III. QUESTIONS ON *TAWASSUL*

Is it true, as some people say, that *tawassul* or "seeking means" through the Prophet and the *awliya'*, such as seeking their intercession, is not necessary nor a priority in Islam, because Allah says that He is near and answers whoever calls Him directly?

What about the statement in *al-Wala' wal-Bara' According to the `Aqeedah of the Salaf* that among the "ten actions that negate Islam" is "relying on an intermediary between oneself and Allah when seeking intercession"?

What about Albani's claims that *tawassul* is not through the person of the Prophet after his time, but through his *du`a* and only in his lifetime?

And what about those who compare *tawassul* and asking intercession to the Christian worship of Jesus and the saints, those who reject *tabarruk bi al-athar* -- getting blessings from the Prophet's relics -- as being outside Islam, and those who put limitations on invoking *salawat* -- blessings and peace -- on the Prophet?

Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, and blessings and peace of Allah upon His Prophet and Messenger Muhammad, his Family and all his Companions. There is not one single act of worship in Islam that is not a *tawassul* (seeking means to Allah), therefore it is inadmissible to say that *tawassul* is not an integral and central part of Islam.

Tawassul is the very heart of Islam, and the *shahada* contains a declaration of belief in *tawassul*, for one cannot be a Muslim unless one recognizes the messengership and prophethood of Muhammad, blessings and peace upon him, and of all Prophets, although the goal is Allah alone Who said: "I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me" (51:56). Therefore this is seeking an obligatory means to an obligatory end. The pillars of Islam similarly all consist in actions which are means before Allah for one who performs them.

Intercession is the greatest means as it will be only through intercession that the people of the Fire will enter Paradise, and Allah even called Himself "Intercessor" in the verse: "You have not, beside Him, a protecting friend or mediator" (32:4) and in the long hadith narrated by Muslim wherein the Prophet said:

Allah will say: "The angels have interceded. The Prophets have interceded. The believers have interceded. There does not remain except the Most Merciful of the merciful ones."[1]

The Prophet also called the Qur'an an intercessor, declared that people were intercessors, and gave as an example the intercession of children for the parents who lost them in their infancy. We ask for the intercession of the dead person every time we pray *janaza*, when we say: *allahumma la tuhrimna ajrahum* which means "O Allah, do not prevent their benefit from reaching us." Allah declares that the best people are the Prophets, then those who are absolutely truthful *(siddiqin)* and these are the great saints, then the martyrs *(shuhada)*, then the righteous *(salihin)*, and the Prophet declared that every person will be making intercession on the Day of Resurrection, but with an order of priority among them, just as Allah gives precedence in this world to those who are closest to Him. All this is a great blessing of Allah to the worlds and the reason why we are greatly blessed on this earth despite our sins. For the earth is never empty of the true worshippers and there is still someone left saying "Allah." If you realize this, you will never harbor doubts about Muslims availing themselves of the blessings and guidance that Allah sends to them in the persons of the *anbiya'* and *awliya'*.

Nor do we believe that the friendship with Allah established in *nubuwwa* and *wilaya* stops with death. We strenuously reject the heresy of those who claim that the Prophet is dead and gone after delivering his message. *Hasha, wa ta`ala Allahu `amma yasifun.* He is alive and fed, our greetings reach him, our actions are shown to him, he intercedes for us, and the dust of his grave is the most blessed spot on earth for which no show of love and honor is too great. No-one who has love in their heart approaches it without *adab*. It is the responsibility of every Muslim to ascertain what is correct from what is wrong, and *tawassul* is correct, recommended, and one of the greatest means of drawing close to Allah, first and foremost through the Prophet. This is the position of the overwhelming majority of the scholars until our own time, opposed by a handful of dissenters.

Tawassul is not a luxury for the rich, and its validity is not determined by circumstance, analogy, or personal feelings but by solid, known legal proofs and the practice of the righteous early generations. It is not a matter of procedure and scholarship but one of sound belief. Dislike for asking for the Prophet's help displays arrogance against Allah's greatest mercy, dislike for the Prophet, and a diseased heart. May Allah protect us from it at all times, especially in our time which is the time of fear of declaring love for our Prophet and that of rampant disaffection towards him. As for *tawassul* with the saints, no one can claim that they know Allah better than the Prophet, just as no one can claim that they know the Prophet better than the Friends of Allah. What then is the status of one who would stop seeking their company and asking for their help and guidance?

THE PROOFS FOR INTERCESSION *(SHAFA`A)* IN ISLAM

In Islam every action of a believer is an intercessor, and the Prophet has told us that the Qur'an also will intercede for us on the Day of Resurrection,[2] while he himself is the greatest intercessor other than Allah. The position of the Prophet as the Intercessor between creation and the Creator is illustrated by his position as the one whom Allah consults with regard to his Community. This is established by the following authentic hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*:

- Hudhayfa said: The Prophet was absent and he did not come out until we thought that he would never come out anymore. When he did come out, he fell into such a long prostration that we thought that his soul had been taken back during that prostration. When he raised his head he said:

  My Lord sought my advice *(istasharani)* concerning my Community, saying: "What shall I do with them?" I said: "What You will, my Lord, they are Your creation and Your servants!" Then He sought my advice again *(fa istasharani al-thaniya)*, and I said to him the same thing, so He said: "We shall not put you to shame concerning your Community, O Muhammad."

  Then He informed me that the first of my Community to enter Paradise will be seventy thousand, each thousand of whom will have seventy thousand with them [4,900,000,000], and none of them shall incur any accounting.

  Then He sent me a messenger who said: "Supplicate and it will be answered to you. Ask and it will be given to you." I said to His messenger: "Will my Lord give me whatever I ask for?" He replied: "He did not send me to you except to give you you whatever you ask for."

  And indeed my Lord has given me whatever I asked for, and I say this without pride: He has forgiven me my sins past or future while I am still alive and walking about; He has granted me that my Community shall not starve, and shall not be overcome. And He has given me al-Kawthar, a river of Paradise which flows into my Pond; and He has given me power and victory over my enemies, and terror running in their ranks at a month's distance from my Community; and He has granted me that I be first among the Prophets to enter Paradise; and He has made spoils of war lawful and good for me and my Community, and He has made lawful much of what He had forbidden those before us, nor did He take us to task for it."

Narrated by Imam Ahmad, and Haythami said in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (10:68) that its chain was fair *(hasan)*.

According to Shari`a even the good action of the greatest apostate intercedes for him and profits him, as established by what is related in Bukhari whereby Abu Lahab freed his slave Thuwayba on the day the Prophet was born and that subsequently his punishment in the grave is diminished every Monday. Scholars have quoted this hadith to highlight the importance of praising the Prophet in that even non-believers benefit from the intercession of their own actions that denote his praise -- even unintentional. Two examples of such scholars are the *hafiz* of Syria and supporter of Ibn Taymiyya, Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Qaysi, known as Nasir al-Din al-Dimashqi (777-842) in his several books on the praiseworthiness of Mawlid, among them *Jami` al-athar fi mawlid al-nabi al-mukhtar* (The compendium of reports concerning the birth of the Chosen Prophet), *al-Lafz al-ra'iq fi mawlid khayr al-khala'iq* (The shining expressions for the birth of the Best of Creation) and *Mawrid al-sadi bi mawlid al-nabi al-hadi* (The continuous spring: the birth of the Guiding Prophet) and the *hafiz* Shams al-Din al-Jazari in his book *`Urf al-ta`rif bi al-mawlid al-sharif* (The beneficient communication of the Noble Birth of the Prophet).

Another principle of that hadith is that the benefit of intercession takes place before Resurrection.

Whether persons other than the Prophet are intercessors as well the answer is: yes, since the Prophet has explicitly declared it in many sound hadiths which quote below, among them the following:

"More people than the collective tribes of Banu Tamim shall enter Paradise due to the intercession of one man from my Community." It was said: "O Messenger of Allah, is it other than you?" He said: "Other than me."[3]

The belief in the Prophet's intercession and that of other than him is obligatory in Islam. It is stated clearly in the *`Aqida tahawiyya* of Imam al-Tahawi, in Ghazali's *al-Iqtisad* and the chapter on *`aqida* in his *Ihya'*, in the works of al-Ash`ari, and even in the *`Aqida wasitiyya* of Ibn Taymiyya. These intercessors are a mercy from Allah and it is an obligation and an order for mankind to seek out Allah's mercy.

The seeking of intercession has two effects: one is immediate, in increasing the faith of the person and availing him all sorts of benefits in the world; the other is delayed until Resurrection.

About the statement in *al-Wala' wa al-bara'* that among the "ten actions that negate Islam" is "relying on an intermediary between oneself and Allah when seeking intercession,"[4] then the deceptiveness of the statement is obvious, since the meaning of intercession is intermediary. How can one at the same time seek an intermediary and refrain from relying on him? This would not be the act of a believer but of a duplicitous person. Besides language and logic it is clear in the hadith of the Great Intercession in Bukhari and Muslim that the people will seek intercessors in vain among all the Prophets **until they come to the Seal of Prophets seeking to rely upon him for intercession, and he confirms that he is able to fulfill their request**. This is one of the matters which the Prophet boasted about in the hadith "I have been given five things..." What then is the import of reducing it to an "action that negates Islam" other than to reduce the status of the Prophet himself and of his intercession?

Allah has created intercession as He has created everything else, out of mercy; He also said: "My Mercy encompasses all things" (7:156). No doubt His greatest Mercy is the Prophet, concerning whom He said: "We did not send you save as a Mercy to the Worlds" (21:107). Belief in the Prophet's intercession is tied to the witnessing to the truth he brought and the recognition by the believers of his right as Allah's greatest Mercy. The angels intercede according to Qur'an, yet the Prophet is nearer to Allah than the nearest among them. No-one will speak on the Day of Judgment except those who have permission, and it is related in authentic hadith that Allah gave permission to the Prophet. The Prophet will not be saying "I and Myself" but will be saying *"ummati, ummati* (My Community)*"* and that is intercession which, unless it is reliable, cannot be hoped for nor looked forward to, as the "Salafis" try to suggest.

Allah said in Surat Yunus:

Is it a matter of wonderment to men that We have sent Our revelation to a man from among themselves? that he should warn mankind and give the glad tidings to the Believers that they have with their Lord a truthful foothold/forerunner. But the unbelievers say: This is an evident sorcerer. (10:2)

The following is one of the authoritative explanations for the expression "a truthful foothold/forerunner" ***(qadama sidqin)***:

"A truthful foothold/forerunner": Bukhari in his *Sahih* [book of *Tafsir* for Surat Yunus, ch. 1], Tabari in *Jami` al-bayan*, Qurtubi in *al-Jami` li al-ahkam*, Ibn `Uyayna in his *Tafsir*, Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir*, Suyuti in *al-Durr al-manthur* and *al-Riyad al-aniqa*, Abu al-Fadl al-Maydani in *Majma` al-amthal*, Abu al-Shaykh, Ibn Mardawayh in his *Tafsir*, Ibn Abi Hatim in his *Tafsir*, and others said, on the authority of the Companions: `Ali ibn Abi Talib and Abu Sa`id al-Khudri, and the Tabi`in: al-Hasan, Qatada, Mujahid, Zayd ibn Aslam, Bakkar ibn Malik, and Muqatil: "It is Muhammad, blessings and peace upon him."

Qurtubi said: "It is Muhammad *sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam*, for he is an intercessor whom the people obey and who precedes them, just as he said: I will be your scout at the Pond *(ana faratukum `ala al-hawd)*. And he was asked about its meaning and said: **It is my intercession, for you to use me as a means to your Lord** *(hiya shafa`ati tawassaluna bi ila rabbikum)*." Ibn Kathir mentioned the latter meaning in his *Tafsir* (2:406, 4:183) as well as al-Razi in his (8:242).

al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi said: "Allah gave him precedence *(qaddamahu)* with the Praiseworthy Station *(al-maqam al-mahmud)*. Qurtubi mentioned it.

Suyuti said: "Ibn Jarir al-Tabari and Abu al-Shaykh narrated that al-Hasan said: It is Muhammad blessings and peace upon him, who is an intercessor for them on the Day of Rising; and Ibn Mardawayh narrated from `Ali ibn Abi Talib through al-Harith and from Abu Sa`id al-Khudri through `Atiyya: It is Muhammad blessings and peace upon him, he is an intercessor in truth on their behalf on the Day of Rising."

Intercession in no way diminishes the fact that everything is under Allah's sovereignty. However, Allah created secondary causes and means, and He has said: "Seek the means to Allah" (5:35). Intercession is but one of those means and not the smallest. The fact that the Prophet said that to utter *la ilaha illallah* from the heart guaranteed his intercession, implies that there is immense good in his intercession; what would we wish for in addition to the benefit brought by uttering the *kalima*, if it were not to be prized immensely?

That is why sincere love of the Prophet and of pious people is of a tremendous benefit, as one hopes thereby to be loved back. The Prophet said to the Arab who had prepared nothing for the Final Hour other than love for Allah and His Prophet: *yuhshar al-mar' ma` man ahabb*, "One is raised in the company of those he loves," and the Companions who were present said this was the happiest day of their lives for hearing this promise.[5] All this implies reliance, and contradicts the assertion of the book *al-Wala' wal-Bara'* that "relying on an intermediary between oneself and Allah when seeking intercession negates Islam."

The asking of intercession from the intercessor, as the asking of *du`a* from a pious Muslim, in no way implies that the person who asks believes any good can come apart from Allah. In effect he is asking Allah, but he is using the means that Allah put at his disposal, including the intercession of those who may be closer than himself to Allah. To refuse to believe that other may be closer than us to Allah is the sin of Iblis.

Imam Ghazali said in the section on doctrine of his *Ihya'*:

It is obligatory to believe in the intercession of first the prophets, then religious scholars, then martyrs, then other believers, the intercession of each one commensurate with his rank and position with Allah Most High.[6]

A contemporary scholar wrote the following explanation of the meaning of intercession:

What is the meaning of Intercession?

al-shafa`a* (intercession) is derived from *al-shaf` which means "even" as opposed to odd, since the interceder adds his own recommendation to the plea of the petitioner; in this way the number of pleaders becomes even, and the weak plea of the petitioner is strengthened by the prestige of the intercessor. We are accustomed in our social and communal life to seek others' intercession and help for fulfilling our needs.

We resort to it to get an advantage or to ward off a disadvantage. Here we are not talking about an advantage or a disadvantage, a benefit or a harm that is caused by natural causes, like hunger and thirst, heat or cold, illness or health; because in such cases we get what we want through natural remedies, like eating and drinking, wearing clothes, getting treatment and so on. What we are talking here about is the benefit and harm, punishment and reward resulting from the social laws made by civil authorities.

From the nature of the relationship of mastership-and-servitude, and for that matter, between every ruler and ruled, rise some commandments, orders and prohibitions; one who follows and obeys them is praised and rewarded, and the one who disobeys is condemned and punished; that reward or punishment may be either material or spiritual. When a master orders his servant to do or not to do a thing, and the servant obeys him he gets its reward; and if he disobeys he is punished. Whenever a rule is made, the punishment for its infringement is laid down too. This is the foundation which all authorities are built upon.

When a man wants to get a material or spiritual benefit but is not suitably qualified for it; or when he desires to ward off a harm which is coming to him because of his disobedience, but has no shield to protect himself, then comes the time for intercession.

In other words, when he wants to get a reward without doing his task, or to save himself from punishment without performing his duty, then he looks for someone to intercede on his behalf. But intercession is effective only if the person for whom one intercedes is otherwise qualified to get the reward and has already established a relationship with the authority. If an ignorant person desires appointment to a prestigious academic post, no intercession can do him any good; nor can it avail in case of a rebellious traitor who shows no remorse for his misdeeds and does not submit to the lawful authorities. It clearly shows that intercession works as a supplement to the cause; it is not an independent cause.

The effect of an intercessor's words depends on one or the other factor which may have some influence upon the concerned authority; in other words, intercession must have a solid ground to stand upon.

The intercessor endeavours to find a way to the heart of the authority concerned, in order that the said authority may give the reward to, or waive the punishment of, the person who is the subject of intercession. An intercessor does not ask the master to nullify his mastership or to release the servant from his servitude; nor does he plead with him to refrain from laying down rules and regulations for his servants or to abrogate his commandments (either generally or especially in that one case), in order to save the wrong-doer from the due consequences; nor does he ask him to discard the canon of reward and punishment (either generally or in that particular case). In short, intercession can interfere with neither the institution of mastership and servantship nor the master's authority to lay down the rules; nor can it effect the system of reward and punishment. These three factors are beyond the jurisdiction of intercession.

What an intercessor does is this: he accepts the inviolability of the above mentioned three aspects. Then he looks at one or more of the following factors and builds his intercession on that basis:

He appeals to such attributes of the master as give rise to forgiveness, e.g., his nobility, magnanimity and generosity.

He draws attention to such characteristics of the servant as justify mercy and pardon, e.g., his wretchedness, poverty, low status and misery.

He puts at stake his own prestige and honour in the eyes of the master.

Thus, the import of intercession is like this: I cannot and do not say that you should forget your mastership over your servant or abrogate your commandment or nullify the system of reward and punishment. What I ask of you is to forgive this defaulting servant of yours because you are magnanimous and generous, and because no harm would come to you if you forgive his sins; and/or because your servant is a wretched creature of low status and steeped in misery; and it is befitting of a master like you to ignore the faults of a slave like him; and/or because you have bestowed on me a high prestige, and I implore you to forgive and pardon him in honour of my intercession.

The intercessor, in this way, bestows precedence on the factors of forgiveness and pardon over those of legislation and recompense. He removes the case from the latter's jurisdiction putting it under the former's influence. As a result of this shift, the consequences of legislation (reward and punishment) do not remain applicable. The effect of intercession is, therefore, based on shifting the case from the jurisdiction of reward and punishment to that of pardon and forgiveness; it is not a confrontation between one cause (divine legislation) and the other (intercession).

By now it should be clear that intercession too is one of the causes; it is the intermediate cause that connects a distant cause to its desired effect.

Allah is the ultimate Cause. This causality shows itself in two ways:

First: in creation: every cause begins from Him and ends up to Him; He is the first and the final Cause. He is the real Creator and Originator. All other causes are mere channels to carry His boundless mercy and limitless bounty to His creatures.

Second: in legislation: He, in His mercy, established a contact with His creatures; He laid down the religion, sent down His commandments, and prescribed suitable reward and appropriate punishment for His obedient and disobedient servants; He sent prophets and apostles to bring us good tidings and to warn us of the consequences of transgression. The prophets and apostles conveyed to us His message in the best possible way. Thus His proof over us was complete: "and the word of your Lord has been accomplished with truth and justice, there is none to change His words" (6:115).

Both aspects of causality of Allah may be, and in fact are, related to intercession:

1. Intercession in creation: quite obviously the intermediary causes of creation are the conduits that bring the divine mercy, life, sustenance and other bounties to the creatures; and as such they are intercessors between the Creator and the created. Some Qur'anic verses too are based on this very theme: "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His; who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission" (2:255); "Surely your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and He is firmly established on the throne, regulating the affair; there is no intercessor except after His permission" (10:3).

Intercession in the sphere of creation is only the intermediation of causes between the Creator and the created thing and effect in bringing it into being and regulating its affairs.

2. Intercession in legislation: intercession, as analyzed earlier, is effective in this sphere too.

It is in this context that Allah says: "On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with" (20:109); "And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits" (34:23); "And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses" (53:26); "... and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves ..." (21:28); "And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him)" (43:86).

These verses clearly affirm an intercessory role for various servants of Allah, both men and angels, with divine permission and pleasure. It means that Allah has given them some power and authority in this matter, and to Him belongs all the kingdom and all the affairs. Those intercessors may appeal to Allah's mercy, forgiveness and other relevant attributes to cover and protect a servant who otherwise would have deserved punishment because of his sins and transgressions. That intercession would transfer his case from the general law of recompense to the special domain of grace and mercy (it has already been explained that the effect of intercession is based on shifting a case from the former's to the latter's jurisdiction; it is not a confrontation between one law and the other). Allah clearly says: "... so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones" (25:70).

Allah has the power to change one type of deed into another, in the same way as He may render an act null and void. He says: "And We will proceed to what they have done of deeds, so We shall render them as scattered floating dust" (25:23); ... "so He rendered their deeds null" (47:9); "If you avoid the great sins which you are forbidden, We will expiate from you your sins" (4:31); "Surely Allah does not forgive that any thing should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases" (4:48).

The last quoted verse is certainly about the cases other than true belief and repentance, because with belief and repentance even polytheism is forgiven, like any other sin. Also Allah may nurture a small deed to make it greater than the original: "These shall be granted their reward twice" (28:54); "Whoever brings a good deed, he shall have ten like it" (6:160). Likewise, He may treat a nonexistent deed as existing: "And (as for) those who believe and their offsping follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work; every man is responsible for what he has done" (52:21) .

To make a long story short, Allah does what He pleases, and decrees as He wills. Of course, He does so pursuant to His servants' interest, and in accordance with an intermediary cause, and intercession of the intercessors (e.g., the Prophets, the Friends of Allah and those who are nearer to Him) is one of those causes, and certainly no rashness or injustice is entailed therein. It should have been clear by now that intercession, in its true sense, belongs to Allah only; all His attributes are intermediaries between Him and His creatures and are the channels through which His grace, mercy and decrees pass to the creatures; He is the real and all-encompassing intercessor: "Say: Allah's is the intercession altogether" (39:44); ... "you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor" (32:4); ... "there is no guardian for them nor any intercessor besides Him" (6: 51). Intercessors other than Allah only get that right by His permission, by His authority.

In short, intercession with Him is a confirmed reality in all cases where it does not go against the divine glory and honour.[7]

PROOF-TEXTS OF INTERCESSION IN THE QUR'AN AND HADITH

1. Linguistic definitions

Shafa`a is the Arabic noun for intercession or mediation or asking forgiveness from Allah for someone else. The word is used also in laying a petition before a king,[8] interceding for a debtor,[9] and in judicial procedure:

"Whoso makes a righteous intercession shall partake of the good that ensues therefrom, and whoso makes an evil intercession will bear the consequence thereof" (4:85);

"He who by his intercession invalidates one of Allah's *hudud* (laws concerning transgressions) is challenging *(tahadda)* Allah" (Bukhari, *Anbiya'* ch. 54).

He who makes intercession is called *shfi`* and *shaf`*.

2. Statement of the Doctrine of Intercession in Islam and the Obligations of Belief Therein

Hujjat al-Islam Imam Ghazali said:

It is obligatory to believe in the intercession of first the prophets, then religious scholars, then martyrs, then other believers, the intercession of each one commensurate with his rank and position with Allah Most High.

[Cf. "Allah Himself is witness that there is no God save Him. And the angels and the men of learning too are witness" (3:18) and "Whoso obey Allah and the Messenger, they are with those unto whom Allah has shown favor, of the Prophets and the saints and the martyrs and the righteous. The best of company are they!" (4:69).]

Any believer remaining in hell without intercessor shall be taken out of it by the favor of Allah, no one who believes remaining in it forever, and anyone with an atom's weight of faith in his heart will eventually depart from it.[10]

3. Proofs of intercession and mediation in the Qur'an

In the Holy Qur'an intercession is:

a) negated in relation to the unbelievers,
b) established categorically as belonging to Allah,
c) further defined as generally permitted for others than Allah by His permission,
d) further specified as permitted for the angels on behalf of whomever Allah wills,
e) explicitly attributed to the Prophet in his lifetime,
f) alluded to in reference to the Prophet in the afterlife, and
g) alluded to in reference to the generality of the Prophets and the believers in the afterlife.

3.a) The Day of Judgment is described as a day on which no intercession will be accepted from the Children of Israel (2:48) or the unbelievers generally speaking (2:254), or the idolaters (10:18, 74:48):

- 2:48: "And guard yourselves against a day when no soul will avail another, nor intercession be accepted from it";

- 2:254: "O believers, spend of that wherewith We have provided you before a day comes when there will be no trafficking, nor friendship, nor intercession. The disbelievers, they are the wrong-doers."

- 10:18: "They worship beside Allah that which neither hurts nor profits them, and they say: These are our intercessors with Allah."

- 74:48: "The mediation of no mediators will avail them then."

3.b) In absolute terms intercession belongs to Allah alone:

- 39:43-44: "Or choose they intercessors other than Allah? Say: What! Even though they have power over nothing and have no intelligence? Say: the intercession belongs to Allah."

3.c) A further definition that "intercession belongs to Allah" is that intercession is actually permitted to others than Allah but only by His permission:

- 2:255: "Who should intercede with Him, except by His permission?"

- 10:3: "There is no intercessor save after His permission."

- 19:87: "They will have no power of intercession, save him who has made a covenant with his Lord."

- 43:86: "And those unto whom they cry instead of Him possess no power of intercession, except him who beareth witness unto the truth knowingly."

3.d) Angels are permitted to intercede for whomever Allah wills, specifically among the believers:

- 21:26-28: "And they say: the Beneficent hath taken unto Himself a son... Nay, but honored slaves [angels]... and they cannot intercede except for him whom He accepteth, and they quake for awe of Him."

- 40:7: "Those who bear the Throne, and all who are round about it... ask forgiveness for those who believe."

- 42:5: "The angels hymn the praise of their Lord and ask forgiveness for those on the earth."

3.e) The intercession of the Prophet in his lifetime is explicitly and frequently established:

- 3:159: "Pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them upon the conduct of affairs."

- 4:64: "And if, when they had wronged themselves, they had but come unto thee and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah forgiving, merciful."

- 4:106-107: "And ask forgiveness of Allah (for others). Allah is ever forgiving, merciful. And plead not on behalf of those who deceive themselves."

- 8:33: "But Allah would not punish them while thou wast with them, nor will He punish them while they seek forgiveness."

- 9:80, 84: "Ask forgiveness for them (the hypocrites) or ask not forgiveness for them; though thou ask forgiveness for them seventy times Allah will not forgive them... And never pray for one of them who dieth, nor stand by his grave."

- 9:103: "Pray for them. Lo! thy prayer is an assuagement for them."

- 9:113: "It is not for the Prophet, and those who believe, to pray for the forgiveness of idolaters even though they may be near of kin (to them) after it hath become clear that they are people of hell-fire."

- 24:62: "If they ask thy leave for some affair of theirs, give leave to whom thou wilt of them, and ask for them forgiveness of Allah."

- 47:19: "Know that there is no god save Allah, and ask forgiveness for thy sin and for believing men and believing women."

- 60:12: "Accept their [believing women's] allegiance and ask Allah to forgive them."

- 63:5-6: "And when it is said unto them: Come! The Messenger of Allah will ask forgiveness for you! they [the hypocrites] avert their faces and thou seest them turning away, disdainful. Whether thou ask forgiveness for them or ask not forgiveness for them, Allah will not forgive them."

3.f) The intercession and mediation of the Prophet on the Day of Judgment has been established by the consensus of scholars *(ijma`)* and is an article of belief in Islam as stated in section **2**. The Mu`tazili heresy rejected it, as they held that the man who enters the Fire will remain there forever. The consensus of scholars is based on the principle of permission (see the verses in section **3.c** above), on the allusive verses in the present section, and on the more explicit hadiths quoted further below:

- 17:79: "It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a Praised Station."

- 93:5: "And verily thy Lord will give unto thee so that thou wilt be content."

3.g) The intercession of the generality of the Prophets as well as the believers has similarly been established by the verses of sections **3.c** and **3.e** above, i.e. based on permission, and also because Prophets have made a covenant with their Lord (33:7, 3:81) and do bear witness unto the truth knowingly. The latter is true also of the elite of the believers (3:18: "Allah, the angels, and the men of learning"). There are also the following verses concerning the Prophets' intercession in their lifetime:

- 12:97-98: "And they said: O our father! Ask forgiveness of our sins for us for lo! we were sinful. And he [Jacob] said: I shall ask forgiveness for you of my Lord. He is the forgiving, the merciful."

- 19:47: "He [Abraham] said: Peace unto thee. I shall ask forgiveness of my Lord for thee."

- 60:4: "Abraham promised his father: I will ask forgiveness for thee, though I owe nothing for thee from Allah."

There are also the following verses concerning the believers' intercession in their lifetime:

- 9:113: "It is not for the Prophet, and those who believe, to pray for the forgiveness of idolaters even though they may be near of kin (to them) after it has become clear that they are people of hellfire."

- 59:10: "And those who came after them say: Our Lord! forgive us and forgive our believing brothers who lived before us."

4. Proofs of intercession/mediation in the hadith

In the hadith the power of intercession is emphasized as given:

a) to the Prophet exclusively of other prophets;
b) to special members of the Prophet's Community, such as saints and scholars;
c) to the common believers of the Prophet's Community.

4.a) Intercession of the Prophet:

4.a.1) In his lifetime for those who passed away:

- All the authentic traditions concerning the Prophet's prayer and *takbir* over the graves of the believers.

- Muslim *(jana'iz)*: Abu Hurayra narrates that a dark-complexioned woman or young man used to sweep the mosque. When that person died, no-one told the Prophet until he enquired about it and then went to pray over the grave. He remarked: "Verily, these graves are full of darkness for their dwellers. Verily, Allah Mighty and Glorious illumines them for their occupants by reason of my prayer for them."

- Muslim *(jana'iz)*: `Awf ibn Malik said that after he heard the words of the Prophet's prayer over a dead person, he earnestly desired that he were that dead person.

- Muslim *(jana'iz)*: Muhammad ibn Qays narrates from `A'isha that the Prophet on every night that he was with her used to quietly get dressed and leave at the end of the night, and she once followed him surreptitiously until he reached Baqi` [the graveyard of the believers] where he prayed for the dead. Later he told her that Jibril had come to him and said: "Your Lord has commanded you to go to the inhabitants of Baqi` and beg forgiveness for them."

4.a.2) In the afterlife:

- al-Daraqutni, al-Dulabi, al-Bayhaqi, Khatib al-Baghdadi, al-`Uqayli, Ibn `Adi, Tabarani, and Ibn Khuzayma in his *Sahih*, all through various chains going back to Musa ibn Hilal al-`Abdi from `Ubayd Allah Ibn `Umar, both from Nafi`, from Ibn `Umar: **"Whoever visits my grave, my intercession will be guaranteed for him."**

Ibn Hajar al-Haytami said in his commentary on Nawawi's *Idah fi manasik al-hajj*:

Ibn Khuzayma narrated it in his *Sahih* but alluded to its weakness. Ibn al-Kharrat and Taqi al-Subki declared it sound (*sahih*). Daraqutni and Tabarani also narrate it with the wording: "Whoever visits me with no other need than visiting me, it is my duty to be his intercessor on the Day of Judgment." One version has: "It is Allah's duty that I be his intercessor on the Day of Judgment." Ibn al-Subki declared it sound.

Although declaring all the chains of this hadith imperfect *(layyina)*, Dhahabi nevertheless said that they strengthened each other and declared the chain *jayyid* (good) as narrated, in *Mizan al-i`tidal*, (4:226): That is, the hadith is *hasan*. Sakhawi confirmed him in the *Maqasid al-hasana*, while al-Subki declared it *sahih* in *Shifa' al-siqam* (p. 12-13) and Samhudi in *Sa`adat al-darayn* (1:77). Imam Lucknawi in *al-Ajwiba al-fadila* (p. 155) said: "And this [declaring it authentic] until today is the custom of the people who have reached mastery of this science."

About Musa ibn Hilal, Dhahabi in his *Mizan* (3:220) said: "*Huwa salih al-hadith*" which means: "He is good enough in his narrations." Ibn `Adi said in *al-Kamil fi al-du`afa*" (6:2350): "He (Musa ibn Hilal) is most likely acceptable; other people have called him unknown *(majhul)* and this is not true... He is one of the shuyukhs of Imam Ahmad and most of them are trustworthy." Lucknawi said in *al-Raf` wa al-takmil* (p. 248-249): "Abu Hatim [al-Razi]'s saying whereby Musa ibn Hilal is unknown is rejected, because it is established that those who are trustworthy narrated hadith from him." Even Albani declared him *thabit al-riwaya* (of established reliability) in his *Irwa'* (4:338).

About `Ubayd Allah ibn `Umar al-`Umari: Dhahabi calls him *saduq hasan al-hadith* (truthful, of fair narrations) in *al-Mughni* (1:348); Sakhawi says of him *salih al-hadith* (his narrations are good enough) in *al-Tuhfa al-latifa* (3:366); Ibn Ma`in said to Darimi about him: *salih thiqa* (good enough and trustworthy) in *al-Kamil* (4:1459).

al-Lucknawi also said about this hadith in his book *Zafr al-amani* (p.422): "There are some who declared it weak, and others who asserted that all the hadiths on visitation of the Prophet are forged, such as Ibn Taymiyya and his followers, but both positions are false for those who were given right understanding, for verification of the case dictates that the hadith is *hasan*, as Taqi al-Din al-Subki has expounded in his book *Shifa' al-siqam fi ziyarat khayr al-anam*."

Among those who fall into the category of "Ibn Taymiyya and his followers" on this issue: Ibn `Abd al-Hadi who wrote *al-Sarim al-munki* in an attempt to refute Subki's book *Shifa' al-siqam* on the great merit of visiting the Prophet; the Saudi author Bin Baz who said: "the ahadith that concern the desirability of visiting the grave of the Prophet are all weak, indeed forged" *(kulluha da`ifa bal mawdu`a)* in the 1993 edition of *Fath al-bari* (3:387); Nasir al-Din Albani, who claimed that the visit to the Prophet ranks among the innovations in *Talkhis ahkam al-jana'iz* (p. 110) and elsewhere in his writings; and Nasir al-Jadya`, who in 1993 obtained his Ph.D. with First Honors from the University of Muhammad ibn Sa`ud after writing a 600-page book entitled *al-Tabarruk* in which he perpetuates the same claim (p. 322). One will find such books printed and distributed far and wide, while the classical books of *Ahl al-Sunna* are deliberately ignored and made unavailable to Muslims at large.

