

292107 - To attain the virtue of praying qiyaam [night prayers] in Ramadan, is it essential that one pray qiyaam on every night of the month?

the question

I have a question about Ramadan. The hadith says “Whoever prays qiyaam [night prayers] in Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward...” Does this mean that it is essential to pray qiyaam every night in Ramadan, and if you omit one of the thirty nights, you will not attain the reward and forgiveness mentioned in the hadith? What is the minimum and maximum for praying qiyaam in one night?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever prays qiyaam in Ramadaan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2009) and Muslim (759).

The mention in general terms of the month of Ramadan includes all of its nights. What appears to be the case is that the reward mentioned is connected to praying qiyaam on all the nights of the month.

As-San’aani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It may be that what is meant is praying qiyaam on all of the nights of the month, and that the one who prays qiyaam on only some of them will not attain what is mentioned of forgiveness. This is the apparent meaning.

End quote from Subul as-Salaam (4/182).

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words “Whoever fasts Ramadan” mean the month of Ramadan, which includes the entire month, from beginning to end.

End quote from Sharh Buloogh al-Maraam (3/290).

If someone misses qiyaam on some of the nights of the month, then if that was due to an excuse that prevented him from praying qiyaam, there is still the hope that he will be granted the reward mentioned in the hadith.

It was narrated that Abu Moosa said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If a person falls sick or travels, there will be recorded for him [a reward] like that of what he used to do when he was at home and was healthy.” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2996).

It was narrated from ‘Aa’ishah, the wife of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “There is no person who used to pray at night, and was overcome by sleep [and missed it], but the reward of his prayer will be recorded for him, and his sleep is a charity to him.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (1314); classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in Irwa’ al-Ghaleel (2/204).

But if he does not pray qiyaam on some nights of Ramadan out of laziness, then the apparent meaning of the hadith suggests that he will not attain the virtue and reward mentioned.

Secondly:

With regard to the minimum and maximum of qiyaam in Ramadan, the Islamic texts did not state a specific number of rak‘ahs for praying qiyaam in Ramadan.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

With regard to qiyaam in Ramadan, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not specify a particular number.

Those who think that there is a specific number for qiyaam in Ramadan that was narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), to which nothing may be added and

from which nothing may be subtracted, are mistaken.

A man may have a lot of energy, in which case the best is for him to do lengthy acts of worship; or he may not have energy, in which case the best for him is to do shorter acts of worship. The prayer of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was balanced: if he made the standing (in his prayer) lengthy, he would also make bowing and prostration lengthy, and if he made the standing short, he would make the bowing and prostration short. This is what he used to do in the obligatory prayers, qiyaam al-layl, the eclipse prayer and other prayers.

End quote from Majmoo‘ al-Fataawa (22/272-273).

Conclusion: there is no maximum for qiyaam al-layl; the Muslim may pray however many rak‘ahs he likes.

With regard to the minimum that a person may pray at night, in general terms it is the rak‘ah of Witr.

To think that you have done qiyaam in Ramadan by praying only one rak‘ah is clearly not correct; Islamic teachings urge us to do a specific kind of qiyaam in Ramadaan, which is emphasized more than qiyaam at other times in general terms. This is what the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and our righteous forebears used to do, to the extent that it was prescribed to pray regularly in congregation with the imam in the mosque during Ramadan, which is not prescribed at other times. The reports encourage the individual to be patient and continue praying with his imam until he finishes all the prayers.

It was narrated that Abu Dharr said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If a man prays [Taraweeh] with the imam until he finishes, it will be counted as if he spent the entire night in prayer.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (1375) and by at-Tirmidhi (806), who said: This is a hasan saheeh hadith.

For more information, please see the answer to question no. [153247](#).

But if he prays on his own, the best is for him to pray as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to pray, namely eleven rak'ahs with khushoo' (proper focus and humility), so that he will have truly prayed out of faith and in the hope of reward.

It was narrated from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahmaan that he asked 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her): How did the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) pray in Ramadan? She said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not pray more, in Ramadan or at any other time, than eleven rak.ahs. He would pray four, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were. Then he would pray four, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were. Then he would pray three.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (1147) and Muslim (738).

If he does more than that, there is nothing wrong with it. For more information, please see the answer to question no. [9036](#).

And Allah knows best.