

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Imam Al-Nawawī on Benefitting the Deceased

& Sheikh Wahba Al-Zuhaylī' Fatwa on Reciting Qur'ān for Their Reward

Translated by Mahdi Lock

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30_The Chapter on How the Statements of Others Benefit the Deceased¹

The 'ulamā' have made consensus that supplicating (*du'ā'*) for the deceased benefits them and the reward for it reaches them. Their proof is His, the Exalted's, statement: **“And those who came into the faith after them say: ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who went before us in faith.’”** [Al-Ḥashr 59:10] and other well-known āyāt that bear the same meaning, as well as well-known aḥādīth such as his, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, statement: **“O Allah, forgive the people of Baqī Al-Gharqad”**² as well as his, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, statement: **“O Allah, forgive our living and our dead.”**³

The 'ulamā' have differed over whether the reward for reciting the Qur'ān reaches [the deceased]. The dominant (*mashhūr*) position of the Shāfi'ī madhhab, as well as a group of other scholars, is that it does not reach, while Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and a group of scholars, as well as a group of scholars from the Shāfi'ī madhhab, hold the position that it does reach. The one reciting can say once he has finished: 'O Allah, give the reward of what I have read to so-and-so',⁴ and Allah knows best.⁵ It is recommended to praise the deceased and mention their merits and good qualities.

426_In the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim, we have related on the authority of Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: 'They passed by a *janāza* and the people were saying good things about the person, and then The Prophet, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, said: **“It is necessary (*wajabat*).”** Then they passed by another *janāza* and the people were saying evil things about the person. Again, he said: **“It is necessary.”** Then, 'Umar bin Al-

¹ Translated from *Al-Adkhār min Kalām Sayyid Al-Abrār* by Al-Imām, Al-Ḥāfiẓ, Sheikh ul-Islām Muḥyī Al-Dīn Abī Zakariyā Yahyā bin Sharaf Al-Nawawī Al-Dīmasḥqī Al-Shāfi'ī (Damascus: Al-Maktaba Al-'Aṣriya, 2000/1421) p.138

² Translator's note (tn): This ḥadīth is found in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and is on the following page of *Al-Adhkār*, i.e. p.139.

³ (tn): *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Sunan Al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Al-Nisā'ī*, *Sunan Al-Bayhaqī* as well as *Al-Mustadrak* of Al-Ḥākim. Imam Al-Tirmidhī classed it as *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ* while Imam Al-Ḥākim said: 'This ḥadīth is *ṣaḥīḥ* according to the conditions of Al-Bukhārī and Muslim.' Please see p.131-132 of *Al-Adhkār* for further details.

⁴ (tn): Ar. *Allahumma awṣil thawāba ma qara'tuhu ilā* [enter name here].

⁵ (tn): For further details on this point, please read Sheikh Wahba Al-Zuhaylī's fatwa below.

Khata'ab, may Allah be pleased with him, said: 'What is necessary?' He said: **"You said good things about this person, so Paradise is necessary for him, and you said evil things about this other person, so the Fire is necessary for him. You are Allah's witnesses on earth."**

426 In the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Al-Bukhārī, we have related on the authority of Abū Al-Aswad, who said: 'I arrived in Madīna and sat with 'Umar bin Al-Khata'ab, may Allah be pleased with him, when a *janāza* passed by. The people were saying good things about the person, so 'Umar said: "It is necessary." Then another *janāza* passed by and, again, good things were said about the person, so 'Umar said: "It is necessary." Then a third *janāza* passed by and evil things were said about the person, so 'Umar said: "It is necessary.'" Abu Al-Aswad said: 'I said: "What is necessary, O Commander of the Believers?" He said: "I have said as The Prophet, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, said: **"If four people testify to the goodness of any Muslim, Allah will enter him into Paradise."** We said: "And three?" He said: **"And three."** We said: "And two?" He said: **"And two."** Then we didn't ask about one.'" The aḥādīth that are similar to what we have mentioned are many, and Allah knows best.



