

ISSUES OF CONTROVERSY

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

FOREWORD

I PRAISE HIM, THE EXALTED, AND I SEND MY SALUTATIONS UPON HIS SERVANT, Messenger, and beloved; our liege lord Muḥammad; the unlettered Prophet, and upon his progeny, companions and allies. To proceed: after reading the manuscript written by the brother, the Ḥabīb, the ‘Allāma, Shaykh Zayn b. Sumayṭ Āl-Bā‘alawī al-Ḥusaynī al-Shāfi‘ī, I was very pleased with it and found it useful and beneficial. It contains sound answers—along with reliable legal evidence from the Book and the Sunna—to many controversial issues in which there are differences between the great majority—Ahl al-Sunna—and a minority of opponents. For this reason, I sought the aid of Allah, the Exalted, in publishing this tract with the title: ‘*Issues of Controversy*’. I did this, asking the Master, the Exalted, to allow the efforts of its author to find acceptance in the hearts and minds, allowing the Muslims to come together upon one common word. He, the Exalted, is the Best One to be asked and He is the Greatest hope. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

—Yūsuf b. al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Rifā‘ī

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QUESTIONS

What is the ruling on performing *tawassul* through the Prophets and saints?

Answer: The ruling in the Sacred Law concerning the performance of *tawassul* through them, and seeking their aid and assistance in the fulfillment of worldly and religious needs is that it is permissible according to the consensus of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a*. They are the great bulk [*siwād al-‘aẓam*] and the majority of the Muslims. Their consensus is an authoritative proof, because [as a whole] they are protected from error.

Both Aḥmad and al-Ṭabarānī narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: “I asked my Lord that my nation not concur upon misguidance, and He granted that to me...” Al-Ḥākim narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās in a raised [*marfū‘*] tradition: “Allah will never allow my nation to concur upon misguidance...” Another narration states: “What the Muslims see as good is seen by Allah as good.”

What is the meaning of *tawassul*?

Answer: It means to seek blessings by mentioning those loved by Allah, the Exalted, for the fact that it has been established that Allah shows mercy to the servants on account of them. *Tawassul* through them means to take them as a means—in other words, an intermediary—unto Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, for the fulfillment of needs and acquisition of wants because they are closer to Allah than us, therefore He responds to their supplications and accepts their intercession. In the Ḥadīth Qudsī, Allah, the Exalted said: “I declare war on whoever takes a friend of mine in enmity . My servant does not draw nearer to Me with anything more beloved to Me than that which I have proscribed for him. My servant continues drawing closer to Me with supererogatory acts until I love him. When I love him, I am his hearing by which he hears, his vision by which he sees, his hand by which he grasps, and his foot by which he walks. Were he to ask Me, I would

most certainly give him, and were he to seek refuge in Me, I would most certainly grant him refuge.” This is narrated by al-Bukhārī in his rigorously authentic collection.

What is the proof for the permissibility of *tawassul*?

Answer: The proof for that is found in many explicit and rigorously authentic Ḥadīth narrations. Among them is the Ḥadīth narrated by al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā’ī, al-Bayhaqī, and al-Ṭabarānī with an rigorously authentic chain going back to ‘Uthmān b. Ḥunayf ؓ, in which it is stated that a blind man came to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ complaining from his loss of sight, saying: “Oh Messenger of Allah! Supplicate to Allah that He return to me my sight.” He ﷺ said: “If you like, I can supplicate for you, and if you like, you can be patient for it is better for you.” The blind man asked him to supplicate for him, so the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Go perform ritual ablution, pray two units of ritual prayer, then supplicate: ‘Oh Allah, I ask you and turn to you through Your Prophet, the Prophet of mercy. Oh Muhammad! I turn to your Lord through you so that my need is fulfilled. Oh Allah, grant him intercession for me...’” The man left, and when he returned, his sight was returned to him. In the narration of al-Bayhaqī it states that his sight returned to him as soon as he stood. The scholars state that these Ḥadīth prove the permissibility of *tawassul* and calling him. this supplication was used by the companions, the followers, the Salaf, and those after them for the fulfillment of their needs—and Allah knows best.

Another evidence is found in the narration of al-Bukhārī from Anas, which states that when they would experience drought, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ would seek rain through al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib. ‘Umar would say: ‘When we experienced drought, we would perform *tawassul* through our Prophet ﷺ to You (Oh Allah) and You would send us rain. Now, we perform *tawassul* to You by the uncle of the Prophet ﷺ.’” The scholars state that this is explicit in proving the permissibility of *tawassul* through upright people, because the people on that day took al-‘Abbās as their means unto Allah, the Exalted, and as a consequence, rain was sent down.

Is it permissible to perform *tawassul* through the deceased?

Answer: The scholars—may Allah have mercy upon them—stated that when it comes to the permissibility of performing *tawassul* through Allah’s beloved, there is no distinction between it being performed during their worldly life or after their movement to the isthmus *barzakh* life. The people of the isthmus *barzakh* life among them are in the Divine presence of Allah, so whoever turns to them, they will turn to him in the fulfillment of his need.

What is the evidence for the permissibility of performing *tawassul* through the deceased?

Answer: The evidence for that was mentioned by Ibn al-Qayyim in *Zād al-Ma‘ād* from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī ؓ who said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Not a single man exits from his house on the way to the prayer and says: ‘Oh Allah! I ask you by the right of the supplicants upon You, and by the right of this walking of mine unto You—for I have not gone out boastfully, vaingloriously, or out of ostentation or seeking to be heard. I have only gone out for fear of Your wrath and in pursuit of your Good pleasure. I ask You to save me from the fire and to forgive me my sins; for no one forgives sins but You’—no one says this, save that Allah entrusts seventy thousand Angels to him, all seeking his forgiveness, and Allah turns to him with His Countenance until he completes his prayer.’” This was also narrated by Ibn Mājah.

Al-Bayhaqī, Ibn al-Sunnī, and al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Nu‘aym narrated that when he would leave his house to go to the prayer, the Prophet ﷺ would supplicate: “Oh Allah! I ask You by the right of the supplicants upon You...” The scholars stated that this is an explicit evidence showing *tawassul* with every believing servant—dead or alive—and that he ﷺ taught his companions this supplication and encouraged them to say it. There is no one among the Salaf or those after them who did not recite this supplication upon leaving his house for prayer. It is also established that when the mother of our liege lord ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—may Allah ennoble his countenance—passed away, the Prophet ﷺ said: “Oh Allah! Forgive my mother, Fāṭima b. Asad and make expansive her entry [into the grave]

by the right of Your Prophet and the Prophets before me.” This is part of a longer Ḥadīth narrated and declared rigorously authentic by Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Ḥākim, and al-Ṭabarānī. Contemplate his words ﷺ : “...and the Prophets before me.” This statement is clear in its affirmation of the permissibility of *tawassul* through the deceased—understand this well and be safe from the pit-falls of destruction.

What is the meaning of ‘seeking aid’ [*istighātha*] ?

Answer: Seeking aid means to seek the help and assistance of one who can support and stave off severities and the like.

Is it permissible to seek aid from other than Allah?

Answer: Yes, it is permissible to seek it from other than Him, the Exalted, when considering that the “other” is a means and intermediary. Even though in reality, the aid is from Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, that does not negate that He has placed means and intermediaries for that. The proof for this is the statement of the Prophet ﷺ : “Allah will assist the servant as long as the servant assists his brother.” [Muslim] and his other statement ﷺ regarding the right of the pathway: “...and that you aid the one in distress and guide the one who is lost.” [Abū Dāwūd] In this Ḥadīth, he ﷺ ascribed the giving of aid to the servant and encouraged the servants to assist one another.

What is the proof for the legality of seeking aid?

Answer: Seeking aid has many proofs. Among them, is the narration found in al-Bukhārī’s collection in the book of Zakāt, that states that the Prophet ﷺ said: “On the Day of Resurrection, the Sun shall draw close until the people’s perspiration reaches half way to their ears. While they are in that state, the people will seek the aid of Ādam, and then Mūsā, and then Muḥammad ﷺ...” The people of the standing will concur upon the permissibility of seeking the aid of the Prophets—upon them all be peace—and this is inspiration given to them by Allah, the Exalted. This contains the strongest proof that performing *tawassul* through them and seeking their aid in this life and the next is recommended.

