

The Defense of the Sunnah:
An Analysis of the Theory and Practices
Of Tasawwuf (Sufism)

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Introduction

In the Sanctified Name of Allah, the Universally Merciful, Uniquely Compassionate. All Praises and Lauds belong to and come from Allah, the Lord, Creator and Sole Sustainer of and Provider for all the worlds and realms. May He continue to send glorious benedictions and strengthening greetings of peace upon the heart, spirit, and blessed light-form of our Prophet, Guide, and Master Muhammad, and upon his household, companions, and inheritors, 'till the Last of Days and the Final Judgment.

I testify with full conviction that there is absolutely no deity other than Allah the Most Exalted, and that our liege-lord Muhammad is His most perfect worshipper and final messenger. And I bear witness that Heaven is real, Hell is real, the Final Hour is real, the Scale of Justice is real, the Bridge is real, the Pond of Abundant Blessings is real, the angels and jinn and spirits are real, and that all of the Prophets and Messengers from Adam (asws) to Muhammad (asws) have come with the unaltered Truth from their Lord and guidance for their people, and that Prophet Muhammad (asws) came to all of the people from his time till the end, with the merciful religion of Islam, abrogating all previously revealed religions and creeds, and that whoever dies upon the belief above shall enter Heaven by the grace of Allah, while whoever dies rejecting the belief above after its clear exposition to him shall suffer torment in Hell by the justice of Allah.

I seek forgiveness and pardon for my sins and shortcomings, as I do likewise on behalf of my Muslim brothers and sisters, past, present, and future, especially the reader of these words.

This Book...

The purpose of this book is to educate the reader about some of the beliefs of Sufis and their practices, and to demonstrate how they are in full accordance with the Shari'a. Tasawwuf from the very beginning has always been integral to the Din, functioning as the realization and implementation of the pillar of Ihsan in the being of the Muslim. Tasawwuf is not a madhhab, nor a sect, nor an ideology, nor a cult, nor a foreign import, nor an heretical invention. It is nothing other than a science concerning the reality of Allah, His Messenger, and the self, transmitted faithfully and without interruption from the Prophet (asws) himself. It is the belief of the writer that the current corruption of the Ummah and its degradation is a direct result of – among other things – the crumbling away of the pivotal pillar of Ihsan as realized through the practice of Tasawwuf and its principles. In the words of one Muslim leader, Syed Zayn al-Abidin:

“Many calamities have befallen the Ummah during the last 200 years, but one of the worst has been the rejection of Tasawwuf. We find ourselves without coherent leadership and following self-proclaimed scholars who teach a dry, literalist and legalistic religion cut off from its traditional and spiritual heritage. In some cases this develops into a harsh and uncompromising political ideology, with violent results. While we understand the sources of this ideology, we cannot condone its methods or

attitude. Islamic civilization, which was remarkably stable and united for over 1200 years, is now in a crisis of disunity.”

It is unfortunate, then, that something as essential as Tasawwuf should have enemies, whether they be from within (those who believe that Tasawwuf can be divorced from Islam) or without (those who believe Tasawwuf never belonged to Islam). It is my hope that with an honest and thorough study of this book and others like it, the reader will come to an understanding of the integral place of Tasawwuf as one of the sciences of Islam, not just due to simple acceptance of my words, but based on authentic knowledge from the Qur'an and Sunnah and rightly guided scholars.

The Din will be revived in its fullness by the return of Tasawwuf to its rightful place in the lives of the Muslims. It is hoped that this will aid in the spreading and rooting of Islam in the hearts of Muslims and non-Muslims alike, in accordance with the promise of Allah: “He is the One Who has sent His messenger with the Din of Truth, to have it overcome all other religions and ways of life, and Allah is sufficient as a Witness.” (Q48:28)

Note of Thanks: I am a student of knowledge and a servant of its people, and much of the beneficial knowledge and insights in this book come from them. Therefore, I would like to express my appreciation of and gratitude towards the following contemporary scholars and shuyukh, whose help and previous work has been indispensable in the composition of this book, and to whom are owed a great deal: my Shaykh Sidi Abdullah Nooruddeen Durkee and his wife Hajja Noura, Shaykh Ahmad ibn Mustafa al-'Alawi, Shaykh Gibril Haddad, Shaykh Abdullah ibn Siddiq al-Ghumari, Shaykh Mahmud Mamduh, Shaykh Nuh Keller, Shaykh Mahmud Subayh, Shaykh 'Isa ibn Mani' al-Himyari, may Allah continue to bless them and increase their favors to us, and shower with mercy those among them who have passed away beyond this world. I would also like to thank my dear friend and elder brother, Sidi Hisham Zoubeir, for his advice and comments. I ask the reader to recite a Fatiha and Ikhlas on their behalf.