Despite the claims of Wahhabis and "Salafis," the hadith "Whoever visits my grave is guaranteed my intercession" is one of the proof-texts adduced by the ulama of Islam to derive the obligation or recommendation of visiting the Prophet's grave and seeking him as *wasila* (intermediary/means), as will be seen further down, in the chapter on visiting the Prophet's grave. Sakhawi said in *al-Qawl al-badi`* (p. 160):

> The emphasis and encouragement on visiting his noble grave is mentioned in numerous hadiths, and it would suffice to show this if there was only the hadith whereby the truthful and God-confirmed Prophet promises that his intercession among other things becomes obligatory for whoever visits him, and the Imams are in complete agreement from the time directly after his passing until our own time that this [i.e. visiting him] is among the best acts of drawing near to Allah.

- Muslim: "Whoever repeats after the words of the *mu'adhdhin*, my intercession will be guaranteed for him."

- Tirmidhi *(hasan gharib)* and Ibn Hibban: "Those closest to me in the hereafter are those who invoked blessings upon me the most (in dunya)."

- The Prophet said: "My intercession is for those people of my Community who commit major sins." It is narrated by Tirmidhi *(hasan sahih gharib)*, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Ahmad, Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*, and `Abd al-Haqq Ibn al-Kharrat al-Ishbili cited it in *Kitab al-`aqiba.* Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-bari* specified the following meaning of this hadith: "He did not restrict this to those who repented."[11]

- In Bukhari, from `Imran ibn Husayn, whereby the Prophet said: "A people will come out of the Fire through the intercession of Muhammad, and will enter Paradise. They will be called the *Jahannamiyyun*."

- In Muslim's *Sahih*: `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn al-`As narrated that the Prophet recited the prayer of Ibrahim: "My Lord! Lo! They have led many of mankind astray. But whoso followeth me, he verily is of me. And whoso disobeyeth me -- Still Thou art Forgiving, Merciful" (14:36). Then he recited the saying of `Isa: "If Thou punish them, lo! they are Thy slaves, and if Thou forgive them (lo! they are Thy slaves)" (5:118). Then he raised his hands and said: "My Community, my Community!" and he wept. Allah said: "O Jibril, go to Muhammad and ask him what causes him to weep." When Jibril came and asked him he told him, upon which Jibril returned and told Allah -- Who knows better than him -- and He said: "O Jibril, go to Muhammad and tell him: We shall make thee glad concerning thy Community and We shall not displease you." (A reference to 93:5)

- Tirmidhi *(hasan sahih)* and Ibn Maja: Abu ibn Ka`b narrated that the Prophet said: "On the Day of Judgment I shall be the Imam of Prophets and their spokesman and the owner of their intercession and I say this without pride" (a reference to 4:41).

- Tirmidhi *(hasan gharib)*: From Anas, similar to the one before but applying to all people not only to Prophets.

- Tirmidhi *(hasan gharib sahih)*: Abu Hurayra narrates that the Prophet said: "I shall stand before my Lord Glorious and Mighty and I shall be adorned with a garment from the garments of Paradise, after which I shall stand to the right of the Throne where none of creation will stand except myself."

- Tirmidhi *(gharib)*: Ibn `Abbas narrates: "Some people close to the Prophet came and waited for him. When he came out he approached them and heard them saying: What a wonder it is that Allah Almighty and Glorious took one of His creation as His intimate Friend -- Ibrahim -- while another one said: What is more wonderful than His speech to Musa, to whom He spoke directly! Yet another one said: And `Isa is Allah's word and His spirit, while another one said: Adam was chosen by Allah. The Prophet said: I heard your words, and everything you said is indeed true, and I myself am the Beloved of Allah *(habibullah)* and I say this without pride, and I carry the flag of glory on the Day of Judgment and am the first intercessor and the first whose intercession is accepted, and the first to stir the circles of Paradise so that Allah will open it for me and I shall enter it together with the poor among my Community, and I say this without pride. I am the most honored of the First and the Last and I say this without pride."

- Bukhari and Muslim: Jabir narrated that the Prophet said: "I have been given five things which no Prophet was given before me:

> I was made victor over my enemies through fear struck in their heart;
> I was permitted to take the booty of war;
> The whole earth was made a place of prostration for me and its soil ritually pure, so when the time to pray comes upon anyone of my Community, let him pray there and then;
> I was given *shafa`a* (intercession/mediation with Allah);
> Every Prophet was sent to his people in particular and I was sent to all peoples.

- Tirmidhi *(hasan)* and Ibn Maja: Abu Sa`id al-Khudri narrated that the Prophet said: "I am the leader of human beings and I say this without pride. I am the first whom the earth will give up when it cleaves, and the first intercessor and the first whose intercession is accepted. I hold the flag of glory in my hand, and under it comes Adam and everyone else."

- Bukhari and Muslim: Anas and Abu Hurayra respectively narrate that the Prophet said: "Every Prophet has a request that is fulfilled, and I want to reserve my request of intercession for my Community for the Day of Judgment."

- Ahmad and Tabarani *(hasan)*: Burayda narrates that the Prophet said: "Verily I shall intercede on the Day of Judgment for more men than there are stones and clods of mud on the earth."

- Bukhari and Muslim: Abu Hurayra narrates a long hadith wherein the Prophet intercedes and his intercession is accepted when all other Prophets are powerless to intercede. In al-Hasan's version in Bukhari, the Prophet intercedes and is accepted four times:

> For those who have a grain of faith in their heart;
> For those who have a mustard seed of faith in their heart;
> For those who have less than that of faith in their heart;
> For those who ever said: *la ilaha illallah*.

4.b) Intercession of special members of the Prophet's Community:

4.b.1) In their lifetime for the living

- Bukhari [*Istisqa'*]: Annas narrated: Whenever drought threatened them, `Umar ibn al-Khattab used to ask Allah for rain through the mediation of al-`Abbas ibn `Abd al-Muttalib. He [`Umar] used to say: "O Allah! We used to ask you through the means of our Prophet and You would bless us with rain, and now we ask You through the means of our Prophet's uncle, so bless us with rain." And it would rain.

4.b.2) In the afterlife

- Tirmidhi *(hasan)*, Ibn Majah, and al-Hakim: Abu Umama narrated that the Prophet said: "More men will enter Paradise through the intercession of a certain man than there are people in the tribes of Rabi`ah and Mudar," and that the elders considered that this was `Uthman ibn `Affan.

- Tirmidhi *(hasan sahih)*, Ibn Majah, and al-Hakim *(sahih)*: Abu Abi al-Jad`a narrated that the Prophet said: "More men will enter Paradise through the intercession of one man than there are people in the tribe of Banu Tamim." They asked him: "Other than you?" He said: "Other than me," and it was said Uways al-Qarani was meant.

4.c) Intercession of the common believers among the Prophet's Community:

4.c.1) In their lifetime for those who passed away

- Muslim *(jana'iz)*: `A'ishah reports the Prophet as saying: "If a company of Muslims numbering one hundred pray over a dead person, all of them interceding for him, their intercession for him will be accepted."

- Muslim *(jana'iz)*: Ibn `Abbas said: "I have heard the Prophet say: If any Muslim dies and forty men who associate nothing with Allah stand over his body in prayer, Allah will accept them as intercessors for him."

- Abu Dawud (Book 20, Number 3194): Narrated Abu Hurayra: `Ali ibn Shammakh said: I was present with Marwan who asked Abu Hurayra: Did you hear how the Prophet used to pray over the dead?... Abu Hurayra said: O Allah, Thou art its Lord. Thou didst create it, Thou didst guide it to Islam, Thou hast taken its spirit, and Thou knowest best its inner nature and outer aspect. We have come as intercessors, so forgive him.

- Ahmad [4:79, 4:100] and others: In many traditions the number of acceptable intercessors in the funeral prayer is reduced to three rows of men, even if the number is under forty. Nawawi says the scholars of *usul al-fiqh* adduce these traditions also.

4.c.2) In the afterlife

- Tirmidhi *(hasan)*, al-Bazzar: Abu Sa`id al-Khudri and Anas respectively narrate that the Prophet said: "One will be told: Stand, O So-and-so, and make intercession, and he will stand and make intercession for his tribe and his family and for one man or two men or more according to his works."

- The *du`a* that is recited in the funeral prayer of a non-adult: "O Allah, make him/her our forerunner, and make him for us a reward and a treasure, make him one who will intercede *(shafi`an)* and whose intercession is accepted *(mushaffa`an)*."

In this *du`a* we are clearly asking for intercession from a person who has passed away, in fact we are asking for intercession from a child who has not done any deeds in this world at all. A version of it mentioning intercession is in Nawawi's *Adhkar*, in the chapter of the *du`a*s over the dead, and it is translated in Nuh Keller's *Reliance* in the section on Funerals.

In fact every *janaza* prayer contains a request for the intercession of the deceased in the phrase *wa la tahrimna ajrahu* which means "and do not prevent his reward from reaching us."

Bukhari related that the Prophet also said: "He whose three children died before the age of puberty, they will shield him from the Hell-Fire, or will make him enter Paradise."

5. Overview of the events of the Last Day at the stage of intercession

The following is quoted from Dr. Muhammad Abul Quasem's book *Salvation of the Soul and Islamic Devotions*:

Islamic [belief] is that for salvation intercession will take place at two stages: on the Day of Judgment and after the sinners' entry into hell.

On the Day of Judgment it will take place first before the divine questioning; it is the Prophet Muhammad who will intercede first for the forgiveness of his community. Accepting this intercession, Allah will grant him permission to take to Paradise through its right gate *(al-bab al-ayman)* built for them especially, all those people of his community who are entitled to it without giving an acount of their actions.[12]

Then when, following the weighing of actions in the Balance the verdict of damnation will be passed to numerous groups of believers who commit major sins, intercessors, including all Prophets, will intercede for the forgiveness of many of them. The Prophet said: "My intercession is for those people of my Community who commit major sins."[13] Allah out of mercy will accept... and save a large number of sinners. This salvation is free from damnation.

The second stage of intercession is after the sinners being like coal as a result of constant burning in Hell-fire for a long time.[14] When they are suffering thus, intercessors will pray to Allah for the rescue of many of them. The result of this will be divine forgiveness of them before the end of their redemptive punishment. This is salvation after damnation.

Who will intercede in the Hereafter? Not only the angels and all Prophets, but also those believers who have high status with Allah, such as saints, sufis, religious scholars, and other pious men [and women], will be able to intercede for others.[15]

May Allah send blessings and peace upon the Intercessor Brought Near to Him, our Master Muhammad, and upon his Family and Companions, and may He grant us his Prophet's intercession on the Day of Reckoning.

SEEKING MEANS *(TAWASSUL)*
THROUGH THE PROPHET

The specific *tawassul* through the Prophet is a request in acknowledgement of his standing as the chief intercessor for the Community before Allah, and it is a request for Allah's blessing as effected by Allah in the person of His Prophet and His saints -- not as effected by the latter without Allah, which is the belief those who oppose *tawassul* falsely impute to those who maintain it. Allah has said of His Holy Prophet, Peace be upon him:

He is anxious about what you do, and merciful with the believers. (9:128)

If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful (4:64)

And if they had had patience till thou camest forth unto them, it had been better for them. And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (49:5)

If only they had been content with what Allah and His Apostle gave them, and had said, "Sufficient unto us is Allah! Allah and His Apostle will soon give us of His bounty: to Allah do we turn our hopes!" (9:59)

They swear by Allah to you (Muslims) in order to please you: But it is more fitting that they should please Allah and His Apostle, if they are Believers. (9:62)

Allah has mentioned all this about His Prophet because it is through His Prophet that He Himself has shown His greatest mercy and most comprehensive forgiveness, and it is by coming to the Prophet that the believers seek to obtain these from Allah. This is clear evidence, both now as it was then, that the mediation of the Prophet -- for that is the meaning of intercession -- can be sought to obtain forgiveness from Allah. The first hadith Imam Ahmad related from Anas ibn Malik in his *Musnad Anas* is: "The whole Community of the people of Madina used to take the hand of the Prophet and rush to obtain their need with it."[16]

The Mufti of Mecca at the time of the spread of the Wahhabi heresy, al-Sayyid Ahmad Ibn Zayni Dahlan (d. 1304) said in *Khulasat al-kalam*:

Tawassul (using means), *tashaffu`* (using intercession), and *istighatha* (asking help) all have the same meaning, and the only meaning they have in the hearts of the believers is that of *tabarruk* (using blessings) with the mention of Allah's beloved ones, since it is established that He grants His mercy to all His servants for the sake of His beloved ones, and this is the case whether they are alive or dead, because in either case the actual effecting agent and true executor is Allah Himself, and these beloved ones are only ordinary causes for His mercy. Like any other secondary causes, they have no effective power of influence in themselves.[17]

The early and late Imams of the Community have said clearly and unequivocally that *tawassul* through the Prophet is highly desirable and recommended for every person. Following are some of their words to this effect.

Imam Malik was asked the following question by the Caliph Abu Ja`far al-Mansur: "Shall I face the *Qibla* with my back towards the grave of the Messenger of Allah when making *du`a* (after *salam*s)?" He replied:

How could you turn your face away from him when he is the means *(wasila)* of your and your father Adam's forgiveness to Allah on the Day of Resurrection? Nay, face him and ask for his intercession *(istashfi` bihi)* so that Allah will grant it to you as He said: "If they had only, when they were wronging themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful (4:64)."

It is cited by al-Qadi `Iyad in *al-Shifa* (2:92-93) with a sound *(sahih)* chain, and also cited by Samhudi in *Khulasat al-Wafa*, Subki in *Shifa' al-siqam*, Qastallani in *al-Mawahib al-laduniyya*, Ibn Jama`a in *Hidayat al-salik*, and Haytami in *al-Jawhar al-munazzam* and *Tuhfat al-zuwwar*. See also Ibn `Abd al-Hadi in *al-Sarim al-munki* p. 244. Ibn Jama`a says in *Hidayat al-salik* (3:1381): "It is related by the two *hafiz* Ibn Bashkuwal and al-Qadi `Iyad in *al-Shifa'* after him, and no attention is paid to the words of those who claim that it is forged purely on the basis of his idle desires."

The words "he is the means *(wasila)* of your and your father Adam's forgiveness to Allah" are confirmed by the verses whereby the Prophet is witness over all communities and people including their Prophets (2:143, 3:81, 4:41, 33:7), as well as the sound hadith of his intercession over all Prophets on behalf of all believers in *Sahih al-Bukhari* (*Kitab al-tawhid*). Furthermore, it is also established from the verse "And Adam received words from his Lord and He relented towards him" (2:37) that Adam has been forgiven.

Imam Ahmad made *tawassul* through the Prophet a part of every *du`a* according to the following report: `Ala' al-Din al-Mardawi said in his book *al-Insaf fi ma`rifat al-rajih min al-khilaf `ala madhhab al-Imam al-mubajjal Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (3:456):

The correct position of the [Hanbali] *madhhab* is that it is permissible in one's supplication (*du`a*) to use as one's means a pious person, and it is said that it is desirable (*mustahabb*). Imam Ahmad said to Abu Bakr al-Marwazi: *yatawassalu bi al-nabi fi du`a'ih* -- "Let him use the Prophet as a means in his supplication to Allah."

The same report is found in Imam Ahmad's *Manasik* as narrated by his student Abu Bakr al-Marwazi.

Similarly the lengthy wording of the *tawassul* according to the Hanbali *madhhab* as established by the *hafiz* Ibn `Aqil in his *Tadhkira* was cited fully by Imam Kawthari in his appendix to Shaykh al-Islam Taqi al-Din al-Subki's *al-Sayf al-saqil* included in Kawthari's edition of the latter.

The Prophet said on the authority of `Umar: "When Adam committed his mistake he said: O my Lord, I am asking you to forgive me for the sake of Muhammad. Allah said: O Adam, and how do you know about Muhammad whom I have not yet created? Adam replied, O my Lord, after You created me with your hand and breathed into me of Your Spirit, I raised my head and saw written on the heights of the Throne:

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMADUN RASULULLAH

I understood that You would not place next to Your Name but the Most Beloved One of Your creation. Allah said: O Adam, I have forgiven you, and were it not for Muhammad I would not have created you."

It was transmitted through many chains and was cited by Bayhaqi (in *Dala'il al-nubuwwa*), Abu Nu`aym (in *Dala'il al-nubuwwa*), al-Hakim in *al-Mustadrak* (2:615), al-Tabarani in his *Saghir* (2:82, 207) with another chain containing sub-narrators unknown to Haythami as he stated in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (8:253), and Ibn `Asakir on the authority of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, and most of these narrations were copied in Qastallani's *al-Mawahib al-laduniyya* (and al-Zarqani's Commentary 2:62).

1. This hadith is declared sound (*sahih*) by al-Hakim in *al-Mustadrak* (2:651), although he acknowledges Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Aslam, one of its sub-narrators, as weak. However, when he mentions this hadith he says: "Its chain is sound, and it is the first hadith of Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Aslam which I mention in this book"; al-Hakim also declares sound another version through Ibn `Abbas.

2. al-Bulqini declares this hadith sound in his *Fatawa*.

3. al-Subki confirms al-Hakim's authentication (in *Shifa' al-siqam fi ziyarat khayr al-anam* p. 134-135) although Ibn Taymiyya's rejection and criticism of this hadith was known to him and he rejects it, as well as saying that Ibn Taymiyya's extreme weakening of Ibn Zayd is exaggerated.

4. The hadith is also included by Qadi `Iyad among the "sound and famous narrations" in *al-Shifa*, and he says that Abu Muhammad al-Makki and Abu al-Layth al-Samarqandi mention it; Qadi `Iyad says: "It is said that this hadith explains the verse: 'And Adam received words from his Lord and He relented towards him' (2:37)"; he continues to cite another very similar version through al-Ajurri (d. 360), about whom al-Qari said: "al-Halabi said: This seems to be the imam and guide Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn `Abd Allah al-Baghdadi, the compiler of the books *al-Shari`a* devoted to the Sunna, *al-Arba`un*, and others.'" This is confirmed by Ibn Taymiyya in his *Qa`ida fi al-tawassul*: "It is related by Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Ajurri, in his book *al-Shari`a*."

5. Ibn al-Jawzi also considers it sound (*sahih*) as he cites it in the first chapter of *al-Wafa bi ahwal al-mustafa*, in the introduction of which he says: "(In this book) I do not mix the sound hadith with the false," although he knew of `Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd's weakness as a narrator; he also mentions the version of Maysarat al-Fajr whereby the Prophet says: "When satan deceived Adam and Eve, they repented and sought intercession to Allah with my name"; Ibn al-Jawzi also says in the chapter concerning the Prophet's superiority over the other Prophets in the same book: "Part of the exposition of his superiority to other Prophets is the fact that Adam asked his Lord through the sanctity *(hurmat)* of Muhammad that He relent towards him, as we have already mentioned."

6. Suyuti cites it in his Qur'anic commentary *al-Durr al-manthur* (2:37) and in *al-Khasa'is al-kubra* (1:12) and in *al-Riyad al-aniqa fi sharh asma' khayr al-khaliqa* (p. 49), where he says that Bayhaqi considers it sound; this is due to the fact that Bayhaqi said in the introduction to the *Dala'il* that he only included sound narrations in his book, although he also knew and explicitly mentions `Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd's weakness;

7. Ibn Kathir mentions it after Bayhaqi in *al-Bidayat wa al-Nihaya* (1:75, 1:180).

8. al-Haythami in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (8:253 #28870), al-Bayhaqi himself, and al-Qari in *Sharh al- shifa'* show that its chains have weakness in them. However, the weakness of Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd was known by Ibn al-Jawzi, Subki, Bayhaqi, Hakim, and Abu Nu`aym, yet all these scholars retained this hadith for consideration in their books.

9. Three scholars reject it, such as Ibn Taymiyya (*Qa`ida jalila fi al-tawassul* p. 89, 168-170) and his two students Ibn `Abd al-Hadi (*al-Sarim al-munki* p. 61-63) and al-Dhahabi (*Mizan al-i`tidal* 2:504 and *Talkhis al-mustadrak*), while `Asqalani reports Ibn Hibban's saying that `Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd was a forger(*Lisan al-mizan* 3:360, 3:442).

10. At the same time, Ibn Taymiyya elsewhere quotes it and the version through Maysara and says: "These two are like the elucidation (*tafsir*) of the authentic ahadith (concerning the same topic)" (*Fatawa* 2:150). The contemporary Meccan hadith scholar Ibn `Alawi al-Maliki said: "This indicates that Ibn Taymiyya found the hadith sound enough to be considered a witness for other narrations *(salih li al-istishhad wa al-i`tibar)*, because the forged *(al-mawdu`)* and the false *(al-batil)* are not taken as witness by the people of hadith"; al-Maliki also quotes (without reference) Dhahabi's unrestrained endorsement of the ahadith in Bayhaqi's *Dala'il al-nubuwwa* with his words: "You must take what is in it (the *Dala'il*), for it consists entirely of guidance and light." (*Mafahim yajib an tusahhah* p. 47).

11. It is furthermore evident that Ibn Taymiyya considers the meaning of the creation of everything for the sake of the Prophet as true and correct, as he declares in his *Majmu`at al-fatawa* in the volume on tasawwuf (11:95-97):

> Muhammad is the Chief of the Children of Adam, the Best of Creation, the noblest of them in the sight of Allah. This is why some have said that "Allah created the Universe due to him," or that "Were it not for him, He would have neither created a Throne, nor a Footstool, nor a heaven, earth, sun or moon." However, this is not a hadith on the authority of the Prophet... but it may be explained from a correct aspect...
>
> Since the best of the righteous of the children of Adam is Muhammad, creating him was a desirable end of deep-seated purposeful wisdom, more than for anyone else, and hence **the completion of creation and the fulfilment of perfection was attained with Muhammad, may Allah Exalted bless him and grant him peace**... The Chief of the Children of Adam is Muhammad, may Allah Exalted bless him and grant him peace, Adam and his children being under his banner. He, may Allah Exalted bless him and grant him peace, said: "Truly, I was written as the Seal of the Prophets with Allah, when Adam was going to-and-fro in his clay," i.e. that my prophethood was decreed and manifested when Adam was created but before the breathing of the Spirit into him, just as Allah decrees the livelihood, lifespan, deeds and misery or happiness of the slave when He creates the embryo but before the breathing of the Spirit into it.
>
> Since man is the seal and last of all creation, and its microcosm, and since the best of man is thus the best of all creation absolutely, then **Muhammad, being the Pupil of the Eye, the Axis of the Mill, and the Distributor to the Collective, is as it were the Ultimate Purpose from amongst all the purposes of creation. Thus it cannot be denied to say that "Due to him all of this was created", or that "Were it not for him, all this would not have been created**," so if statements like this are thus explained according to what the Book and the Sunna indicate, it is acceptable.

12. Its latter part is mentioned as a separate hadith in the wording: "Were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created the spheres *(al-aflak)*." al-`Ajluni said in *Kashf al-khafa'* (#2123): "al-Saghani (d.650) said it is forged. I say: but its meaning is correct." Similarly `Ali al-Qari said in *al-Asrar al-marfu`a* (#754-755): "al-Saghani (in *al-Ahadith al-mawdu`a* p. 7) said: "It is forged," however, its meaning is sound (*mi`nahu sahih*), as Daylami has narrated on the authority of Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet said: "Gabriel came to me and said: O Muhammad! Were it not for you, Paradise would not have been created, and were it not for you, the Fire would not have been created." And Ibn `Asakir's narration has: And were it not for you, the world would not have been created."

As for Albani's rejection of Qari's use of Daylami in support of the hadith with the words: "I do not hesitate to declare it weak on the basis that Daylami is alone in citing it" (*Silsila da`ifa* #282), it shows exaggeration and deviation from the practice of the scholars concerning Daylami and his book. Ibn Taymiyya said in *Minhaj al-sunna* (4:38): "The fact that Daylami alone narrates a hadith does not indicate that the hadith is sound." Note that he never said: "The fact that Daylami alone narrates a hadith indicates that it is forged," yet this is what Albani concludes! The reader may compare Albani's method of apriori rejection in lieu of a discussion of the hadith itself, to Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani's reliance on a hadith narrated by Daylami, as is shown by hadith #33 of his *Arba`un fi rad` al-mujrim `an sabb al-muslim*, **although Daylami is alone in citing it**. Further in *Minhaj al-sunna* (4:78) Ibn Taymiyya declared of him and his book: "al-Daylami in his book *al-Firdaws* mentioned many sound *(sahih)* hadiths, and also fair *(hasan)* narrations and forged ones.... He was one of the people of knowledge and religion and he was not a liar."

13. Ibn al-Qayyim in his *Bada'i` al-fawa'id* went so far as to represent Allah saying to humankind that everything was created for the sake of human beings:

> *hal `arifat qimata nafsik? innama khalaqtu al-akwana kullaha laka... kullu al-ashiya'i shajaratun wa anta al-thamara*
>
> Have you realized your value? I only created all the universes for your sake... All things are trees whose fruit you are.[18]
>
> If Allah created all the universes for the sake of human beings, then how could all humanity be given what the Prophet is grudged, who is better than mankind and jinn put together?

14. Following are some of the hadiths of the mention of the Prophet's name together with Allah on the Throne and in the heavens cited by the hadith masters, as related by Suyuti in *al-Khasa'is al-kubra* (1:12-14):

> a) In Ibn `Asakir from Ka`b al-Ahbar: Adam said to his son Sheeth: "O my son, you are my successor, therefore found my successorhip upon godwariness and the Firm Rope, and every time you mention Allah, do mention next to His name the name of Muhammad, for I saw his name written on the leg of the Throne as I was between the spirit and the clay. Then I circumambulated the heavens and I did not see in them a single spot except the name of Muhammad was written upon it, and when my Lord made me inhabit Paradise I saw in it neither palace nor room except the name of Muhammad was written on it. I have seen his name written on the bosom of the wide-eyed maidens of Paradise, on the leaves of the reed-stalks and thickets of the Garden, on the leaves of the Tree of Bliss, on the leaves of the Lote-tree of the Farthermost Boundary, and upon the veils and between the eyes of the angels. Therefore, make frequent remembrance of him, for the angels remember him in every moment."
>
> b) Ibn `Adi and Ibn `Asakir from Anas: The Prophet said: "When I was taken up to heaven I saw written on the leg of the Throne:
>
> ***la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah***
> ***ayyadtuhu bi `ali***."[19]
>
> c) Ibn `Asakir from `Ali: The Prophet said: "The night I was enraptured I saw written on the Throne:
>
> ***la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah***
> ***abu bakr al-siddiq `umar al-faruq***
> ***`uthman dhu al-nurayn***."[20]
>
> d) Ibn `Adi, Tabarani in *al-Awsat*, Ibn `Asakir, and al-Hasan ibn `Arafa in his famous volume from Abu Hurayra: The Prophet said: "The night I was enraptured and taken up to heaven I did not pass a heaven except I saw in it my name written: ***muhammadun rasulullah*** with Abu Bakr at my side."
>
> e) al-Bazzar from Ibn `Umar: The Prophet said: "When I was taken up to heaven I did not pass a heaven except I saw in it my name written: ***muhammadun rasulullah***."[21]
>
> f) al-Khatib, Ibn `Asakir, and al-Daraqutni in *al-Afrad* (Reports from a single narrator), from Abu al-Darda': The Prophet said: "The night I was enraptured I saw a green garment on the Throne whereupon was written in letters of light:
>
> ***la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah***
> ***abu bakr al-siddiq `umar al-faruq***."
>
> g) Ibn `Asakir from Jabir: The Prophet said: "On the gate of Paradise is written:
>
> ***la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah***."[22]
>
> h) Abu Nu`aym in *al-Hilya* from Ibn `Abbas: The Prophet said: "There is not in all Paradise one tree with a single leaf but inscribed:
>
> ***la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah***."[23]
>
> i) al-Hakim from Ibn `Abbas, and he graded it *sahih* (sound): "Allah revealed to `Isa the following: Believe in Muhammad and order all those of your Community who see him to believe in him, for were it not for Muhammad I would not have created Adam, nor Paradise, nor the Fire. When I created the Throne upon the water it shuddered. So I wrote upon it:
>
> ***la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah***
>
> and it became calm." al-Dhahabi said: "Its chain contains `Amr ibn Aws and it is not known who he is."[24]

j) In Ibn `Asakir from Jabir through Abu al-Zubayr: "Between Adam's shoulders is written:

muhammadun rasulullah khatam al-nabiyyin."

Imam Shawkani said in his commentary on al-Jazari's (d. 833) *`Iddat al-hisn al-hasin* entitled *Tuhfat al-dhakirin bi `iddat al-hisn al-hasin* (Beirut ed. 1970), p. 37: "He [al-Jazari] said: Let him make *tawassul* to Allah with His Prophets and the *salihin* or saints (in his *du`a*). I say: And exemplifying *tawassul* with the Prophets is the hadith extracted by Tirmidhi *et al.* (of the blind man saying: O Allah, I ask You and turn to You by means of Muhammad the Prophet of Mercy) [see below]... as for *tawassul* with the saints, among its examples is the hadith, established as sound, of the Companions' *tawassul* asking Allah for rain by means of al-`Abbas the Prophet's uncle, and `Umar said: "O Allah, we use as means to You the uncle of our Prophet etc. [see below]." We cite further below Shawkani's complete and detailed stand on *tawassul* from his treatise *al-Durr al-nadir*.

A blind man came to the Prophet and said: "Invoke Allah for me that he help me." He replied: "If you wish I will delay this, and it would be better for you, and if you wish I will invoke Allah the Exalted (for you)." He said: "Then invoke him." The Prophet said to him: *idhhab fa tawadda', wa salli rak`atayn thumma qul* -- "Go and make an ablution, pray two rak`at, then say: "O Allah, I am asking you *(as'aluka)* and turning to you *(atawajjahu ilayka)* with your Prophet Muhammad *(bi nabiyyika Muhammad)*, the Prophet of mercy; O Muhammad *(ya Muhammad)*, I am turning with you to my Lord regarding my present need / I am asking my Lord with your intercession concerning the return of my sight *(inni atawajjahu bika ila rabbi fi hajati hadhih* -- another version has: *inni astashfi`u bika `ala rabbi fi raddi basari)* so that He will fulfill my need; O Allah, allow him to intercede (with you) for me *(allahumma shaffi`hu fiyya)*."

It is related by Ahmad (4:138 #17246-17247), Tirmidhi (*hasan sahih* gharib -- *Da`awat* Ch. 119), Ibn Majah (Book of *Iqamat al-salat wa al-sunnat*, Ch. on *Salat al-hajat* #1385), Nasa'i (*`Amal al-yawm wa al-laylat* p. 417-418 #658-660), al-Hakim (1:313, 1:526), Tabarani in *al-Kabir*, and rigorously authenticated as sound *(sahih)* by nearly fifteen hadith masters including Ibn Hajar, Dhahabi, Shawkani, and Ibn Taymiyya.

1. The Prophet's order, here as elsewhere, carries legislative force for all Muslims and is not limited to a particular person, place or time; it is valid for all generations until the end of time unless proven otherwise by a subsequent indication from the Prophet himself, Peace be upon him.

2. The Prophet was not physically present at the assigned time of the invocation, since he said to the blind man: "***Go*** and make ablution," without adding: "and then come back in front of me." With regard to physical absence, the living and the dead are exactly alike, namely: absent.

3. Despite the Prophet's physical absence, the wording *(sigha)* for calling upon his intercession is direct address: "O Muhammad." Such a wording -- "O So-and-So" -- is only used with someone present and able to hear. It should also be noted that Allah forbade the Companions from being forward or calling out to the Prophet in the ordinary manner used with one another (49:1-2). The only way, therefore, that the Prophet, Blessings and peace be upon him, could both be absent and at the same be addressed is that the first be understood in the physical sense and the second in the spiritual.

The above invocation was also used after the Prophet's lifetime, as is proven by the sound *(sahih)* hadith authenticated by Bayhaqi, Abu Nu`aym in the *Ma`rifa*, Mundhiri (*Targhib* 1:473-474), Haythami, and Tabarani in the *Kabir* (9:17-18) and the *Saghir* (1:184/201-202) on the authority of `Uthman ibn Hunayf's nephew Abu Imama ibn Sahl ibn Hunayf: A man would come to `Uthman ibn `Affan for a certain need, but the latter would not pay him any attention nor look into his need, upon which he complained of his condition to `Uthman ibn Hunayf who told him: "Go and make ablution, then go to the mosque and pray two rak`at, then say (this *du`a*)," and he mentioned the invocation of the blind man, "then go (to `Uthman again)." The man went, did as he was told, then came to `Uthman's door, upon which the door-attendant came, took him by the hand, and brought him to `Uthman who sat him with him on top of the carpet, and said: "Tell me what your need is." After this the man went out, met `Uthman ibn Hunayf again, and said to him: "May Allah reward you! Previously he would not look into my need nor pay any attention to me, until you spoke to him." He replied: "I did not speak to him, but I saw the Prophet when a blind man came to him complaining of his failing eyesight," and he mentioned to him the substance of the previous narration.

It is narrated that `Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, would pray to Allah for rain during times of drought through the means, the honor and intercession of the uncle of the Prophet, `Abbas ibn `Abd Muttalib by using this supplication: "O Our Lord! Previously, when we had a drought, we used to come to You by means and intercession of Your Prophet. Now we are requesting intercession through the uncle of the Prophet to grant us rain," and it was granted. Bukhari relates it. `Umar added, after making this supplication: "He (al-`Abbas), by Allah, is the means to Allah" *(hadha wallahi al-wasilatu ilallahi `azza wa jall)*. Ibn `Abd al-Barr relates it in *al-Isti`ab bi ma`rifat al-ashab*.