Another proof for this is found in the narration of al-Ṭabarānī, in which the Prophet ﷺ said: “If one of you becomes lost or in need of assistance and he is in a distant land without a companion, let him say: ‘Oh servants of Allah! Give me aid’, for Allah has servants you do not see.” This Ḥadīth is explicit in indicating the permissibility of seeking aid and calling upon those who are absent among the living and the dead—and Allah knows best.

In closing, the Sayyid, Imām Aḥmad Zaynī Daḥlān—may Allah have mercy upon him—said:

The upshot of this is that the view of Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamā‘a is that seeking aid and performing *tawassul* through the living and the dead is permissible, because we do not believe that anything possess independent efficacy, benefit, or harm except Allah who is alone without any partners. The Prophets have no independent efficacy for themselves; blessings are sought from them and aid is only sought from their station because they are beloved by Allah, the Exalted. Those who draw a distinction between the living and the dead are those who believe that the living—as opposed to the dead—possess independent efficacy, whereas we say that Allah is the creator of everything: **“And Allah created you and what you do.”**
[*Khulāṣa al-Kalām*]

Do we benefit from the dead in this world or not?

Answer: Yes, the dead can bring benefit to the living. It has been established that they supplicate and intercede for the living. Our liege lord and Shaykh, Imām ‘Abdullah b. ‘Alawī al-Ḥaddād—may Allah be pleased with him and allow us to benefit from him—said: “They are of more benefit to the living than the living are to themselves; the living are occupied with gathering provisions whereas the dead are divested of that. They have no concern save what their own hands have brought fourth of righteous actions. They have no other attachment save that—like the Angels.”

What is the proof that the dead can benefit the living?

Answer: The proof for that is found in the narration of Aḥmad from Anas ؓ who said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Your works are presented to your relatives and families; if it is good, they are happy; if it is other than that, they say: ‘Oh Allah! Do not

allow them to die until You guide them just as You have guided us. Al-Bazzār narrated with a rigorously authentic chain from Ibn Mas‘ūd, from the Prophet ﷺ who said: “My life is better for you; you bring up new matters and new matters are brought up for you. Your actions will be shown to me; if I see goodness I shall praise Allah and if I see evil I shall ask forgiveness of Him for you” The scholars have said: “What benefit is greater than him ﷺ seeking forgiveness for the wrong actions of his nation that are presented to him?”

Some scholars have said: “The strongest proof that the dead benefit the living is what occurred to the Prophet ﷺ on the night of the miraculous journey, when Allah ordered him and his nation with fifty prayers, and our liege lord Mūsā advised him to go back to his Lord and ask for it to be reduced”—as was narrated in the rigorously authentic collection [of al-Bukhārī]—and it was lightened for them [his nation] by means of him; this is from the greatest of benefits.

Are the Prophets alive in their graves?

Answer: Yes, it has been established that they perform the pilgrimage and offer prayers inside of their graves. The scholars have stated that it is possible that religious works are performed out of sheer delight and not out of legal accountability [*taklīf*]; so there is no contradiction between this and the fact that the hereafter is not an abode of works.

What is the proof that they are alive?

Answer: The proof is found in a Ḥadīth narrated in the rigorously authentic collection of Muslim, from Anas who said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘On the night of the ascension, I was brought to Mūsā who was standing and praying in his grave upon the red plain.’” This was narrated by al-Bayhaqī and Abū Ya‘lā from Anas who said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘The Prophets are alive in their graves engaging in prayer.’” Al-Munāwī said this Ḥadīth is rigorously authentic.

The scholars have stated that in the Qur’ān, Allah textually mentioned the life of the martyrs: **“And do not consider those who are killed in the way of Allah as dead. Nay, they are alive and with their Lord, receiving provision.”** [Āl-‘Imrān: 169] So [if they are alive], then the Prophets and truthful one are alive *a fortiori*, for they possess a higher rank.

‘Ā’isha—may Allah be pleased with her—said: “I used to enter my house in which the Messenger of Allah and my father were [buried]. I used to remove my clothes, saying [to myself]: ‘It is only my husband and father.’ After ‘Umar was buried with them, by Allah, never did I enter except that I was wrapped in my garments out of shyness in front of ‘Umar.” This was narrated by Aḥmad and it proves that Lady ‘Ā’isha—may Allah be pleased with her—did not doubt that our liege lord ‘Umar could see her, and it is for this reason, that after his burial, she made sure to cover herself when she wanted to enter.

Is it permissible to seek blessings from the relics of the righteous?

Answer: Yes, that is permissible according to the agreement of the scholars of Islam.

What is the proof for that?

Answer: There are many proofs for that. Among them is the narration found in the rigorously authentic collection of Muslim, from Anas رضي الله عنه, who said: “I saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when the barber was cutting his hair [after Minā]. The companions were surrounding him, none of them wanting a single hair of his to fall except in his hand.” The companions, therefore, used to save his hairs ﷺ in order to derive blessings from them and to seek rain. It has been established that Khālīd b. al-Walīd رضي الله عنه used to place several of the Prophet’s hairs under his hat. During one of his battles, he lost his hat and he went to great lengths looking for it, so much so that some of the companions rebuked him on account of how many people were killed in search of it. Khālīd informed them that he did not go to such lengths merely for the hat, but rather because of what the hat contained of the Prophet’s hair ﷺ. He was afraid, lest the blessings found in it slip into the hands of the pagans. In the rigorously authentic collection of al-Bukhārī, there is a report from Abū Juḥayfa who said: “I once went to the Prophet ﷺ, and he was wearing a red cloak out of tanned leather. I saw Bilāl take the ablution water of the Prophet ﷺ and the people were hastening to acquire it. Whoever obtained some of it would rub himself with it, and whoever did not get any of it would take from the moisture of those who did.” In other words, for the sake of blessings and seeking cure.

In the Musnad of Imām Aḥmad, there is a report from Ja’far b. Muḥammad who said: “When we washed the Prophet ﷺ after his death, some of the water that was used

remained in the area around his eyes, so ‘Alī took from it and drank it.” in al-Bukhārī’s collection, there is a report from Asmā’ b. Abī Bakr—may Allah be pleased with her—in which it states that she took out a embroidered cloak made of Persian cloth, and said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to wear this, and we now wash it for the sick and seek a cure from it.”

What is the ruling on visiting the graves of the Prophets, righteous, and others?

Answer: Visiting their graves, as well as undertaking a journey to them is an recommended act of closeness [to Allah]. The scholars—may Allah have mercy upon them—said that in the beginning of Islam, visiting graves was prohibited, then that ruling was abrogated by both the statements and actions of the Prophet ﷺ.

What is the proof that it is permissible?

Answer: The proof for that is the narration found in the rigorously authentic collection of Muslim, in which it states that he ﷺ said: “I used to forbid you from visiting graves, but alas, now visit them.” In the narration of al-Bayhaqī it states: “I used to forbid you from visiting graves, but visit them now, for they soften the hearts, cause the eyes to cry, and remind of the hereafter.” ‘Ā’isha—may Allah be pleased with her—said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to go out in the middle of the night to al-Baqī’ cemetery and call out: “Peace be upon you all, oh abode of a believing folk. You shall soon receive what you were promised, and, Allah willing, we shall be joining you. Oh Allah! Forgive the people of al-Baqī’ al-Gharqad.” This was narrated by Muslim.

What is the ruling on women visiting graves?

Answer: The scholars—may Allah have mercy upon them—mentioned that visiting the graves is a Sunna for men and reprehensible [*makrūh*] for women—unless it is for the sake of seeking blessings; such as visiting the Prophets, saints, and scholars. In such a situation, it is considered a Sunna for them just as it is for men. Some of them said that it is unrestrictedly permissible for women to visit graves, due to the Ḥadīth narrated by

both al-Bukhārī and Muslim, stating that he ﷺ once saw a woman crying at the graveside of her son. He ﷺ ordered her to be patient and did he not censure her. Muslim narrated that he ﷺ taught ‘Ā’isha the supplication to be said when visiting graves, after she asked him: “What should I say to them?” He replied: “Say: ‘Peace be upon you oh people of the abode of believers and Muslims. May Allah have mercy upon the ones among us who have gone forward and those yet to go. Allah willing, we shall soon join you.’”