Appendix: Reciting Qur'ān for the Deceased⁶

Question: Does the reward of the Fātiḥa and reciting other parts of the Qur'ān reach the deceased after they have died or after have they have been buried in their graves or any other place?

Answer: [Sheikh Wahba Al-Zuhaylī:] There are two conflicting opinions on this matter that have been mentioned by Al-San'ānī in his book *Bushra Al-Ka'ib bi Liqā' al-Ḥabīb*.

The first opinion, which is the dominant [*mashūr*] opinion of the madhabs of Mālik and Al-Shāfi'ī, is that it does not reach.

The second opinion, which is the madhhab of Imam Aḥmad and the majority of the *salaf* and the four madhabs, including the later Mālikīs and Shāfi'īs, is that the reward does reach. Imām Abū Ḥanīfa said: 'The deceased receives everything from *ṣadaqa* and whatever else.' He also said: 'Read "Āyat al-Kursī" three times and "*Qul huwa Allahu aḥad*" and say: "O Allah, indeed the bounty [*fadl*] is for the people of the graves."'

Al-San'ānī mentioned the proofs for the second opinion, who say that the deceased benefit from what the living do for them, from the Book, the Sunnah, the Consensus [*ijmā'*] and the principles of the Revealed Law.

As for the Book, it is His, the Exalted's, statement: **"Those who come after them say: 'Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith.'" [Al-Ḥashr 59:10]** Allah praised them because they sought forgiveness for the believers who came before them, and this proves that the deceased benefit from the living seeking forgiveness. The deceased benefitting from supplication [*du'ā*] is also proved by the Consensus of the Ummah regarding supplicating for them in the *janāza* prayer.

The *aḥādīth* have confirmed that he, may Allah's prayers and peace be upon him, supplicated in the *janāza* prayer for whoever sent prayers on him, and he said: **'O Allah, forgive him, have mercy on him, excuse him and pardon him.'**

Consensus has been made stating that it is permissible for a debt to be discharged on behalf of a deceased person by anyone, close or far, and that if the deceased owes a debt to a living person, that person can waive it and no longer make any claim to it, just as he would with a living person. Consensus has also been made stating that the reward of fasting (voluntary or obligatory) reaching the deceased being confirmed in the Sunnah is proof that the reward of all other actions reaches them. The texts have confirmed that the reward reaches the deceased for three kinds of worship, physical (i.e. fasting), financial (giving charity on behalf of the

⁶ Translated from *Fatāwā Mu'āṣira* by Sheikh Wahba Al-Zuhaylī, p. 273-274 (Damascus: Dar Al-Fikr, 2003)

⁷ Narrated by Al-Bukhārī in *Al-Adab* as well as Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Al-Tirmidhī and Al-Nisā'ī from Abū Hurayra.

dead) and both the physical and financial together (through performing the Hajj on behalf of a deceased person or someone who is chronically ill and unable to move).⁸

Ibn Taymiyah⁹ said: ‘Indeed the deceased benefit from the recitation of Qur’ān, as they benefit from financial worship such as charity (*ṣadaqa*) and other things.’ Likewise, Al-Nawawī said in *Al-Majmū*¹⁰: ‘The reward for reciting the Qur’ān reaches the deceased.’

In conclusion, the relied-upon (*mu’tamad*) position of the four madhabs is that the reward for reciting the Qur’ān reaches the deceased if the living dedicate it to them.



⁸ (tn): The Imam is mentioning this statement because this is what everyone is agreed upon. This issue also includes other actions, such as reciting the Qur’an and so forth, as there are famous positions from Shāfi’ī Imams stating that such things do not reach the dead and are not to be done. It is this position that Salafiyyah adopts as if there were no other position, when in fact there is a difference of opinion.

⁹ (tn): i.e. Taqī ud-Dīn Ahmad ibn Taymiyah.

¹⁰ (tn): This is Imām Al-Nawawī’s 27-volume fiqh book, which is the ultimate reference work for the Shafi’ī school.