The scholars say that `Umar sought the means of al-`Abbas rather than the Prophet in order to show and acknowledge the status of the Prophet's uncle among the people and, more generally, of the Ahl al-Bayt or direct relatives of the Prophet. Kawthari in his *Maqalat* (p. 411) cites Ibn `Abd al-Barr's commentary in *al-Isti`ab* that `Umar used al-`Abbas in response to Ka`b's words: "O Commander of the believers, the Bani Isra`il in such circumstances used to pray for rain by means of the relatives of Prophets." It is not, as some have fancied, because the Prophet's means is no longer available that `Umar used al-`Abbas as a *wasila*. The hadith of `Uthman ibn Hunayf and the words of Malik to al-Mansur show that the Prophet continued to be sought by the Companions and Followers as a means of benefit even after he left this life.

The following is more evidence to this effect:

al-Darimi in the Chapter 15 of the *Muqaddima* (Introduction) to his *Sunan* (1:43) entitled: "Allah's generosity to His Prophet after his death," relates from Aws ibn `Abd Allah with a good chain: "The people of Madina complained to `A'isha of the severe drought that they were suffering. She said: "Go to the Prophet's grave and open a window towards the sky so that there will be no roof between him and the sky." They did so, after which they were watered with such rain that vegetation grew and the camels got fat. That year was named the Year of Plenty."

It is clear from the above narrations that the position of the Mother of the Believers `A'isha differs from that of modern-day "Salafis," since she recommended to the people of Madina to use the Prophet in his grave as a means of obtaining blessing and benefit and this remained in use until the Wahhabis took over the Hijaz, while "Salafis" declare this to be unacceptable. Either they know better than the *fuqaha'* of the Companions or, most certainly, they are peddling misguidance and innovation.

Shaykh Albani, in order to reject the hadith of Darimi, raised some objections which are so full of holes that one can not only see the sky through them, but also the sun, the moon, and the stars. He said in his little book translated under the name *Tawassul: Its Types and Its Rulings* (p. 130-131) about Darimi's chain of transmission for the report (Abu al-Nu`man from Sa`id ibn Zayd from `Amr ibn Malik al-Nukri from Abu al-Jawza' Aws ibn `Abd Allah from `A'isha):

This chain of narration is weak and cannot be used as a proof due to three reasons:

(i) Sa`id ibn Zayd who is the brother of Hammad ibn Zayd is somewhat weak. al-Hafiz [Ibn Hajar] said about him in *al-Taqrib*: "Generally acceptable, but he makes mistakes." Dhahabi said about him in *al-Mizan*: "Yahya ibn Sa`id said: Weak, and al-Sa`di said: He is not a proof, they declare his ahadith to be weak. Nasa'i and others said: He is not strong; and Ahmad said: He is all right. Yahya ibn Sa`id would not accept him."

However, the above documentation is partial and biased, and this is not surprising since "Salafis" only mention what advances their view while they cover up, rephrase, or declare weak whatever contradicts it. This is especially true of Albani, whose followers claim him as "the leading scholar of hadith of this age"(!) whereas he makes frequent mistakes, innovates in many of his rulings, and is generally unreliable except to those unschooled in the Islamic sciences. It would be more correct for "Salafis" to say: "He is our leading scholar," for in this we would agree with them completely. However, it is a fact that no one who has actual knowledge in hadith and fiqh uses Albani's books except that they check and verify anything they take from them against trustworthy scholars.

The present narration is a case in point, since Albani deliberately omits to mention the authentication of the narrators he seeks to declare weak, hiding basic evidence from his readers in order to mislead them, all because he is dead set against the issue at hand, even if it is authentically reported from the Mother of the Believers! Following is a point-by-point refutation of Albani's claims by the Moroccan hadith scholar `Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn al-Siddiq al-Ghumari in his booklet entitled: *Irgham al-mubtadi` al-ghabi bi jawaz al-tawassul bi al-nabi* (The coercion of the unintelligent innovator to the effect that using the Prophet as a means is permissible p. 23-25):

Albani's weakening of Sa`id ibn Zayd is rejected, because Sa`id is one of Muslim's narrators, and Yahya ibn Ma`in declared him trustworthy *(thiqa)*!

The editor of Ghumari's text, Ghumari's student Hasan `Ali al-Saqqaf says on the same page as the above:

Albani has adduced worthless proofs as is his habit when embellishing falsehood. He cited whatever fit his whim from Ibn Hajar's *Taqrib*, leaving out his mention that Sa`id ibn Zayd is one of Muslim's narrators in his *Sahih*. Beware, therefore, of this *tadlis* (concealment) on his part!... He added Dhahabi's notice on Sa`id ibn Zayd in the *Mizan*, and this is another deliberate cover-up, for he faithlessly omitted to mention what Ibn Hajar reported in *Tahdhib al-tahdhib* (4:29) from those who declared Sa`id ibn Zayd trustworthy, in addition to his being one of Muslim's narrators:

- Bukhari said: "Muslim ibn Ibrahim narrated to us: Sa`id ibn Zayd Abu al-Hasan narrated to us, and he is reliable and a memorizer of hadith *(saduq hafiz)*."

- al-Duri said on the authority of Ibn Ma`in: "Sa`id ibn Zayd is trustworthy *(thiqa)*."

- Ibn Sa`d said: "He was trustworthy."

- al-`Ujli said: "He is from Basra, and he is trustworthy."

- Abu Zur`a said: "I heard Sulayman ibn Harb say: Sa`id ibn Zayd narrated to us, and he was trustworthy."

- Abu Ja`far al-Darimi said: "Hibban ibn Hilal narrated to us: Sa`id ibn Zayd narrated to us, and he was a memorizer of hadith and he was reliable."

- Ibn `Adi said: "There is no denounced narration from him except someone else also narrates it, and I consider him one of those in the reliable category."

In addition to the above remarks it is noteworthy to mention that Albani cited Ahmad's grading of Sa`id ibn Zayd as *la ba'sa bihi* which his translator rendered as "he is all right," but neither the author nor the translator seems to know that in Imam Ahmad's terminology *la ba'sa bihi* is identical with *thiqa*, which means "trustworthy" and is among the highest gradings of authentication! Ibn Salah in his *Muqaddima* (p. 134), Dhahabi in *Lisan al-mizan* (1:13), Sakhawi in *Fath al-mughith*, Ibn Hajar in *Hadi al-sari*, Abu Ghudda in his commentary to Lucknawi's *Raf^* (p. 222 n. 3), as well as the editor of Nawawi's *al-Taqrib wa al-taysir* (p. 51) have indicated that the equivalency of saying "There is no harm in him" with the grade of trustworthy *(thiqa)* obtains for many early authorities of the third century such as Ibn Ma`in, Ibn al-Madini, Imam Ahmad, Duhaym, Abu Zur`a, Abu Hatim al-Razi, Ya`qub ibn Sufyan al-Fasawi, and others.

Albani continues in his list of reasons for weakening Darimi's narration:

(ii) It is *mawquf* (stopping at the Companion), coming only from `A'isha and not from the Prophet, **and even if the chain of narration up to `A'isha were authentic then it would not be a proof since it is something open to personal judgment in which even the Companions are sometimes correct and sometimes incorrect, and we are not bound to act upon that (!).**

To this claim it is easy to reply that not only is the narration sound and authentic, but also that there is no objection related from any of the Companions to the act recommended by the Mother of the Believers, just as there was no objection on their part to the *istisqa'* made by the man who came to the grave of the Prophet in the narration of Malik al-Dar cited below. This shows *ijma`* on the matter on the part of the Companions, and such *ijma`* is definitely binding in the sense that no one can declare unlawful or innovative something which they have tacitly declared lawful or desirable. As for the following the opinion of the Companions we say what Imam al-Shafi`i said as related by Ibn Qayyim in *A`lam al-muwaqqi`in `an rabb al-`alamin* (2:186-187): "Their opinion for us is better than our opinion to ourselves."

Albani listed the following as his last reason for weakening Darimi's narration:

(iii) Abu al-Nu`man... was originally a reliable narrator except that he deteriorated at the end of his life. The hadith master Burhan al-Din al-Halabi mentions him among those who deteriorated in later life in his book *al-Muqaddima* (p. 391) and he says: "The ruling about these people is that their narrations are accepted if reported from them by people who heard from them before they deteriorated. But narrations reported from them by those who heard from them after they deteriorated, or narrations reported from therm by people about whom we do not know whether they heard from them before they deteriorated or after, then these narrations are to be rejected."

I say: We do not know whether this report was heard by Darimi from him before or after his memory deteriorated, it is therefore not acceptable and cannot be used as evidence. [Footnote:] Shaykh al-Ghumari missed this weakness in *Misbah al-zujaj* (p. 43), just as it was ignored by another in order to give the impression to the people that this report is authentic(!).

Ghumari said regarding these claims about Abu al-Nu`man:

His weakening of Abu al-Nu`man is invalid, because Abu al-Nu`man's deterioration did not affect what is narrated from him! al-Daraqutni said [as cited by Dhahabi in *Mizan al-i`tidal* (4:81)]: "He deteriorated at the end of his life, and no denounced hadith issued from him after his deterioration whatsoever, and he is trustworthy *(thiqa)*." As for what Ibn Hibban said, that "Many denounced things occurred in his narrations after his deterioration," then al-Dhahabi refuted it when he said (4:8): "Ibn Hibban was unable to cite a single denounced narration from him, and the truth is just as Daraqutni said."

Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi al-Maliki said in his book *Shifa' al-fu'ad bi ziyarat khayr al-`ibad* (p. 152):

Abu al-Nu`man's deterioration neither harms nor is detrimental to his reliability, since Bukhari in his *Sahih* narrated over one hundred hadiths from him, and no narration was taken from him after his deterioration, as Daraqutni said.... The chain of transmission is all right, in fact I consider it good. The scholars have cited as evidence many chains that are like it or less strong than it.

Following are Saqqaf's further comments, beginning with Albani's charge against Shaykh al-Ghumari:

We know full well that it is Albani who betrays scholarly trust and deliberately misinforms the people, even if he accuses others of disinformation.... In weakening Abu al-Nu`man he has again acted faithlessly. His quotation from al-Burhan al-Halabi's book *al-Ightibat bi man rumiya bi al-ikhtilat* (p. 23) is designed to pull the wool over the eyes of his followers and those who only read his works! For it is necessary to also know that those who are branded as suffering from deterioration in the aforementioned book are divided among those whose narrations were unaffected by their deterioration and those whose narrations were affected. Abu al-Nu`man belongs to the first group, and al-Dhahabi made this clear in *al-Mizan* (4:8). Therefore our reply to Albani is: Shaykh al-Ghumari did not miss anything concerning this matter of deterioration, because he is a hadith scholar and a master memorizer *(hafiz)*, however, it is you who have missed it, O slandering backbiter!

As for Albani's quotation of Ibn Taymiyya's claim in his *al-Radd `ala al-Bakri* (p. 68-74) whereby "a clear proof that it is a lie is the fact that no such opening existed above the house at all in the whole of the life of `A'isha"(!) then it is a weak objection which is no sooner brought up than cast out. Surely Imam al-Darimi and the scholars of the succeeding generations would know of such a detail better than latecomers. As for the authorities among the latter, then the hadith scholar and historian of Madina Imam `Ali al-Samhudi (d. 922) did not so much as look at Ibn Taymiyya's objection, rather he confirmed the truth of Darimi's narration by saying, after citing it in his *Wafa' al-wafa'* (2:549): al-Zayn al-Miraghi said: "Know that it is the Sunna of the people of Madina to this day to open a window at the bottom of the dome of the Prophet's room, that is, of the blessed green dome, on the side of the *Qibla*." I say: And in our time, they open the door facing the noble face (the grave) in the space surrounding the room and they gather there."

So much for the claims of naysayers regarding *istisqa'* through the Prophet.

- The act of the Mother of the Believers `A'isha in the narration of Darimi is explicitly confirmed by Abu Talib's famous line of poetry concerning *istisqa'* through the Prophet as related in the book of *istisqa'* in Bukhari's *Sahih*:

`Abdullah ibn Dinar said: "I heard Ibn `Umar reciting the poetic verses of Abu Talib:

A fair-skinned one by whose face rainclouds are sought,
A caretaker for the orphans and protector of widows.

`Umar ibn Hamza said: Salim narrated from his father (Ibn `Umar) that the latter said: "The poet's saying came to my mind as I was looking at the face of the Prophet while he was praying for rain -- and he did not get down till the rain water flowed profusely from every roof-gutter:

A fair-skinned one by whose face rainclouds are sought,
A caretaker for the orphans and protector of widows.

One sub-narrator added: "These were the words of Abu Talib."

Note that in his translation of Bukhari (2:65), Muhammad Muhsin Khan alters the wording of the hadith to read: "A white person **who is requested to pray for rain**" in place of "**by whose face rain is sought,"** and Allah knows best the reason for this grave betrayal of the translator's trust in the most important Islamic source after the Qur'an.

al-Bayhaqi relates with a sound *(sahih)* chain: It is related from Malik al-Dar, `Umar's treasurer, that the people suffered a drought during the successorship of `Umar, whereupon a man came to the grave of the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah, ask for rain for your Community, for verily they have but perished," after which the Prophet appeared to him in a dream and told him: "Go to `Umar and give him my greeting, then tell him that they will be watered. Tell him: You must be clever, you must be clever!" The man went and told `Umar. The latter said: "O my Lord, I spare no effort except in what escapes my power!" Ibn Kathir cites it thus from Bayhaqi in *al-Bidaya wa al-nihaya* and says: *isnaduhu sahih*;[25] Ibn Abi Shayba cites it in his *Musannaf* with a sound *(sahih)* chain as confirmed by Ibn Hajar who says: *rawa Ibn Abi Shayba bi isnadin sahih* and cites the hadith in *Fath al-bari*.[26] He identifies Malik al-Dar as `Umar's treasurer *(khazin `umar)* and says that the man who visited and saw the Prophet in his dream is identified as the Companion Bilal ibn al-Harith, and he counts this hadith among the reasons for Bukhari's naming of the chapter "The people's request to their leader for rain if they suffer drought." He also mentions it in *al-Isaba*, where he says that Ibn Abi Khaythama cited it.[27] This hadith is discussed again further below with respect to Albani's claim: " We do not accept that this story is authentic..."

The legal inference here is not from the dream, because although the dream of seeing the Prophet is truthful, a dream cannot be used to establish a ruling *(hukm)* due to the possibility that the person who saw it makes an error in its wording. Rather, the inference from this hadith is based on the action of the Companion Bilal ibn al-Harith. The fact that Bilal came to the grave of the Prophet, called out to him, and asked him to ask for rain is a proof that these actions are permitted. These actions fall under the rubric of asking the Prophet for help *(istighatha)*, seeking him as a means *(tawassul)*, and using his intermediary *(tashaffu`)*, and none of the Companions reprimanded him, and therefore it was understood that such actions are among the greatest acts of drawing near to Allah.

In his edition of Ibn Hajar, the Wahhabi scholar Bin Baz rejects the hadith as a valid source for seeking rain through the Prophet, and brazenly condemns the act of the Companion who came to the grave, calling it *munkar* (aberrant) and *wasila ila al-shirk* (a means to associating partners to Allah).[28] We seek protection from Allah from ignorance and error.

The Prophet said: "My life is a great good for you: you will relate about me and it will be related to you; and my death is a great good for you: your actions will be presented to me (in my grave) and if I see goodness I will praise Allah, and if see other than that I will ask forgiveness of Him for you."

Haythami says in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (9:24 #91): "al-Bazzar relates it and its sub-narrators are all men of sound hadith." Qadi `Iyad cites it in *al-Shifa* (1:56 of the Amman edition) and Suyuti said in his *Manahil al-safa fi takhrij ahadith al-shifa* (Beirut 1988/1408) p. 31 (#8): "Ibn Abi Usama cites it in his *Musnad* from the hadith of Bakr ibn `Abd Allah al-Muzani, and al-Bazzar from the hadith of Ibn Mas`ud with a sound *(sahih)* chain." He says the same in his *al-Khasa'is al-kubra*. It is confirmed by al-Khafagi's and al-Qari's respective commentaries on *al-Shifa'*. al-`Iraqi said in *Tarh al-tathrib*: "Its chain is good" *(isnaduhu jayyid)*.

It is cited in Shaykh al-Islam al-Taqi al-Subki's *Shifa' al-siqam fi ziyarat khayr al-anam* (The healing of the sick concerning the visit of the Best of Creation), where he mentions that Bakr ibn Abd Allah al-Muzani reported it, and Ibn al-Jawzi mentions it through Bakr and then again through Anas ibn Malik in the penultimate chapter of the penultimate section of *al-Wafa*, both *huffaz* without giving the *isnad*. However, Ibn al-Jawzi specifies in the introduction of his book that he only included sound traditions in it. He also mentions the version through Aws ibn Aws: "The actions of human beings are shown to me every Thursday night preceding Friday." See also *Fath al-bari* 10:415 and 11:385, al-Mundhiri's *al-Targhib wa al-tarhib* 3:343, and *Musnad Ahmad* 4:484.

The former Grand Mufti of Egypt Shaykh Hasanayn Muhammad Makhluf wrote in his *Fatawa shar`iyya* (Cairo: Dar al-i`tisam, 1405/1985, 1:91-92):

The hadith means that the Prophet is a great good for his Community during his life, because Allah the Exalted has preserved the Community through the secret of the Prophet's presence from misguidance and confusion and disagreement, and He has guided the prople through the Prophet to the manifest truth; and that after Allah took back the Prophet, our connection to the latter's goodness continues uncut and the extension of his goodness endures, overshadowing us. The deeds of the Community are shown to him every day, and he glorifies Allah for the goodness that he finds, while he asks for His forgiveness for the small sins, and the alleviation of His punishment for the grave ones: and this is a tremendous good for us. There is therefore "goodness for the Community in his life, and in his death, goodness for the Community."

Moreover, as has been established in the hadith, the Prophet is alive in his grave with a special "isthmus-life" *(hayat barzakhiyya khassa)* stronger than the lives of the martyrs which the Qur'an spoke about in more than one verse. The nature of these two kinds of life cannot be known except by their Bestower, the Glorious, the Exalted. He is able to do all things. His showing the Community's deeds to the Prophet as an honorific gift for him and his Community is entirely possible rationally and documented in the reports. There is no leeway for its denial; and Allah guides to His light whomever He pleases; and Allah knows best.

We cite more hadiths on *tawassul* in section **c)** below.

al-`Utbi said: "As I was sitting by the grave of the Prophet, a Bedouin Arab came and said: "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah! I have heard Allah saying: "If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful" (4:64), so I have come to you asking forgiveness for my sin, seeking your intercession with my Lord. Then he began to recite poetry:

O best of those whose bones are buried in the deep earth,
And from whose fragrance the depth
and the height have become sweet,
May I be the ransom for a grave which thou inhabit,
And in which are found purity, bounty and munificence!

Then he left, and I dozed and saw the Prophet in my sleep. He said to me: O `Utbi, run after the Bedouin and give him glad tidings that Allah has forgiven him."

The report is *mashhur* (well-known) and related by Nawawi, *Adhkar*, Mecca ed. p. 253-254, *al-Majmu`* 8:217, and *al-Idah fi manasik al-hajj*, chapters on visiting the grave of the Prophet; Ibn Jama`a, *Hidayat al-salik* 3:1384; Ibn `Aqil, *al-Tadhkira*; Ibn Qudama, *al-Mughni* 3:556-557; al-Qurtubi, *Tafsir* of 4:64 in *Ahkam al-Qur'an* 5:265; Samhudi, *Khulasat al-Wafa* p. 121 (from Nawawi); Dahlan, *Khulasat al-Kalam* 2:247; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir* 2:306, and *al-Bidayat wa al-nihayat* 1:180; Abu al-Faraj ibn Qudama, *al-Sharh al-kabir* 3:495; al-Bahuti al-Hanbali, *Kashshaf al-qina`* 5:30; Taqi al-Din al-Subki, *Shifa' al-siqam* p. 52; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Muthir al-gharam al-sakin ila ashraf al-amakin* p. 490; al-Bayhaqi, *Shu`ab al-iman* #4178; Ibn `Asakir, *Mukhtasar tarikh Dimashq* 2:408; Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, *al-Jawhar al-munazzam* [commentary on Nawawi's *Idah*]; Ibn al-Najjar, *Akhbar al-Madina* p. 147. A similar report is cited through Sufyan ibn `Uyayna (Shafi`i's shaykh), and through Abu Sa`id al-Sam`ani on the authority of `Ali.

Evidently, al-`Utbi's account of the Arab's *tawassul* for forgiveness at the Prophet's grave is found in many books on the subject of *ziyara* (visiting the Prophet's grave in Madina) or *manasik* (rites of pilgrimage) by the many scholars of the Four Schools, none of whom have rejected it or declared it weak. See, for example, the translations of Ibn al-Jawzi, Nawawi, and Ibn Jama`a in the last section of this book. Those of the contemporary "Salafi" scholars who choose to contest this report of its established grade of *mashhur*, do not measure up to the reliability of a single one of the sources named above. As for the "Salafis'" recourse to the isolated opinions of Ibn Taymiyya or Ibn `Abd al-Hadi who have cast aspersions on the authenticity of the report, in the words of Ibn Jama`a: no attention is paid to it.

The sources also relate the report of Ibn Abi Fudayk, one of the early scholars of Madina and one of Shafi`i's shaykhs, who said: "I heard one of the authorities whom I have met say: "It has reached us that whoever stands at the Prophet's grave and recites: "Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet..." (33:56) and then says: "May Allah bless you, O Muhammad" *(sallallahu `alayka ya Muhammad)* seventy times, an angel will call him saying: May Allah bless you, O So-and-so; none of your needs will be left unfulfilled."" Ibn Jama`a related it in *Hidayat al-salik* 3:1382-1383, Ibn al-Jawzi in *Muthir al-gharam* p. 487, Qadi `Iyad in *al-Shifa'*, and Bayhaqi in *Shu`ab al-iman* (#4169).

The *muhaddith* al-Samhudi and others also relate the account of the Arab who sought the Prophet's means at his grave:

al-Asma`i said: I saw a Bedouin stand at the Prophet's grave and say: "O Allah, here is Your Beloved, and I am Your servant, and Satan is Your enemy. If You forgive me, Your Beloved will be happy, Your servant will attain victory, and Your enemy will be angry. If You do not forgive me, Your Beloved will be sad, Your enemy will be satisfied, and Your servant will be destroyed. But You are more noble, O my Lord, than to allow Your Beloved to be sad, Your enemy to be satisfied, and Your servant to be destroyed. O Allah, the highborn Arabs, if one of their leaders die, release one of their slaves over his grave in his honor, and this is the leader of the worlds: therefore release me over his grave, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!" al-Asma`i said: "I said to him: O brother of the Arabs! Allah has surely forgiven you and released you for the beauty of this request."[29]

al-Hafiz Ibn al-Jawzi relates in *Kitab al-Wafa* (p. 818 #1536): (*al-hafiz*) Abu Bakr al-Minqari said: I was with (*al-hafiz*) al-Tabarani and (*al-hafiz*) Abu al-Shaykh in the Prophet's Mosque, in some difficulty. We became very hungry. That day and the next we didn't eat. When it was time for `isha, I came to the Prophet's grave and I said: "O Messenger of Allah, we are hungry, we are hungry" *(ya rasullallah al-ju` al-ju`)*! Then I left. Abu al-Shaykh said to me: Sit. Either there will be food for us, or death. I slept and Abu al-Shaykh slept. al-Tabarani stayed awake, researching something. Then an `Alawi (a descendant of `Ali) came knocking at the door with two boys, each one carrying a palm-leaf basket filled with food. We sat up and ate. We thought that the children would take back the remainder but they left everything behind. When we finished, the `Alawi said: O people, did you complain to the Prophet? I saw him in my sleep and he ordered me to bring something to you.

Imam Bukhari said that he wrote his biographical book on the subnarrators of authentic hadith *al-Tarikh al-kabir* by the Prophet's graveside, under the light of the moon. It is related by Ibn al-Jawzi in *Sifat al-safwa* (4:147) and al-Subki in *Tabaqat al-shafi`iyya al-kubra* (2:216).

Musnad Ahmad, Imam Ahmad's compilation of 30,000 mostly sound narrations from the Prophet, was held in such high reverence that it was read in the sixth century by a society of devout hadith scholars from cover to cover in fifty-six sittings before the grave of the Prophet in Madina.[30] Where is such devotion to the Prophet found today?

Ibn Hajar said in Sulayman ibn Sunayd ibn Nashwan's biographical notice in his *al-Durar al-kamina* that he performed forty pilgrimages. On the fortieth he was seized by fatigue and fell asleep by the side of the Noble Grave. Thereupon he saw the Prophet who told him: "O So-and-so, how many times have you come, and you have received nothing from me? Give me your hand." He gave him his hand, and the Prophet wrote upon it something against fever after which, if ever he suffered from it, he would be cured by Allah's permission. This invocation is: "I have sought refuge with a Master who never judges unjustly nor leads to other than victory. Go out, O fever, from this body, nor does pain of any sort follow this." Ajluni mentions it in *Kashf al-khafa* (#1175).

SHAYKH AL-ISLAM *AL-HAFIZ* TAQI AL-DIN AL-SUBKI'S INVOCATION OF *TAWASSUL*

This is Shaykh al-Islam *al-hafiz* Taqi al-Din al-Subki's invocation of *tawassul* through the Prophet. It is taken from his *Fatwas*, Vol. 1 p. 274, at the beginning of the *fatwa* entitled "The Descent of Tranquility and Peace on the Nightlights of Madina" *(tanazzul al-sakina `ala qanadil al-madina)*.

Transliteration:

al-hamdu lillahi al-ladhi as`adana bi nabiyyihi sallallahu `alayhi wa sallama sa`adatan la tabid

wa ashhadu an la ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lahu al-wali al-hamid

wa ashhadu anna muhammadan `abduhu wa rasuluhu al-hadi ila kulli amrin rashid

sallallahu `alayhi wa `ala alihi salatan taliqu bi jalalihi la tazalu ta`lu wa tazid

wa sallama tasliman kathiran ila yawm al-mazid

wa ba`d fa inna Allaha ya`lamu anna kulla khayrin ana fihi wa manna `alayya bihi fa huwa bi sababi al-nabi sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam wa iltija'i ilayh

wa i`timadi fi tawassuli ila Allahi fi kulli umuri `alayh

fa huwa wasilati ila Allahi fi al-dunya wa al-akhira

wa kam lahu `alayya min ni`amin batinatin wa zahira.

Translation:

To Allah belongs all praise, Who has blessed us with his Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, with an endless felicity.

I bear witness that there is no deity except Allah alone without partner, the protecting Friend, the Glorious.

I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger, the guide to every upright matter.

May Allah send blessings and peace upon him in a manner befitting His majesty, with a blessing rising ever higher and increasing

And a superabundant greeting of peace until the Day of the Increase (Day of Judgment).

To proceed: Verily Allah knows that every goodness in my life which He has bestowed upon me is on account of the Prophet and that my recourse is to him

And my reliance is upon him in seeking a means to Allah in every matter of mine.

Verily he is my means to Allah in this world and the next.

And the gifts of Allah I owe to him are too many to count, both the hidden and the visible.

This is the language of *Ahl al-Sunna*. We embrace this language as faultless and accept it. Those in whose hearts there is a disease find fault with it. And praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. Following is a short description of Subki's stature as an Imam in Islam, based on Nuh Keller's biographical notice in the *Reliance of the Traveller*:

Abu al-Hasan Taqi al-Din al-Subki (683-756 / 1284-1355) is the son and father of illustrious scholars and jurists all of the Shafi`i school. He was a hadith master (*hafiz*), Koranic exegete, and Islamic judge who was described by Ibn Hajar Haythami as "the *mujtahid* Imam whose imamate, greatness, and having reached the level of *ijtihad* (competence for independent legal reasoning) are agreed upon," by Dhahabi as "the most learned, eloquent, and wise in judgment of all the shaykhs of the age," and by Sakhawi as "one of those who are named Shaykh al-Islam" along with his son Taj al-Din. Suyuti says of him: "He authored more than 150 works, his writings displaying his profound knowledge of hadith and other fields and his magisterial command of the Islamic sciences. He educated the foremost scholars of the time, was a painstaking, accurate, and penetrating researcher, and a brilliant debater in the disciplines. No previous scholar attained to his achievements in Sacred Law, of masterful inferences, subtleties in detail, and carefully worked-out methodological principles." Salah al-Din Safadi said of him: "People say that no one like him has appeared since Ghazali, though in my opinion they do him an injustice thereby, for to my mind he does not resemble anyone less than Sufyan al-Thawri." With his vast erudition, he was at the same time a godfearing ascetic in his personal life who was devoted to worship and tasawwuf, though vigilant and uncompromising in matters of religion and ready to assail any innovation or departure from the tenets of the faith of *Ahl al-Sunna*.

TAWASSUL THROUGH THE *AWLIYA'*

The evidence for *tawassul* through the *awliya'* or saints is also abundant, and it suffices that Allah strictly warns all believers to keep company with them when He says: "O believers! Be wary of Allah, and keep company with the truthful!" (9:119) and He enjoins us to follow those who have turned to Him in true and complete repentence (31:15). The Prophet said to al-Firasi, concerning asking from people: "If you absolutely must ask from people, then ask from the righteous ones" *(in kunta la budda sa'ilan fas'al al-salihin)*.[31] There is no doubt that the visit of pious persons is a Sunna in Islam for that very purpose, as shown by the chapters to that effect entitled *Bab ziyarat al-salihin* in the books of etiquette and invocations.

Some people think that if a *du`a* from a holy man is answered while he is alive then he cannot help you if he is dead, as if the holy man or shaykh or saint is the origin of the help, but it is always Allah who is the source of the *baraka* and never a human being; so to think that Allah can only give when that saint is alive, and that when he is dead, Allah does not give anymore, is to say that the source *is* the person and not Allah in the first place! But in reality it is Allah who is giving help in both cases: life or death.

As for the objections of some "Salafis" today that it is not permissible to seek the blessings of saints after their death, they are based on the false belief that Allah's influence through the saints is in need for the saints' biological life to be effective, and this is absurd! As we said before, Allah's gift to the saints is independent from their being alive or dead, since in either case the real power always belongs to Allah, and the saints are only a secondary cause with no effective power in themselves. Moreover, the views of the early and late Imams and scholars quoted below concerning the permissibility of *tawassul* through the pious, also confirm that the objections of "Salafis" to *tawassul* through the saints after their passing from this life do not stand up to scrutiny.

It is obligatory for Muslims to believe that the *abdal* or Substitute-saints exist -- so called because, as the Prophet said (see #3 below), "None of them dies except Allah substitutes another in his place" -- and that they are among the religious leaders of the Community concerning whom there is no doubt among Muslims. No less than Ibn Taymiyya writes at the end of his *`Aqida wasitiyya*:

The true adherents of Islam in its pristine purity are *Ahl al-Sunna*t wal-Jama`a. In their ranks the truthful saints *(siddiqin)*, the martyrs, and the righteous are to be found. Among them are the great men of guidance and illumination, of recorded integrity and celebrated virtue. The Substitutes *(abdal)* and the Imams of religion are to be found among them and the Muslims are in full accord concerning their guidance. These are the Victorious Group about whom the Prophet said: "A group within my Community manifestly continues to be in the truth. Neither those who oppose them nor those who abandon them can do them harm, from now on until the Day of Resurrection."[32]

The Prophet emphasized in many authentic narrations the benefits brought to all creation through the intercession of Allah's saints and their standing with Him. Suyuti in his *fatwa* on the *abdal* in his *Hawi li al-fatawi* provided many examples of this type of universal intercession from which we quote the following:

1. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal says in his *Musnad* (1:112):

... The people of Syria were mentioned in front of `Ali ibn Abi Talib while he was in Iraq, and they said: "Curse them, O Commander of the Believers." He replied: "No, I heard the Messenger of Allah say: "**The Substitutes *(al-abdal)* are in Syria and they are forty men, every time one of them dies, Allah substitutes another in his place. By means of them Allah brings down the rain, gives (Muslims) victory over their enemies, and averts punishment from the people of Syria.**"" al-Haythami said: "The men in its chains are all those of the *sahih* except for Sharih ibn `Ubayd, and he is trustworthy *(thiqa)*."[33]

2. al-Hakim narrated the following which he graded sound *(sahih)*, and al-Dhahabi confirmed him:

`Ali said: "Do not curse the people of Syria, for among them are the Substitutes *(al-abdal)*, but curse their injustice."

Note that any religious knowledge unattainable through *ijtihad* and authentically conveyed from one of the Companions is considered a hadith by the experts of that science.

3. Tabarani said in his *Mu`jam al-awsat*:

Anas said that the Prophet said: "The earth will never lack forty men similar to the Friend of the Merciful [Prophet Ibrahim], and through them people receive rain and are given help. None of them dies except Allah substitutes another in his place." Qatada said: "We do not doubt that al-Hasan [al-Basri] is one of them."

Ibn Hibban narrates it in *al-Tarikh* through Abu Hurayra as: "The earth will never lack forty men similar to Ibrahim the Friend of the Merciful, and through whom you are helped, receive your sustenance, and receive rain."

4. Imam Ahmad also narrated in the *Musnad* (5:322):

The Prophet said: "The Substitutes in this Community are thirty like Ibrahim the Friend of the Merciful. Every time one of them dies, Allah substitutes another one in his place."