What the meaning of the Prophet’s ﷺ statement: “May Allah curse the women who frequently visit the graves”?

Answer: The scholars interpreted this Ḥadīth, saying that it refer to the women who visit graves for the sake of crying and wailing, as was the custom of the women. Such a visit is unlawful, as opposed to a visit that is free of such things.

What is the meaning of the Prophet’s statement: “Do not undertake a journey except to three Masjids...”?

Answer: The people of knowledge have said that this Ḥadīth means that one should not undertake a journey to a Masjid for its own virtue, unless it is one of the three Masjids in which the reward for prayer inside one of them is multiplied. If this was not the meaning of the Ḥadīth, it would imply that one should not undertake a journey to ‘Arafāt or Minā, to visit one’s parents and relatives, to seek knowledge, engage in trade, or wage Jihād—an no one from the Muslims say this.

Can the dead sense and hear what is said around them?

Answer: Yes, and for this reason, the Prophet ﷺ legislated the visitation of the dead and sending them salutations directly. He ﷺ would frequently visit the inhabitants of al-Baqī cemetery and greet them. Allah forbid that he ﷺ greet people who neither hear or understand.

What is the proof for that?

Answer: The proof for that is found in the narration of Ibn Abī al-Dunyā's *Kitāb al-Qubūr* from 'Ā'isha—may Allah be pleased with her—who said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘There is no man who visits the grave of his brother and sits with him, except that he [the inhabitant of the grave] takes pleasure in his company and replies to him until the latter gets up to leave.’” Abū Hurayra said: “When a man passes by the grave of his brother, the former responds to his greetings and recognizes him. When he passes by the grave of someone he doesn't know and sends his greetings of peace, the former responds with the greeting of peace.

What is the meaning of Allah's words: “And you can not cause those in the graves to hear”?

Answer: The answer to this was provided by Ibn al-Qayyim in *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*:

The context of the verse proves that what is meant is that for the unbeliever whose heart is dead, you are not able to cause him to hear in a manner that will benefit him. Allah did not mean that the inhabitants of the graves are completely unable to hear. How can this be, when the Prophet ﷺ informed that they hear the footsteps of those in the funeral procession? He also informed that those killed at Badr heard his words and address. He ﷺ legislated the sending of salutations to them—the dead—in the second person [pronoun] that is heard. He also informed that whoever sends greetings to his dead believing brother, that the former will respond to his greetings. This verse is similar to the words of the Exalted: “Indeed, you can not cause the dead to hear and you can not cause the deaf to hear the call; when they turn away.”

What is the ruling on reciting the Qur'ān at the graves and donating its reward to the dead?

Answer: You should know that the recitation of the Muslims and their declaration of Divine unity upon their dead is the truth and is correct, and that the reward of that reaches their dead according to the agreement of the scholars of Islam. This is because after their recital and declaration of Divine unity, they say: ‘Oh Allah! Allow the reward

of what we have recited and our declarations of Divine unity to reach so and so...' The only disagreement is if there is no supplication like this. The well known opinion in the legal school of Imām al-Shāfi'ī is that its reward does not reach them. On the other hand, the late Shāfi'ī scholars took the view—which is the view of the other three Imāms—that the rewards for such recitation and remembrance does reach the dead. This is what the people have acted upon; and whatever the Muslims see as good, is seen by Allah as good. Our liege lord and Imām, the proof and pole, 'Abdullāh b. 'Alawī al-Ḥaddād—may Allah cause others to benefit from him—said:

The most blessed and beneficial thing one may gift to the dead is the recitation of the Qur'ān and donation of its reward to them. This has been the practice of the Muslims throughout the ages and localities. It is the view of the majority of scholars and righteous both of early time and of latter times.

This was said by him ﷺ in his book, *Sabīl al-Adhkār*.

What is the proof for the permissibility of reciting the Qur'ān upon the dead?

Answer: The proof for this is narrated by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Mājah from Ma'qal b. Yassar: "The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Read Sūra Yāsīn upon your dead.'" The scholars have stated that this Ḥadīth is unrestricted and that it includes recitation both before death and after it. Al-Ṭabarānī and al-Bayhaqī (in *Shu'ab al-Imān*) narrated a raised (*marfū'*) tradition from Ibn 'Umar that states: "When one of you dies, do not hold him back; hasten him to his grave and let the beginning of Sūra al-Baqara be recited near his head and the end of it be recited at his feet." This was mentioned by Imām al-Suyūṭī in *Jama' al-Jawāmi'*.

In *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*, Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned what would entail that reading upon the graves is recommended. He proved this by mentioning that groups of the Salaf used to advise those around them to read at their graves [after their death]. Among them was Ibn 'Umar; he advised others to read Sūra al-Baqara at his grave. Also, when someone from the Anṣār would die, they would go to their grave and recite the Qur'ān. The scholars have mentioned that it is permissible for someone to donate the rewards for his own works to someone else; be it prayer, recitation, or anything else. This is proven by the

narration mentioned by al-Darāqutnī that a man said: “Oh Messenger of Allah! I had two parents whom I treated well during their life; how can I treat them well after their death?” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ replied: “It is from kindness that you pray for them when you pray and that you fast for them when you fast.”

What is the meaning of Allah’s words: “And man will have nothing but that for which he strives”, and the statement of the Prophet ﷺ : “When the son of Ādam dies, all of his works cease” ?

Answer: In *Kitāb al-Rūḥ*, Ibn al-Qayyim said:

The Qur’ān did not negate that a man could benefit from the efforts of others, rather, it informed that such a person possesses nothing but that for which he strived. As for the efforts of others, it is their possession; if they wish, they can give it to others, and if they wish, they can keep it for themselves. He, the Exalted, did not say that such a person can not *benefit* from anything but his own efforts. The Prophet said [in the Ḥadīth] that [the son of Ādam’s] works cease; he did not say that benefits cease. He only informed of [man’s] works ceasing. As for the works of others, it belongs to them; if they gift it to him, the reward of the work will reach him; not the reward of his own work. That which ceases is one thing, and that which reaches is another
—understand this well.

The scholars of Qur’ānic exegesis mentioned from Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ that the ruling found in Allah’s words: **“And man will have nothing but that for which he strives”** is abrogated in the Sacred Law by the other verse: **“And those who believed and whose offspring followed them in faith; We will join their offspring with them.”** So this verse states that He will enter the children into Paradise by the righteousness of the fathers. ‘Ikrima said that this was reserved for the people of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm—peace be upon them—and as for this nation, they will have that for which they strived and for what others strived for them, as it is narrated that a woman buried one of her children and said: “Oh Messenger of Allah! Does this child have a Ḥajj?” He ﷺ replied: “Yes, and for you is the reward.” Someone else asked him ﷺ : “My mother died; will she have a reward if I pay charity on her behalf?” He ﷺ replied: “Yes.” And Allah knows best.

What is the ruling on kissing and rubbing graves?

Answer: According to most of the scholars, the ruling is that it is reprehensible only. Some of them stated that it is allowed and permissible for the sake of deriving blessings; no one said that it was unlawful.

What is the proof that it is permissible?

Answer: It is proven to be permissible because there is no prohibition against it in the Sacred Law, nor is there any proof establishing its unlawfulness. It has been narrated that when Bilāl ؓ visited the chosen one ؑ, he started to cry and rub his cheeks on the noble grave. It is also narrated that Ibn ‘Umar would place his right hand upon the grave. This was mentioned by al-Khaṭīb Ibn Jamā‘. It is also established from Imām Aḥmad—may Allah have mercy upon him—that he was asked about kissing the grave and pulpit of the Prophet ﷺ, to which he replied: “There is no harm in that.”

What is the ruling on covering the graves with plaster and building over them?

Answer: According to most scholars, plastering the graves is reprehensible. Abū Ḥanīfa said that it was not reprehensible. There is nothing in the Sacred Law that proves its unlawfulness, and as for the Ḥadīth that states the prohibition of plastering over the graves, building over them and sitting upon them, the majority of the scholars agree that this prohibition is one of detestability and not unlawfulness.

Is there any reason why so many people in the various lands plaster the graves or is it without reason?

