

293605 - To Attain the Virtue of the Night Prayer, Must One Pray Every Night

the question

If one does not perform the Tarawih prayer in the mosque for one or more days, does it fall under the saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): "Whoever stands (in prayer) during Ramadan with faith and seeking reward, his previous sins will be forgiven," or is it necessary to stand (in prayer) all the nights of Ramadan?

Detailed answer

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "Whoever stands (in prayer) during Ramadan with faith and seeking reward, his previous sins will be forgiven." Reported by Al-Bukhari (2009) and Muslim (759).

The apparent meaning of the Hadith is that it refers to standing (in prayer) for the entire month of Ramadan, whether it is done in congregation in the mosque or at home. Thus, the ruling includes everyone who stands (in prayer) during Ramadan, whether in congregation or alone, in the mosque or at home.

As-San`ani said:

"It is possible that it means standing (in prayer) for all its nights, and that whoever stands for part of it does not achieve the forgiveness mentioned, which is the apparent meaning." End quote from "Subul As-Salam" (4/182).

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"He (the Prophet) said: 'Whoever stands (in prayer) during Ramadan' means the month of Ramadan, and it encompasses the whole month, from its beginning to its end." End quote from "Sharh Bulugh Al-Maram" (3/290).

Shaykh Ibn Jibrin (may Allah have mercy on him) stated in his "Fatawa" (24/9) with the numbering of Al-Shamilah:

"Standing (in prayer) during Ramadan is achieved by praying a portion of every night, like half or a third of it, whether that is by praying eleven Rak`ahs or twenty-three, and standing (in prayer) is achieved by praying behind the Imam of the neighborhood until he departs, even if it is for less than an hour..." End quote.

For those who miss standing (in prayer) during some nights of Ramadan; if it was due to an excuse that prevented them from doing so, then this virtue mentioned in the Hadith is hoped for them; due to the saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him):

"When a servant falls ill or travels, it will be written for him as if he was doing the deeds he used to perform when he was healthy and resident." Reported by Al-Bukhari (2996).

Al-Qastallani said:

"Whoever stands (in prayer) during Ramadan" all its nights, or some of them when he is unable to do so, and his intention was to pray if not for the obstacle." End quote from "Irshad As-Sari" (3/425).

However, if one leaves standing (in prayer) during some nights of Ramadan out of laziness, the apparent meaning of the Hadith is that he does not achieve the mentioned virtue.

Therefore, it is upon a Muslim to be keen on praying Tarawih in congregation in the mosque, and if he is unable or preoccupied, he should pray at home to the best of his ability.

And Allah knows best.