Hakim Tirmidhi cites it in *Nawadir al-usul* and Ahmad's student al-Khallal in his *Karamat al-awliya'*. Haythami said its men are those of the *sahih* except `Abd al-Wahid who was declared trustworthy by al-`Ijli and Abu Zar`a (as well as Yahya ibn Ma`in).

5. Abu Dawud through three different good chains in his *Sunan* (English #4273), Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (6:316), Ibn Abi Shayba in his *Musannaf*, Abu Ya`la, al-Hakim, and Bayhaqi narrated:

Umm Salama the wife of the Prophet said: "Disagreement will occur at the death of a Caliph and a man of the people of Madina will come forth flying to Mecca. Some of the people of Mecca will come to him, bring him out against his will and swear allegiance to him between the Corner and the *Maqam*. An expeditionary force will then be sent against him from Syria but will be swallowed up in the desert between Mecca and Madina, and when the people see that, the Substitutes *(abdal)* of Syria and the best people *(`asaba)* of Iraq will come to him and swear allegiance to him..."

6. Imam Ahmad cited in *Kitab al-zuhd*, also Ibn Abi al-Dunya, Abu Nu`aym, Bayhaqi, and Ibn `Asakir narrated from Julays:

Wahb ibn Munabbih said: I saw the Prophet in my sleep, so I said: "Ya Rasulallah, where are the Substitutes *(budala')* of your Community?" So he gestured with his hand towards Syria. I said: "Ya Rasulallah, aren't there any in Iraq?" He said: "Yes, Muhammad ibn Wasi`, Hassan ibn Abi Sinan, and Malik ibn Dinar, who walks among the people similarly to Abu Dharr in his time."

Nawawi in *Bustan al-`arifin* (1985 ed. p. 31) mentions that the hadith master Hammad ibn Salama ibn Dinar (d. 167) was considered to be one of the *abdal*.

Shaykh `Abd al-Qadir Gilani said in the Third Discourse of his masterpiece *Futuh al-Ghayb*, as slightly adapted from the 1958 translation of M. Aftab-ud-Din Ahmad published in Lahore:

And he said (may Allah be pleased with him):

When the servant of Allah is in a trial, he first tries to escape from it with his own efforts, and when he fails, in this he seeks the help of others from among men such as the kings and men of authority, people of the world, men of wealth, and in the case of illness and physical suffering, from physicians and doctors; but if the escape is not secured by these he then turns towards his Creator and Lord the Great and Mighty and applies to Him with prayer and humility and praise.

So long as he finds the resources in his own self he does not turn towards the people and so long as he finds resources in the people he does not turn towards the Creator. Further, when he does not get any help from Allah he throws himself in His presence and continues in this state, begging and praying humbly entreating and praising and submitting his neediness in fear and hope. Allah, however, tires him out in his prayer and does not accept it until he is completely disappointed in all the means of the world. The decree of Allah and His work then manifest themselves through him and this servant of Allah passes away from all the worldly means and the activities and efforts of the world and retains just his soul.

At this stage he sees nothing but the work of Allah and becomes, of necessity, a believer in the unity of Allah *(Tawhid)* to the degree of certainty, that in reality there is no doer of anything excepting Allah and no mover and stopper excepting Him and no good and no evil and no loss and no gain and no benefit and no conferring and no withholding and no opening and no closing and no death and no life and no honor and no dishonor and no affluence and no poverty but in the hand of Allah.

He then becomes in the presence of Allah as a nursing baby in the hands of its nurse and a dead corpse in the hands of the person who gives it the funeral bath and a ball is before the stick of the polo-player, **as it keeps revolving and rolling and changing position after position and condition after condition**, and he feels no strength either in his own self or in others besides himself for any movement. He thus vanishes from his own self out into the work of his Master.

So he sees nothing but his Master and His work, and hears nothing and understands nothing excepting Him. If he sees anything it is His work and if he hears and knows anything, he hears His word and knows through His knowledge and he becomes gifted with His gifts and becomes lucky through His nearness and through his nearness he becomes decorated and honored and becomes pleased and comforted and satisfied with His promise and is drawn towards His word and he feels aversion for and is repelled from those besides Him and he desires and relies on His remembrance and he becomes established in Him, the Great and Mighty, and relies on Him and obtains guidance from, and clothes and dresses himself with, the light of His knowledge and is apprised of the rare points of His knowledge and of the secrets of His power and he hears and remembers only from Him the Great, the Mighty, and then offers thanks and praise therefore and takes to prayer.

Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami said in his book *al-Khayrat al-hisan fi manaqib al-imam Abi Hanifa al-Nu`man*, chapter 35:

When Imam al-Shafi`i was in Baghdad, he would visit the grave of Imam Abu Hanifa, give him salam, and then ask Allah for the fulfillment of his need through his means *(yatawassal ilallah ta`ala bihi fi qada' hajatihi)*.[34]

Imam Kawthari mentioned in his *Maqalat* (p. 412) that the *hafiz* al-Khatib al-Baghdadi mentions Shafi`i's *tawassul* through Abu Hanifa in the beginning of his *Tarikh Baghdad* (1:123) with a good chain.

Haytami also said in many places in his book *al-Sawa`iq al-muhriqa li ahl al-dalal wa al-zandaqa* (cf. p. 180) and *al-Khayrat al-hisan* (p. 69): "Imam Shafi`i made *tawassul* through the Family of the Prophet (Ahl al-Bayt) when he said:

Al al-nabi dhari`ati wa hum ilayhi wasilati
arju bihim u`ta ghadan bi yadi al-yamini sahifati

The Family of the Prophet are my means and my
intermediary to him. Through them I hope to be
given my record with the right hand tomorrow.

This is found in *Diwan al-Shafi`i* as edited by `Umar Faruq al-Dabbagh (Beirut: Dar al-arqam, n.d.) p. 50.

- The *hafiz* al-`Iraqi relates with his chain in his *Fath al-muta`al*: "We narrated that the Imam Ahmad sought blessing from drinking the washing-water of Imam al-Shafi`i's shirt, and Ibn Taymiyya himself also related it."

******[this appears to be an error, s/be Imam Shafi`I sought blessing by the washing-water of Imam Ahmad's shirt.]*******

al-Khatib relates that the *hafiz* Abu Nu`aym considered it incumbent upon all Muslims to invoke Allah for Abu Hanifa in their prayer due to his preservation of the Prophet's *Sunan* and *fiqh* for them.[35] This is explained by the fact that among Abu Hanifa's merits that are exclusively his is his standing as the first in Islam to have compiled a book of *fiqh*.[36]

al-hafiz Abu `Ali al-Ghassani relates in Ibn al-Subki's *Tabaqat al-shafi`iyya* 2:234: Abu al-Fath Nasr ibn al-Hasan al-Sakani al-Samarqandi came to us in 464 and said: "We had a drought in Samarqand some years ago. The people made the *istisqa'* (prayer for rain) prayer but they did not get rain. A saintly man named al-Salah came to the judge and said to him: I have an opinion I would like to show you. My opinion is that you come out followed by the people and that you all go to the grave of Imam Muhammad ibn Isma`il al-Bukhari and make *istisqa'* there. Perhaps Allah will give us rain. The judge said: What a good opinion you have. He came out and the people followed him, and he prayed for rain in front of them at the grave while people wept and sought the intercession of the one who was in it. Allah sent such heavy rain that those who were in Khartenk (where this took place, 3 miles away from Samarqand) could not reach Samarqand for seven days because of the rain's abundance."

The late mufti of Lebanon al-Shahid al-Shaykh Hasan Khalid said in his *fatwa* on *tawassul* on September 16, 1980 (reprinted in the Waqf Ikhlas offset reprint of Sayyid Ahmad ibn Zayni Dahlan's book *Fitnat al-wahhabiyya* 1992):

Tawassul was declared permissible in our own time by the mufti of the world, our shaykh the savant Abu al-Yusr `Abidin. We went with him to Nawa, a place in Hawran wherein is buried the Shaykh Muhyiddin al-Nawawi. When we arrived at his grave, our Shaykh Abu al-Yusr ordered us to ask Allah the Exalted for our need in front of him and said to us: "The *du`a* (invocation) at his grave is answered."

Ibn al-Jawzi in his biographies of the *awliya* entitled *Sifat al-safwa* lists many of those at whose graves *tabarruk* (seeking blessing) and *tawassul* is recommended. Among them:

Abu Ayyub al-Ansari: "al-Waqidi said: It has reached us that the Eastern Romans visit his grave and seek rain through his intercession when they suffer from droughts" (1:243). Mujahid said: "People would uncover the space above his grave and it would rain."

Ma`ruf al-Karkhi (d. 200H): "His grave can be seen in Baghdad, and one seeks blessings with it. *al-Hafiz* Ibrahim al-Harbi (d. 285H) -- Imam Ahmad's companion -- used to say: Ma`ruf's grave is proven medicine" (2:214) Ibn al-Jawzi adds: "We ourselves go to Ibrahim al-Harbi's grave and seek blessings with it" (2:410)

al-hafiz al-Dhahabi also relates Ibrahim al-Harbi's saying about Ma`ruf al-Karkhi: "Ma`ruf's grave is proven medicine." *Siyar a`lam al-nubala'* (9:343).

Abu al-Hasan al-Daraqutni said: "We used to seek blessings from Abu al-Fath al-Qawasi's grave" (2:471).

Abu al-Qasim al-Wa`iz: "His grave can be seen in Ahmad ibn Hanbal's cemetary and it is sought for blessings." Related in the notice on `Abd al-Samad ibn `Umar ibn Muhammad ibn Ishaq (2:482).

al-Hafiz Abu al-Qasim Ibn `Asakir says in *Musnad Abi `Uwana* (1:430): "Abu `Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn `Umar al-Saffar said to me that the grave of Abu `Uwana in Isfarayin [near Naysabur] is a place of visitation for the whole world *(mazar al-`alam)* and a place for obtaining blessing for the entire creation *(mutabarrak al-khalq)*."

al-Hafiz Diya' al-Din al-Maqdisi al-Hanbali said in his book *al-Hikayat al-manthura* (Zahiriyya ms. 98, an autograph) that he heard the *hafiz* `Abd al-Ghani al-Maqdisi al-Hanbali say that something like an abcess appeared on his upper arm for which there was found no medicine. He came to Ahmad ibn Hanbal's grave and applied his arm against it, after which he found himself healed. Imam Kawthari said that he read this account in Diya' al-Din's own handwriting. See *Maqalat al-Kawthari* (Riyadh and Beirut: Dar al-ahnaf, 1414/1993) p. 407, 412.

Do those who have left this life know about the affairs of the living?

Ibn Qayyim in *Kitab al-ruh* narrates with his chain from Ibn al-Mubarak on the authority of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari that the latter said: "The works of the living are clear to the dead. Whenever they see a good deed they rejoice and are pleased; but if they see evil they say: O Allah, return its equivalent in good."

Ibn Qayyim in the same book, and Ibn Abi al-Dunya in *Kitab al-qubur* narrated that `Abbad ibn `Abbad called upon Ibrahim ibn Salih while he was ruler of Palestine and said: "Exhort me." He said: "With what should I exhort you? May Allah set you right! I have heard that the works of the living are clear as day to their dead relatives. So consider what is laid open to the Messenger of Allah of your work." Ibrahim wept until his beard was wet.

Imam Suyuti in his book *Sharh al-sudur* (p. 263-266) has an entire chapter devoted to that topic entitled: "The Exhibition of the deeds of the living to the dead." In it he lists fifteen hadiths and sayings of the Companions to that effect:

1. Ahmad in his *Musnad*, al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi in *Nawadir al-usul*, and Ibn Mindah narrated from Anas that the Prophet said: "Your deeds are shown to your relatives and ancestors among the dead. If they consist in good they are happy with it, if otherwise, they say: O Allah! Don't let them die before you guide them as you have guided us."

2. al-Tayalisi in his *Musnad* narrated from Jabir ibn `Abd Allah that the Prophet said: " Your deeds are shown to your relatives and ancestors in their graves. If they consist in good they are happy with it, if otherwise, they say: O Allah! Inspire them to act in obedience to You."

3. Ibn al-Mubarak and Ibn Abi al-Dunya in *Kitab al-qubur* narrated from Abu Ayyub: "Your deeds are shown to the dead, who rejoice if they see any good in them, and if they see evil in them they say: O Allah, give them another opportunity."

4. Ibn Abi Shayba in his *Musannaf*, al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Abi al-Dunya narrated from Ibrahim ibn Maysara that when Abu Ayyub campaigned to take Constantinople he passed by a story-teller who was saying: "What a servant does in the morning, before evening is shown to those in the hereafter who know him; and what he does at the end of the day is shown to them by the next morning." Abu Ayyub said: "Be careful what you say." He replied: "By Allah it is as I said." Abu Ayyub said: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You lest You reveal my shame to `Ubada ibn al-Samit and Sa`d ibn `Ubada concerning what I did after them."

5. al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi cited in *Nawadir al-usul* the hadith of `Abd al-Ghafur ibn `Abd al-`Aziz from his father, from his grandfather, whereby the Prophet said: "One's deeds are shown to Allah on Monday and Thursday, and they are shown to Prophets as
well as fathers and mothers on Fridays, at which time they rejoice for the good deeds, and the latter increase the brightness and light of their faces. Therefore be wary of Allah and do not harm your dead."

6. al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi also cited -- as well as Ibn Abi al-Dunya in his Book of Dreams *(Kitab al-manamat)* and Bayhaqi in *Shu`ab al-iman* from al-Nu`man ibn Bashir: I heard the Prophet say: "Allah, Allah! [Be wary of Him] concerning your brethren among the dwellers of graves, for your deeds are shown to them."

7. Ibn Abi al-Dunya and al-Asbahani in *al-Targhib* cited from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet said: "Do not shame your dead with your evil deeds for your deeds are shown to your relatives among the dwellers of the graves."

8. Ibn Abi al-Dunya, Ibn Mindah, and Ibn `Asakir narrated from Ahmad ibn `Abd Allah ibn Abi al-Hawari: My brother Muhammad ibn `Abd Allah related to me: `Abbad al-Khawass walked in to see Ibrahim ibn Salih al-Hashimi when the latter was governor of Palestine. Ibrahim said: "Admonish me." He replied: "It has reached me that the deeds of the living are shown to their relatives among the deceased. Therefore beware what is shown to Allah's Messenger from your deeds."

9. Ibn Abi al-Dunya cited from Abu al-Darda' that he used to say: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You lest my maternal uncle `Abd Allah ibn Rawaha should loathe me when I meet him."

10. Ibn al-Mubarak and al-Asbahani cited from Abu al-Darda' that he said: "Your deeds are shown to the dead, whereupon they rejoice and they are saddened" and he would say: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from committing a deed by which `Abd Allah ibn Rawaha should be dishonored."

This `Abd Allah ibn Rawaha al-Ansari was the great-grandson of the poet Imru' al-Qays and was himself a great poet among the Companions. He said of the Prophet:

law lam takun fihi ayatun mubina
lakana manzaruhu yunabbi'uka bi al-khabari

"Even if there were not, concerning him, clear and evident
signs, yet the sight of him would have told you the news."

Ibn Hajar narrated it in *al-Isaba* (2:299) and said: "This is the most beautiful verse of poetry by which the Prophet was ever praised."

Ibn Sayyid al-Nas said of Ibn Rawaha in *Minah al-madh* (p. 166):

He was killed as a martyr on the day of Mu'ta in Jumada 8 before the conquest of Mecca. On that day he was one of the commanders. He was one of the poets who did good and who used to fend off harm from Allah's Messenger. It was concerning him and his two friends Hassan (ibn Thabit) and Ka`b (ibn Zuhayr) that was revealed the verse: "Except those who believe and do good deeds and remember Allah abundantly." (The Poets 26:227).

Hisham ibn `Urwa narrated from his father that the latter said: I never saw anyone more aggressive or faster in his poetry than `Abd Allah ibn Rawaha. I heard Allah's Messenger say to him one day: "Recite some poetry appropriate to the moment, while I look at you." He rose up then and there and said:

inni tafarrastu fika al-khayra a`rifuhu
wallahu ya`lamu anna ma khanani al-basaru
anta al-nabiyyu wa man yuhramu shafa`atahu
yawma al-hisabi laqad azra bihi al-qadaru
fa thabbat allahu ma ataka min hasanin
tathbita musa wa nasran kalladhi nusiru

I foresee for you immense good, of this I am certain.
Allah knows that my sight never betrayed me.
You are the Prophet, and whoever is deprived of your intercession
On the Day of Reckoning, his destiny is disgrace.
May Allah make firm all the good that He gave you,
With a firmness like Musa's and the same victory.

Upon hearing this the Prophet said to him: "And you also, may Allah make you firm, O Ibn Rawaha." Hisham ibn `Urwa continued: Allah indeed made him firm with the staunchest firmness. He died as a martyr, and Paradise was opened for him and he entered it. End of Ibn Sayyid al-Nas's words. Blessings and peace on the Prophet, his Family, and his Companions!

11. Ibn al-Mubarak also cited from `Uthman ibn `Abd Allah ibn Aws that Sa`id ibn al-Jubayr said to him: "Give me permission to see my brother's daughter" -- `Uthman's wife and the daughter of `Amr ibn Aws -- so he permitted him. He went and asked her: "How is your husband treating you?" She said: "He does his utmost with me." Then Sa`id said: "O `Uthman! Treat her well, for there is nothing that you do with her except its news reaches `Amr ibn Aws." `Uthman said: "The news of the living reaches the dead?" He said: "Yes, there is no one with an intimate friend [among the deceased] except the news of his relatives reaches him. If it is good he rejoices and is cheered by it, and if it is bad he is saddened and distraught."

12. Ibn Abi al-Dunya cited the following report through Abu Bakr ibn `Iyash, from a grave-digger who was with the Banu Asad and who said: I was among the graves one night when I heard someone in a grave say: "O Abu `Abd Allah!" and another answered: "What, O Jabir?" He said: "Tomorrow our mother will be coming to us." The other replied: "Of what use will that be for her? Let her not come, for my father became angry with her and swore that he would not pray over her." The next day a man came to me and said: "Dig a grave for me between these two," indicating the graves from where I had heard the voices coming. Whereupon I said: "This one's name is Jabir, and that one is `Abd Allah?" He said: "Yes!" So I told him what I had heard. Then the man said: "Yes, I had sworn that I would not pray over her, but I shall break my oath and pray over her."

13. Abu Nu`aym cited from Ibn Mas`ud that the latter said: "Keep relations with those your father kept relations with, for that is the way relations are kept on behalf of the dead in their graves."

14. Ibn Hibban cited from Ibn `Umar that the Prophet said: "Whoever likes to keep relations with his father in his grave, let him keep relations with his father's brothers after him."

15. Abu Dawud and Ibn Hibban cited from Abu Usayd al-Sa`idi that a man came to the Prophet and asked: "O Messenger of Allah! Does anything remain of my responsibility to keep piety to my two parents after their death?" He said: "Yes, four aspects of filial piety remain: praying for them, keeping the promises they made, honoring their friends, and keeping relations with those whom you know only because of them."

INTERMEDIARIES TO ALLAH

There is no contradiction in asking Allah both with or without an intermediary, although in reality there are always several kinds of intermediary present, beginning with one's own state, obedience, belief, acts, sincerity, etc. Only those with deficient knowledge or imperfect belief imagine that the person who asks Allah through an intermediary has associated another to his worship of Allah. The Prophet explained this to the Companions once and for all when he said to Abu Bakr al-Siddiq: "Help is not sought with me (i.e. in reality), help is sought with Allah."[37] He did not say to Abu Bakr: "Asking me is forbidden and constitutes association to Allah." What he said meant that the Prophet is not the source of help but only the most effective intermediary to obtain help from Allah.

The meaning of the hadith is elucidated by the Qur'anic verses: "You did not throw when you threw, but Allah threw" (8:17) and: "Those who swear allegiance unto thee swear allegiance only unto Allah" (48:10). Further, the Prophet said, "I did not bear you but Allah bore you."[38] Thus the meaning of the hadith "Help is not sought with me" is:

(Even if I am the one ostensibly being asked
for help,) I am not the one being asked for help,
in reality Allah Himself is being asked.

The hadith "Help is not sought with me" must therefore be interpreted in the light of the fact that asking for help applies to whoever the help comes from including in respect to causation and acquisition (i.e. secondary causes); this is what the Arabic means and the Shari`a permits. This meaning is supported by the hadith in Bukhari *(Kitab al-tawhid)* touching on intercession on the Day of Resurrection, in which people sought help from Adam, then Musa, then Muhammad, on him be Allah's blessings and peace, and the latter replies: "I can do it."

It is essential to understand that it is not, in reality, the Prophet who is the ultimate object of supplication, nor is he the one who grants it, but he is the best means of forwarding it to Allah and for its being granted by Allah. This is clear in the Prophet's prayer to Allah, in his words, "through Your Prophet and the Prophets before me" and "through those who ask" in the following two hadiths:

On the authority of Abu Sa`id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him: He relates that the Messenger of Allah said: "The one who leaves his house for prayer and then says: O Allah, I ask you by the right of those who ask you and I beseech you by the right of those who walk this path unto you that my going forth bespeak not of levity, pride nor vainglory nor done for the sake of repute. I have gone forth in the warding off your anger and for the seeking of your pleasure. I ask you, therefore, to grant me refuge from Hellfire and to forgive me my sins, for no one forgives sins but yourself. Allah will accept for his sake and seventy thousand angels will seek his forgiveness."

It is related in *Musnad Ahmad* 3:21, Ibn Majah *(Masajid)*, al-Mundhiri in *al-Targhib* 1:179, Ibn Khuzayma in his *Sahih*, Ibn al-Sani, and Abu Nu`aym. Ghazali mentions it in the *Ihya* and `Iraqi said: "It is *hasan*." Nawawi mentions only Ibn al-Sani's two chains in the *Adhkar* and says they are *da`if* (weak). However, Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani says it is *hasan* in *al-Amali al-masriyya* (#54) and also in the *Takhrij* of Nawawi's book, explaining that the latter neglected Abu Sa`id al-Khudri's narration and omitted to mention Ibn Majah's. See Imam Kawthari's remarks on this hadith below.

The Prophet also said on the authority of Anas ibn Malik: "O Allah, grant forgiveness to my mother, Fatima Bint Asad, and make vast for her the place of her going in [i.e. her grave] by the right of thy Prophet and that of those Prophets who came before me" and so on until the end of the hadith.

Tabarani relates it in *al-Kabir* and *al-Awsat*. Ibn Hibban and al-Hakim declare it sound. The "Fatima" referred to here is the mother of Sayyidina `Ali who raised the Prophet. Ibn Abi Shayba on the authority of Jabir relates a similar narrative. Similar also is what Ibn `Abd al-Barr on the authority of Ibn `Abbas and Abu Nu`aym in his *Hilya* on the authority of Anas Ibn Malik relate, as *al-hafiz* al-Suyuti mentioned in the *Jami` al-Kabir*. Haythami says in *Majma` al-zawa'id*: "Tabarani's chain contains Rawh ibn Salah who has some weakness but Ibn Hibban and al-Hakim declared him trustworthy. The rest of its sub-narrators are the men of sound hadith." Imam al-Kawthari says about this hadith in his *Maqalat* (p. 410): "It provides textual evidence whereby there is no difference between the living and the dead in the context of *tawassul*, and this is explicit *tawassul* through the Prophets, while the hadith of Abu Sa`id al-Khudri, O Allah, I ask You by the right of those who ask You, constitutes *tawassul* through the generality of Muslims, both the living and the dead."

The Prophet used to say after the two rak`at of the dawn prayer: "O Allah, Lord of Jibril, of Israfil, of Mika'il, and Lord of Muhammad the Prophet: I seek refuge in You from the Fire..."

Nawawi mentions in the *Adhkar* that it was narrated by Ibn al-Sani, and Ibn Hajar graded it *hasan* or fair as mentioned by Ibn `Allan in his Commentary on the *Adhkar* (Vol. 2 p. 139). Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi al-Maliki said: "The specific mention of the above in his *du`a* is understood as *tawassul*, as if he were saying: "O Allah, I ask You and I seek as means to You Jibril, Israfil, Mika'il, and Muhammad the Prophet. Ibn `Allan referred to this in his commentary."[39]

IMAM SHAWKANI'S *FATWA* ON *TAWASSUL* AND HIS DENUNCIATION OF WAHHABIS

Imam Shawkani said in his treatise entitled *al-Durr al-nadid fi ikhlas kalimat al-tawhid*:

There is no harm in *tawassul* through any one of the Prophets or Friends of Allah or scholars of knowledge... One who comes to the grave as a visitor *(za'iran)* and invokes Allah alone, using as his means the dead person in the grave, is as one who says: "O Allah, I am asking that you cure me from such-and-such, and I use as a means to You whatever this righteous servant of Yours possesses for worshipping You and striving for Your sake and learning and teaching purely and sincerely for You." Such as this, there is no hesitation in declaring that it is permitted...

Shawkani's denunciation of Wahhabis

He also says in *al-Durr al-nadid*:

Regarding what those who forbid *tawassul* to Allah through the Prophets and the saints cite to support their position, such as Allah's sayings:

- "We only worship them in order that they may bring us nearer" (39:3)
- "Do not call on any other god with Allah, or you will be among those who will be punished" (26:213)
- "Say: Call on those besides Him whom ye fancy; they have no power to remove your trouble from you or to change them. Those unto whom they cry seek for themselves the means of approach to their Lord, which of them shall be the nearest; they hope for His mercy and fear His wrath: for the wrath of thy Lord is something to take heed of" (17:57)

These verses are irrelevant. Rather: they support exactly the reverse of what the objectors to *tawassul* claim, since the verses are related to another issue. To wit: the verse "We only worship them in order that they may bring us nearer" explicitly states that they worship them for that purpose, whereas the one who makes *tawassul* through a scholar, for example, never worships him, but knows that he has a special distinction *(maziyya)* before Allah for being a carrier of knowledge; and that is why he uses him as a means.

Similarly irrelevant to the issue is Allah's saying: "Do not call on any other god with Allah." This verse forbids that one should call upon another together with Allah, as if saying: "O Allah and O So-and-so." However, the one who makes *tawassul* through a scholar, for example, never calls upon other than Allah. He only seeks a means to Him through the excellent works that one of His servants achieved, just as the three men in the cave who were blocked by the rock used their good works as a means to have their petition answered.

[*Sahih Bukhari*, English translation Volume 8, Book 73, Number 5: Narrated Ibn `Umar: Allah's Apostle said, "While three persons were traveling, they were overtaken by rain and they took shelter in a cave in a mountain. A big rock fell from the mountain over the mouth of the cave and blocked it. They said to each other: Think of such righteous deeds which you did for Allah's sake only, and invoke Allah by mentioning those deeds so that Allah may relieve you from your difficulty. One of them said: O Allah! I had my parents who were very old and I had small children for whose sake I used to work as a shepherd. When I returned to them at night and milked the sheep, I used to start giving the milk to my parents first before giving to my children. And one day I went far away in search of a grazing place for my sheep, and didn't return home till late at night and found that my parents had slept. I milked my livestock as usual and brought the milk vessel and stood at their heads, and I disliked to wake them up from their sleep, and I also disliked to give the milk to my children before my parents though my children were crying from hunger at my feet. So this state of mine and theirs continued till the day dawned. O Allah! If you considered that I had done that only for seeking Your pleasure, then please let there be an opening through which we can see the sky. So Allah made for them an opening through which they could see the sky. Then the second person said: O Allah! I had a female cousin whom I loved as much as a passionate man loves a woman. I tried to seduce her but she refused till I paid her one-hundred dinars So I worked hard till I collected one hundred dinars and went to her with that But when I sat in between her legs (to have sexual intercourse with her), she said: O Allah's slave! Be afraid of Allah! Do not deflower me except legally (by marriage contract). So I left her alone. O Allah! If you considered that I had done that only for seeking Your pleasure then please let the rock move a little to have a wider opening. So Allah shifted that rock to make the opening wider for them. And the last person said: O Allah! I employed a laborer for wages equal to a *faraq* (a certain measure) of rice, and when he had finished his job he demanded his wages, but when I presented his due to him, he gave it up and refused to take it. Then I kept on sowing that rice for him (several times) until I managed to buy, with the price of the yield, some cows and their shepherd. Later on the laborer came to me an said: Be afraid of Allah, and do not be unjust to me an give me my due. I said to him: Go and take those cows and their shepherd. So he took them and went away. If You considered that I had done that for seeking Your pleasure, then please remove the remaining part of the rock. And so Allah delivered them."]

Similarly irrelevant to the issue is Allah's saying: "Those unto whom they cry..." for it refers to people who call upon those who cannot fulfill their request, at the same time not calling upon Allah Who can; whereas one who makes *tawassul* through a scholar, for example, never called except upon Allah, and none other besides Him.

The above shows the reader that these objectors to *tawassul* are bringing forth evidence that is irrelevant to the issue at hand. Even more irrelevant is their citing of the verse:

- "The Day when no soul shall have power to do anything for another: for the Command, that Day, will be all with Allah." (82:19)

for that noble verse contains nothing more than the fact that Allah alone decides everything on the Day of Judgment, and that none other will have any say at that time. However, the maker of *tawassul* through one of the Prophets or one of the scholars, never believes that the one through whom he makes *tawassul* is in partnership with Allah on the Day of Judgment! Whoever believes such a thing in relation to a Prophet or non-Prophet is in manifest error.

Equally irrelevant is their objection to *tawassul* by citing the verses:

- "Not for you is the decision in the least" (3:128)

- "Say: I have no power over over good or harm to myself except as Allah wills" (7:188)

for these two verses are explicit in that the Prophet has no say in Allah's decision and that he has no power to benefit or harm himself in the least, let alone someone else: but there is nothing in those two verses to prevent *tawassul* through him or any other of the Prophets or Friends of Allah or scholars.

Allah has given His Prophet the Exalted Station *(al-maqam al-mahmud)* -- the station of the Great Intercession *(al-shafa`a al-`uzma)*, and He has instructed creation to ask for that station for him and to request his intercession, and He said to him: "Ask and you shall be granted what you asked! Intercede and you shall be granted what you interceded for!" And in His Book He has made this dependence on the fact that there is no intercession except by His leave, and that none shall possess it except those whom He pleases...

Equally irrelevant is their adducing as proof against *tawassul*:

- "And admonish your nearest kinsmen" (26:214)

whereupon the Prophet said: "O So-and-so son of So-and-so, I do not have any guarantee on your behalf from Allah; and O So-and-so daughter of So-and-so, I do not have any guarantee on your behalf from Allah." For in the preceding there is nothing other than the plain declaration that he cannot benefit anyone for whom Allah has decreed harm, nor harm anyone for whom Allah has decreed benefit, and that he does not have any guarantee from Allah from any of his close relatives, let alone others. This is known to every Muslim. There is nothing in it, however, that prohibits making *tawassul* to Allah through the Prophet, for *tawassul* is a request from the One Who holds power to grant and deny all requests. The petitioner who makes *tawassul* only desires to place, at the front of his petition, what may be a **cause** for the granting of his petition by the One Who alone gives and withholds, the Owner of the Day of Judgment.

SHAYKH SALIH AL-NA`MAN'S *FATWA* ON *TAWASSUL*

The following legal opinion on *tawassul* was given by Shaykh Salih al-Na`man, the Secretary of the Section of *Ifta'* and Religious Education at the Ministry of Religious Endowments *(wizarat al-awqaf)* of the Syrian Arab Republic in the city of Hama on March 22, 1980. It is reproduced in full in the 1992 Waqf Ikhlas reprint of Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan's section of his history of Islam *al-Futuhat al-islamiyya* on the Wahhabi sect entitled *Fitnat al-wahhabiyya*.

Text of the *fatwa*:

"Praise belongs to Allah the Lord of the Worlds. Blessings and Peace on our Master Muhammad and on his Family and all his Companions.

"From the slave who is poor and in need of Him, the Secretary of Legal Opinions in the city of Hama (Syria) and the Preacher in the Madfan Mosque, to the brother who asked a question, Sayyid `Ashiq al-Rahman in Wilayatullah Abad in India: Warm greetings and blessings. To proceed: You have asked a question on a legal issue, and this answer is given after some delay because I was away in the Hijaz.

"You asked about *al-tawassul ilallah ta`ala bi al-anbiya' wa al-mursalin* -- seeking/using means to Allah the Exalted with/through/by means of the Prophets and the Messengers -- and about *hukmu man tawassal*, the law's position with regard to the person who makes *tawassul*. This is the answer:

"Praise belongs to Allah the Exalted! Seeking or using means *(al-tawassul)* to Allah through his Prophet or the Prophets or the Righteous *(al-salihin)* or with the deeds *(a`mal)* that are done purely for His glorious countenance: There is no legal prohibition against it, because Allah the Exalted said: "Seek ye the means to Him" (5:35) and "Had they but come to thee when they had wronged themselves, and asked Allah forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-Returning, Merciful" (4:64) and because the Companions -- may Allah be well pleased with them -- used to seek a means through Allah's Messenger, as narrated concerning the blind man who used Allah's Messenger as a means (to obtain his request) and his eyes were opened.

"The Community has reached consensus on the fact that *tawassul* is permissible as long as one's belief is sound *(idha sahhat al-`aqida)*, and the consensus of the Community constitutes a legal proof *(ijma` al-umma hujjatun shar`iyya)*; as the Prophet said: "My Community shall not agree on an error." As for the claim of some extremists *(ghulat)* of the Wahhabiyya whereby the law's position with regard to the person who makes *tawassul* is that it is *shirk* (worshipping other than Allah together with Him): there is no proof for such a claim either legally or rationally, because the person who makes *tawassul* does not contravene the Prophet's order: "If you ask, ask Allah, and if you seek help, seek help from Allah." Rather, he is asking Him through one beloved to Him in order that his supplication be answered, and this is what our Glorious and Majestic Lord likes from us. How then can we judge that he is committing *shirk* when he is not a *mushrik* (one who commits *shirk*). Such an act the law considers abominable and our religion declares itself innocent of it, since it has been said: "Whoever declares a believer to be an disbeliever has committed disbelief."