Answer: They do not do it without reason or to merely decorate. Rather, their intention in doing that is good and there are benefits to be found from it. Among these benefits is so that they are known to be graves so modesty is shown in visitation and respect is displayed and they are not desecrated. Another benefit to be found from it is that it prevents people from exhuming the grave—because this is forbidden in the Sacred Law—

and that it allows the relatives of the dead to gather together, as is the Sunna. It has been reported that he ﷺ placed a stone upon the grave of ‘Uthmān b. Maz‘ūn and said: “This is a marker upon the grave of my brother so I can bury here, those who die from my relatives.” This was narrated by Abū Dāwūd and al-Bayhaqī.

As for building structures upon the graves, the scholars have mentioned some details regarding this: If the structure is in a piece of land owned either by the deceased or someone else with their permission, then it is reprehensible. It is not unlawful—be the structure a dome or other than that. If the structure is in a graveyard located on a piece of property that is donated as charity or as a *waqf* endowment, then it is unlawful. The only reason for its unlawfulness is because of it constricting and crowding the graveyard. Yes, it is true that they [the scholars] excluded [from this ruling] the graves of the righteous and the Imāms of the Muslims. It is permissible to build structures upon their graves—even if it is located on donated property—because this revives the visitation of the dead that is commanded in the Sacred Law and is for the sake of seeking blessings and allowing the living to take benefit from the dead by recitation [of the Qur’ān] there. The scholars inferred the permissibility for this from the actions of the Muslims both of early and later times, for according to the scholars, that is a proof.

What is the meaning of the Ḥadīth: “May Allah curse the Jews and Christians; they took the graves of their Prophets as Masjids”?

Answer: The scholars have mentioned that this Ḥadīth means prostrating to the graves and praying towards them with the intention of reverence; as the Jews and Christians do when they prostrate to the graves of their Prophets and make them as prayer directions (*qiblas*) that they face in their prayers for the sake of reverence. This is clearly unlawful. The prohibition [in the Ḥadīth] is therefore in imitating them by doing as they do and prostrating to the graves and praying towards them—and this is not correct for a Muslim to do and it is not to be found in Islam due to the statement of the Prophet ﷺ : “Satan has despaired from being worshipped by those who pray, however, he seeks to cause dissention between them.” This was narrated by Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, and Aḥmad.

What is the ruling on imparting the deceased [with the testimony of faith] after his burial?

Answer: Imparting [the testimony of faith] to the deceased adult after his burial is seen as recommended by many scholars due to the words of the Exalted: “**And remind them, for certainly the reminder benefits the believers.**” It was recommended by the Shafi‘ī, most of the Ḥanbalīs, and the verifying scholars from the Ḥanafīs and Mālikīs. At that time [after death], the servant is in the greatest need of a reminder. In his legal verdicts, Ibn Taymiyya mentioned that this type of imparting has been established from a group of the companions and that they ordered it, and that Imām Aḥmad said that there was no harm in it, and that it was recommended by a group of al-Shāfi‘ī’s and Aḥmad’s companions. He [Ibn Taymiyya] said in summary:

It has been established that the one buried is being questioned and that it is commanded to pray for him, so for this reason, it has been said that imparting [the testimony of faith] benefits him. The dead hear calling, as it appears in the rigorously authentic Ḥadīth that the Prophet ﷺ said that he hears their footsteps, and he also said: “You can not hear what I say better than they.”

Is there any Ḥadīth that describes the manner of imparting [the testimony of faith] mentioned above?

Answer: Yes. Al-Ṭabarānī narrated a raised (*marfū‘*) tradition that says: “If one of your brothers die and you have covered his grave with dirt, let one of you stand at his head level and say: ‘Oh so and so, the son of so and so [*fulāna*; i.e. his mother]’, for he will hear him, and then let him say again: ‘Oh so and so, the son of so and so’, for the deceased will then sit upright. Then let him say: ‘Oh so and so, the son of so and so’, for he will then say in response: ‘Guide us, may Allah have mercy upon you’, but you will not perceive it. Then, let him say to the deceased: ‘Remember what you left the world with: the testimony of: ‘There is no god worthy of worship but Allah and Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger’, and that you were pleased with Allah as your Lord, with Islam as your religion, with Muḥammad as your Prophet, and with the Qur’ān as your Imām.’ Indeed, [the Angels] Munkar and Nakīr will take each others hands and say: ‘Let us go.

What causes us to remain with he whose evidence was imparted to him?’ A man said: ‘Oh Messenger of Allah! What if he doesn’t know his mother?’ He ﷺ replied: ‘Then he should ascribe him to his mother Ḥawwā’ (Eve).’”

What is the ruling on sacrificing animals outside of the doors of the saints?

Answer: The scholars—may Allah have mercy upon them—have mentioned that this has some detail to it. If someone does that in the name of that saint, or in order to draw close to him, then he is like someone who has sacrificed for other than Allah. The sacrificial animal is considered carrion and the one who did that is sinful. He is not to be declared an unbeliever unless he intended by that act, to worship and show reverential glorification [to the saint]—just as one who prostrates for the same reason. As for the one who, when sacrificing the animal, intends Allah, the Exalted, and donates the meat to the poor and indigent, for the sake of donating the reward of that charity to the soul of that saint, then this is permissible, nay, rather it is recommended according to the agreement of the Imāms because it is from the realm of charity donated to the dead and goodness shown to him—both encouraged in the Sacred Law—so understand this well.

What is the ruling on performing vows for the saints?

Answer: The scholars—may Allah bring benefit through them—mentioned that vows for the shrines of the saints and the scholars is permissible and valid, *if* the one performing the vow intends the people located at that place, such as the descendents [of the saints and scholars], or the poor at their graves, or if he intends to fulfill his vow by building up their tombs, because that entails reviving visitation of the dead which is legislated. It is also valid if the one performing the vow was ambiguous and did not intend any of that in particular, and then spent out [wealth] for those things—not if he intends reverential glorification of the grave and drawing close to its inhabitant, or if he vows to the person of the deceased. Such a vow is invalid because it is unlawful, and it is well known that none of those who perform vows intend such a thing.

What do the Muslims intend with their vows and sacrifices for the dead?

Answer: You should know that the Muslims do not intend anything by that other than charity on their [the deceased's] behalf and donating its reward to their souls. No Muslim who sacrifices for the Prophet or a saint or vows anything for him intends anything more than charity on his behalf and donating its reward to him. It is like gifts from the living given to the dead and it is commanded in the Sacred Law. Ahl al-Sunna and the scholars of this nation are in unanimous agreement that charity from the living benefits and reaches the dead.

What is the proof that the reward of charity reaches the dead?

Answer: This is proven by many rigorously authentic Ḥadīth. Among them is the Ḥadīth narrated by Muslim from Abū Ḥurayra رضي الله عنه stating that a man said to the Prophet ﷺ: “My father died and did not leave any bequeathal; will it benefit him if I give charity on his behalf?” He ﷺ replied: “Yes.” From Sa‘d رضي الله عنه it is narrated that he asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ: “Oh Prophet of Allah! My mother died, and I know that had she lived, she would have given charity. If I give charity on her behalf, will that benefit her?” He ﷺ replied: “Yes.” He then asked him: “So what charity is best oh Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “Water.” Sa‘d then dug a well and said: “This is for the mother of Sa‘d.”

What is the ruling on swearing by other than Allah?

Answer: The people of knowledge disagreed regarding the ruling on swearing by someone who possesses sanctity such as the Prophet, a saint, and the like. Some of them said that it is reprehensible and others said that it is unlawful. The famous opinion in the legal school of Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal is that it is permissible to swear in the name of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and that it is obligatory to expiate ones oath if they break it. His reasoning was that this is one of the two pillars of the testimony of faith. None of the scholars said that swearing by other than Allah is unbelief unless the one swearing intended to reverentially glorify the one in whose name he is swearing like one would glorify Allah. This is not done by any of the people of Islam. The scholars say that based upon this, the narration: “Whoever swears by other than Allah has associated a partner” is understood.

What is the intention of those who swear by the graves or their inhabitants?

Answer: You should know that they do not intend an actual oath by their swearing, rather, what they say is akin to performing *tawassul* and seeking intercession with Allah by those who possess rank and honor—both in their life and death—with Him, because He, the Exalted has made them as means for the fulfillment of His servant's needs by their intercession and supplications. This is like the one who says: 'I swear by you' or: 'I adjure you by so and so or the inhabitant of this grave', or other similar expressions that do not lead to the unlawful, much less unbelief or idolatry. You should be well aware of this and be warned from falling into the pitfalls of accusing the Muslims of unbelief and idolatry. We ask Allah to protect us and all of the Muslims from idolatry and to forgive us and them for everything less than that.