Note on Hadith Documentation: In this book, I have attempted to my utmost to provide the reader with source documentation for the Qur'anic ayat and Prophetic ahadith and scholarly writings. For the Qur'an, I have used the reading and numbering of Hafs, which is the most popular across the Muslim world. The translations have been for the majority my own, while relying on the published translations of Shaykh Nooruddeen Durkee, Abdullah Yusuf 'Ali, Muhammad M. Pickthall, and many others.

As for the hadith sources, I have taken care to provide sufficiently thorough documentation for them also, using for the most part the most well-known major collections. As those who are familiar with hadith collections know, there are a number of different published editions and commentaries out there. As an example, the Sahih collection of Imam Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari has undergone a number of publications, some of them in three volumes, some in four, with different page numberings and different editions and dates of publication. In addition, there are different numbering systems for the hadiths. So for example, the Dr. Bugha edition of Sahih Bukhari counts 7124 hadiths in three volumes, while the Fath al-Bari numbering system counts 7563 hadiths, whereas the “universal numbering system” of Sahih Bukhari counts 7008 hadiths. Therefore, for the sake of clarity and consistency, in sourcing hadiths I have used the universal numbering system of most of the major collections (mainly

for the “Nine Books”). The basic format of a hadith citation is: Bukhari (1:2 #3), which would mean that the hadith is recorded by Imam Bukhari in his Sahih, first volume, second page, third hadith (according to the universal numbering system). Sometimes I will only include the hadith number for the sake of brevity, since that is the most important piece of information needed when looking for a particular hadith in a certain collection. I have also sometimes mentioned the title of the chapter in which the hadith is found. Also, please be aware that there are different published editions of hadith collections, each having different volume and page numberings. I have tried to use the most popular editions of collections, but on rare occasions I did not have access to them and in that case, I have relied on the sourcing of others. If any mistakes are found, I request the reader to notify me of these at my contact listed in the beginning of this book.

Similarly, the books of the scholars are cited in the same way: (volume#) : (page#). I hope this system will remove any confusion for the reader.

I must mention here that Shaykh Gibril Haddad has been a tremendous help in providing sources for a large number of hadiths cited in this text.

A final word: The Maghribi scholar Ahmad ibn ‘Ajiba related in his Iqadh al-Himam that Imam Abu’l Hasan ‘Ali ash-Shadhuli al-Hasani (radiyallahu ‘anhu) said, “He who dies without having entered into this knowledge of ours (meaning Tasawwuf) dies persisting upon his grave sins (kaba’ir) without realizing it.” This is because the knowledge of Tasawwuf concerns itself with the attainment of inward purity and excellence, so that one who neglects Tasawwuf neglects their heart and inward being. Most of the enormities and grave sins are related to the heart, such as arrogance, heedlessness, greed, hatred, insincerity, and so on. Therefore, one who is only concerned with perfecting his outward while neglecting his inward will remain bound to the influences of his lower ego-self...may Allah protect us from dying in such a state! This is why Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, the mujaddid (renewer) of the fifth Islamic century, held Tasawwuf to be an obligation upon every individual to implement, in accordance with the authentic hadith recorded by Imam Muslim and others, “Verily Allah does not consider your outward forms or your wealth, but rather He considers your hearts and your actions.”

I ask Allah to make this effort a source of benefit and an opening towards greater understanding and a stimulus towards an increased desire to rise to the highest potential Allah has graciously made available to us. May He (Most Exalted!) and His Messenger (asws) and His close friends be pleased with it!

And their final call is, ‘all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds,’
And Allah speaks the truth, and He guides to the Way
And may blessings and peace be upon the noblest of the Prophets and Messengers, our Master and Intercessor
Muhammad, and upon his household and companions, until the Final Day!

TOPIC:
The Light of the Prophet (asws) and His Special Distinction

There has arisen today a group of Muslims who are “angry” that the Sufis praise the Prophet Muhammad (asws) “too much”, and claim that he is no more than an ordinary man like us. They have no reservations against praising or elevating themselves and their own people, with praises which they would be reluctant to apply to the Blessed Prophet (asws). Rather, they seek to denigrate his status to their own, and cast aspersions of misguidance and heretical innovation on anyone who declares that he (asws) has unique qualities separating him from the rest of creation, or that he is a light from Allah (Most High). This is due only to their arrogance, which has blinded them, for they see no one higher than them but Allah Himself, and so if someone (like the Prophet (asws) or his righteous inheritors) is praised above them, they imagine that he is being given the same status as Allah Himself! It would do them well to become humble and learn what their religion says about this unique blessed being, and not fall under the warning and curse of Allah which He saves for those who belittle His most Beloved (asws). So in this chapter, we mention some of what has come concerning his special distinctions, especially his being the first (created) light from Allah.