"Our master Usama ibn Zayd killed a mushrik after the latter had said: "There is no god but Allah" *(la ilaha illallah)*. When news of this reached Allah's Messenger he condemned our master Usama in the strongest terms and he said to him: "How can you kill him after he said *la ilaha illallah*?" He replied: "But he said it with the sword hanging over his head?" The Prophet said again: "How can you kill him after he said *la ilaha illallah*?" He replied: "O Messenger of Allah, he said it in dissimulation *(taqiyyatan)*?" The Prophet said: "Did you split his heart open (to see)?" and he did not cease to reprove him until Usama wished that he had not entered Islam until after he had killed that man so that he might have been forgiven all his past sins through belief.

"From this and other narrations we conclude that some of the Wahhabis today may be guilty of hastening to accuse others of disbelief *(takfir)*, as they have done in the past with hundreds of thousands in the Hijaz whom they massacred even as they were saying *la ilaha illallah*, and as the Kharijis have done in the time of our Master `Ali -- may Allah ennoble his countenance.

"In short, *tawassul* is not prohibited, rather it is legally commendable *(mustahsanu shar`an)*, and it is not permitted to cast the label of *shirk* on the believer. This is what will be found in the established books of Islamic law. And Allah knows best."

6 Jumada I 1400
22 March 1980
Signature of the Secretary of *Fatwas* in Hama
Seal of the Ministry of Religious Endowments
District of the *Muhafazat* of Hama, Syria

FATWA OF SHAYKH SUHAYL AL-ZABIBI

The following *fatwa* on *tawassul* was given by Shaykh Abu Sulayman Suhayl al-Zabibi the Imam of the Mosque of Najjarin in Damascus. It is reproduced in full in the 1992 Waqf Ikhlas reprint of Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan's section of his history of Islam already cited.

Text of *fatwa*:

"In the Name of Allah the Merciful the Beneficent, and Blessings and Peace upon our Master Muhammad and upon his Excellent and Pure Family and all those who follow them with excellence until the Day of Judgment.

"To proceed, you have sent us a letter in which you ask the *fatwa* concerning belief in *tawassul* through the Prophets and Messengers, Blessings and Salutations be upon them, and the text of your question is: Is the person who believes in this (*tawassul*) a *mushrik* (one who worships other than Allah together with Him) or a *kafir* (disbeliever), and is his worship -- such as *salat, zakat, hajj,* and *sawm* -- sound or void *(sahiha am fasida)*? And you have asked for an exposition from the Glorious Book because it is the first source of legislation, and from the True Sunna because it holds the second rank in the derivation of proofs after the Noble Qur'an, and from the Consensus *(ijma`)* and the sayings of the pious early generations, may Allah be well pleased with them, because they are closer than us to the full understanding of Allah's Book and the Sunna of His Messenger.

"This is the answer which I give while asking Allah's help and His power and might:

Belief *(i`tiqad)* in *tawassul* through the Prophets and Messengers, Blessings and Peace be upon them, and through the Righteous Friends of Allah *(al-awliya' al-salihin)* upon whose goodness, righteousness, uprightness, and friendship with Allah there is general agreement, is true belief, not disbelief, and I consider it permissible, not forbidden; and

The person seeking such as the above as a means to Allah in order that his need be fulfilled is a believer and one who declares the oneness of Allah, not one who worships other than Allah together with Him, and all his acts of worship are sound.

"Among the proofs for this from Qur'an: Allah the Blessed and the Exalted said: "O ye who believe, fear Allah and seek ye the means to Him" (5:35) in surat *al-Ma'ida* verse 35 *juz'* 6. Some of the scholars of Islam have derived from this verse a proof for the legality of seeking help and a means to Allah through the righteous ones among His servants, and of considering them a means between Allah the Almighty and His servants for the fulfillment of needs provided that the person making *tawassul* believes that the effective doer *(al-fa``al)* is Allah and none other. If one thinks otherwise, he has committed disbelief, may Allah the Exalted protect us!

"Also among the proofs from Qur'an for *tawassul* is the saying of Allah the the Blessed and the Exalted: "Had they but come to thee when they had wronged themselves, and asked Allah forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-Returning, Merciful" from sura al-Nisa' verse 64 *juz'* 5. Ibn Kathir said in explanation of this verse: Allah the Exalted advises those who disobey and those who sin, when they commit their mistakes and disobedience, to come to Allah's Messenger and seek Allah's forgiveness in his presence and ask him (the Prophet) to forgive them. If they do this, Allah relents towards them, grants them mercy, and forgives them; whence He said: "They would have found Allah Oft-Returning, Merciful."

"Ibn Kathir continues: A large number of the scholars, among whom is Shaykh Abu Mansur al-Sabbagh in his book *al-Shamil*, have mentioned the well-known account related by al-`Utbi who said: As I was sitting by the grave of the Prophet, a Bedouin Arab came and said: Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah! I heard that Allah said: "If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful," so I have come to you asking forgiveness for my sin, seeking your intercession with my Lord *(mustashfi`an bika ila rabbi)*. Then he began to recite poetry:

O best of those whose bones are buried in the deep earth,
And from whose fragrance the depth and the height
have become sweet,
May my life be the ransom for a grave which thou inhabit,
And in which are found purity, bounty, and munificence!

"Then he left, and I dozed and saw the Prophet in my sleep. He said to me: O `Utbi, run after the Bedouin and give him glad tidings that Allah has forgiven him. This is the end of Ibn Kathir's discourse.

"Here now is the proof from the noble hadith. The following hadith was extracted by the following masters of hadith among the Imams: Ibn Khuzayma in his *Sahih* (the rank of which approximates that of *Sahih Muslim*), al-Nasa'i in his book *`Amal al-yawm wa al-layla*, al-Tirmidhi in his *Jami`* and he said of it *hasan sahih gharib*, that is, with respect to the fact that only Abu Ja`far `Umayr ibn Yazid al-Khutami al-Madani al-Basri narrates it, and he is *thiqa* (trustworthy) according to Nasa'i and Ibn Ma`in, therefore the fact that it is *gharib* does not jeopardize its rank of *sahih*. Ibn Majah also narrated it and confirmed Abu Ishaq [Ibn Rahawayh] who declared it *sahih*, and so did al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak* who said: "It is sound according to the criterion of Bukhari and Muslim," and Dhahabi confirmed him.

"From `Uthman ibn Hunayf: He was with the Prophet at the time a blind man came to him complaining of his lack of eyesight, etc. This is a sound hadith in which the Prophet explicitly orders those who have a certain need to make *tawassul* and call him in his absence -- both in his life and after his death. This is precisely what the Companions understood from him, as his order to any given person in the Community is directed to all the Community in every time as long as there is no proof that it is specific to an individual. What then if there is proof to the contrary -- i.e. that it is not specific to an individual? Tabarani related in his *Mu`jam al-kabir* and *Mu`jam al-saghir* that a man in need used to try to visit `Uthman ibn `Affan frequently, etc. Tabarani said the hadith was sound and Bayhaqi narrated it in *Dala'il al-nubuwwa* with a good chain."

Abu Sulayman Suhayl al-Zabibi
Imam of Masjid al-Najjarin
(Damascus, Syria)

FATWA OF MUSTAFA IBN AHMAD IBN AL-HASAN AL-SHATTI AL-HANBALI AL-ATHARI AL-DIMASHQI (1856-1929 C.E.)

From the 1994 Waqf Ikhlas offset reprint of al-Shatti's *al-Nuqul al-shar`iyya fi al-radd `ala al-wahhabiyya* (The Legal Proof-Texts Concerning the Reply to the Wahhabi Sect)

Allah said:

1. *Fa istaghathahu al-ladhi min shi`atihi* (28:15) "The man of his [Musa's] own people appealed to him [P: asked him for help] against his foe."[40]

2. *Wa law annahum idh zalamu anfusahum ja'uka fa istaghfarullah...* (4:64) "If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee [Muhammad] and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them [P: and asked forgiveness of the Messenger], they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful."

If a Wahhabi says: "This is specific to him (the Prophet) being alive," we say there is unanimity and the clearest evidences about the Prophet being alive in his honored grave.[41]

The rule of this noble verse is applicable now and any time Allah wills. This is why you see that all scholars recommend reading this verse when visiting his honored grave.[42] This fact cannot be hidden from anybody who has studied the sayings of the scholars in this respect. There is no need to detail it again. Anyone who claims a contrary interpretation has to bring evidence to that effect. And how will he get such evidence when many other verses teach the believers to seek shelter with the Prophet?

Among such verses are: *al-nabiyyu awla bil mu'minina min anfusihim* (33:6) "The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves, and his wives are (as) their mothers," and *wa ma arsalnaka illa rahmatan lil `alamin* (21:107) "We did not send you except as a Mercy to the worlds. This is exactly what was understood by the father of humanity, Adam, from the juxtaposition of the name of the Prophet to Almighty Allah's name. Adam understood that the Prophet is the intermediary and the means to Him, so he sought intercession through him to his Lord in order to be forgiven; and he was forgiven as has been established.[43]

As for the verses and ahadith which have been put forward by the Wahhabis such as the following: *ud`uni astajib lakum* (40:60) "Call on [P: pray unto] me; I will answer [P: hear] your prayer"; *fa firru ila Allah* (51:50) "Therefore flee unto Allah"; *wa in yamsask Allahu bi durrin fa la kashifa lahu illa hu* (6:17, 10:107) "If Allah touch thee with affliction, none can remove it [P: relieve therefrom] but He", "If Allah do touch thee with hurt, there is none can remove it but He"; *wa nahnu aqrabu ilayhi min habl al-warid* (50:16) "For We are nearer to him than his jugular vein"; Hadith: *idha ista`anta fa ista`in billah* "If you ask for help, then ask help from Allah" etc; these verses do not support the Wahhabis' claim that it is prohibited to use the means of Prophets and the pious. This is very clear. Those who agree among Muslims about the permissibility and recommendability of seeking the Prophets and pious ones as means never meant to suppose any effective power as originating in them. They never believed such a belief at all! Rather, all Muslims believe that Allah Almighty is the doer of His own free deliberation, and He alone is the giver and taker of existence, of benefit, and harm. This is one of the basic beliefs in Islam. The scholars never considered seeking the means of Prophets and the pious ones as consisting in *mimman ittakhadha min dunillahi andadan* or "taking equals other than Allah" as the Wahhabis have claimed.

How dare they use for evidence to support their school of thought verses like: *wa la ya'murukum an tattakhidhu al-mala'ikata wal-nabiyyina arbaban* (3:80) "[P:] And He commanded you not that ye should take the angels and the Prophets
for lords" and the like! This is a clear manipulation of the meaning of the verse and a use of something out of its proper place. If you mention the specious argument of those who forbid using an intermediary, namely that they see the common people often requesting from the pious ones, whether living or dead, what should properly be requested only from Allah Almighty: that is open to question in our opinion and not a proven fact as Ibn Taymiyya overtly misrepresents it in many of his books and treatises! For he discusses something to that effect in relation to the hadith of the blind man when he begins with the words: "Concerning this [*tawassul*] there is the hadith of the blind man..." This is a summation of his opposition to the issue at hand: "And they find that the common people say to the saint *(wali)*: Do such-and-such for me, and these words that they use suggest an influence on their part which properly belongs only to Allah Almighty."

I answer that these confusing expressions must be interpreted figuratively, and the proof for their having to be taken figuratively is that they originate in the mouth of a pure monotheist *(muwahhid)*. Therefore, if the common person is asked of the soundness of his belief in what he is saying, he will answer that Allah alone is the Most Effective Doer *(al-Fa`al)* without partner; and that he asks of those great ones who are honored by Allah and brought near Him because they mean by that to use them as their intermediaries to reach their goal which is Allah Almighty. The reason that they have recourse to the pious ones is that the latter have been placed high by Allah Himself and He is the One who holds them in such consideration and they obtain what they desire from Him, as He Himself has said.

We concede that it is good to recommend to the common people that they observe the path of good manners towards Allah Almighty in masking their requests; indeed it is a part of ordering the good and forbidding the reprehensible. However, it is not correct for us to forbid them from seeking means and using help in absolute terms. How can that be done when Allah Almighty said: "The man of his (Musa's) own people appealed to him against his foe" (28:15)?

REPUDIATION OF THOSE WHO COMPARE *TAWASSUL* AND ASKING INTERCESSION TO THE CHRISTIAN WORSHIP OF JESUS AND THE SAINTS, AND OF THOSE WHO LIMIT THE QUANTITY OF PERMISSIBLE *SALAWAT* ON THE PROPHET IN ANY WAY OR FORM

As for the specious comparison by some "Salafis" of Muslims making *tawassul* through the Prophet to the Christian worship of Jesus, or Muslims making *tawassul* through *awliya* to the Christian worship of saints, we ask Allah to reform those who make such comparisons and stray so widely from the right path in their views as to forget, by ignorance or design, that Muslims are strict monotheists who worship Allah alone and use the blessings of particular acts, times, places, and persons to benefit them, not as objects of worship. If they persist in not seeing the difference between taking one as an object of worship on the one hand, and using one as a means to obtain blessings on the other, we ask Allah for protection from such misguidance, for persistence in making analogies between the doctrines of Muslims and Christians in disregard of their fundamental disparity is a characteristic of the enemies of Islam.

One deviant sect in particular among these enemies of *tawassul* are the *bukhala'* or misers who wish to curtail sending "too much blessings and peace" on the Prophet on the pretense that it would foster worship of the Prophet. They claim -- and what a detestable claim -- that "praising him too much would be like ascribing a partner to Allah." *Subhan Allah*! The Prophet explicitly declared their status in the hadith when he said: "The miser *(bakhil)* is he before whom my name is mentioned and he does not invoke blessings and peace upon me."[44]

Allah said:

"Verily, Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O believers! Invoke blessings upon him, and utmost greetings." (33:56)

The *bukhala'* have declared their opposition to Allah Himself, since Allah Himself is sending his *salat* on the Prophet. If Allah does something, can anyone compete with Him in that? If not, and if He gives the order nevertheless to do the same, then how can that same thing ever be "too much"? Even one *salat* of Allah on His Prophet is more than all the *salawat* jinn and mankind can ever make, even if they made it forever. For that reason, our *salat* on the Prophet can never be enough, nor does it consist of anything at all on our part, but is only our asking more *salat* **from Allah on him**: *Allahuma salli `ala Muhammad*, i.e. "O Allah, we beg You to send Your *salat* on Your Prophet."

It is beyond us how anyone can dare say that there is too much praise for the Prophet when his very name is the Praised One. The scholars have even said that Allah has cut the name of the Prophet from His Own Name, as we shall explain *insha Allah* in the section on the Prophet's Names. Suffice it to say here that the names of Muhammad, Ahmad, and Mahmud: "Praised One, Most Praised, and Praiseworthy," were never given to any one person before or after him; and Allah said, as read by al-Baydawi in his Commentary:[45]

Allah suffices as witness
(that) Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah!
(48:28-29)

What differentiates the Muslims from the Jews? The Jews say *la ilaha illallah* but they never like to say *Musa rasulullah*. They are stingy in love for their Prophet. Christians similarly refuse to say *`Isa rasulullah* although for other reasons. Both groups refuse to say *Muhammadun rasulullah* and that is where we differ. You cannot be Muslim without the latter, even if you are a believer in God. This makes the second part of the *shahada* a requirement for entering Islam, and thus belief in the Prophet is a means for salvation from error and punishment. Allah never accepts anyone to come to Him saying "I love You directly": instead they must obey the order "If you indeed love Allah, then follow me, and Allah will love you" (3:31). Therefore love of Allah can only proceed from love of the Prophet and its sign is to praise him and invoke blessings upon him often, as he requested in the hadith *akthiru al-salat `alayya* ("Send much blessings upon me") which we cite below.

The scholars have explained that Allah's *salawat* or sending of blessings stands for *rahma* -- mercy-- while the believers' *salawat* or invocation of blessings stands for *du`a* -- supplication.[46] This verse on the *salawat* of Allah and His angels is absolute in sense and unrestricted with respect to quantity and time. In other words ***Allah and His angels send blessings, peace, mercy, honor, gifts, and salutations upon the Prophet at all times and with boundless abundance***. Allah orders the believers to invoke blessings upon him similarly, that is: incessantly, as far as they are able.

Furthermore, since the best remembrance is *la ilaha illallah*, a Muslim does not remember Allah except he also remembers the Prophet since he says directly after it: *muhammadun rasulullah*. This is established by Allah's saying: "Remember Me and I shall remember you" (2:152) as elucidated by the hadith: "Whoever invokes blessings upon me once, Allah sends ten blessings upon him."[47] In this connection *al-hafiz* Sakhawi said:

> Just as in the testimony of faith *(shahada)* Allah has placed His Messenger's blessed name next to His own sacred name and has said that he who obeys the Prophet obeys Him and he who loves the Prophet loves Him, in the same manner He has related our invoking blessings upon the Prophet to His own blessings upon us. Therefore just as Allah said about His remembrance: "Remember Me and I will remember you," likewise is His assurance: "Allah sends ten blessings on the one who invokes a single blessing on the Holy Prophet," as it is established in the sound hadith.[48]

Sakhawi mentions on the same page al-Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-`Arabi's similar explanation of the verse: "Whoso brings a good deed shall have ten the like of it" (6:160) as referring to the good deed of invoking blessings on the Prophet, in the light of the aforementioned hadith.

Anyone who dares claim that there is a limitation in quantity, quality, timeliness, or in any other aspect of invoking blessings and peace upon the Prophet has erred and strayed from the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the Religion of Islam. Be warned, Muslims who love your Prophet -- and every Muslim loves his Prophet -- about the dissemination of such false advice in your midst, which typifies the logic of those who cannot differentiate between worship and respect and are remiss in both, and typifies the hatred of non-Muslims for the central symbol of the Religion of Muslims -- Blessings and Peace upon him. Diminishing one's praise of the Prophet on the pretense that "it would foster his worship" is to imitate Iblis, who refused to prostrate to Adam on the claim that he only worships Allah.

Such are those who desire to extinguish Allah's light, but Allah will perfect His light in spite of them. None but non-Muslims cringe at the enthusiasm of the believers in invoking blessings on their Prophet. Such enthusiasm proceeds directly from the Prophet's own joy when he received news from Heaven of the immense mercy granted his Community for invoking blessings upon him:

> Sahl ibn Sa`d narrates: Allah's Messenger came out and met Abu Talha. The latter rose and went to him saying: "My father and mother be sacrificed for you, Messenger of Allah! I see joy and delight in your countenance?" The Prophet said: "Yes, for Gabriel has just come to me saying: O Muhammad, whoever among your Community invokes blessings upon you once, Allah records for Him ten meritorious deeds, erases from his register ten evil deeds, and raises him ten degrees because of it." al-Sakhawi said: "Our shaykh (Ibn Hajar) graded it *hasan* without doubt."[49]

Another extremely important reason why one must incessantly invoke blessings on the Prophet is that it is established in the hadith that "the *du`a* or invocation of the believer is suspended between heaven and earth as long as the invocation of blessings and peace upon your Prophet does not accompany it." Tirmidhi narrates this hadith from `Umar in the section of his *Sunan* entitled *Sifat al-salat `ala al-nabi*, and al-Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-`Arabi comments it thus:

> The chain of men who narrate this is sound and both Malik and Muslim have cited it though not Bukhari. Such an utterance on the part of `Umar can only be a Prophetic legislation because it is not subject to opinion. It is strengthened by Muslim's narration of the Prophet's words: "If you hear the *mu'adhdhin*, repeat his words after him then invoke blessings upon me... then ask Allah to grant me *al-wasila*..."[50]

It is established that invoking blessings on the Prophet is especially meritorious on Friday according to the following hadith:

> "Invoke blessings upon me abundantly on Friday because it is a day that is (particularly) witnessed and the angels witness it (abundantly). As soon as a person invokes blessings on me his invocation is shown to me until he ends it." Abu al-Darda' said: "Even after (your) death?" The Prophet replied: "Verily, Allah has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of Prophets."[51]

The Prophet explicitly confirmed that the believer gains by invoking blessings and peace upon him without restriction, even if one ceases all other forms of *du`a*. This is established in the hadith:

> Ubayy ibn Ka`b said: "After one third of the night the Prophet used to get up. One such time he said: O People! Remember Allah! The *rajifa* [first blow of the Trumpet] is upon us! The *radifa* [second blow of the Trumpet][52] follows it. Death has come." Ubayy said: *ya rasulallah inni ukthiru al-salata `alayka fa kam aj`al laka min salati* "O Messenger of Allah, I make much *salawat* upon you as a habit. How much of my prayer should I devote to you?" The Prophet said: "As much as you like." Ubayy said: "A quarter?" The Prophet said: "As you like, but if you add to that it will be better for you." Ubayy then mentioned a third, then a half, then two thirds, and always the Prophet answered: "As you like, but if you add to that it will be better for you." Finally Ubayy said: *ya rasulallah inni uridu an aj`ala salati kullaha lak* **"O Messenger of Allah, I want to devote my entire prayer (i.e. *du`a*) to you." Whereupon the Prophet said: "Then you will be freed from care and your sins will be forgiven."** (Another version has: "Then Allah will suffice you in the matter of your worldly life and your hereafter.")[53]

The scholars of Islam have contributed many commentaries on this important hadith, of which we cite the following from Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami's *Fatawa hadithiyya* and from the *hafiz* al-Sakhawi's *al-Qawl al-badi`*:

> (Haytami:) It is understood from the wording of these narrations that the meaning of the word *salat* in the expression: "I shall devote my *salat* to you" is *du`a'* -- invocation... Then the meaning is: "There is a time in which I make *du`a* on behalf of myself: how much of that should I devote to you?" If this is established firmly, then consider what the Shaykh al-Islam *al-hafiz* Ibn Hajar said as reported from him by his student *al-hafiz* al-Sakhawi who particularly commended this saying of his: "This hadith constitutes a tremendous principle of the Religion for whoever makes *du`a* after his recitation and says: O Allah, grant our Master Allah's Messenger the reward of this worship."[54]
>
> (Sakhawi:) *Salat* in this hadith means invocation *(du`a')* and habitual devotion *(wird)* in the following sense: "There is a time in which I make *du`a* on behalf of myself: how much of that should I devote to you?" The Prophet did not consider that he should place a limit for him in this respect in order not to close the gate of superabundance for him. Accordingly he persisted in giving Ubayy the choice at the same time as he stressed for him surplus in invocation until Ubayy said: "I shall devote my entire prayer to you." That is: I shall invoke blessings upon you instead of asking anything for myself. Whereupon the Prophet said: "Then you will be freed from care," that is: do not worry either for your Religion or for your worldly need, because invoking blessings on me includes both remembrance of Allah and rendering honor to the Prophet; and the sense of this is an indication to Ubayy that he is actually invoking for himself, as confirmed by the Prophet's report on behalf of his Lord: "Whoever is occupied from beseeching Me because of remembering Me, I shall grant him the best of what I grant those who beseech."[55] Know then that if you make most of your worship consist in invoking blessings upon your Prophet, Allah will suffice you in the matter of your worldly life and your hereafter.[56]

However, according to the party of the *bukhala'* -- the mean and miserly -- to follow the Prophet's advice in this matter "would foster his worship"! How far is this "Salafi" opinion from the Qur'an and the Sunna! In 1,400 years of sending *salawat* on the Prophet far more abundantly than in our age, we have never witnessed what they claim; how then do they want us to fear its occurrence now? Have they forgotten that the Prophet specifically said: "Those closest to me in the hereafter are those who invoked blessings upon me the most (in dunya)"[57] and "No people sit at length without mentioning Allah and invoking blessings on His Prophet except they will incur dissatisfaction from Allah (or: dissatisfaction on the Day of Rising): if He likes He will punish them and if He likes He will forgive them"[58]? Rather, they are intent on hindering Muslims from expressing love for their Prophet through invoking blessings upon him, celebrating his birth, reading his life story, and encouraging each other towards knowing him and loving him more than their own parents and children. This is the great characteristic of this Community which its enemies wish to eradicate: we know our Prophet; we keep his status high; we prefer his Sunna to all other lifestyles; and we cherish his love among us more dearly than our own lives and properties.

The following is a list of the principal benefits obtained by invoking blessings on the Prophet as compiled by the *hafiz* al-Sakhawi in his book devoted to the topic, entitled *al-Qawl al-badi` fi al-salat `ala al-habib al-shafi`* (The Radiant Discourse Concerning the Invocation of Blessings on the Beloved Intercessor):

> Among the rewards of one who performs *salat* upon Allah's Messenger are the following:
>
> The *salat* -- blessing -- of Allah, His angels, and His Prophet on that person;
> the expiation of his faults;
> the purification of his works;
> the exaltation of his rank;
> the forgiveness of his sins;
> the asking of forgiveness for him by his own *salat*;
> the recording of rewards the like of Mount Uhud for him and his repayment in superabundant measure;
> the comfort of his world and his hereafter if he devotes his entire *salat* to invoking blessings upon him;
> the obliteration of more faults than that effected by the manumission of a slave;
> his deliverance from affliction because of it;
> the witnessing of the Prophet himself to it;
> the guarantee of the Prophet's intercession for him;
> Allah's pleasure, mercy, and safety from His anger;
> admission under the shade of the Throne for him;
> preponderance of his good deeds in the Balance;
> his admission to drink from the Prophet's Pond;
> his safety from thirst and deliverance from the Fire;
> his ability to cross the Bridge swiftly;
> the sight of his seat in Paradise before he dies;
> numerous wives in Paradise;
> the preponderance of his *salat* over more than twenty military conquests;
> its equivalency to giving alms to the needy;
> its being *zakat* and purification for him;
> his wealth will increase because of its blessing;
> more than one hundred of his needs will be fulfilled through it;
> it constitutes worship;
> it is the most beloved of all deeds to Allah;
> it beautifies meetings;
> it cancels out poverty and material duress;
> it lets him expect and find goodness everywhere;
> it makes him the most deserving of goodness;
> he benefits from it as well as his children and theirs, as well as those to whom its reward is gifted in the register of his good deeds;
> it brings him near to Allah and to His Prophet;
> it is a light that helps him against his enemies;
> it cleans his heart of hypocrisy and rust;
> it commands the love of people and the sight of the Prophet in dreams;
> it forbids slander *(ghiba)* against him;
>
> In sum, it is among the most blessed, most meritorious, most useful of deeds in Religion and in the life of the world, and carries desirable rewards other than all this for those who are clever and eager to acquire the deeds which constitute treasures for them, and harvest the most flourishing and glowing of hopes. They do this by focusing on the deed that includes all these tremendous merits, noble qualities, manifold and all-encompassing benefits which are not found together in any other. Nor do they characterize any other human action or speech except this: *sallahu `alayhi wa sallama tasliman kathiran* -- may Allah bless him and greet him abundantly.[59]

DARUD TAJ: INVOCATION OF BLESSINGS UPON THE PROPHET KNOWN AS "INVOCATION OF THE CROWN"

The following is a transliteration and translation of a famous invocation of blessings on the Prophet entitled *Darud taj* or "Invocation of the Crown" which is especially well known in the Indian subcontinent:

Transliteration

allahumma salli `ala sayyidina wa mawlana Muhammad

sahibi al-taji wal-mi`raji wal-buraqi wal-`alam
dafi` al-bala'i wal-waba'i wal-qahti wal-maradi wal-alam

ismuhu maktubun marfu`un mashfu`un manqushun fi al- lawhi wal-qalam
sayyidi al-`arabi wal-`ajam

jismuhu muqaddasun mu`attarun mutahharun munawwarun fil-bayti wal-haram

shams al-duha badr al-duja sadr al`ula nur al-huda
kahf al-wara misbah al-zulam

jamil al-shyam shafi` al-umam sahib al-judi wal-karam

wallahu `asimuhu wa jibrilu khadimuhu wal-buraqu markabuhu
wal-mi`raju safaruhu wa sidratu al-muntaha maqamuhu

wa qaba qawsayni matlubuhu
wal-matlubu maqsuduhu wal-maqsudu mawjuduhu

sayyid al-mursalin khatim al-nabiyyin
shafi` al-mudhnibin anis al-gharibin

rahmatun li al-`alamin
rahat al-`ashiqin murad al-mushtaqin
shams al-`arifin siraj al-salikin misbah al-muqarrabin
muhibb al-fuqara' wal-masakin

sayyid al-thaqalayn
nabiyy al-haramayn
imam al-qiblatayn
wasilatina fi al-darayn
sahibi qaba qawsayn
mahbub rabbi al-mashriqayni wal-maghribayn

jadd al-hasani wal-husayn
mawlana wa mawla al-thaqalayn
Abi al-Qasimi MUHAMMAD Ibni `Abdillah
nurin min nurillah

ya ayyuha al-mushtaquna bi nuri jamalihi
sallu `alayhi wa alihi wa sallimu taslima

Allahumma salli `ala Muhammadin wa `ala ali Muhammadin wa sallim

Translation

O Allah, send blessings and Peace upon our Master and Patron Muhammad,

The Owner of the Crown and the Ascent and the Buraq and the Standard,
The Repeller of Affliction and Disease and Drought and Illness and Pain.

His name is written on high, served and engraved in the Tablet and the Pen,
The Leader of All, Arabs and non-Arabs,
Whose body is sanctified, fragrant, and pure,
Illumined in the House and the Haram,

The Sun of Brightness, the Full Moon in Darkness,
The Foremost One in the Highest Fields, the Light of Guidance,
The Cave of Refuge for Mortals, the Lamp That Dispels the Night,
The Best-Natured One, The Intercessor of Nations,
The Owner of Munificence and Generosity.

Allah is his Protector, Gabriel is his servant.
The Buraq is his mount, the Ascent is his voyage,
The Lote-Tree of the Furthermost Boundary is his station,
Two Bow-Lengths or Nearer is his desire,
His desire is his goal, and he has found his goal,

The Master of the Messengers, the Seal of the Prophets,
The intercessor of sinners, the friend of the strangers,
The Mercy for the Worlds,
The rest of those who burn with love, the goal of those who yearn,

The sun of knowers, the lamp of travellers,
The light of Those Brought Near,
The friend of the poor and destitute,

The master of Humans and Jinn,
The Prophet of the Two Sanctuaries,
The Imam of the Two *Qibla*s,

Our Means in the Two Abodes,
The Owner of *Qaba Qawsayn*,
The Beloved of the Lord of the Two Easts and the Two Wests,

The grandfather of al-Hasan and al-Husayn,
Our patron and the patron of Humans and Jinn:
Abu al-Qasim MUHAMMAD Son of `Abd Allah,
A light from the light of Allah.

O you who yearn for the light of his beauty,
Send blessings and utmost greetings of peace
Upon him and upon his Family.

ANOTHER INVOCATION OF BLESSINGS AND PEACE UPON THE PROPHET

This is another well-known invocation of blessings and peace upon the Prophet. Some of the words in it come from the Ansar who greeted the Prophet with outpourings of joy and acclamation when he entered Madina for his Emigration there.[60] On this chapter the Companion al-Bara' ibn `Azib narrates:

> The first people who came to us (in Medina) were Mus`ab ibn `Umayr and Ibn Umm Maktum who were teaching Qur'an to the people. Then there came Bilal, Sa`d, and `Ammar ibn Yasir. After that `Umar ibn al-Khattab came along with twenty other Companions of the Prophet. Later on the Prophet himself came and I had never seen the people of Medina so joyful as they were on the arrival of Allah's Apostle, for even the slave girls were saying, "Allah's Apostle has arrived!" Before his arrival I had already memorized the Sura starting with: "GLORIFY THE NAME OF YOUR LORD, THE MOST HIGH" (87:1) together with other Suras of *al-Mufassal*.[61]

Blessings and peace on the one who said: "I was sent to all people without exception"[62] and "I was sent only as Mercy. I was not sent as a punishment."[63]

ya nabi salam `alayka
ya rasul salam `alayka
ya habib salam `alayka
salawatullah `alayka

O Prophet, Peace be upon you.
O Messenger, Peace be upon you.
O Beloved, Peace be upon you.
The Blessings of Allah be upon you.

tala`a al-badru `alayna
min thaniyyat al-wada`
wajaba al-shukru `alayna
ma da`a lillahi da`

The full moon has risen over us
From the mountains of al-Wada`.
We shall ever give thanks for it
As long as there will be callers to Allah.

anta shamsun anta badrun
anta nurun fawqa nur
anta iksiru al-wujud
anta misbah al-sudur

You are a sun, you are a full moon,
You are light upon light,
You are the quintessence of existence,
You are the lamp in every breast

ashraqa al-badru `alayna
fakhtafat minhu al-budur
mithla husnik ma ra'ayna
qattu ya wajh al-surur

The full moon has risen over us
Eclipsing all other moons.
Such as your beauty we have never seen
No, never, O face of delight!

ya habibi ya muhammad
ya `arus al-khafiqayn
ya mu'ayyad ya mumajjad
ya imam al qiblatayn

O My beloved, O Muhammad,
O bridegroom of the East and the West,
The one Allah vindicated and exalted,
O Imam of the Two Directions!

ya nabi salam `alayka
ya rasul salam `alayka
ya habib salam `alayka
salawatullah `alayka

Abundant Blessings and Greetings of Peace upon the Prophet, his Family, and his Companions.