Do the friends of Allah possess miraculous gifts [*karāmāt*] in this life and after death?

Answer: Yes. It is obligatory for us to believe that the miraculous gifts of the saints are true—in other words, that they are rationally possible and that they occur during their life and after their death. No one denies that save he whose inner vision is blinded and whose inner state is corrupt.

What is the proof for this?

Answer: The proof for this consists of two matters. First, [in the Qur'ān] there is the story of Maryam that Allah mentioned in His Mighty Book. The Exalted said: **"Every time Zakariyya entered upon her in the prayer chamber, he found with her provision. He said: 'Oh Maryam! From where is this [coming] to you?' She said: 'It is from Allah. Indeed, Allah provides for whom He wills without account.'"** The Qur'ānic exegetes state that she would have the winter produce in the summer time and the summer produce in the winter time. This used to come to her in a miraculous way. This is the miracle by which Allah honored her. Regarding her, Allah also said: **"And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates."** There is also the story of the people of the cave. Allah, the Exalted, mentioned in His book that they slept for three

hundred and nine years without having consumed food or drink, and that He turned them on their right and left sides without any intermediary means, so they would not experience any pain. He also mentioned that He made it so that the sun would not cover their place when it would rise and set, so as to shield them from its heat lest it harms them. Allah also mentioned in the Qur’ān the story of al-Khaḍir, the miracle of Dhū al-Qarnayn, and the miracle of Āṣif b. Barkhiyyā who possessed knowledge of the book [mentioned in the story of Sulaymān].

Second, there are numerous reports from the companions and the followers and those after them up until today—reports that are considered mass transmissions by meaning and that have filled the horizons. Al-Bukhārī narrated in his rigorously authentic collection that our liege lord Khubayb ؓ would eat fruit out of its season when he was a prisoner shackled in Mecca, and there was no fruit in Mecca at that time. That was nothing more than provision given to him by Allah and a miracle. Al-Bukhārī also narrated that when our liege lord ‘Āṣim was killed and the pagans wanted to cut off a piece of his body, Allah dispatched a large swarm of hornets—so large they appeared as a shadow—and they protected his body from them and they were unable to do anything. This is a miracle of ‘Āṣim after his death ؓ.

Anas ؓ said: “Usayd b. al-Ḥuḍayr and ‘Abbād b. Bishr—may Allah be pleased with both of them—were with the Messenger of Allah ﷺ during a dark night taking care of some need, until he ﷺ left for a while. The both of them departed, each one carrying a staff in his hand. The staff of one of them lit up, allowing them to walk in its light. When they parted ways, the other’s staff lit up as well, allowing him to walk in its light until he reached his family.” This was narrated by al-Bukhārī. The miraculous gifts that come from the saints are too numerous to enumerate. When they come from the Messenger ﷺ and his brothers among the Prophets they are considered prophetic miracles (because it is rationally permissible that every miracle that comes from a Prophet be considered a miraculous gift when coming from a saint)¹. Among the Prophets are those who entered

¹ In Arabic, this distinction is quite clear, although in English this is not the case. *Karāma* or miraculous gift, is the word used in Arabic to refer to the preternatural phenomena that comes from saints. *Mu’jizāt*, also translated as miracles, are exclusively for the Prophets and

fire unharmed. Some of them brought life to the dead, some were from the people of teleportation, some could walk upon water or fly in the air, and yet others among them were obeyed by the Jinn, and so on.

Notice: The scholars—may Allah have mercy upon them—mention that if a seemingly miraculous gift appears at the hand of an unbeliever or a corrupt person, then he is a sorcerer, and that if it appears at the hand of a saint—who is an upright believer—then it is a miracle.

Is it possible to see the Prophet ﷺ during wakefulness?

Answer: Seeing him ﷺ during wakefulness is rationally possible and has occurred. The scholars—may Allah bring benefit through them—have mentioned that many of the Imāms of the Sufis have seen him ﷺ both in their dreams and during wakefulness, and that they asked him concerning things that pertained to their benefit.

What is the proof that this is possible?

Answer: The proof for this is narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others. The Prophet ﷺ said : “Whoever sees me in his sleep shall see me in wakefulness, for Satan can not impersonate me.” The scholars said that this Ḥadīth is glad tidings indicating that whoever is blessed to see him in their sleep, then they will most certainly—if Allah wills—see him in a state of wakefulness; even if only before death by a few moments. It is not correct to interpret this Ḥadīth to mean that one will see the Prophet in the hereafter or in the isthmus *barzakh* life, because on that day, all nations shall see him. This Ḥadīth is the strongest proof that the Prophet’s presence is everywhere, because those who see him are in the east and the west. Imām al-Suyūṭī—may Allah have mercy upon him—said: “It is possible to sum up from all of these Ḥadīth narrations, that the Prophet ﷺ is alive within his physical body and his spirit, and that he goes where he pleases around the corners of the earth and the celestial kingdom, and that he is in his appearance that he

Messengers. When the two words are together, we have decided to translated *Karāmat* as miraculous gifts, and *Muʿjizāt* as miracles. –**translator**

was in before his death, and that he is hidden from the eyes just as the Angels. So, when Allah, the Exalted wills, He lifts the veil from those whom He wishes to honor with the Prophet's vision."

Is our liege lord al-Khaḍir ؑ alive or not?

Answer: The majority of the notable scholars concur that al-Khaḍir ؑ is alive, and this is well known with both the common and the elite. In his book, *Laṭā'if al-Mīnan*, Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh said that it is reported by way of mass transmission from the saints of every epoch that he is met and that [knowledge] is taken from him. This has reached the degree of mass transmission that can not possibly be denied.

In his book, '*Muthīr al-Gharām al-Sakan*', Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned four rigorously authentic narrations regarding his [al-Khaḍir's] life. In al-Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, it is narrated that when the Prophet ﷺ died, they heard a voice from one corner of the house saying: "Peace be upon you and the mercy and blessings of Allah, oh people of the Prophetic progeny! Every soul shall taste death, and you shall be given your just rewards on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, Allah has condolences for every affliction, a successor for every one who passes away, and someone to come after everyone who departs. So, in Allah place your trust and in Him place your hopes. The one who is truly afflicted is he who is denied reward." 'Alī—may Allah ennoble his countenance—said: "Do you know that is? That is al-Khaḍir ؑ"

What is the ruling on seeking cure using the Qur'ān and the Divine names?

Answer: You should know that Allah has not sent from the heavens any remedy that is more beneficial than the Qur'ān. It is a healing for sickness and a polish for the rust of the hearts. The Exalted said: **"And We reveal from the Qur'ān what is a healing and a mercy for the believers."** The Prophet ﷺ said: "He who is not healed with the Qur'ān will have no other healing."

What is the ruling on incantations [*ruqyā*] for the sick?

Answer: The scholars are in unanimous agreement that it is permissible to use incantations when they fulfill three conditions: that they are from the speech of Allah, the

Exalted or are from His names and attributes, that it is in the Arabic language or in any other language the meaning of which is known and distinguished from other than it, and that one believes that the incantation has no independent effect in and of itself and that it is only from the decree of Allah, the Exalted.

What is the proof that such incantations are permissible?

Answer: The proof for this is narrated by Muslim from the Ḥadīth of ‘Awf b. Mālik who said: “We used to get incantations done during the time of ignorance, so we asked the Messenger of Allah: ‘What do you think about that?’ He replied: ‘Present to me what you use in your incantations; there is no harm in incantations so long as they do not contain idolatry.’”

What are the prohibited forms of incantation?

Answer: The prohibited forms of incantations are those that are in a language other than Arabic wherein the meaning is unknown and perhaps there is sorcery or unbelief included in it. If the incantation has an understood meaning, such as Allah’s remembrance or His names and attributes, then it is permissible, nay, it is recommended and blessings are obtained from it.

What is the ruling on writing and hanging amulets?

