

The Night before the Day of Eid

By Muaz Billoo

The great Imam al-Shafi رحمته الله says,

“**Ibrahim ibn Muhammad**¹ said that Thawr ibn Yazid narrated to us on the authority of Khalid ibn Ma’dan that Abu al-Darda رحمته الله said, ‘Whoever stands (in worship) on the two nights (i.e. the nights prior to the day of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha) of the two Eids, seeking to be rewarded by Allah, his heart will not die on the day that the hearts will die.’

It has been said that dua is (especially) answered on five nights,

1. The night before Jumu’ah
2. **The night before Eid al-‘Adha**
3. **The night before Eid al-Fitr**
4. The first night of Rajab
5. The fifteenth night of Sha’ban

Ibrahim ibn Muhammad told us that he saw the great scholars of Madinah come to the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ of the night of Eid, supplicating and remembering Allah until a portion of the night passed.

It has also reached us that ibn ‘Umar رحمته الله used to spend the night before Eid in worship.

I give credence to all that which I have narrated regarding (prayer in) these nights, without considering it obligatory (*fard*).”²

Imam ibn Majah رحمته الله narrates in his *Sunan* (#1782): “Abu Ahmad al-Marrar ibn Hamawayh narrated to us that Muhammad ibn al-Musaffa narrated to us that **Baqiyyah ibn al-Walid** narrated to us on the authority of Thawr ibn Yazid on the authority of Khalid ibn Ma’dan on the authority of Abu Umamah رحمته الله that the Prophet ﷺ said, “**Whoever stands in the two nights of Eid, hoping in reward from Allah, then his heart will not die on the day that the hearts will die.**”³

¹ Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Yahya al-Sulami; although most Muhaddithin did not consider him a reliable narrator, Imam al-Shafi رحمته الله held him in high regard. In fact, Hafiz ibn ‘Adi رحمته الله says, “I have looked extensively into his (Ibrahim ibn Muhammad)’s narrations and have studied each and every one of them. There is not a single *Munkar* narration from among them. Whenever there is a *munkar* narration, the issue is only due to the person narrating from him, or the person he is narrating from, but not due to him. He is from among those whose narrations can be written, for indeed, Imam al-Shafi, ibn al-Asbahani, and others have praised him him,” see *Al-Kamil Fi Du’afa al-Rijal* 1/333 as well Dr. Bashir ‘Awwad Ma’ruf’s defense of Ibrahim ibn Muhammad in his annotations on *Tahdhib al-Kamal* 1/134.

² *Kitab al-Umm*, 2/485-486.

³ Hafiz al-Busiri رحمته الله declares this narration *da’eef* due to the *Tadlis* of Baqiyyah ibn al-Walid; See: *Misbah al-Zujajah* 602. According to some editions of *Misbah al-Zujajah*, al-Busiri argues that the concept of standing in worship on these two nights has numerous support from other narrations, thereby giving it credence.

Imam al-Tabarani رحمہ اللہ narrates in his *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat* (#159): “Ahmad ibn Yahya ibn Khalid ibn Hayyan narrated to us that Hamid ibn Yahya al-Balkhi narrated to us that Jarir ibn Abdul Hameed narrated on the authority of a man named ‘**Umar ibn Harun al-Balkhi** on the authority of Thawr ibn Yazid on the authority of Khalid ibn Ma’dan that ‘Ubadah ibn al-Samit رحمہ اللہ said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “**Whoever stands in worship on the two nights of Eid, his heart shall not die on the day that the hearts will die.**”⁴

These narrations in addition to the statements of Imam al-Shafi رحمہ اللہ above give credence to spending the night before Eid in worship. Even if the individual narrations are *da'eef*, the vast majority of Muhaddithin have permitted the transmission and practice of such narrations in matters of virtue. Furthermore, it is still a well-established act of virtue to stand in prayer at night all throughout the year. Thus, it is preferable to engage in worship on this night.

The renowned Hanafi jurist, ‘Allamah al-Haskafi رحمہ اللہ writes,

“(And it is *mustahabb*) to spend the two nights of ‘Eid in worship.”⁵

The renowned Shafi Jurist, Imam al-Nawawi رحمہ اللہ writes,

“It is *mustahabb* (preferable) to spend the two nights of Eid in prayer or other forms of worship...even though the (aforementioned) Hadith is *da'eef*, there exists leniency with regards to Ahadith that discuss virtues, as has been discussed in the first portion of the book.”⁶

Note: Allamah al-Munawi رحمہ اللہ explains the meaning of the narration,

“His heart will not die on the day that hearts will die:

Meaning, his heart will not be filled with the love of this world, as that is death (for the heart), or it means that he will be protected from an evil end (which is alluded to in the Qur'an, 6:122) i.e. that of a disbeliever.”⁷

⁴ Hafiz al-Haythami رحمہ اللہ says in *Majma' al-Zawaid* #3203, “Narrated by al-Tabarani in *al-Kabir* and in *al-Awsat*. In it is ‘Umar ibn Harun al-Balkhi, and the predominant view regarding him is that he is weak, although ibn Mahdi and others have praised him. However, a large group (of Muhaddithin) considered him weak.” It is interesting to note that according to the last section of Imam al-Tirmidhi's *al-'Ilal al-Kabir, Bab Jami' Fi Dhikr al-Rijal* #84, Imam al-Bukhari رحمہ اللہ actually praises Umar ibn Harun al-Balkhi, as he describes him as *Muqarib al-Hadith*, which is a term of praise; see Hafiz al-Iraqi's *Alfiyyah* line #333, along with Hafiz al-Sakhawi's commentary in *Fath al-Mughith*.

⁵ *Hashiyah ibn 'Abidin*, 4/302, Farfur Edition

⁶ *al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhab*, 6/104-105.

⁷ *Fayd al-Qadir Sharh Jami' al-Saghir*, Hadith #8903

There is deep wisdom in spending the night before Eid in worship: it is the first hours wherein we are no longer within the month of Ramadan. Throughout Ramadan, Allah ﷻ allowed us to spend hours and nights in His worship. Now that Ramadan is over, what will we do? How do we feel? Do we feel a sense of heaviness bearing down on our hearts because we did not value our time? Or do we feel a sense of joy, as if we are taking our first steps outside of prison?

A sign that our deeds in Ramadan have been accepted is that Allah ﷻ allows us to carry on some of what we were able to accomplish in Ramadan throughout the rest of the year. We can fast six days of Shawwal to earn the reward of fasting for a year. We can maintain a regular schedule of reciting some portion of the Qur'an. We can make a schedule to build a habit of standing in Tahajjud. These are just a few examples.

Now that the month is over what do we do? Do we treat the day of Eid as our “day off” from worshipping Allah ﷻ? Once the day of Eid settles in, do we abandon the Qur'an and seal it away only to pick it up next year? Or do we devote some time on the day of Eid to worshipping Allah ﷻ as well? If the very first day after Ramadan is completely bereft of Allah ﷻ's remembrance, then this does not bode well for us for the rest of the year.

The night before Eid serves as a reminder that we still need to continue the spirit of Ramadan, that is, the spirit of worship even outside of Ramadan from the moment that the blessed month is over. The moment it leaves us, we should seek Allah ﷻ's forgiveness for not taking advantage of the month and beseech Him to not make it our last. May Allah ﷻ forgive our shortcomings and accept whatever little we did.