ALBANI'S REWORDING OF THE PROPHET'S *DU`A* OF *TAWASSUL*

Following is a concise refutation of a recent dissertation by the "Salafi" shaykh Albani entitled *Tawassul: Its Types and Its Rulings* currently distributed in translation among English-speaking Muslims by his supporters in order to replace with "Salafi" ideology the understanding of *Ahl al-Sunna* regarding *tawassul*.[64] It will be seen with Allah's permission that the commentary of Albani is a proof against "Salafis" and all those who follow new teachings instead of clinging to the *sawad al-a`zam* or massive majority of scholars. Their pretext that "there is disagreement about *tawassul*" and that "we follow proof not scholars" is a sham. There is no disagreement about *tawassul* among *Ahl al-Sunna* except the dissent of some lone voices in the matter, such as Ibn Taymiyya who declared travel undertaken to visit the Prophet an act of disobedience: this is not disagreement but *shudhudh* or dissent, as classified by Imam Ahmad in speaking of the disagreement of the lone scholar with the consensus. There seems to be little doubt that Albani has achieved the same dubious distinction of dissenting with one and all, as he proudly admits in the following lines of his book, especially the second sentence which we have emphasized:

> Imaam Ahmad allowed *tawassul* by means of the Messenger alone, and others such as Imaam ash-Shawkaanee allowed *tawassul* by means of him and other Prophets and the Pious. [Note that he omits to mention Imam Malik and Imam Shafi`i as permitting *tawassul* also.] *However we* [i.e. Albani and his party]*, as is the case in all matters where there is disagreement, follow whatever is supported by the proof whatever that is, without blindly sticking to the opinions of men.*[65]

The proofs that Albani alone purports to see -- against what the majority understand -- are characteristic of the "Salafi" method. As the scholars who debate them well know, the "Salafi" method consists in a lack of method in and a non-recognition of any of the established principles of the derivation of rulings from the primary sources other than what fits the purpose of their position at the time. Scholars of *Ahl al-Sunna* may traditionally familiarize themselves with the *fiqh* and the *usul* of other than their own school, but this is impossible to do with the "Salafis," because they completely lack any type of method and shift constantly from one position to another depending on the purpose at hand. Albani has achieved particular notoriety for his contamination of the field of hadith scholarship with this systematic unaccountability and free-lance style.

As we will see in the section on *salat* in the present work, Albani had previously suggested altering the prayer by changing the words *as-salamu `alayka ayyuha al-nabi* to *as-salamu `ala al-nabi* in the *tashahhud* whereas the Prophet explicitly said, as related in Bukhari and Muslim: "Pray as you see me pray," and: "Who innovates something in this matter of ours (meaning religion), it is *radd* (rejected)." And here is Albani now trying to alter the *tawassul* through the Prophet which is valid for all and for all times, and reduce it to a one-time *du`a* of the Prophet valid only for a single man in the Prophet's time. But, as the Prophet said: "There is no preventing what Allah has given, and there is no avoidance of what He has decreed."[66]

1. *ALBANI'S TAMPERING WITH THE HADITH ITSELF*

> It is reported by Ahmad and others with an authentic chain of narration from Uthmaan bin Haneef **[sic]** "that a blind man came to the Prophet (SAW) and said, 'supplicate to Allaah that He should cure me.' So he (SAW) said, 'if you wish I will supplicate for you and if you wish I will delay that for that is better (and in a narration: and if you wish have patience and that is better for you).' So he said, 'supplicate to Him.' So he (SAW) ordered him to make wudoo, and to make wudoo well, and to pray two rak'ahs and to supplicate with this du'aa, 'O Allaah I ask you and turn to you by means of your Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy, O Muhammad I have turned by means of you (i.e. your du`aa) **[sic]** to my Lord in this need of mine, so that it may be fulfilled for me, O Allaah accept him as supplicant on my behalf, and accept my supplication for him (to be accepted for me) **[sic]**.' He said, 'So the man did it and he was cured.'"
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* p. 68**

1. Albani or his translator err on the narrator's name. This is the Companion `Uthman ibn Hunayf, not Haneef, and his full name is Abu `Amr `Uthman ibn Hunayf ibn Wahb of Aws, may Allah be well pleased with him.[67]

2. The wording of the hadith is: "O Muhammad I have turned **with you** *(bika)* to my Lord." It is not "O Muhammad I have turned by means of your *du`a (bi du`a'ika)* to my Lord." We shall see that this blatant interpolation of another term in lieu of the explicit wording of the hadith is central to Albani's attempt to reword this hadith of the Prophet (we have already transcribed the complete and correct translation of this hadith above, in the section entitled SEEKING MEANS THROUGH THE PROPHET).

3. The blind man's final words are not "and accept my supplication for him" nor could they be, since he is not praying for the Prophet but for himself. He is imploring Allah to help him by means of the Prophet's intercession, not by means of his own, and he is practicing Islam, not egalitarianism!

The original Arabic is (in one of two versions in Ahmad): *wa tashaffa`ni fihi* which must be translated: "and join me to him in supplicating You (i.e. join my supplication to his)," as he is well aware that the likelihood of his being heard increases exponentially if it is linked to the Prophet's audience.

One may excuse the false suggestion that the man not only prays for the Prophet's intercession for him but also for his own interceding for the Prophet as stemming from a bad translation. However, the poor translation is just as deliberate as the misrendering of "O Muhammad I have turned by means of your *du`a* to my Lord," since Albani, as we shall see, tries to adduce the supposed *du`a* of the blind man on behalf of the Prophet as additional evidence to support his idea that the *tawassul* in the hadith is by means of *du`a* and not by means of the person of the Prophet.

Furthermore the words of the blind man's final request "and join me to him in supplicating You" are not in all versions. They are not found in Ahmad's first version out of two, nor in Tirmidhi's version, nor in Ibn Majah's version, nor in Nasa'i's version, nor in the version retained by Imam Nawawi in his *Adhkar*![68] Why then does Albani cite it as the primary text instead of assigning it parenthetical mention, as he does with the phrase: "(and in a narration: and if you wish have patience and that is better for you)"? Because, as we have said, he wants to make the entire hadith revolve around *tawassul* ***through the du`a of the Prophet as opposed to his person***, and he wants to adduce the blind man's own supposed *tawassul* through his own *du`a* as additional evidence of his claim, as we see below.

2. *ALBANI'S DISSENT AND CONTEMPT FOR THE SCHOLARS*

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> The opponents hold that this hadeeth shows that it is permissible to make *tawassul* in du'aa by the status of the Prophet (SAW) or other pious people, since the Prophet (SAW) taught the blind man to use him as a means of nearness in his du'aa, and the blind man did that and his sight was restored.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* p. 69**

Observe how he says "the opponents," although it is he who has brought opposition to something established in Islam, and he invented that it is not through the Prophet's sacred status *(hurmat)* or person (dhaat) but through his *du`a* that *tawassul* is permissible, in open contradiction to the understanding of the Salaf such as Mujahid, Imam Malik,[69] Imam al-Shafi`i,[70] Imam Ahmad,[71] Ibrahim al-Harbi, and al-Shawkani as we have already seen, and that of Ibn al-Jawzi, Nawawi, Ibn al-Humam, and Ibn al-Qayyim as we see below.

> As for us, than **[sic]** we hold that the hadeeth has no proof for them concerning this form of *tawassul* about which there is disagreement, which is seeking nearness by means of his person. Rather it is a further proof for the third type of lawful and prescribed *tawassul* which we have spoken of previously [i.e. through the du'aa of another person], since the *tawassul* of the blind man was through means of his (SAW) du'aa, and the proofs for what we say are many being contained in the hadeeth itself, most importantly:
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* p. 69**

Rather, Muslims believe as Ibn al-Jawzi said that **it is through the Prophet's person and status and not only through his *du`a* that one makes *tawassul***, as is clear from this excerpt from his chapter concerning the Prophet's superiority over the other Prophets in his book *al-Wafa*:

> Part of the exposition of his superiority to other Prophets
> is the fact that Adam asked his Lord through the sacred status
> *(hurma)* of Muhammad that He relent towards him, as we have
> already mentioned.[72]

The importance of this remark does not lie in the veracity of the hadith, which is a separate discussion -- and Ibn al-Jawzi clearly considers it authentic -- but in the wording of Ibn al-Jawzi whereby *tawassul* is correct as made through the status of the Prophet. This is enough of an indication that Ibn al-Jawzi's *`aqida* or doctrine concerning *tawassul* fully contradicts that of Albani and his followers. It comes down to deciding who is closer to following the Sunna: the Imams, *huffaz* and historians on the one hand -- or the polemicist and scholar of books? *al-hamdu lillah*, this is no dilemma at all.

Indeed the position of Albani is not founded upon the explicit words of the hadith, but upon their figurative interpretation. The hadith clearly says: *bi nabiyyika* i.e. with/by means of/through Your Prophet. Even a child of seven years old can see that this does not mean "through the *du`a* of your Prophet." Nor does he provide any justification for his recourse to figurative interpretation in a matter where the literal meaning is clear and true.

> 1) The reason the blind man came to the Prophet (SAW) was for him to make supplication (du'aa) for him, as he said, 'Supplicate Allaah that He should cure me.' So he sought to use his (SAW) du'aa as a means of nearness to Allaah, the Most High, since he knew that his (SAW) supplication was more likely to be accepted by Allaah than the du'aa of others, and if the intention of the blind man was to seek nearness to Allaah by means of the Prophet's (SAW) person or status or his right, then he would have had no need to go to the Prophet (SAW), or to ask him to make du'aa for him, rather he would have sat in his house, and supplicated to his Lord saying, for example, 'O Allaah I ask You by the status of your Prophet and his station with You, that You cure me and enable me to see.'
>
> But that is not what he did. Why? because he was an Arab and knew very well the meaning of '*tawassul*' in the Arabic Language, and knew that it was not a word said by a person with a need, mentioning the name of a person as an intermediary, rather it had to include coming to one whom he believed to be pious and have knowledge of the Book and the Sunnah and ask him to make du'aa for him.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* p. 69**

This argument is entirely speculative and the *Shari`a* is not derived from speculation. The facts are clear. The ruling is not derived only from the fact that the blind man came to the Prophet but from the entirety of the hadith. The blind man came asking for the Prophet's *du`a*, and the Prophet subsequently *taught* him a form of *du`a* that he should make after performing *wudu'* and praying two rak`at. In the latter *du`a* the Prophet further *taught* him to make *tawassul* with certain clear and explicit words. These same words were used by the man in need in the time of sayyidina `Uthman ibn `Affan, after the time of the Prophet. Was the man in need not also an Arab who knew very well the meaning of '*tawassul*' in the Arabic Language?

About the hadith of the man in need which we have already cited in full earlier, Shaykh Yusuf al-Rifa`i wrote in his rebuttal to a "Salafi" critic entitled "The Evidence of the Sunni Community" *(Adilla Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama`a)*: "This is an explicit, unequivocal text from a prophetic Companion proving the validity of *tawassul* through the dead"; and Shaykh Muhammad al-Hamid (1910-1969) has written in his "Rebuttals of Falsehoods" *(Rudud `ala abatil)*: "As for calling upon the righteous (when they are physically absent, as in the words *Ya Muhammad* in the hadiths of `Uthman Ibn Hunayf), *tawassul* to Allah Most High through them is permissible, the supplication (*du`a*) being to Allah Most Glorious, and there is much evidence for its permissibility. Those who call on them intending *tawassul* cannot be blamed."[73] Are Shaykh al-Sayyid Yusuf al-Rifa`i, Shaykh Muhammad al-Hamid, and Shaykh `Abd Allah al-Ghumari not also Arabs who know very well the meaning of '*tawassul*' in the Arabic Language?

Were Imam Ahmad, Shawkani, and Ibn al-Jawzi not also Arabs who knew very well the meaning of '*tawassul*' in the Arabic Language? What about Imam Nawawi and Ibn al-Humam, who are cited below as instructing every visitor to the Prophet in Madina to seek him as a means in *tawassul* -- are they not Arabs who knew very well the meaning of '*tawassul*' in the Arabic Language? All these major scholars did not seem to experience the same problem as Albani with the language of *tawassul*, nor with the fact that *tawassul* is said by a person in need mentioning the name of another person as intermediary!

> 2) The Prophet (SAW) promised that he would make du'aa for him, after advising him of what would be better for him, and this was his (SAW) saying, 'If you wish I will supplicate for you, and if you have patience that is better for you.' And this second matter is what he (SAW) indicated in the hadeeth which he narrated from His Lord, the blessed and Most High, that He said, 'when I afflict My servant in his two beloved ones, that is his eyes, and he has patience, then I give him Paradise in place of them.' [Reported by al-Bukhaaree (transl. 7/377/no.557) from Anas, quoted in as-Saheehah (2010)]
>
> 3) The blind man's insistence that he (SAW) should supplicate for him, as he said, 'Supplicate to Him.' Which means that the Messenger (SAW) definitely did make du'aa for him, since he (SAW) was the best at fulfilling a promise and he had already promised to make du'aa for him if he wished as has preceded, and he wanted du'aa from him, and so the point is established. Also the Prophet (SAW), out of his mercy and desire that Allaah, the Most High, should answer his du'aa for him, guided the blind man to using the second type of lawful and prescribed *tawassul*, which is *tawassul* by means of righteous actions, in order to combine the different types of good.
>
> So he ordered him to make wudoo, and to pray two rak'ahs, and then to make du'aa for himself...
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* p. 70**

... in the words taught to him by the Prophet, which consist verbatim in asking Allah through the Prophet himself and his status. That is the essence of the *du`a* taught by the Prophet, and of the entire hadith.

> ... and these are acts of obedience to Allaah, the One free of all blemish or defect, and the Most High, which he offered along with the du'aa of the Prophet (SAW) on his behalf, and this falls under Allaah, the Most High's Saying: 'Seek means of approach (waseelah) to Him' (5:35) as has preceded.
>
> The Messenger (SAW) did not suffice with making du'aa for the blind man, as he had promised, he also gave him an action to perform which involved obedience to Allaah, the One free of all blemish and defect, the Most High, and drawing near to Him, so that the affair would be complete from all angles, and nearer to acceptance and being pleasing to Allaah, the One free of all blemish and imperfections, and the Most High, therefore the whole event revolved around du'aa, as is clear and contains nothing of what they mention.
>
> Shaikh al-Ghumaaree[74] is ignorant of this or pretends to be, since he says in 'al-Misbaah' ([p.] 24), '"... If you wish I will make du'aa for you", means, "if you wish I will teach you a du'aa which you can make and will repeat it to you," this explanation is binding so that the start of the hadeeth agrees with its end.'
>
> I say: this explanation is futile due to many reasons, from them that the blind man asked him (SAW) to make du'aa for him, not to teach him a du'aa, and since his (SAW) saying to him, 'And if you wish I will make du'aa' was an answer to his request, it was then definitely a request for du'aa, and this has to be, and this is the meaning which agrees with the end of the hadeeth, which is why we find that al-Ghumaaree does not try to explain his saying at the end, 'O Allaah accept him as a supplicant for me, and accept my supplication for him (to be accepted for me),' since this clearly shows that his *tawassul* was through the du'aa of the Prophet (SAW) as we have shown in what has preceded.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* p. 70-71**

Rather, the end does confirm that the essence of this *du`a* revolves around the Prophet's intercession, and that is what making *tawassul* through him means. Shaykh al-Ghumari is right when he says that the Prophet taught the *du`a* of *tawassul* as an answer to the blind man's request for *du`a*, since the *du`a* of *tawassul* is the main lesson of this hadith and the means through which Allah fulfills the Prophet's own *du`a* and returned the blind man's sight to him. Nor does the fact that the blind man asked the Prophet to make *du`a* for him preclude the Prophet in any way or form from teaching him that *du`a* -- and through him all Muslims -- in addition to responding to his specific request, for the Prophet is by essence the Teacher and Purifier of the Community:

> Truly **Allah was gracious to the believers** when He raised up among them a Messenger from themselves, to recite to them His signs and **to purify them, and to teach them** the Book and the Wisdom, though before they were in manifest error. (3:164)

To insist that the Prophet could not have been acting didactically in a general way but only making the *du`a* for the blind man alone simply because that is all that the blind man wanted, is to act like the man who kept repeating to the Prophet: "Teach me something (about Islam)!" not realizing that the Prophet's answer: "Do not get angry"[75] constituted a universal Islamic teaching of the highest order. Yet this is what Albani insists, in order to reduce the hadith to a one-time occurrence that bears no significance to the *Umma* at large, and in order to annihilate its availability to all Muslims as a universal and enduring *du`a* of *tawassul*.

The great characteristic of Islam is that the overwhelming part if not all of the Prophet's guidance, his teachings, and his miracles are enduring for all time, the greatest being the Glorious Qur'an, and not limited to the time of the Companions or to some individuals among them! To believe otherwise is to rob Islam of its primacy as the Religion that pleases Allah and to place it on a par with Christianity and Judaism as an abrogated religion, and we seek refuge in Allah from such aberrant suggestions.

> Then he [Ghumari] says, 'Even if we admit that the Prophet (SAW) made du'aa for the blind man, then that does not prevent those hadeeth from being generalised to include others.'
> I say: This is clear error, since no one prevents the hadeeth from applying to other then **[sic]** the blind man, from those whom the Prophet (SAW) made du'aa for. However since du'aa from him (SAW) after he left to join the highest company is something that those seeking *tawassul* for all various needs and desires do not know about, and also they themselves do not seek *tawassul* by his (SAW) du'aa after his death, therefore the ruling is different, and this admission of al-Ghumaaree is a proof against him.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* p. 71-72**

Observe the aberration of Albani's declaration that "du'aa from him (SAW) after he left to join the highest company is something that those seeking *tawassul* for all various needs and desires do not know about," when it is established in the authentic hadith that the Prophet continually makes *du`a* and asks forgiveness for his *Umma* and makes *tahmid (al-hamdu lillah)* even in the grave:

> My life is a great good for you, you will relate about me and it will be related to you, and my death is a great good for you, your actions will be presented to me (in my grave) and if I see goodness I will praise Allah, and if see other than that I will ask forgiveness of Him for you.[76]

Observe also how Albani boldly claims: "they themselves do not seek *tawassul* by his (SAW) du'aa after his death" -- this is clear and manifest error, and may Allah save us from such. As we have shown in many places already, the Companions sought *tawassul, tabarruk, istisqa,* and *istishfa`* both through his person and through his *du`a* after his death, in which he stands the same as he stands in his life in the world in relation to Allah, i.e. praying and making *du`a* for his Community.

This is another clear proof against misguidance, and it is confirmed by Malik al-Dar's narration of the Companion Bilal Ibn al-Harith's request to the Prophet that he make *istisqa'* (prayer and *du`a* for rain) on behalf of his Community. We have already cited this hadith which Ibn Hajar said "Ibn Abi Shayba related with a sound chain from the narration of Abu Salih al-Saman from Malik al-Dar who was `Umar's treasurer":

> The people suffered from drought during the successorship of `Umar, whereupon a man came to the grave of the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah, ask for rain for your Community, for verily they have but perished"...

We will note here that in his obstinacy in asserting that the Companions did not seek *tawassul* by the Prophet's *du`a* after his death Albani went far afield trying to disprove the authenticity of this hadith:

> We do not accept that this story is authentic since the reliability and precision of Maalik al-Daar is not known, and these are the two principle **[sic]** conditions necessary for the authenticity of any narration, as is affirmed in the science of hadeeth. Ibn Abee Haatim mentions him in *al-Jarh wat-ta'deel* (4/1/213) and does not mention anyone who narrates from him except Aboo Saalih. So this indicates that he is unknown, and this is further emphasized by the fact that Ibn Abee Haatim himself, who is well known for his memorisation and wide knowledge, did not quote anyone who declared him reliable, so he remains unknown. Then this does not contradict the saying of al-Haafidh: "... with an authentic chain of narration, from the narration of Aboo Saalih as-Saman..." since we say: It is not declaration that all of the chain of narration is authentic (saheeh), rather only that it is so up to Aboo Saalih. If that were not the case then he would not have started mentioning the chain of narration from Aboo Saalih. Rather he would have begun: "From Malik ad-Daar... and its chain of narration is authentic." But he said it in the way that he did to draw attention to the fact that there was something requiring investigation in it. The scholars say this for various reasons. From these reasons is that they may not have been able to find a biography for some narrator(s) and therefore they would not permit themselves to pass a ruling on the whole chain of narration...
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings* p. 120**

1. The above is disproved by Ibn Sa`d's (d. 230) biographical notice on Malik al-Dar in his *Tabaqat*:

> **Malik al-Dar:** `Umar ibn al-Khattab's freedman. He narrated from Abu Bakr and `Umar. He was known.[77]

2. It is further disproved by the *hafiz* al-Khalili's (d. 445) notice on Malik al-Dar in his *Kitab al-irshad fi ma`rifat `ulama' al-hadith*:

> **Malik al-Dar:** *muttafaq `alayh athna `alayhi al-tabi`un* -- He is agreed upon (as trustworthy), the Successors have approved highly of him.[78]

3. It is further disproved by Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani's biographical notice on Malik al-Dar in his *al-Isaba fi tamyiz al-sahaba*:

> **Malik ibn `Iyad:** `Umar's freedman. He is the one named Malik al-Dar. He has seen the Prophet and has heard narrations from Abu Bakr al-Siddiq. He has narrated from Abu Bakr and `Umar, Mu`adh, and Abu `Ubayda. From him narrated Abu Salih al-Saman and his (Malik's) two sons `Awn and `Abd Allah...
>
> Bukhari in his *Tarikh* narrated through Abu Salih Dhakwan from Malik al-Dar that `Umar said during the period of drought: "O my Lord, I spare no effort except in what escapes my power!" Ibn Abi Khaythama also narrated it in those words but in a longer hadith:
>
> > The people suffered a drought during the time of `Umar, whereupon a man came to the grave of the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah for rain for your Community." The Prophet appeared to him in a dream and told him: "Go, see `Umar and tell him: You will be watered, and: You must put your nose to the grindstone *(`alayk al-kaffayn)*!" (The man went and told `Umar.) Then `Umar wept and exclaimed: "O my Lord, I spare no effort except in what escapes my power!"
>
> We have also narrated in the *Fawa'id* of Dawud ibn `Amr and al-Dabbi compiled by al-Baghawi in the narration of `Abd al-Rahman ibn Sa`id ibn Yarbu` al-Makhzumi from Malik al-Dar: he said: "`Umar ibn al-Khattab summoned me one day. He had with him a purse of gold containing four hundred dinars. He said: "Take this to Abu `Ubayda," and he mentioned the rest of the story.
>
> Ibn Sa`d mentioned him (Malik al-Dar) in the first layer of the Successors among the people of Madina and said: "He narrated from Abu Bakr and `Umar, and he was known." Abu `Ubayda said of him: "`Umar put him in charge of the dependents in his household. When `Uthman succeeded him, he put him in charge of financial allotments and he was then named *Malik of the House*."
>
> Isma`il al-Qadi related from `Ali ibn al-Madini: "Malik al-Dar was `Umar's treasurer."[79]

4. It is further disproved by Hasan al-Saqqaf's rebuttal of Albani's discourse and entire method on this hadith in Saqqaf's preface to `Abd Allah al-Ghumari's refutation of Albani entitled *Irgham al-mubtadi` al-ghabi bi jawaz al-tawassul bi al-nabi* (The compulsion of the ignorant innovator with the permissibility of seeking means with the Prophet):

> Albani has declared this sound hadith weak upon pretexts frailer than a cobweb in his *Tawassul*. He has claimed that Malik al-Dar is unknown *(majhul)* and has reproduced only his biographical notice from Ibn Abi Hatim's *Kitab al-jarh wa al-ta`dil* in order to give his readers the impression that only one man has narrated from Malik al-Dar, and that is Abu Salih al-Saman. And it has been decided by Albani on the basis of what he reproduces from one of the scholars that a man remains "unknown" until two or more narrate from him. In order to help his cause he mentioned that al-Mundhiri and al-Haythami did not know Malik al-Dar, that he is therefore unknown, and that a chain of transmission containing an unknown is unsound. Then he began to brag saying: "This is a critical piece of information which none will know but those who have practiced this science." As for us we say to him: Rather this is deliberate concealment *(tadlis)* and deceit and treachery which none commits except one whose heart is filled with spite and enmity against the Sunna and *Tawhid* and its people...
>
> Now, if al-Mundhiri and al-Haythami declared that they did not know him, we say to the searcher for truth: This means that they did not declare him either trustworthy or unreliable, because they do not know him. However, there are those who do know him, such as Ibn Sa`d, and Bukhari, and `Ali ibn al-Madini, and Ibn Hibban, and *al-hafiz* Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani, and others! Which of the two assessments, O Albani, is retained: that of those who know him, or that of those who don't?!
>
> It is a wonder that Albani approves the statement of those who don't know Malik al-Dar's case, selects it, and prefers it to the statements of those who do know it, which he conceals and with which he dislikes that anyone be acquainted.

What I will cite from the sayings of the Imams among the masters of hadith who have recognized Malik al-Dar as reliable is enough to confirm what al-Sayyid `Abd Allah al-Ghumari and other hadith scholars as well as some of those who work with hadith have said: namely, that **Albani knows the correct facts in many matters but ... is not to be relied upon for (assessing) a single hadith.** This is the explicit position of many of the scholars such as the three *muhaddith*s al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Ghumari, al-Sayyid `Abd Allah al-Ghumari, and al-Sayyid `Abd al-`Aziz; the shaykh `Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghudda; the *muhaddith* of India and Pakistan Habib al-Rahman al-A`zami; Shaykh Isma`il al-Ansari; Shaykh Muhammad `Awwama; Shaykh Mahmud Sa`id; Shaykh Shu`ayb Arna'ut; and tens of others among the experts in this field and those that deal with it. The People of Hadith therefore witness that that man's word is not relied upon in the authentication and weakening of hadith because he authenticates and weakens according to whim and mood, not scientific rules, and whoever examines his sayings and writings can verify this.[80]

A REFUTATION OF ALBANI FROM IMAM NAWAWI AND IMAM IBN AL-HUMAM AL-HANAFI

A further proof that *tawassul* through the Prophet after his time is universally recognized and encouraged in the Shari`a is Imam Nawawi's description of the etiquette of visiting the grave of the Prophet after the fulfillment of the Pilgrimage in the Book of Hajj in the *Adhkar*, where he says:

> [After giving salam to the Prophet, Abu Bakr, and `Umar] Then he [the visitor] returns to his initial station opposite the Prophet's face, ***and he uses the Prophet as his means in his innermost*** *(fa yatawassalu bihi fi haqqi nafsihi)*, ***and seeks his intercession before his exalted and mighty Lord*** *(wa yatashaffa`u bihi ila rabbihi subhanahu wa ta`ala)...* and he avails himself of this noble spot, and glorifies and praises and magnifies Allah and invokes blessings on His Messenger. Let him do all that abundantly.[81]

Nawawi similarly says in the part devoted to visiting the Prophet in his book on Pilgrimage entitled *al-Idah fi manasik al-hajj*:

> [The visitor stands and greets the Prophet, then he moves to greet Abu Bakr and `Umar] Then he returns to his original position, directly in front of Allah's Messenger, ***and he uses the Prophet as his means in his innermost self*** *(fa yatawassalu bihi fi haqqi nafsihi)*, ***and seeks his intercession before his exalted and mighty Lord*** *(wa yatashaffa`u bihi ila rabbihi subhanahu wa ta`ala)* and one of the best things that he can say is what has been narrated by our colleagues on al-`Utbi's authority, and they admired what he said:
>
> As I was sitting by the grave of the Prophet, a Bedouin Arab came and said: "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah! I have heard Allah saying: "If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgive-ness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful" (4:64), so I have come to you asking forgiveness for my sin, seeking your intercession with my Lord..."[82]

Similarly the Hanafi *faqih* Kamal al-Din ibn al-Humam said in *Fath al-qadir* (2:337), book of *hajj*, chapter on visiting the Prophet:

> *wa yas'alu allaha hajatahu* ***mutawassilan*** *ilallah bi hadrati nabiyyihi thumma qala* ***yas'alu al-nabiyya sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam al-shafa`ata fa yaqulu ya rasulallah as'aluka al-shafa`ata ya rasulallah atawassalu bika ilallah***
>
> Then let him ask Allah for his need, **using Allah's Prophet as his means to Allah**; (then he said): **Let him ask the Prophet for his intercession and say: O Messenger of Allah, I am asking you for your intercession; O Messenger of Allah, I am using you as my means to Allah.**

It cannot be clearer that Albani is therefore innovating in:

a) claiming that *tawassul* is no longer made by asking for the Prophet's *du`a* after he left dunya;

b) claiming that *tawassul* is not made through the Prophet's person or status.

> That in the du'aa which Allaahs Messenger (SAW) taught him to say occurs, 'O Allaah accept him as a supplicant [intercessor] for me', and it is impossible to take this to mean *tawassul* by his (SAW) person, or his status, or his right, since the meaning is, 'O Allaah accept his (SAW) supplication for You to restore my sight.'
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

The complete words of the *du`a* are as follows: "O Allah I ask you and turn to you by means of your Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy. O Muhammad I turn by means of you to my Lord in this need of mine, so that it may be fulfilled for me, **O Allah make him my intercessor** *(shaffi`hu fiyya)*."

Therefore the *du`a* contains the following steps:

- Call and request to Allah stating that one uses the Prophet as means;
- Call to the Prophet stating that one uses him as means to Allah;
- Call and request to Allah to make the Prophet one's intercessor.

This proves:

- that one may ask for the Prophet's intercession in this life;
- that one takes for granted that the Prophet's intercession is accepted;
- that one does not take for granted that his intercession is granted;
- and that such intercession is "by means of him," period.

> And shafaa'ah [the arabic word used in the hadeeth] in the language means: du'aa [supplication], and this is what is meant for the Shafaa'ah which is established for him (SAW) and for the other Prophets and the pious on the Day of Ressurrection.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

Neither is the hadith taking place on the Day of Resurrection, nor is this hadith primarily about the Prophet's blessed *shafa`a*, which is explained in countless other ayats and ahadith, but about *tawassul* through the Prophet, which is the **modality** and **language** of asking for his *shafa`a* here and now. Albani is trying to make one and the same thing of *tawassul* and *shafa`a*, and furthermore he is trying to make the language say other than what it states explicitly.

> And this shows that shafaa'ah is more particular then du'aa since it will only occur if there are two people seeking a matter, so that one of them is a supplicant for the other, as opposed to a single person seeking something who does not have anyone else to supplicate for him. In Lisaan ul-Arab it says, 'shafaa'ah [intercession] is the intercessor's speaking to a king about a need which he is requesting for someone else, and the intercessor is the one seeking something for someone else, through whom he intercedes to attain what is desired...' So it is established by this means also that the *tawassul* of the blind man wa through his (SAW) du'aa and not his person.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

Again: The hadith is about the **asking** for the intercession, not the intercession itself. Clearly, the one hoping intercession needs to ask, and the reason he is asking is because of the intercessor's status. Is this not obvious?

> That from what the Prophet (SAW) taught the blind man was, 'And accept my supplication [shafaa'ah] for him'... This sentence is an authentic part of the hadeeth, it is reported by Ahmad and al-Haakim who authenticated it with adh-Dhahabee agreeing. And it alone is a decisive proof that taking the hadeeth to refer to *tawassul* by his person is futile, that being the position of some recent writers - and it seems that they realise this point and therefore do not mention this sentence at all - which shows how far they can be trusted in reporting narrations. And close to this is their quoting the previous sentence, 'O Allaah accept his shafaa'ah for me', as a proof for *tawassul* by his person - but as for explaining how it shows that then they do not explain that to the readers, since one not having something cannot give it to others.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

The proof for *tawassul* through the Prophet's person does not lie in the particular part of the *du`a* which says "O Allah accept his *shafa`a* for me" but in the *du`a* as a whole, as has been shown above.

Albani's contempt and mistrust of the scholars whose view invalidates his typifies his tendency to disrespect persons on the basis of his disagreement and that is the general tendency of his admirers also. What can be meant by his phrase "some recent writers"? Are Nawawi and Ibn al-Jawzi, who respectively state that *tawassul* is through the Prophet's person and status, "recent writers"? The only "recent writer" here is Albani himself.

> 'i.e. accept my shafaa'ah for him, i.e. accept my du'aa that you accept his 'shafaa'ah', i.e. his du'aa that You restore my sight.' And it is not possible to understand anything but this from this sentence.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

The above impossibility seems axiomatic to Albani perhaps, but to others it is clear that the statement quoted also refers to the phrase: "I ask you and turn to you by means of your Prophet" and so the full meaning is: "Accept my *du`a* and accept the request that I may make this *du`a* to you by means of him." As much as Albani tries to conceal this basic meaning he cannot.

> This is why you find the opponents feigning ignorance of it and not making mention of it since it demolishes their building from the foundations and tears down it's walls, and when they hear it you will see them looking at you like one in a swoon. This is because they (think that they) understand the shafaa'ah of the Messenger (SAW) for the blind man, but what can the blind man's shafaa'ah for the Messenger (SAW) mean? They have no answer for that at all. And the fact that they percieve this nullifies their misinterpretation is that you will not find a single one of them using it in practice, i.e. supplicating, 'O Allaah accept Your Prophets' shafaa'ah for me and my shafaa'ah for him.'
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

The blind man was merely blind in the eyes, but Allah spoke of those who are blind-hearted and this is a graver illness.

The *shafa`a* of the Messenger for the blind man benefits the blind man. The *shafa`a* of the blind man for the Messenger benefits the blind man also! The former is the Prophet's request on behalf of the blind man. The latter is the blind's man request that he be given permission to have the Prophet request for him. It is very clear, but it seems Albani ekes out his argument only in order to confuse the issue, just as he shuffled the lexical meanings of *tawassul* and *shafa`a*.