Answer: It is permissible to write amulets that do not contain words of unknown meaning. According to the correct view that is held by the verifying scholars of the Muḥammadan nation, it is also permissible to hang them upon humans and animals. In *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned a narration from Ibn Ḥibbān who said: “I asked Ja‘far b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī ؓ about hanging amulets for protection [*ta‘wīdh*]. He said: ‘If it is from the Book of Allah or from the words of the Prophet ﷺ, then hang it and seek a cure by it.’” It has also been mentioned from Imām Aḥmad that he was asked the amulets that are hung after an affliction. He said: “I hope that there is no harm in it.” ‘Abdullah, the son of Imām Aḥmad said: “I saw my father write an amulet for someone who suffered from panic attacks [*aladhī yafza‘*] and for the one suffering fever after an affliction had struck.” Ibn Taymiyya said in his legal verdicts: “They quoted from Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ that he used to write words from the Qur’ān and remembrance and order those

who were sick to place them in water and drink. This entails that such things contain blessings, and Imām Aḥmad stated its permissibility.”

What are the types of amulets that were prohibited in the Ḥadīth: “Whoever hangs an amulet has committed idolatry”?

Answer: The scholars said that the meaning of the word ‘amulet’ mentioned in this Ḥadīth is the garland or necklace that was hung on people in the times of ignorance. The people used to believe that it would repel afflictions. That was considered idolatry because they wanted such things to repel harms and bring benefits besides Allah. An amulet that contains the names or words of Allah, the Exalted has nothing to do with this.

What is the legal ruling on gathering and participating in the Mawlid?

Answer: Participating in the Mawlid, insomuch as it includes mentioning the reports about the beginning of the Prophet’s life and the signs and miracles that occurred at his birth, is a good innovation. He who participates in it shall be rewarded for it because it entails exaltation of his rank ﷺ and manifesting delight and happiness with his noble birth.

How many categories of innovation are there?

Answer: The scholars—may Allah have mercy upon him—stated that innovation is two categories: good innovation and reprehensible innovation.

What is a good innovation?

Answer: A good innovation is something the Imāms of guidance view to be in accordance with the Book and the Sunna insomuch as it brings benefits and good; such as compiling the Qur’ān in a book form, the *Tarawīḥ* prayers, the establishment of *Ribāṭs* [military outposts of training and spiritual wayfaring] and schools, and every other practice not found in the first generation. In the Ḥadīth it states: “Whoever innovates a good

innovation in Islam will have its reward and the reward of those who act upon it after him without that decreasing from their rewards one bit.”

What is a reprehensible innovation?

Answer: A reprehensible innovation is one that goes against the Divine texts of the Qur’ān and Sunna and violates the consensus of the nation. This is how the Prophet’s ﷺ statement was understood: “Every newly invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance.” This means the false and reprehensible innovations.

Is there any basis for the Mawlid within the Prophetic Sunna?

Answer: Yes. The Imām and Ḥadīth master, Aḥmad Ibn Ḥajar al- ‘Asqalānī derived a sound basis for it from the Sunna. It is the Ḥadīth found in the two rigorously authentic collections [of al-Bukhārī and Muslim]. It states that the Prophet ﷺ entered Medina and found that the Jews were fasting on the day of ‘Āshūrā’. He asked them regarding this and they replied: “It was the day in which Allah drowned Pharaoh and saved Mūsā, so we fast on this day out of thanks for Allah, the Exalted.” So, the Prophet started to fast on that day and ordered the Muslims to fast it as well. He [Ibn Ḥajar] said:

This [Ḥadīth] indicates observing thanks to Allah for His bounties that He gifted, when He repelled harm on a particular day. Thanks to Allah is obtained from various types of worship, such as prostration, fasting, and charity. What bounty is greater than the appearance of this Prophet of mercy?

[summarized from *al-Ḥāwī* of al-Suyūṭī]

From this, it is known that gathering for the sake of hearing the story of his birth ﷺ is from the greatest of acts that draw one near [to Allah], for it is a means of showing gratitude to Allah for the appearance of the possessor of miracles, as well as the opportunity of feed others, pray, and send many prayers and salutations and other good deeds. The notable scholars have explicitly stated that performing a Mawlid [in a locality] will ensure security for that year and glad tidings in this world in obtaining one’s wants and needs. Actions are only according to their intentions, and Allah, the Glorified and Exalted knows best. With peace.

Benefit: The Ḥadīth master, Shams al-Dīn Ibn al-Jazarī said in his book, *‘Urf al-Ta’rif bi al-Mawlid al-Sharīf*:

It has been narrated that Abū Lahab was seen in a dream after his death. He was asked about his condition in the fire, to which he replied: ‘The punishment is lightened for me every Monday night and I drink water from between my fingers the size of this—and he pointed to the tips of his finger—because of manumitting Thuwayba when she brought me the good news of the Prophets birth and because of her breastfeeding him.’²

So if Abū Lahab, the unbeliever who was condemned in the Qur’ān, receives reward for showing delight during the night of the Prophet’s birth ﷺ, then what is the state of the Muslim monotheist from his own nation ﷺ who dresses nicely and gives out from love of him ﷺ? By my life! His reward from Allah the Generous is nothing more than entering the gardens of Paradise out of His bounty!

What is the ruling on gathering for remembrance and the *Ḥaḍras* that many people do?

Answer: Gathering for such purposes is a Sunna that is sought after and a recommended act of closeness as long as it does not include anything unlawful such as free mixing between unrelated men and women.

² Shaykh Muḥammad ‘Alawī al-Mālikī—may Allah have mercy upon him—said in his book:

Notions That Must Be Corrected:

I say: this report was narrated by a number of Imāms in Ḥadīth and Prophetic biography such as; Imām ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī, Imām al-Bukhārī, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajr, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr, al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Bayhaqī, Ibn Hishām, al-Suhaylī, al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Baghawī, Ibn al-Dība‘, al-Ashkhar, and al-‘Āmirī. Imām ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī narrated it in his Muṣannaf (7/478). Imām al-Bukhārī narrated it in his Ṣaḥīḥ collection with his chain up to ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr in *Mursal* form in the book of marriage; chapter: regarding Allah’s words: **“And your mothers that weaned you.”** As for Ibn Ḥajr, he mentioned it in al-Fath and said: “It was narrated by al-Isma‘īlī from the route of al-Dhuhālī from Abū Yamān. It was also narrated from ‘Abd al-Razzāq from Ma‘mar.

What is the proof that it is recommended to do remembrance with an audible and raised voice?

Answer: There are many Ḥadīth narrations from the Prophet ﷺ concerning the virtue of gathering for remembrance and raising one's voice. From these Ḥadīth is his statement ﷺ : “There are no people who remember Allah, except that the Angels surround them, and they are enveloped in mercy, tranquility descends upon them, and Allah mentions them with those with Him (the higher gathering of Angels).” [Muslim]

Muslim and al-Tirmidhī reported that the Prophet ﷺ came across a circle of his companions and inquired: “What causes you to sit?” They responded: “We have sat down in order to remember and praise Allah.” He said ﷺ : “Jibrīl came to me and informed me that Allah mentioned you with pride with His Angels.” Aḥmad and al-Ṭabarānī cited a raised [*marfūʿ*] tradition that states: “There are no group of people that gather together to remember Allah—not intending anything other than the pleasure of Allah—except that a caller from the heavens calls out to them saying: ‘Stand up as people who are forgiven for their sins, for your ill deeds have been replaced with good deeds!’”

In these Ḥadīth reports there contains the clearest proof for the virtue of gathering and sitting for remembrance and goodness, and that Allah mentions such people with pride. The recommendation to raise the voice with remembrance is proven by the narration in al-Bukhārī's collection, from Abū Hurayra ؓ who said: “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: ‘Allah the Exalted said: ‘I am as My servant thinks of Me. I am with him when he remembers Me. When he remembers Me in himself, I remember him as well. When he remembers Me in a gathering, I remember him in a gathering better than his.’” Remembrance in a gathering can be nothing other than audible. Al-Bayhaqī narrated a raised [*marfūʿ*] tradition that states: “Make much remembrance of Allah until the hypocrites say that you are show-offs.” In another narration it states: “...until they say you are insane” Obviously, such a thing can only be said when the remembrance is audible and not when it is silent—and Allah knows best.

Benefit: The Gnostic scholars—may Allah allow us to benefit from them—said that there are Ḥadīth entailing that both audible and silent remembrance are recommended. These reports are reconciled by saying that the preference [for one over the other] differs based on the individual and the situation. The one who engages in remembrance should hold fast to what he feels is more beneficial for his heart and more conducive to his spiritual will. The scholars have also mentioned that silent remembrance is better for the one who fears ostentation or fears confusing one in prayer, and so on. If he is safe from that, then audible remembrance is better because it entails more action, and its benefit goes to other people and is stronger for the heart. Each person shall only have what he intended, and the one who knows the hearts is Allah, the Glorified and Exalted.

2

ENCOURAGEMENT TO LOVE THE PROPHETIC FAMILY AND WARNING FROM HAVING HATRED OF THEM

You should know that it is well known among both the commonality and the elite, that loving the his family and progeny ﷺ is an obligation for all of the people of Islam. Encouragement to have love and esteem for them is established in Qur’ānic verses and Prophetic Ḥadīth and was the way of the notable companions, the followers, and the rightly guided Imāms of the Salaf.

Among the Qur’ānic verses that establish the obligation of showing love towards them, is Allah’s statement to His Prophet ﷺ : **“Say: ‘I do not ask of you any reward for it other than love for the relatives’”** Imām Aḥmad, al-Ṭabarānī, and al-Ḥākim all relate that when this verse was revealed, the companions asked: “Oh Messenger of Allah! Who are these relatives of yours whom we are obligated to love?” He said ﷺ : “ ‘Alī, Fāṭima, and their children.” Sa’īd b. Jubayr—may Allah have mercy upon him—explained this verse: **“...other than love for the relatives”**, saying: “The relatives of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.” Regarding the verse: **“And whoever does a good act We will increase him in good”**, Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ said: “The good act [here] is love for the family of Muḥammad ﷺ.”

As for the Ḥadīth [showing this], Ibn Māja reported from al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib that the Prophet ﷺ said: “What is wrong with some people, who, if one my family sit near them, they stop their conversation? By Him in whose hand is my soul, faith will not enter the heart of a person until he loves them for the sake of Allah and due to their relationship with me.” In another narration it states: “A servant will not believe in me until he loves me, and he will not love me until he loves my family.”

Al-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥākim reported from Ibn ‘Abbās that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Love Allah, for He bestows you with bounties. Love me for the love of Allah, and love my household for my love [of them].” Al-Daylamī reported that he ﷺ said: “Discipline your children with three character traits: love of your Prophet, love for his household, and

recitation of the Qur'ān.” Al-Ṭabarānī reported that Ibn ‘Umar ؓ said: “The last thing the Prophet spoke was: ‘Commit to me an oath that you will care for my household.’” Al-Ṭabarānī and Abū al-Shaykh reported that he ؓ said: “Indeed, to Allah—the Exalted and Sublime—belongs three sanctified things; whoever safeguards them will be protected by Allah in his religion and worldly life; whoever does not safeguard them will not be protected by Allah in his religion and worldly life.” He was asked: “What are these things?” He replied ؓ : “The sanctity of Islam, my sanctity, and the sanctity of my offspring.” Al-Bayhaqī and al-Daylamī reported that he ؓ said: “A servant will not truly believe until I am more beloved to him than his own self, and until my progeny is more beloved to him than his own progeny, and until my family is more beloved to him than his own family.”

Al-Bukhārī narrated in his rigorously authentic collection from Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq ؓ that he said: “Oh people! Be vigilant with Muḥammad with respect to his household and take care of them and do not harm them.” He ؓ used to say: “By Him in whose hand is my soul, keeping the ties of his relatives is more beloved to me than keeping the ties of my own relatives.” In the *Shifā’* of Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ, it is reported that the Messenger of Allah ؓ said: “Knowing the progeny of Muḥammad is an acquittal from the hell-fire; loving the progeny of Muḥammad is [safe] passage across the *Ṣirāṭ* (the path over hell); allegiance to the progeny of Muḥammad is safety from the torment.”

3

WARNING FROM HATRED TOWARDS THEM AND CAUSING THEM INJURY

As for the narrations that speak of the Divine threat towards those who hate them and show them enmity, they are numerous. The Muslim who has concern for his religion must be warned from hating anyone from the household of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. That will harm him in his religion and hereafter, and it is counted as injury and bad treatment towards his Prophet ﷺ.

The scholars—may Allah have mercy upon them—cited the Ḥādīth narrations mentioning that whoever annoys the Prophetic household, then he has annoyed the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and that whoever annoys the Messenger of Allah has annoyed Allah and is deserving of wrath and curses and included in the severe Divine threat mentioned in the words of Allah: **“Indeed, those who annoy the Allah and His Messenger, Allah curses them in this life and the next, and He has prepared for them a humiliating punishment.”** And: **“It is not allowed for them to annoy the Messenger of Allah.”** Al-Ṭabarānī and al-Bayhaqī reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said while on the pulpit: “What is wrong with those people who annoy me and cause me injury with respect to my progeny and offspring? Certainly, whoever annoys my progeny and offspring has caused me annoyance, and whoever causes me annoyance then they have caused Allah annoyance.” Al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and al-Ḥākim reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “I am war against those who wage war against them and I am peace with those who are peaceful with them.” Here, he meant his household ﷺ. al-Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī reported a raised [*marfū‘*] tradition in his Prophetic biography: “None love us, the Prophetic household, save a pious believer, and not hate us save a wretched hypocrite.” Al-Ṭabarānī and al-Ḥākim reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Even if a man stood between the *Rukn* [east pillar of the Ka‘ba] and the prayer place [of Ibrāhīm] praying and fasting, if he died while having hatred of the household of Muḥammad, he will enter the hell-fire.” He ﷺ said: “The anger of Allah is severe against he who injures me with respect to my family.” This was reported by al-Daylamī.

4

THE VIRTUES OF THE PROPHET'S HOUSEHOLD

You should know that, according the people of intellect and insight, being connected and related to him ﷺ is the greatest pride and most noble feat. His ancestry and lineage are the most noble because they are connected to him through family ties and bound to him by their roots. The scholars—may Allah have mercy upon them—are in agreement that the esteemed *Aḥsrāf* [descendents of the Prophet ﷺ] are the best of people in pedigree from the side of their fathers and grandfathers, and equal with others in the application of the rulings of the Sacred Law and proscribed punishments. There are many verses and Ḥadīth reports that explicitly mention the virtue of the Prophet's household  and how they are authentically related to their grandfather—the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. The Exalted said: **“Allah intends only to remove from you the impurity [of sin] oh people of the household, and to purify you with extensive purification.”**

The scholars have said that his statement: **“...people of the household...”** includes both the people of the physical house of dwelling, and his relatives who are his household by relation. There are Ḥadīth narrations that have been reported in support of this. From these narrations is the one reported by Imām Aḥmad from Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī  who said: “This verse was revealed concerning the Prophet ﷺ, ‘Alī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn—may Allah be pleased with all of them.” It is authentically reported that he  placed a garment over them and said: “Oh Allah! These are the people of my household and my close relatives. Remove impurity from them and purify them with an extensive purification.” In another narration it states: “He placed a garment over them and placed his hand upon them and said: ‘Oh Allah! These are the members of the household of Muḥammad, so place Your prayers and blessings upon the household of Muḥammad, indeed You are the Glorious, Worthy of all praise.”

Among the Qurʾānic verses that indicate their virtue, are the words of the Exalted: **“Then whoever argues with you about it after [this] knowledge has come to you, say: ‘Come; let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly together and invoke the curse of Allah upon the**

liars.” The scholars of Qur’ānic exegesis said that when this verse was revealed, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ called ‘Alī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn—may Allah be pleased with all of them. He then took al-Ḥusayn and carried him in his arms, took al-Ḥasan by the hand, and Fāṭima walked behind him ﷺ with ‘Alī behind her. He ﷺ said: “Oh Allah! These are the members of my household.” This verse is an explicit proof that the children of Fāṭima are called his sons ﷺ and that their relation to him is sound and will benefit them in this life and the next.