> the saying of the blind man in his du'aa, 'O Allaah I ask You and turn to You by means of your Prophet Muhammad (SAW)' means, 'I seek a means of nearness to You by means of the du'aa of your Prophet', with the governing word [i.e. du'aa] omitted - and this is something well known in the language - as occurs in the saying of Allaah, 'the town and caravan...' (12:82), i.e. 'the PEOPLE of the town, and the COMPANIONS of the caravan..' [with the governing
> words PEOPLE and CARAVAN omitted]. And we and the opponents agree upon that, i.e. that we have to come up with the governing word which has been omitted.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

The above is a good illustration of Albani's method of narrowing down the outward sense of the *du`a*, which is: "I am turning to You by means of your Prophet" to a specific sense: "I am turning to You by means of your Prophet's *du`a*." In order to achieve this he comes up with terms that are not in the hadith -- *"by means of the du`a"* -- and he dictates that they are the governing terms around which the sole meaning of the hadith revolves -- that is: Albani's meaning.

> And in our view it is the same case as with the du'aa of Umar and his *tawassul* by means of al-Abbaas - either it is taken to be, 'I turn to You by means of the (status) of Your Prophet', and 'O Muhammad I turn by your (person) or your (position) to my Lord' - as they claim - or to be, 'I turn to you by means of the (du'aa) of Your Prophet', and, 'O Muhammad I Turn to you by your (du'aa) to my Lord' - which is our saying. And one of these must be preferred due to a proof which shows it. So as for their saying that the missing governing word is (status/position) then they have no proof for it, neither in this or any other hadeeth, since there is nothing mentioned along with it which suggests or states any mention of (status) or indicates it at all.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

This is perhaps the greatest fallacy in his entire argument, since in making it he completely ignores the countless verses and hadiths which show the Prophet's tremendous status, including his own explicit statements that he is the Master of the children of Adam and the noblest of them in Allah's sight, and the *ijma`* of Muslims concerning his praiseworthy station.

> Just as they have nothing from the Qur'an and Sunnah, or from the practice of the Companions where there is *tawassul* by anyone's status. So this preferred view of theirs has nothing to support it and so is rendered baseless and not taken into any further consideration. As for our view then it is supported by many proofs which have preceded.
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

The lexical "proof" has been rejected as *shafa`a* is not the same as *tawassul*. And the "proof" that the *wasila* is purely the Prophet's *du`a* has been rejected, as it was shown that the *wasila* is the Prophet himself in addition to the *du`a* which he taught the blind man, and the *du`a* which he himself made on his behalf.

> And I also say: Even if it were correct that the blind man sought to make *tawassul* by his (SAW) person, then it would be something particular to him, not something shared by the rest of the Prophets and the pious. And joining them in it along with him is something not acceptable, since he (SAW) was the leader and the most noble of them all, so it could have been something which Allaah particularised him like many others reported in authentic narrations, and matters of particularised qualities are not within the scope of analogy. So he who thinks that the blind man's *tawassul* to Allaah was by means of his (SAW) person - then he should halt at that and not add others to it, as is reported from Imaam Ahmad and Shaikh al-Izz bin abdis-Salaam (RH).
>
> **Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Rulings***

One goes to one's nearest means among the *salihin* or saintly people, as is established by `Umar's *tawassul* through al-`Abbas the Prophet's uncle. This is not only permissible but recommended by all Four Schools. As for Imam Ahmad, he made *tawassul* through the Prophet a part of every *du`a* as has been reported, nor did he try, unlike Albani, to alter the modality of the *tawassul* or its meaning.

Note that Albani moved from denying that the *tawassul* can be made through the Prophet's person to accepting it, then denying that it be made by other than the blind man, then accepting it, and finally denying that it be made through other than the Prophet!

If it were forbidden to seek the Prophet's person as a means for obtaining cure and blessings in this life, then why did the Companions and the Followers seek such blessings through the hair of the Prophet, his *minbar*, his sweat, his saliva, his grave, and other items which we shall not mention? If one cannot deny the benefit derived by a mere particle of the Prophet's body long after his time, they surely one cannot deny the benefit derived by his noble person -- except one whom Allah has deprived of true understanding, such as those who insist on denying even when the proofs are brought right under their nose. And Allah knows best.

REFUTATION OF THOSE WHO QUESTION *TABARRUK BI AL-ATHAR* ("SEEKING BLESSINGS FROM THE PROPHET'S RELICS") AS A VALID ISLAMIC PRACTICE

"*Tabarruk*": deriving blessing from something once owned or touched by a holy person.

"*Athar*": relics.

As for those who reject the validity of *tabarruk* or seeking blessings through the relics of the Prophet, we warn them that Allah Himself mentioned the *tabarruk* of the Prophet Ya`qub with the relic of his son Yusuf as well as the *tabarruk* of the Banu Isra'il with the relics of the Family of Musa and the Family of Harun; and that the evidence for the *tabarruk* of the Companions and the Tabi`in through the Prophet and the saints is innumerable.

- Allah said: "Go with this my shirt, and cast it over the face of my father: he will come to see (clearly)... When the Caravan left (Egypt), their father said: I do indeed scent the presence of Yusuf... Then, when the bearer of glad tidings came, he laid it on his face and he became a seer once more. He said: Said I not unto you that I know from Allah that which ye know not?" (12:93-96).

- And He said: " And their Prophet said unto them: Lo! the token of his kingdom is that there shall come unto you the ark wherein is peace of reassurance from your Lord, and a remnant of that which the house of Moses and the house of Aaron left behind, the angels bearing it. Lo! herein shall be a token for you if (in truth) ye are believers." (2:247)

The Companions' Seeking of Blessings With the Prophet's Person and His Relics

1. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's hair and nails. There are countless hadiths on this.

- Bukhari narrates in his *Sahih* in the Book of Clothing, under the chapter entitled "What is mentioned about gray hair," that `Usman ibn `Abd Allah ibn Mawhab said: "My family sent me to Umm Salama with a cup of water. Umm Salama brought out a silver bottle which contained one of the hairs of the Prophet, and it used to be that if anyone came under the evil eye or ill health they used to send her a cup of water through which she would pass this hair (for drinking). We used to look into the silver bottle: I saw some reddish hairs."

- Anas said: "When the Prophet shaved his head (after pilgrimage), Abu Talha was the first one to take of his hair." Bukhari.

- Anas also said: "The Prophet threw stones at al-Jamra, then sacrificed, then told the barber to shave his head right side first, then began to give the hair away to the people." Muslim.

- Anas said: "Talha was the one distributing it." Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud.

- He also said: "When the Prophet shaved his head in Mina, he gave me the hair from the right side and he said: Anas! take it to Umm Sulaym [his mother]. When the Companions saw what the Prophet gave us, they began to compete to take the hair from the left side, and everyone was getting a share from that." Ahmad narrated it.

- Ibn al-Sakan narrated through Safwan ibn Hubayra from the latter's father: Thabit al-Bunani said: Anas ibn Malik said to me (on his death-bed): "This is one of the hairs of Allah's Messenger, Allah's blessings and peace upon him. I want you to place it under my tongue." Thabit continued: I placed it under his tongue, and he was buried with it under his tongue."[83]

- Abu Bakr said: "I saw Khalid [ibn Walid] asking for the Prophet's forelock and he received it. He used to put it over his eyes and then kiss it." It is known that he then placed it in his *qalansuwa* (head cover around which the turban is tied) and never faced battle again except he won. Narrated by Ibn Hajar in his *Isaba*. Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani relates that Imam Malik said: "Khalid ibn al-Walid owned a *qalansiyya* which contained some of the Prophet's hair, and that is the one he wore the day of the battle of Yarmuk.[84]

- Ibn Sirin (one of the Tabi`in) said: "One hair of the Prophet in my possession is more precious to me than silver and gold and everything that is on the earth and everything that is inside it." Bukhari, Bayhaqi (*Sunan kubra*), and Ahmad.

- In Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 72, Number 784: `Uthman bin `Abd Allah ibn Mawhab said, "My people sent me with a bowl of water to Umm Salama." Isra'il approximated three fingers indicating the small size of the container in which there was some hair of the Prophet. `Uthman added, "If any person suffered from evil eye or some other disease, he would send a vessel (containing water) to Umm Salama (and she would dip the Prophet's hair into it and it would be drunk). I looked into the container (that held the hair of the Prophet) and saw a few reddish hairs in it."

Hafiz Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-bari*, Volume 10, page 353, said: "They used to call the silver bottle in which the hair of the Prophet was kept *jiljalan* and that bottle was in the home of Umm Salama." *Hafiz* al-`Ayni said in *`Umdat al-qari*, Volume 18, page 79: "Umm Salama had some of the hairs of the Prophet in a silver bottle. When some people got ill, they would go and obtain blessings from these hairs and they would be healed by means of their blessings. If a person were struck by the evil eye or any sickness, he would send his wife to Umm Salama with a *mikhdaba* or water-pail, and she would pass the hair through that water and then drink the water and he would be healed, after which they would return the hair to the *jiljal*."

- Imam Ahmad narrates in his *Musnad* (4:42) from `Abd Allah ibn Zayd ibn `Abd Rabbih with a sound *(sahih)* chain as stated by Haythami in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (3:19) that the Prophet clipped his nails and distributed them among the people.

2. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's sweat.

- Anas said: "The Prophet stayed with us, and as he slept my mother began to collect his sweat in a flask. The Prophet awoke and said: O Umm Sulaym, what are you doing? She said: This is your sweat which we place in our perfume and it is the best perfume." Muslim, Ahmad.

- When Anas was on his deathbed he instructed that some of this flask be used on his body before his funeral and it was done. Bukhari.

- Ibn Sirin also was given some of Umm Sulaym's flask. Ibn Sa`d.

3. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's saliva and ablution water. These hadiths are extremely numerous.

- In Bukhari and Muslim: The Companions would compete for whoever would get the remnant of the Prophet's ablution water in order to put it on their faces. Nawawi in *Sharh Sahih Muslim* said: "In these narrations is evidence for seeking blessings with the relics of the saints" *(fihi al-tabarruk bi athar al-salihin)*.

- The Prophet used to heal the sick with his saliva mixed with some earth with the words: "*Bismillah*, the soil of our earth with the saliva of one / some of us shall heal our sick with our Lord's permission." Bukhari and Muslim.

> Regarding this hadith Ibn Hajar says in *Fath al-bari* (1989 ed. 10:255-256):
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> The Prophet's words "with the saliva of one or some of us" indicate that he would spit at the time of using a protective invocation *(ruqya)*. Nawawi said (in *Sharh Sahih Muslim*): "The meaning of the hadith is that the Prophet put some of his saliva on his forefinger then placed it on some earth and formed some clot with it with which he wiped the place of the ailment or the wound, pronouncing the words of the hadith at the time of wiping." Qurtubi said: "The hadith shows the permissibility of using protective invocations against any and all ailments, and it shows that this was an open and widely-known matter among them." He also said: "The Prophet's placing of his finger on the earth and of the earth on his finger indicates the desirability of doing this when using a protective invocation.... This falls under none other than the heading of obtaining blessing *(tabarruk)* through Allah's Names and through what His Prophet left us." Ibn Hajar concludes: Protective invocations *(ruqa)* and those hanged upon oneself *(`aza'im)* have wondrous effects, the true nature of which boggles the mind.

- The Prophet had everyone in Madina bring their newborn, whom he would read upon and into whose mouth he would do *nafth* and *tifl* (breath mixed with saliva). He would instruct their mother not to suckle them that day until nightfall. He did the same later in Mecca. Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Ahmad, Bayhaqi (*Dala'il*), etc.

- The names of over 100 of the *Ansar* and *Muhajirin* who received this particular blessing have been transmitted with *isnad*s, and are found in the main books of biographies.

4. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's cup.

- Hajjaj ibn Hassan said: "We were at Anas's house and he brought up the Prophet's cup from a black pouch. He ordered that it be filled with water and we drank from it and poured some of it on our heads and faces and sent blessings on the Prophet. Ahmad, Ibn Kathir.

- `Asim said: "I saw that cup and I drank from it." Bukhari.

5. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's minbar.

- Ibn `Umar used to touch the seat of the Prophet's minbar and then wipe his face for blessing. (*al-Mughni* 3:559; *al-Shifa'* 2:54; Ibn Sa`d, *Tabaqat* 1:13; *Mawsu`at Fiqh `Abdullah ibn `Umar* p. 52.)

- From Abu Hurayra, Jabir, Abu Imama, and Malik: The Prophet made it a sunna to swear to the truth on top of his minbar. Nisa'i, Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, and others. Bukhari confirms it. Ibn Hajar says: and in Mecca, one swears between the Yemeni corner and Maqam Ibrahim. *(Fath al-bari)*

6. *Tabarruk* with money the Prophet gave away.

- Jabir sold a camel to the Prophet and the latter gave instructions to Bilal to add a *qirat* (1/12 *dirham*) to the agreed sale price. Jabir said: "The Prophet's addition shall never leave me," and he kept it with him after that. Bukhari.

7. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet' s staffs.

- When `Abdullah ibn Anis came back from one of the battles having killed Khalid ibn Sufyan ibn Nabih, the Prophet gifted him his staff and said to him: "It will be a sign between you and me on the Day of Resurrection." Thereafter he never parted with it and it was buried with him when he died. Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (3:496).

- Qadi `Iyad relates in his book *al-Shifa'*, in the chapter entitled "Esteem for the things and places connected with the Prophet," that after Jihjah al-Ghifari took the Prophet's staff from the hands of `Uthman and tried to break it accross his knee, infection seized his knee which led to its amputation, and he died before the end of the year.

8. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's shirt.

- Jabir says: "The Prophet came after `Abdullah ibn Ubay had been placed in his grave. He ordered that he be brought out. He placed his hands on `Abdullah's knees, breathed *(nafth)* upon him mixing it with saliva, and dressed him with his shirt. Bukhari and Muslim.

9. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's *musalla*s or places of prayer.

- Many chains of transmission: `Utban ibn Malik was one of the Companions of the battle of Badr. After he became blind he said to the Prophet: "I would like you to pray in my house so that I can pray where you prayed." The Prophet went to his house and asked where exactly he would like him to pray. He indicated a spot to him and the Prophet prayed there. Bukhari and Muslim. The version in Muslim has: I (`Utban) sent for the Prophet the message: "Come and lay for me a place for worship *(khutt li masjidan)*." Imam Nawawi in *Sharh Sahih Muslim* said: "It means: "Mark for me a spot that I can take as a place for worship by obtaining blessing from your having been there *(mutabarrikan bi atharika)*... In this hadith is evidence for obtaining blessings through the relics of saints *(al-tabarruk bi athar al-salihin)*."

- `Umar feared that the taking of the tree of the *bay`a* to the Prophet as a place of prayer might lead to a return to idol-worship and he had it cut. Bukhari, Ibn Sa`d (1:73). It is known, however, that Ibn `Umar derived blessings even from walking in the same spots where the Prophet had walked and praying exactly where he had prayed both at the Ka`ba and on his travels, and that he watered a certain tree under which Prophet had prayed so that it would not die. Bukhari, Bayhaqi (*Sunan* 5:245).

10. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's grave.

- Dawud ibn Salih says: "[The Caliph] Marwan [ibn al-Hakam] one day saw a man placing his face on top of the grave of the Prophet. He said: "Do you know what you are doing?" When he came near him, he realized it was Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. The latter said: "Yes; I came to the Prophet, not to a stone." Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*, Ahmad (5:422), Tabarani in his *Mu`jam al-kabir* (4:189) and his *Awsat* according to Haythami in *al-Zawa'id* (5:245), al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (4:515); both the latter and al-Dhahabi said it was *sahih*. It is also cited by al-Subki in *Shifa' al-siqam* (p. 126), Ibn Taymiyya in *al-Muntaqa* (2:261f.), and Haythami in *al-Zawa'id* (4:2).

- Mu`adh ibn Jabal and Bilal also came to the grave of the Prophet and sat weeping, and the latter rubbed his face against it. Ibn Majah 2:1320, Ahmad, Tabarani, Subki, and Ibn `Asakir.

- *Hafiz* al-Dhahabi writes in the compendium of his shaykhs entitled *Mu`jam al-shuyukh* (1:73) in the entry devoted to his shaykh Ahmad ibn `Abd al-Mun`im al-Qazwini (#58): "Ahmad ibn al-Mun`im related to us... [with his chain of transmission] from Ibn `Umar that the latter disliked to touch the Prophet's grave. I say: He disliked it because he considered it disrespect. Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked about touching the Prophet's grave and kissing it and he saw nothing wrong with it. His son `Abd Allah related this from him.

Dhahabi continues: If it is said: "Why did the Companions not do this?" It is replied: "Because they saw him with their very eyes when he was alive, enjoyed his presence directly, kissed his very hand, nearly fought each other over the remnants of his ablution water, shared his purified hair on the day of the greater Pilgrimage, and even if he spat it would virtually not fall except in someone's hand so that he could pass it over his face. Since we have not had the tremendous fortune of sharing in this, we throw ourselves on his grave as a mark of commitment, reverence, and acceptance, even to kiss it. Don't you see what Thabit al-Bunani did when he kissed the hand of Anas ibn Malik and placed it on his face saying: "This is the hand that touched the hand of Allah's Messenger"? Muslims are not moved to these matters except by their excessive love for the Prophet, as they are ordered to love Allah and the Prophet more than they love their own lives, their children, all human beings, their property, and Paradise and its maidens. There are even some believers that love Abu Bakr and `Umar more than themselves...

Don't you see that the Companions, in the excess of their love for the Prophet, asked him: "Should we not prostrate to you?" and he replied no, and if he had allowed them, they would have prostrated to him as a mark of utter veneration and respect, not as a mark of worship, just as the Prophet Yusuf's brothers prostrated to Yusuf. Similarly the prostration of the Muslim to the grave of the Prophet is for the intention of magnification and reverence. One is not imputed disbelief because of it whatsoever *(la yukaffaru aslan)*, but he is being disobedient [to the Prophet's injunction to the Companions]. Let him therefore be informed that this is forbidden. Similarly in the case of one who prays towards the grave."

- Imam Ahmad's son `Abd Allah said: I asked my father about the man who touches and kisses the pommel of the Prophet's minbar to obtain blessing, or touches the grave of the Prophet. He responded by saying: "There is nothing wrong with it." `Abd Allah also asked Imam Ahmad about the man who touches the Prophet's minbar and kisses it for blessing, and who does the same with the grave, or something to that effect, intending thereby to draw closer to Allah. He replied: "There is nothing wrong with it." This was narrated by `Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his book entitled *al-`Ilal fi ma`rifat al-rijal* (2:492).

- We already mentioned the authentic account whereby in the time of `Umar there was a drought during which Bilal ibn Harith came to the grave and said: "O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah for rain on behalf of your Community."

- We already mentioned `A'isha's account whereby she instructed that the roof be opened over the Prophet's grave in times of drought, and it would rain.

- `Umar sent a message to `A'isha saying: "Will you allow me to be buried with my two companions (the Prophet and Abu Bakr)?" She said, "Yes, by Allah," though it was her habit that if a man from among the Companions asked her that she would always refuse. Bukhari.

11. *Tabarruk* with the Prophet's *jubba* (robe or cloak).

- Imam Muslim relates that `Abd Allah, the freed slave of Asma' the daughter of Abu Bakr, the maternal uncle of the son of `Ata', said: "Asma' sent me to Abdullah ibn `Umar saying: "The news has reached me that you prohibit the use of three things: the striped robe, saddle cloth made of red silk, and fasting the whole month of Rajab." Abdullah said to me: "So far as what you say about fasting in the month of Rajab, how about one who observes continuous fasting? And so far as what you say about the striped garment, I heard `Umar ibn al-Khattab say that he had heard from Allah's Messenger: "He who wears a silk garment, has no share for him (in the Hereafter)." And I am afraid that stripes were part of it. And so far as the red saddle cloth is concerned, here is `Abd Allah's saddle cloth [= his] and it is red." I went back to Asma' and informed her, so she said: "Here is the cloak *(jubba)* of Allah's Messenger," and she brought out to me that cloak made of Persian cloth with a hem of (silk) brocade, and its sleeves bordered with (silk) brocade, and said: "This was Allah's Messenger's cloak with `A'isha until she died, then I got possession of it. The Apostle of Allah used to wear it, and we washed it for the sick so that they could seek cure thereby." Muslim relates this in the first chapter of the book of clothing. Nawawi comments in *Sharh sahih Muslim* (Book 37 Chapter 2 #10): "In this hadith is a proof that it is recommended to seek blessings through the relics of the righteous and their clothes *(wa fi hadha al-hadith dalil `ala istihbab al-tabarruk bi aathaar al-salihin wa thiyabihim)*."

12. *Tabarruk* with spots and people the Prophet had touched.

- Suwayd ibn Ghafalah reported: I saw `Umar kissing the Stone and clinging to it, saying: "I saw Allah's Messenger bearing great love for you." This hadith has been narrated on the authority of Sufyan with the same chain of transmitters (and the words are): "He (`Umar) said: "I know that you are a stone, nor would I consider you of any worth, except that I saw Abu al-Qasim bearing great love for you." And he did not mention about clinging to it. [Muslim: 7: 2916]

- Qadi `Iyad relates in his *Shifa'*, in the chapter entitled "Esteem for the things and places connected with the Prophet," that Imam Malik would not ride an animal in Madina and he used to say: "I am too shy before Allah to trample with an animal's hoof on the earth where Allah's Messenger is buried." Imam Malik gave a *fatwa* that whoever said: "The soil of Madina is bad" be given thirty lashes and jailed. Qadi `Iyad mentions the verses of an anonymous visitor to Madina:

The veil is lifted from us and a moon shines out
to those who look on, banishing all illusions.
When our mounts reach Muhammad, it is forbidden
for us to be found in our saddles.
We are drawing near to the best man ever
to walk on the earth,
So we hold this ground in respect and honor.

`Iyad adds: "One must respect the places... whose soil contains the body of the Master of Mankind and from which the *din* of Allah and the Sunna of the Messenger spread out... and the first earth that the skin of the Prophet touched after death. Its fragrance should be inhaled and its residences and walls should be kissed." Then he recites:

O Abode of the best of the Messengers...
For you (Madina) I have intense love, passionate love,
and yearning which kindles the embers of my heart.
I have a vow: If I fill my eyes with those walls
and the places where you (O Prophet) walked,
There my turbaned gray hair will be covered with dust
from so much kissing.
Had it not been from obstacles and foes,
I would always visit them,
even if I had to be dragged by my feet. [85]

- al-Tabarani in *al-Awsat* and *al-Kabir* (4:16), and Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (5:67-68) with a sound chain as stated by al-Haythami in *al-Zawa'id* (4:211) narrated through Handhalah Ibn Hudhaym that the latter went with his grandfather, Hudhaym, to the Prophet. Hudhaym said to the Messenger of Allah: "I have sons and grandsons, some of whom are pubescent and others still children." Motioning to the young child next to him, he said: "This is the youngest." The Prophet brought this young child whose name was Handhalah next to him, wiped on his head, and told him, "*barakallahu fik*," which means: "May Allah bless you." After that, people started to bring Handhalah a person with a swollen face or a sheep with a swollen udder. Handhalah would place his hand on that part of his head the Prophet wiped, then touch the swollen part and say *Bismillah*, and the swelling would be cured.

- Ibn Abi Shayba narrated in his *Musannaf* (4:121), in the chapter entitled: "Touching the grave of the Prophet" with a *sahih* chain as judged by Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani, and Qadi `Iyad in his book *al-Shifa'*, in the chapter entitled: "Concerning the visit to the Prophet's grave, the excellence of those who visit it and how he should be greeted": Yazid ibn `Abd al-Malik ibn Qusayt and al-`Utbi narrated that it was the practice of the Companions in the masjid of the Prophet to place their hands on the pommel of the hand rail *(rummana)* of the pulpit *(minbar)* where the Prophet used to place his hand. There they would face the *Qibla* and supplicate (make *du`a*) to Allah hoping He would answer their supplication because they were placing their hands where the Prophet placed his while making their supplication. Abu Mawduda said: "And I saw Yazid ibn `Abd al-Malik do the same." This practice of the Companions clarifies two matters. The first is the permissibility of asking Allah for things by the Prophet *(tawassul)* after his death since by their act the Companions were truly making *tawassul*. Likewise it is permissible to ask Allah for things by other pious Muslims. The second is the permissibility of seeking blessings (baraka) from the objects the Prophet touched.

- The Tabi`i Thabit al-Bunani said he used to go to Anas Ibn Malik, kiss his hands, and say: "These are hands that touched the Prophet." He would kiss his eyes and say: "These are eyes that saw the Prophet." Abu Ya`la narrated it in his *Musnad* (6:211) and Ibn Hajar mentions it in his *al-Matalib al-`aliya* (4:111). al-Haythami declared it sound in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (9:325).

- According to Bukhari in his *Adab al-mufrad*, `Abd al-Rahman ibn Razin related that one of the Companions, Salama ibn al-Aku`, raised his hands before a group of people and said: "With these very hands I pledged allegiance *(bay`a)* to the Messenger of Allah," upon hearing which, all who were present got up and went to kiss his hand. Another version of this hadith was also related by Ahmad.

- Abu Malik al-Ashja`i said that he once asked another Companion of the Tree, Ibn Abi Awfa, "Give me the hand that swore bay`at to the Messenger of Allah, Peace be upon him, that I may kiss it." Ibn al-Muqri related it.

- Bukhari in *al-Adab al-mufrad* also relates that Suhayb saw Sayyidina `Ali kiss both the hand and feet of the Prophet's uncle al-`Abbas, and that Thabit kissed the hand of Anas because it had touched the Prophet's hand.

- al-Shurunbali al-Hanafi in the book of Pilgrimage of his manual of *Fiqh* entitled *Nur al-idah* (as translated by Muhammad Abul Quasem under the title *Salvation of the soul and Islamic devotions*) said (p. 225): "It is praiseworthy to enter into the Holy House [Ka`ba]. The person who enters it should seek the place where the Prophet performed his ritual prayer. This place is in front of him when his back faces the door, so that there is the distance of three cubits between him and the door in front of him. He will perform ritual prayer in it. If he performs it near the wall, he will put his cheek on it, and pray to Allah for forgiveness and praise Him."

13. *Tabarruk* with the soil and vegetation of Madina.

The merits of Madina, of prayer in Madina, of visiting the Masjid al-Nabawi, of living in Madina, of not cutting its trees, etc. are all based on the fact that the Prophet is there. The fact that it is a sanctuary *(haram)* and a preserve *(hima)* is well documented in numerous ahadith. It is even strongly recommended not to enter Madina except on foot, and many Companions, Tabi`in, and Tabi` al-Tabi`in never entered it except on foot, in respect for the Holy Presence of the Prophet.

- Narrated Ali ibn Abu Talib: The Prophet said: "Madina's fresh grass is not to be cut, its game is not to be driven away, and things dropped in it are to be picked up only by one who publicly announces it, and it is not permissible for any man to carry weapons in it for fighting, and it is not advisable that its trees are cut except what a man cuts for the fodder of his camel. [Abu Dawud, 10: 2030]

- Narrated Abu Hurayra: When the people saw the first fruit (of the season or of plantation) they brought it to Allah's Apostle. When he received it he said: "O Allah, bless us in our fruits; and bless us in our city; and bless us in our *sa's* and bless us in our *mudd* (i.e. in every measure). O Allah, Ibrahim was Thy servant, Thy friend, and Thy apostle; and I am Thy servant and Thy apostle. He (Ibrahim) made supplication to Thee for (the showering of blessings upon) Mecca, and I am making supplication to Thee for Madina just as he made supplication to Thee for Mecca, and the like of it in addition." He would then call to him the youngest child and give him these fruits. [Muslim, 7: 3170]

As the Prophet asked Allah's Blessings on the city, its fruits, and in their measures, then it must be full of blessing as his supplication is a *du`a' mustajab* or answered prayer. Therefore, it is common practice for pilgrims to purchase the dates of Madina for the blessings, and to bring them back home to share among those who could not make the pilgrimage. And it is said that there yet remain living some of the date palms from those planted by the Holy hand of the Most Noble Messenger himself, blessings and peace be upon him. Wallahu a`lam.

14. *Tabarruk* with his Blessed Hand and His Feet.

- The first hadith Imam Ahmad related from Anas ibn Malik in his *Musnad Anas* is: "The whole Community of the people of Madina used to take the hand of the Prophet and rush to obtain their need with it."[86]

- Narrated `A'isha the Mother of the Believers: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when he had a complaint, would recite the last three suras of Qur'an, over himself and blow." She said, "When his pain was great, I would recite it over him and wipe him with his right hand hoping for its blessing."[87]

- Usama ibn Sharik narrates: "I came to see the Prophet while his Companions were with him, and they seemed as still as if birds had alighted on top of their heads. I gave him my salam and I sat down. [Then Bedouins came and asked questions which the Prophet answered.] ... The Prophet then stood up and the people stood up. They began to kiss his hand, whereupon I took his hand and placed it on my face. I found it more fragrant than musk and cooler than sweet water." Narrated by Abu Dawud (#3855), Tirmidhi (2038 -- *hasan sahih*), Ibn Majah (3436), al-Hakim (4:399), and Ahmad (4:278). *al-hafiz* Imam Bayhaqi cites it in Branch 15 of his *Shu`ab al-iman* entitled: The Fifteenth Branch of Faith, Namely A Chapter On Rendering Honor To The Prophet, Declaring His High Rank, And Revering Him *(al-khamis `ashar min shu`ab al-iman wa huwa babun fi ta`zim al-nabi sallallahu `alayhi wa sallama wa ijlalihi wa tawqirih)* Vol. 2 p. 200 (#1528).

- Narrated `Abd Allah ibn `Umar: Ibn `Umar was sent with a detachment by the Apostle of Allah. The people wheeled round in flight. He said: I was one of those who wheeled round in flight. When we stopped, we said: What should we do? We have run away from the battlefield and deserve Allah's wrath. Then we said: Let us enter Medina, stay there, and go there while no one sees us. So we entered the city and thought: If we present ourselves before Allah's Apostle, and if there is a change of repentance for us, we shall stay; if there is something else, we shall go away. So we sat down (waiting) for the Apostle of Allah before the dawn prayer. When he came out, we stood up to him and said: We are the ones who have fled. He turned to us and said: No, you are the ones who return to fight after wheeling away. We then approached and kissed his hand, and he said: I am the main body of the Muslims. (Abu Dawud, Book 14 [Jihad], Number 2641.) This hadith is also found in al-Abhari; in the book of *al-hafiz* Ibn Muqri on standing up and kissing the hand out of respect; in the *Adab al-mufrad* of Imam Bukhari (Chapter on Kissing the Hand and Chapter on Kissing the Foot), in Ibn Majah (*Adab*), in Bayhaqi's *Dala'il an-Nubuwwa*, and in the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

- Ibn `Umar told a story and said: "We then came near the Prophet and kissed his hand." It is related in Ibn Maja's *Sunan*, Book of *Adab*, Chapter on kissing by a man of another man's hand; in Abu Dawud's *Sunan*, Book of *Adab*, Chapter on kissing the hand; and in the *Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba through two different chains.

- Umm Aban, daughter of al-Wazi` ibn Zari` narrated that her grandfather Zari` al-`Abdi, who was a member of the deputation of `Abd al-Qays, said: "When we came to Medina, we raced to be first to dismount and kiss the hand and foot of Allah's Apostle... (to the end of the hadith)" [Abu Dawud, 41: 5206.] Bukhari relates from her a similar hadith in his *Adab al-mufrad*: We were walking and someone said, "There is the Messenger of Allah," so we took his hands and feet and kissed them.

- Burayda narrated that one of the Bedouin Arabs who came to the Prophet, Peace be upon him, asked: "O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to kiss your head and your hands," and he received it. In another version, he asks permission to kiss the head and the feet. Narrated in Ghazali's *Ihya'* and the version mentioning the feet is in Hakim's *Mustadrak* and in Ibn Muqri. Both al-Hakim and al-`Iraqi declared the latter's chain authentic.

- From Safwan ibn `Asal al-Muradi: "One of two Jews said to his companion: Take us to this Prophet so we can ask him about Musa's ten signs... [the Prophet replied in full and then] they kissed his hands and feet and said: we witness that you are a Prophet..." Narrated by Ibn Abi Shayba (Book of *Adab*, Chapter entitled A Man Kissing Another Man's Hand When He greets Him), Tirmidhi (Book of *Adab*) who declared it *hasan sahih*, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah (Book of *Adab*), and al-Hakim who declared it *sahih*.

- When we were with Allah's Messenger on an expedition, a Bedouin came and asked for a miracle. The Prophet pointed at a tree and said to the Bedouin: "Tell that tree, Allah's Messenger summons you." The tree swayed and brought itself out, and came to the presence of the Prophet saying: "Peace be upon you O Messenger of Allah!" The Bedouin said, "Now let it return to its place!" When Allah's Messenger ordered it, the tree went back. The Bedouin said, "let me prostrate to you!" The Messenger answered: "No one is allowed to do that [ie it is Haraam]." The Bedouin said, "Then I will kiss your hands and feet." The Prophet permitted him that. Narrated by Qadi `Iyad in *al-Shifa'* (1:299) and al-Bazzar in his *Musnad* (3:49).

Remarks on Kissing the Hand from a recent interview of Mawlana Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani

INTERVIEWER. Beside Ikhlas and love, what else do you emphasize in your teachings?

SHAYKH NAZIM. Respect. There must be respect. Without respecting each other, it is impossible to do anything. Allah Almighty ordered His servants to have respect among themselves. Respect brings good understanding. Good understanding brings love. Love brings everything.

INT. As others see you, perhaps they might say that your followers practically worship you.

SN. Those who say that are so foolish. They do not know what is worship and what is respect.

INT. So, you do not encourage your followers...?