It has been related that once, [the Caliph] Hārūn al-Rashīd asked Imām Mūsā al-Kāẓim ؑ : “How can you all say that you are the offspring of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ when your real father was ‘Alī and one can only ascribe himself to his paternal grandfather’s side and not to the side of one’s maternal grandmother?” al-Kāẓim replied: “I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Satan. In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful: **‘And from his offspring was Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Ayūb, Yūsuf, Mūsā, and Hārūn; and thus we reward the good doers. And Zakariyyā, Yaḥyā, and ‘Isā and Ilyās.’** ‘Isā did not have a father and was only connected to the offspring of the other Prophets through his mother. Thus, we have been connected to the offspring of our Prophet ﷺ from our mother Fāṭima—may Allah be pleased with her. In addition to this oh leader of the believers, the verse of *Mubāhala*³ was revealed, and the Prophet ﷺ called no other than ‘Alī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn—may Allah be pleased with them.” This was mentioned in *Majma‘ al-Aḥbāb*.

There are many Ḥadīth narrations that speak of the virtue of the Prophetic household and their distinguished traits. Abū Ya‘lā reported from Salama b. al-Akwa‘ ؓ that the Prophet ﷺ said: “The stars are a security for the people of the heavens and my household is a security, protecting my nation from differences.” In a narration from Imām Aḥmad he is reported to have said: “When my household is destroyed, the people of the earth shall receive the signs they were warned about.” Al-Ḥākim narrated from Anas ؓ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “My Lord promised me that He will not punish those of my household who believe in Allah, the Exalted, with Divine unity and believe in my message.”

³ *Mubāhala* refers to the tradition of proving one’s truthfulness by calling the erring party to invoke the curse of Allah upon the liar. —translator

Al-Tirmidhī reported that he ﷺ said: “I leave among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you never go astray after me. One of them is greater than the other: the Book of Allah, the Exalted and Sublime—coming from the heavens to the earth—and my family and household. They shall not part ways until they meet at the pond, so look well to how you treat them after me.” It is authentically reported that he ﷺ said: “The likeness of my household among you is like the ship of Nūḥ; whoever embarks upon it will be saved and whoever does not shall drown.” In another narration it states: “...whoever does not shall be destroyed.” And: “The likeness of my household among you is like the gate of *Ḥaṭṭa* among the children of Israel; whoever enters through it shall be forgiven.” Al-Daylamī reported that he ﷺ said: “Prayers are veiled until prayers are sent upon Muḥammad and the people of his household.” Imām al-Shāfi‘ī said in poetry:

Oh household of the Messenger of Allah!

Love of you is an obligation from Allah revealed in the Qur’ān

Sufficient for your tremendous rank is that

He who does not pray upon you has no prayer

Some of the investigating scholars—may Allah bring benefit through them—said that whoever contemplates reality will realize that the people of the Prophetic household—save the rare one amongst them—are those who carry out the duties of the religion, call to the Sacred Law of the Master of the Messengers, fear their Lord, and follow in the footsteps of their grandfather—*and the one who resembles his father has done no wrong*. Their scholars are the leaders of the nations and the shining sons that remove oppression. They are the blessing of this nation and they remove from it every affliction. It is a must that in every generation there is found a group of them by whom Allah removes tribulation from the people. They are a security for the inhabitants of the earth just as the stars are a safety for the inhabitants of the heavens. Did not the Prophet ﷺ say: “Learn from them and do not seek to teach them. If you oppose them you are from the party of the Devil”? Has it not been reported from him that whoever holds fast to them will never go astray and that they will never allow one to enter the door of misguidance

and or expel him from the door of guidance? Did he not say that they are a security for this nation and that Allah has placed wisdom with them? Did he not say that whoever detracts from them has exited from the religion of Islam, and that whoever hates them is a hypocrite? Did he not say that they shall never depart from the Book of Allah until they are re-united with it upon the shore of the pond?

What is the meaning of the rigorously authentic Ḥadīth in which he ﷺ said: “Oh Fāṭima! Oh Ṣāfiyya b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib! Oh sons of ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib! Save yourselves from the fire, for I can not suffice you one bit from Allah”? The scholars—may Allah bring benefit through them—said that there is no contradiction between this Ḥadīth and the other Ḥadīth reports that speak of the virtue of his household, because this Ḥadīth means that he ﷺ possesses nothing; no benefit or harm for anyone in front of Allah, nevertheless, Allah gave him the ability to benefit his relatives and nation by the general and specific intercession. He ﷺ possesses nothing other than what his Master—the Exalted and Sublime—has given him. The same can be said regarding the other narration in which he said ﷺ: “...I can not suffice you at all in front of Allah.” In other words, with his self alone and without the honor of intercession with which Allah has gifted him, or being forgiven for his sake. In the same Ḥadīth, he ﷺ pointed to the right of his lineage when he said: “...however you are relatives and I shall keep the ties.” The station of warning and causing fear entailed that he speak with them in this threatening way, while at the same time, inclining to the right of lineage.

The Prophetic Ḥadīth narrations authentically establish that the lineage of his household shall benefit them in this life and the next. From these narrations is the one reported by Aḥmad and al-Ḥākim, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “Fāṭima is a part of me. Whoever angers her, angers me, and whoever makes her happy makes me happy. The ties of kinship shall be severed on the Day of Resurrection except my kinship, lineage, and family.” Al-Ḥākim reported from Anas that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “My Lord promised me that He will not punish those of my household who believe in Allah, the Exalted, with Divine unity and believe in my message.”

The Imām and notable scholar and the seal of the verifying scholars, Aḥmad b. Ḥajar al-Haytamī, was asked in a legal query: “Which of the two is more virtuous; the ignorant *Sharīf* [descendent of the Prophet ﷺ] or the knowledgeable scholar [who is not a

Sharīf? Which of the two is more deserving of respect if they are together; which of them should be given coffee first or which of the two should have his hand kissed first?” He ﷺ responded:

Both of them possess tremendous virtue. As for the *Sharīf*, it is because of the noble portion inside him that is unparalleled to anything. Based upon this, some scholars have said: “I shall not declare anything equal to his portion ﷺ.” As for the practicing scholar, his virtue lies in the benefits he brings to the Muslims and his guidance to the misguided. The scholars are the successors to the Messengers and they have inherited their knowledge and sciences. It is a duty upon the one who is granted success to observe proper respect and honor both the *Ashrāf* and the scholars. The *Sharīf* is the one who should be served first if both [he and the scholar] are together. This is because the Prophet ﷺ said: “Give precedence to the Quraysh ...” and because of the noble portion within him. What is meant by a *Sharīf* is he whose lineage goes back to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn—may Allah be pleased with them both—and their households. Peace be with you—and Allah, the Exalted knows best.

5

THE BENEFIT OF ASCRIPTION TO HIM ﷺ

There are rigorously authentic Ḥadīth reports stating that ascription to him ﷺ is a benefit in this life and the next. Among these reports is his statement ﷺ: “Every relation through both blood and marriage shall be severed on the Day of Resurrection, except my relation by blood and marriage. This was narrated by Ibn ‘Asākir from ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ. This Ḥadīth and its likes prove the tremendous benefit of ascription to him ﷺ.

The scholars say that this report does not contradict the other reports in which he encouraged his household ؓ to fear Allah, have awe of Him, and obey Him, and in which he said that he cannot suffice them from Allah one bit, and that he does not possess the ability to benefit or harm anyone by himself—besides the intercession and forgiveness granted to him. He ﷺ said these things to instill fear in them. Al-Bazzār and al-Ṭabarānī and others reported in a long Ḥadīth: “...What is wrong with people who claim that closeness to me in lineage shall not benefit. Every lineage and means is severed on the Day of Resurrection except for my lineage and means. The ties of my kinship shall be kept in the life of this world and the next.” Imām Aḥmad, al-Ḥākim, and al-Bayhaqī reported from Ibn Mas‘ūd ؓ who said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say upon the pulpit: ‘What is wrong with those people who say that the Messenger’s ties of kinship shall not benefit his people on the Day of Resurrection. Nay, by Allah, the ties of my kinship shall be kept in this world and the hereafter. Oh people! Indeed, I shall precede you to the pond.’”

CONCLUSION

This is what has been compiled by the author. May Allah, the Exalted, reward him with good. This is what has been edited and published by me. All praise is due to Allah the Generous, He who by His bounty, all good acts are completed. May Allah send His prayers and peace upon our liege lord Muḥammad and his progeny.

—the one poor unto his Lord:

Yūsuf b. al-Sayyid Hāshim al-Rifāʿī

27th *Muḥarram*, 1415 Hijrī

June 7th, 1994

Kuwait