SN. This is shaytanic teaching that they are propagating. We are Muslims. We say: *La ma`buda illa Allah*. That means no one is worthy of worship except Allah Almighty. But they are such square-headed people, and their heads are like footballs, empty! And what if someone respects a person that we have been ordered to respect? *Man lam yuwaqqir kabirana wa lam yarham saghirana fa laysa minna.* [Whoever does not revere our elders or show mercy to our little ones is not one of us.]* This is *tawqir al-nas*, giving honor to people, as it has been ordered: *anzilu al-nasa manazilahum*, "Give everyone their own station."** This is an order from the Shari`a.

* Hadith of the Prophet narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (5:323), al-Hakim declared it *sahih* in *al-Mustadrak* (1:122) and al-Dhahabi agreed with him.
** Hadith of the Prophet narrated by Muslim without chain in the introduction to his *Sahih*. Sakhawi said in *al-Jawahir wa al-durar* this is a fair *(hasan)* hadith, and al-Hakim said it is *sahih* in *Ma`rifat `ulum al-hadith* and he said Ibn Khuzayma narrated it.

But those people want to put everyone on the same level, like communism. No! Allah Almighty ordered: "Preserve one another's honor": *wa la tansaw al-fadla baynakum* (2:237). And He said: *inna akramakum `indallahi atqakum* [The most honorable of you in Allah's sight are the most Godwary] (49:13). If we find someone that should be respected because of his *taqwa*, then we may respect him. We must not hold him as an ordinary person, no.

Those who criticize this are not following *Madhhab*s [Islamic schools of law]. They are a Fifth *Madhhab*. We are following the Four *madhhab*s, and in our *madhhab*s kissing hands is Okay, but through their *madhhab*: no. They may kiss their women's. . . [genitals] according to their *madhhab*, but not hands. I must say this. It is not haram for them to do such a thing, but kissing the hand of a person is?! How can that be, when all the Sahaba were kissing the Prophet's hand, and so many hadiths confirm it in their own printed books. They were kissing the Prophet's hands and feet.

What happens if I kiss my mother's hands and feet? Is this Haram? With which proof? They are saying this, only because they are trying to break the relationship between believers and their teachers. *al `ulama' warathatu al anbiya'.* [Scholars of knowledge are the inheritors of Prophets.]* We must give them our highest respect. I don't like for a fifteen-year-old or a young person to come in and make this with his hand [handshake gesture] to a shaykh. What is this? That is the American style. No. We, too, have *`urf* [customs]. We have traditional *adab*, traditional manners coming from the Prophet, and we know that up to this day kissing hands is a gesture of respect, not worship.

* Hadith of the Prophet narrated by Bukhari in his *Sahih* in *mu`allaq* form, Ahmad (5:196), Tirmidhi, Darimi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Hibban, Ibn Majah, Bayhaqi in the *Shu`ab* and others.

If I kiss my mother's feet, am I worshipping her? These people are given knowledge but no wisdom. Allah said: *yu'ti al-hikmata man yasha', wa man utiya al-hikmata utiya khayran kathiran* [He gives wisdom to whomever He will, and whoever is given wisdom, he has been given an immense goodness] (2:269). Allah Almighty never gave everyone wisdom. So many people, in American universities, are learning Islamic knowledge, but they are not *mu'min*s [believers]. They haven't been given wisdom. They are only reading books. Wisdom is the sum of knowledge. Without wisdom knowledge is dead!

INT. I agree, but in terms of the respect that we show, are we carrying it very far... to be perceived... you are perceived as interceding for your followers -- making *shafa`a* -- so that in *Akhira* [hereafter] you will be interceding on their behalf...

SN. Is it prohibited to make *du`a*? If I am asking for something on behalf of my brother *bi zahr al-ghayb* [in his absence], is it wrong? There are so many hadiths advising us to make such *du`a* for each other.* It does not matter if it is going to be intercession. If I say: "Oh my Lord, give my brother a good life" or, if someone kisses my hand, if I say: "Allah bless you". Is it haram? Is that intercession now? There is no need to call it intercession. *Allahu fi awn al-`abd ma kana al-`abdu fi `awni akhihi* [Allah helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother].** That means we must try to help each other in any way we can: by hand, by word, and by praying. What is wrong with that?

* E.g. *Sahih Muslim*, book of *Du`a*, chapter on making *du`a* for a brother in his absence.
** Hadith of the Prophet narrated by Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Ahmad, and others.

I may help someone who cannot help himself or herself. I might go to the Sultan in order to help him. This is intercession, but it is in Shari`a. It is an honorable job because we are helping people who cannot help themselves. It is lawful, and Allah orders us: *wa ta`awanu `ala al-birri wa al-taqwa* [Help one another in righteousness and piety} (5:2). It is a command that we must help each other for good things. How are they blaming me for making *du`a* for them and accusing me because of making intercession? Intercession in *akhira* should be only in the divine presence. If Allah gives me intercession, I may say for these people: O my Lord, those people are no-mind people, send them with the animals!

INT. Nevertheless, is this very clear to those who are following you? That you are not going to intercede on their behalf?...

SN. They are clear. They are not idiots, like those people. They are clever. They may teach them a lesson. My followers are Doctors and Professors. Those people may take lessons from my followers. My followers are not cheated ones. They are all Europeans and Americans. Let those people bring one of the Germans, or one of the English, or one of the Americans to Islam. Our people are all educated people, I cannot cheat them!

INT. Sometimes, in meetings, you are introduced as "the perfect one." But people believe that there is only one perfect one, and that is the Prophet.

SN. But from him there are so many models coming...

INT. So do you say that that is a right introduction for a human being?

SN. Prophets are the first models. They are *ma`sum* -- innocent. Others, all of them, are not going to be innocent, but through their *mujahada* [striving], by fighting with their *nafs* [ego], whoever will be able to control their *nafs*, that one will become a model to help the others how to control their ego. Because every evil comes from uncontrollable people. I am not saying that I am a perfect model of the Prophet, *sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam*; but I am trying to step in his steps. I am not stepping after shaytan or evil -- no.

INT. Then, if you were to tell your followers not to address you the perfect one, not to kiss your hands and feet -- and they say that in meetings even women come and kiss your hands, and the Prophet would never allow that... I want your comments on that?

SN. No. They are always untrue people. They are always changing things from their real light. They are liars. They make *iftira'* [fabrications] and backbiting, because they are *hasud* -- jealous, envious people. I never say to my followers that I am "a perfect one." But until they find a perfect one, I am only training them. I never said that I am a 100% perfect trainer but I am a good opportunity; while I am here, I only try to do my best with people. Like a doctor who is not a specialist, but still he must treat his patients. Should he say: I cannot touch you because I am not a specialist?

I never said to anyone: "I am a 100% perfect person and I am training you: Come and kiss my hands!" I am not so foolish as these people. They are thinking that I say to people come and kiss my hand!

INT. They say that it is a necessary part of your training...

SN. No, never. My training is written in my books and the associations I hold, but they are not reading my books because shaytans are so proud. Can they find it anywhere that I say: Kiss my hand, kiss my feet? But I may enter through a crowd and without doing anything, people are completely unable to remain seated, they will stand up. I am not saying to them to do it. It is something granted to me, from the greatness of Allah, called *haybat* [dignity]. They can't stop. When I pass, they stand up and rush to me. I am not telling them to.

Once I was in Madina praying, facing *Qibla*. As I was finishing, one of these people said to me: "O shaykh! Why did you bring all these people behind you!" I was surprised. My eyes were closed and I was making *du`a* without sound, only what I may hear. But I looked around and I saw 100 people behind me. I said I am no one, I am an ordinary person, a visitor here. I do not know them. Why are you telling me this? Tell those people to go away!

Prophets have a magnetic power called *jazba* [attraction]. That makes people run to that person. I have some of that which I received through our spiritual way. I am not an empty one, like those people. But they are *hussad* [enviers], just as there were so many *hussad* among the Jewish people in front of the Prophet. It doesn't matter. They can't do anything.

What happens if my followers kiss my hand? The Prophet kissed the Stone, and all Sahaba kissed the Stone. All the Hujjaj [pilgrims] kiss the Stone, and the Ka`ba. It is not haram to kiss the Ka`ba. Is the Ka`ba more honored than Man? No.

INT. But the Ka`ba has a special place in their hearts.

SN. We have a special place also. We have been granted this specialness to be *khalifatullah* [Allah's representatives]. The Ka`ba is *baytullah* [Allah's House], we are *khalifatullah*. Are we less honored than the Ka`ba? Never. We have been honored. Angels asked for this honor but they were not given it. We have been granted it. How can you say not? One man was sitting with his back to the Ka`ba, and another said: What are you doing? He said: What? I am more than this Ka`ba in the Divine presence. The Ka`ba cannot do *sajda*, but I am making *sajda*. The Ka`ba was built by Sayyidina Ibrahim, while I was created by Allah.

15. *Tabarruk* From the Prophet's Blessed Skin.

- Narrated Usayd ibn Hudayr: `Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Layla, quoting Usayd ibn Hudayr, a man of the Ansar, said that while he was given to jesting and was talking to the people and making them laugh, the Prophet poked him under the ribs with a stick. He said: Let me take retaliation. He said: Take retaliation. He said: You are wearing a shirt but I am not. The Prophet then raised his shirt and the man embraced him and began to kiss his side. Then he said: This is what I wanted, Apostle of Allah! (Abu Dawud, Book 41, Number 5205.)

- Ibn `Abd al-Barr relates, in his *Isti`ab fi Ma`rifat al-ashab* (p. 673), that the Prophet, after forbidding two or three times the use of *khaluq* (a kind of perfume mixed with saffron), and finding that Sawad ibn `Amr al-Qari al-Ansari was wearing it, nudged him in the mid-section with a palm-tree stalk *(jarida)* and scratched him. The latter asked for reparation; when the Prophet bared his own belly to him, he jumped and kissed the Prophet's belly.

- Ibn Ishaq's version in the *Sira* mentions that Sawad was standing in the ranks of the Companions of Badr at the time of this incident. The Prophet was arranging the ranks with his switch *(miqra`a)* and he nudged Sawad's belly with it, scratching him inadvertently, with the words: "Align yourself with the others." Sawad said: "*Ya Rasulallah*, you hurt me, so give me reparation." The Prophet handed him the switch and said: "Take reparation." Sawad approached him and kissed his belly. The Prophet said: "What made you do that, O Sawad?" He replied, "*Ya Rasulallah*, the time has come for what you see, and I loved for my last action in this *dunya* to be touching you."

- Narrated Buhaysa al-Fazariyya: My father sought permission from the Prophet. Then he came near him, lifted his shirt, and began to kiss him and embrace him out of love for him... (Abu Dawud, Book 9, Number 1665.)

16. *Tabarruk* with places the Prophet visited

- Narrated Abu Burda: When I came to Medina. I met Abdullah bin Salam. He said, "Will you come to me so that I may serve you with *sawiq* (i.e. powdered barley) and dates, and let you enter a (blessed) house in which the Prophet entered?"… (Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 159)

17. The Prophet's sandals

- Bukhari and Tirmidhi narrate from Qatada: "I asked Anas to describe the sandals of Allah's Messenger and he replied: Each sandal had two straps"; and from `Isa ibn Tahman: "Anas took out a pair of shoes and showed them to us. They did not have hair on them." (The remark refers to the Arabian practice of not removing the hair from the leather from which shoes were made.) Bukhari, Malik, and Abu Dawud relate that `Ubayd ibn Jarih said to `Abd Allah ibn `Umar: "I saw you wear tanned sandals." He replied: "I saw the Prophet wearing sandals with no hair on them and perform ablution in them, and so I like to wear them."

al-Qastallani in his *Mawahib al-laduniyya* said that Ibn Mas`ud was one of the Prophet's servants and that he used to bring for the Prophet his cushion *(wisada)*, his tooth-stick *(siwak)*, his two sandals *(na`layn)*, and the water for his ablution. When the Prophet rose he would put his sandals on him; when he sat he would carry his sandals in his arms until he rose.[88]

Qastallani mentions the following from one of the greatest Tabi`in:

Abu Ishaq (al-Zuhri) said: al-Qasim ibn Muhammad (ibn Abu Bakr al-Siddiq) said: Of the proven blessing of the likeness of the Prophet's sandal is that whoever has it in his possession for *tabarruk*, it will safeguard him from the sedition of rebels and the mastery of enemies, and will be a barrier against every recreant devil and the evil eye of the envious. If the pregnant woman holds it in her right hand at the time of labor, her delivery will be easier by Allah's change and His might.

al-Qastallani also said that Abu al-Yaman ibn `Asakir wrote a volume on the image of the Prophet's sandal, and so did Ibn al-Hajj al-Andalusi. He relates the account of a pious shaykh by the name of Abu Ja`far Ahmad ibn `Abd al-Majid:

I cut the pattern of this sandal for one of my students. He came to me one day and said: "I saw a wonder yesterday from the blessing of this sandal. My wife was suffering from a pain which almost took her life. I placed the sandal on the spot of her pain and said: O Allah, show me the blessing of the owner of this sandal. Allah cured her on the spot."[89]

al-Munawi and al-Qari mentioned in their commentary on Tirmidhi's *al-Shama'il* that Ibn al-`Arabi said that the sandals are part of the attire of Prophets, and the people only left them due to the mud in their lands. He also mentioned that one of the names of the Prophet in the ancient books is *sahib al-na`layn* or "The wearer of the two sandals."

Shaykh Yusuf al-Nabahani recited about the Prophet's sandals:

wa na`lun khada`na haybatan li waqariha
fa inna mata nakhda`u li haybatiha na`lu
fa da`ha `ala a`la al-mafariqi innaha
haqiqataha tajun wa surataha na`lu

A sandal to whose majestic nobility we submit
For by submitting to its majesty do we rise:
Therefore place it in the highest spot for it is
In reality a crown, though its image is a sandal.

And when Imam al-Fakhani first saw the Prophet's sandals he recited:

wa law qila li al-majnuni layla wa wasluha
turidu am al-dunya wa ma fi zawayaha
laqala ghubarun min turabi ni`aliha
ahabbu ila nafsi wa ashfa li balawaha

And if Layla's Madman were asked: do you prefer
Union with Layla, or the world and its treasures?
He would answer: "Dust from the earth of her sandals
Is dearer to my soul, and its most soothing remedy."

Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Muqri wrote a book on this which he named *Fath al-muta`al fi madh al-ni`al* (The opening of the Most High in the praise of the Prophet's sandals).

Ashraf `Ali al-Tahanawi the Deobandi shaykh wrote a treatise entitled *Nayl al-shifa' bi na`l al-mustafa* (Obtaining remedy through the sandals of the Elect One) found in his book *Zad al-sa`id* (Provision for the fortunate).[90]

The *muhaddith* of India Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalwi said in his translation of Tirmidhi's *Shama'il*:

Maulana Ashraf `Ali Thanwi Sahib has written in his book *Zaadus Sa`eed* a detailed treatise on the *barakat* and virtues of the shoes of Rasulullah Sallallahu `Alayhi Wasallam. Those interested in this should read that book (which is available in English). In short, it may be said that it [the Prophet's sandal] has countless qualities. The `ulama have experienced it many a time. One is blessed by seeing Rasulullah Sallallahu `Alayhi Wasallam in one's dreams; one gains safety from oppressors and every heartfelt desire is attained. Every object is fulfilled by its *tawassul* (means, petition, request). The method of *tawassul* is also mentioned therein.[91]

We see by all the above evidence that *tawassul* and *tabarruk* are an intimate and integral part of the practice of the Companions, that it is Sunna, and that no one denies it except those who deviate from the Sunna and who harbor the disease of ignorance and suspicion in their heart. May Allah protect us from their designs, and may He keep all Muslims unswervingly on the path of *Ahl al-Sunna* and that of the true Salaf. We declare ourselves clear and innocent of the innovations of those who have attacked, rejected, or questioned the validity of *tawassul*. And Allah knows best.

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[1]Narrated by Muslim (Iman) from Abu Sa`id al-Khudri.

[2]Muslim, Ahmad, and others.

[3]Narrated by Tirmidhi (*hasan sahih* gharib).

[4]Muhammad Saeed al-Qahtani, *al-Wala' wa al-bara' according to the `Aqeedah of the Salaf* (London: al-Firdous Ltd., 1993) p. 99.

[5]Narrated in Bukhari.

[6]al-Ghazali, *Ihya `ulum al-din* (beginning), trans. Nuh Keller in *Reliance of the Traveller* p. 824.

[7]al-Tabata'i, *al-Mizan: An Exegesis of the Qur'an*, 3rd edition. Surah II, Verses 47-48, vol. 1, pp 221-262.

[8]See *Lisan al-`arab* under *shafa`a.*

[9]See Bukhari, *Istiqrad* Ch. 18.

[10]al-Ghazali, *Ihya `ulum al-din* (beginning), trans. Nuh Keller in *Reliance of the Traveller* p. 824.

[11] Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari* Riqaq ch. 51 (1989 ed.) 11:522.

[12]Bukhari: Tafsir 17:5; Muslim, Zuhd 14; Tirmidhi, Qyamat 10; Ahmad 2:436.

[13]Tirmidhi, Qyamat 11; Abu Dawud, Sunna 31; Ibn Majah, Zuhd 37; Ahmad 3:213; and others. See previous mention of this hadith.

[14]Muslim, Iman 306; Bukhari, Riqaq 56; Ibn Majah, Zuhd 37; Ahmad 3:79.

[15]Muhammad Abul Quasem, *Salvation of the Soul and Islamic Devotions* (Kegan Paul Intrnl. 1981) p. 44.

[16]Ahmad, *Musnad* 3:98 (#11947).

[17]Ahmad Zayni Dahlan, *Khulasat al-kalam fi umara' al-balad al-haram* (The summation concerning the leaders of the sacrosanct country) 2:245.

[18]Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Bada'i` al-fawa'id* (Alexandria: dar al-da`wa, 1412/1992) p. 63.

[19]See also al-Khatib (11:173) and Suyuti in *al-Durr al-manthur* (4:153). al-Haythami cites it in *Majma` al-zawa'id* as narrated from the Companion "Abu al-Hamra' (Hilal ibn al-Harith) the servant of the Prophet," rather than Anas, and says: "Its chain contains `Amr ibn Thabit, and his narrations are abandoned *(matruk)*." This is different from `Amr ibn Thabit al-Tabi`i (the student of `Abd Allah ibn `Umar), who is trustworthy *(thiqa)*.

[20]Also al-Khatib in *Tarikh Baghdad* (10:264) and Suyuti in *al-Durr al-manthur* (4:153) without the mention of the three caliphs.

[21]al-Haythami said in *Majma` al-zawa'id*: "From Ibn `Umar: The Prophet said: "When I was taken up to heaven I did not pass a heaven except I saw in it my name written: ***muhammadun rasulullah abu bakr al-siddiq***." Its chain contains `Abd Allah ibn Ibrahim al-Ghifari who is weak."

[22]al-Haythami in *Majma` al-zawa'id* narrates it with the addition: ***`ali akhu al-nabi sallallahu `alayhi wa sallama qabla an yakhluqa al-khalq*** (in another version: ***qabla an yakhluqa al-samawati wa al-ard*) *bi alfay sanatin***. Haythami says: "Tabarani narrated it in *al-Awsat* and its chain contains al-Ash`ath ibn `Amm al-Hasan ibn Salih who is weak, and I don't know him."

[23]al-Haythami in *Majma` al-zawa'id* says: "In Tabarani from Ibn `Abbas: The Prophet said: "There is a tree in Paradise" -- or: "There is no tree in Paradise," the narrator `Ali ibn Jumayl was unsure -- "except all of its leaves are inscribed:

la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah
abu bakr al-siddiq `umar al-faruq
`uthman dhu al-nurayn.

Tabarani narrates it and its chain contains `Ali ibn Jumayl who is weak."

[24]No doubt this is other than `Amr ibn Aws al-Thaqafi the great Tabi`i whose narrations are found in Bukhari and Muslim.

[25]Ibn Kathir, *al-Bidaya wa al-nihaya* 7:92.

[26]Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bari*, Book of *istisqa* ch. 3 (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-`ilmiyya, 1410/1989) 2:629-630.

[27]Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba* 6:164 #8350.

[28]*Fath al-bari* 2:630n.

[29]Narrated by al-Samhudi in *Khulast al-wafa'* (Madina, 1972) p. 123, by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami in his *Jawhar al-munazzam* (Cairo: Dar jawami` al-kalim, 1992) p. 126-127, and others.

[30]Muhammad Zubayr Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development & Special Features* (Islamic Texts Society, 1993) p. 51.

[31] Narrated by Ahmad in the Musnad, Abu Dawud, and al-Nasa'i in their Sunan. al-Dhahabi said: "Its chain is good" *(isnaduhu salih)*. See Dhahabi, *Mu`jam al-shuyukh* (Ta'if: maktabat al-siddiq, 1408/1988) 2:420 (#1028).

[32]Ibn Taymiyya, *`Aqida wasitiyya* (Salafiyya edition) p. 36.

[33]That is: this is a sound (*sahih*) hadith.

[34]al-Haytami, *al-Khayrat al-hisan* (Cairo: al-Halabi, n.d.) p. 63. It is also related that Imam Ahmad made *tawassul* through Imam Shafi`i to the point that his son `Abd Allah expressed his surprise, and Ahmad replied: "al-Shafi`i is like the sun for the people and like health for the body." When Imam Shafi`i heard that the people of al-Maghrib made *tawassul* to Allah through Imam Malik, he did not object to it.

[35]al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, *Tarikh Baghdad* 13:344.

[36]Suyuti, *Tabyid al-sahifa* (1413/1992 ed.) p. 161.

[37]Suyuti, *Jami` al-ahadith* 496 #2694. Haythami in *Majma` al-zawa'id*: "Tabarani related it and its men are those of sound hadith except Ibn Luhay`a who is fair (*hasan*).

[38]Bukhari and Muslim.

[39]Ibn `Alawi al-Maliki, *Mafahim yajib an tusahhah* (Dubai: Hashr Dalmuk, 1985) p. 69.

[40]The Qur'anic translation used for this section is that of Yusuf Ali (Revised King Fahd edition) unless marked by a "P" which indicates that of Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.

[41]In addition to the hadiths we have already mentioned, these evidences can be perused in Jalaluddin al-Suyuti's *Anba' al-adhkia' fi hayat al-anbiya* (The reports of the enlightened ones concerning the lives of Prophets) in *al-Rasa'il al-`ashr* (The ten treatises) (Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-`ilmiyya, 1409/1989) p. 197-211, also included in his *Hawi li al-Fatawi*; and Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn al-Husayn al-Bayhaqi, *Kitab ma warada fi hayat al-anbiya'i ba`da wafatihim* (What has been said concerning the lives of Prophets after their demise) (Beirut: Mu'assassat Nader, 1410/1990).

[42]See for example below, the section on *Ziyara*.

[43]This is a reference to the hadith of `Umar: "When Adam made his mistake..." that concerns Adam's seeking forgiveness for the sake of the Prophet Muhammad. This hadith is accepted as authentic by some scholars and rejected as inauthentic by others.

[44]Narrated by Tirmidhi (#3546 -- *hasan sahih gharib*), Nasa'i, Ibn Hibban, and al-Hakim. Bayhaqi also cites it in *Shu`ab al-iman* (2:213 #1565-1566).

[45]al-Baydawi, *Anwar al-tanzil* in *Majma` al-tafasir* 6:34.

[46]See Ibn al-`Arabi's commentary on Tirmidhi's Chapter on the Description of *salat* on the Prophet in *Tuhfat al-ahwadhi* and Tirmidhi's words to that effect (2:268, 2:271).

[47]Narrated by Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi (*hasan sahih*), Nasa'i, Ibn Hibban, Tabarani (*sahih*), and others.

[48]al-Sakhawi, *al-Qawl al-badi`* p. 132.

[49]al-Sakhawi, *al-Qawl al-badi`* p. 107.

[50]Ibn al-`Arabi, *Tuhfat al-ahwadhi* 2:273-274.

[51]Related by Ibn Majah with a sound chain through Abu al-Darda'. Also related with a sound chain from Aws ibn Aws al-Thaqafi by Ahmad, Ibn Abi Shayba, Abu Dawud, al-Nasa`i, Ibn Majah, al-Darimi, Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Hibban, al-Hakim (*sahih*, confirmed by Dhahabi), Tabarani in his *Kabir*, and Bayhaqi in many places, some with the initial addition of the following: "The best of your days is Friday, for in it Adam was created, and in it his soul was taken back, and in it is the Blowing of the horn, and in it is the universal Seizure, therefore invoke blessings upon me abundantly on Friday," etc.

The first part (concerning the order to invoke more *salat* on Friday and the disclosure ot this invocation to the Prophet) is related by Bayhaqi in *Shu`ab al-Iman* through Abi Umama, Anas, and Abu Mas`ud al-Ansari, and by al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak* from the latter. Shafi`i in his Musnad relates the first part only ("Invoke blessings upon me abundantly on Friday") *mursal* from Safwan ibn Salim.

[52]These are Mujahid's glosses as related by Bukhari in his *Sahih* (Riqaq ch. 43).

[53]Narrated by Tirmidhi (Qiyama 23 -- *hasan sahih*), Ahmad (5:136, 2:527), Abu Dawud (2041), al-Hakim (*sahih*), and al-Bazzar through various chains. al-Dhahabi narrates it from one of his shaykhs, Tahir ibn `Abd Allah al-`Ajami, in *Mu`jam al-shuyukh: al-mu`jam al-kabir* (Ta'if: maktabat al-siddiq, 1408/1988) 1:311 (#342).

[54]al-Haytami, *Fatawa hadithiyya* p. 18.

[55]Narrated from Ibn `Umar by Tabarani with a "soft" chain *bi sanadin layyin* according to Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-bari* (Beirut, 1989 ed. 11:161, #6329), i.e. the narrations of one or more of the narrators, although retained, need investigation. Cf. the definition of *layyin* in *Muqaddimat Ibn al-Salah* (p. 239 of the 1974 Egyptian ed.) and Nawawi's *Taqrib* (p. 51 of the 1987 Beirut ed.). However, Ibn Hajar considers this hadith authentic (11:177, #6345). Also narrated by Bukhari in his *Tarikh* (2:115), Abu Nu`aym in *al-Targhib* (1337), Ibn `Abd al-Barr in *al-Tamhid* (6:46), and Bayhaqi in *Shu`ab al-iman* (1:413-414 #573-574). Also narrated from Abu Sa`id by Tirmidhi (last hadith of Thawab al-Qur'an #2926, *hasan* gharib) with the wording "Whoever is occupied by the Qur'an and My remembrance..."

[56]al-Sakhawi, *al-Qawl al-badi`* p. 133.

[57]Tirmidhi *(hasan gharib)*, Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*, al-Bukhari in his *Tarikh al-kabir*, Ibn Bashkuwal, Ibn Abi `Asim, Abu Nu`aym, al-Sakhawi in *al-Maqasid al-hasana* (#268) and *al-Qawl al-badi`* (p. 125), and Bayhaqi in *Shu`ab al-iman* (2:212-213 #1563-1564).

[58]Narrated from Abu Hurayra and Abu Sa`id al-Khudri by Ahmad, Tirmidhi *(hasan sahih)* in the beginning of the Book of *Da`awat*, Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih*, Ibn Majah in his *Sunan*, Ibn al-Sani in *`Amal al-yawm wa al-layla* p. 443, and by al-Hakim in the *Mustadrak* (1:496) who said it is *sahih*.

[59]al-Sakhawi, *al-Qawl al-badi`* p. 98.

[60]See the relevant section in Ibn Kathir's history *al-Bidaya wa al-nihaya*.

[61]English *Sahih Bukhari*, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 262. *al-Mufassal* is a name for the last part of the Qur'an beginning with al-Hujurat, or Qaf, or al-A`la.

[62]*Bu`ithtu ila al-nasi `ammatan / kaffatan*. Narrated by Ahmad (3:304), Bayhaqi in the *Sunan* (2:433), Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir* (2:112, 281, 3:389, 4:397, 6:101, 506, 512), Tabarani in the *Kabir* (12:413), and others. al-Haythami said in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (8:259-261): "The narrators in Ahmad's chain are trustworthy."

[63]Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*: *innama bu`ithtu rahmatun wa lam ub`athu `adhaban*.

[64]M. Nasir al-Din al-Albani, *Tawassul: Its Types and Its Rulings*, trans. Dawud Burbank (Birmingham: al-Hidaayah, 1995).

[65]Albani, *Tawassul* p. 38.

[66]Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, and Ahmad.

[67]Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba* 4:220 #5427.

[68]Nawawi, *al-Adhkar* (Ta'if: Maktabat al-mu'ayyad, 1408/1988) p. 239 #562.

[69]Imam Malik said to al-Mansur inside the Prophet's Mosque in Madina: "Face him [the Prophet] and ask for his intercession *(istashfi` bihi)*." It is cited by al-Qadi `Iyad in *al-Shifa* (2:92-93) with a sound *(sahih)* chain, and also cited by al-Samhudi in *Khulasat al-Wafa*, Subki in *Shifa' al-siqam*, Qastallani in *al-Mawahib al-laduniyya*, Ibn Jama`a in *Hidayat al-salik*, and Haytami in *al-Jawhar al-munazzam* and *Tuhfat al-zuwwar*. See also Ibn `Abd al-Hadi in *al-Sarim al-munki* p. 244. Ibn Jama`a says in *Hidayat al-salik* (3:1381): "It is related by the two *hafiz* Ibn Bashkuwal and al-Qadi `Iyad in *al-Shifa'* after him, and no attention is paid to the words of those who claim that it is forged purely on the basis of his idle desires."

[70]Imam Shafi`i in his *Diwan* declared his reliance on *tawassul* through the Prophet's family, and he also made *tawassul* through Imam Abu Hanifa, as related by al-Haytami respectively in *al-Sawa`iq al-muhriqa* in many places and *al-Khayrat al-hisan* p. 63.

[71]As reported by `Ala' al-Din al-Mardawi in his book *al-insaf fi ma`rifat al-rajih min al-khilaf `ala madhhab al-Imam al-mubajjal Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (3:456). [See above]

[72]Ibn al-Jawzi, *al-Wafa* (Beirut: dar al-kutub al-`ilmiyya, 1408/1988), p. 365.

[73]Both quoted in *The Reliance of the Traveller* p. 935-940.

[74]`Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn al-Siddiq al-Ghumari, a *muhaddith* and Sufi shaykh from Morocco and the shaykh of Hasan `Ali al-Saqqaf.

[75]Related by Bukhari. Cf. Nawawi's *Forty hadiths* #16.

[76]Haythami says in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (9:24 #91): "al-Bazzar relates it and its sub-narrators are all sound *(rijaluhu rijal al-sahih)*." Qadi `Iyad cites it in *al-Shifa* (1:56 of the Amman edition). Suyuti said in his *Manahil al-safa fi takhrij ahadith al-shifa* (Beirut 1988/1408) p. 31 (#8): "Ibn Abi Usama cites it in his Musnad from the hadith of Bakr ibn `Abd Allah al-Muzani, and al-Bazzar from the hadith of Ibn Mas`ud with a sound (*sahih*) chain." Ibn al-Jawzi mentions it through Bakr and then again through Anas ibn Malik in the penultimate chapter of the penultimate section of *al-Wafa*, and also mentions the version through Aws ibn Aws with a sound chain: "The actions of human beings are shown to me every Thursday on the night of (i.e. preceding) Friday." See also *Fath al-bari* 10:415, al-Mundhiri's *al-Targhib wa al-Tarhib* 3:343, and *Musnad Ahmad* 4:484.

[77]Ibn Sa`d, *Tabaqat* 5:12.

[78]Abu Ya`la al-Khalil ibn `Abd Allah al-Khalili al-Qazwini, *Kitab al-irshad fi ma`rifat `ulama' al-hadith*, ed. Muhammad Said ibn Umar Idris, 1st ed., 3 vols. (Riyad : Maktabat al-Rushd, 1989), as quoted in `Abd Allah al-Ghumari, *Irgham al-mubtadi` al-ghabi bi jawaz al-tawassul bi al-nabi*, ed. Hasan `Ali al-Saqqaf, 2nd ed. (`Amman: Dar al-imam al-Nawawi, 1412/1992) p. 9.

[79]Ibn Hajar, *al-Isaba* (Calcutta 1853 ed.) 6:164 #8350.

[80] Saqqaf then mentions the above references. See his preface to al-Ghumari, *Irgham al-mubtadi`* p. 7-9.

[81]Nawawi, *al-Adhkar* (Ta'if ed.) p. 262.

[82]Nawawi, *al-Idah fi manasik al-hajj* (Damascus: Dar ibn Khaldun, n.d.) p. 144. See also a similar passage in Nawawi's *Majmu`* (8:212f.).

[83]Narrated by Ibn Hajar in *al-Isaba fi tamyiz al-sahaba* (Calcutta, 1853) 1:72 under "Anas ibn Malik."

[84]Ibn Abi Zayd, *al-Jami` fi al-sunan* (1982 ed.) p. 227.

[85]Trans. `A'isha Bewley in *Muhammad the Messenger of Allah: ash-Shifa of Qadi `Iyad* p. 248.

[86]Ahmad, *Musnad* 3:98 (#11947).

[87]Narrated by Malik in *al-Muwatta'*, Book 50, Number 50.4.10.

[88]al-Qastallani, *al-Mawahib al-laduniyya* (Beirut, 1996 ed.) 1:429.

[89]All in al-Qastallani, *al-Mawahib al-laduniyya* 2:174.

[90]All quoted in al-Sayyid Hashim al-Rifa`i, *Adilla* p. 101.

[91]Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhelwi, ed. and trans. of Tirmidhi, *al-Shama'il al-muhammadiyya*, 2nd ed. (Ghaziabad, India: New Era Publishers, 1994) p. 72-73.