From the Qur’an

1) Allah (Most High) Himself has called the Prophet Muhammad (asws) a “light from Allah” and “a light-giving lamp”. He said: “There has come to you from Allah a Light and a Manifest Book” (Q5:15). The vast majority of the Mufasssirin (excluding the Mu’tazila like Zamakhshari) interpreted the “light” in this verse to refer to Prophet Muhammad (asws), in that in his original reality he is a light from Allah. They include: Imam Suyuti (Tafsir al-Jalalayn), Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi (Mafatih al-Ghayb), Baydawi (Tafsir Anwar at-Tanzil), Ibn Jawzi (Zad al-Masir), Baghawi (Ma’alim at-Tanzil), Shawkani (Fath al-Qadir), Sayyid Mahmud al-Alusi (Tafsir Ruh al-Ma’ani), Ibn Jarir at-Tabari (Jami’ al-Bayan), al-Khazin in his Tafsir, an-Nasafi (Tafsir al-Madarik), Qurtubi (Ahkam al-Qur’an), Abu’s Su’ud, and others.

2) Allah also said: “O Prophet! We have truly sent you as a witness, a bearer of good news, and a warner, and one who invites to Allah by His Permission, and a light-giving lamp (sirajan munira)” (Q33:45-46). About this verse, Mulla ‘Ali Qari al-Hanafi writes in his Sharh al-Shifa’ (1:505) the following: “Muhammad (asws) is a tremendous light and the source of all lights...sirajan munira means a luminous sun, as in Q25:61. There is in that verse an indication that the sun is the highest of the physical lights, and that other lights are outpourings from it. Similarly, the Prophet (asws) is the highest of the spiritual lights and other lights are derived from him by virtue of his mediating connection and pivotal rank in the sphere of creation. This is also inferred from the hadith “The first thing Allah created is my light, O Jabir!”

3) As for the verse (Q18:110): “Say, I am a human like you who is Divinely inspired...”, then this is no contradiction to saying that the Prophet (asws) is created from the Light of Allah. The poet said: “Muhammad is a human being, but not like humankind; he is a precious ruby, while people are stones.” The ruby is also a stone, but it has special distinctions and qualities that set it apart from other stones. Nor do we mean by “light” the physical light that we see when we turn on the switch in our rooms (even though his light did have a material aspect and on occasion manifested physically). Rather, there are other

lights besides the purely material, which can be seen in such sayings of his (asws) as: “You should keep to the dhikr of Allah, for it is a light for you,”¹ and “Wudu’ is bright light” (Sahih Muslim, #246). Indeed, he is both the “light from Allah” and a “human being,” and the inability to grasp both aspects of his blessed being is the shortcoming of the individual.

Furthermore, this verse only means that he is a human creature, in other words, created and not creator, and that is the only way in which he is like us other humans. Otherwise, which one of us can say that he has received direct revelation from Allah, or that he has went beyond the universe and spoken with, heard, and saw Allah Most High (all at the same time)? It is a grave error to think that this verse means he is like us in all aspects, for he himself (asws) also said, “I am not like you...,” as we will see below. This image of him and attitude towards him is the exact and fundamental reason why the previous nations went astray and were punished. Compare the words of these Muslims today who have no reverence for their Prophet (asws) to the words of the disbelievers before them:

- “... They (Fir’awn and his people) became arrogant, and they were indeed a haughty group. They said, ‘shall we believe in two humans like us, when their tribes are subservient to us?’ So they rejected them, and came to be among those who were utterly destroyed” (Q23:46-48).
- “So they (the disbelievers) tasted the severity of their doing, and for them is a grievous punishment. That is because their Messengers came to them with the clear proofs, and they said, ‘shall (another) human guide us?’” (Q64:5-6).
- “So the disbelievers among his people said, ‘we do not *see you* except as a human like us...’” (Q11:27).

... and other similar verses. This view of him (asws) as being no different than any other human is a fatal sickness and a stain of disbelief (kufr) upon the hearts, which must be removed to receive the light and guidance of Allah. Another manifestation of that sickness and skewed understanding of Tawhid can be seen in the response of Iblis to the Order of Allah to prostrate to Adam (asws). He claimed that he was defending Tawhid because he refused to bow down before anyone except Allah, and not give “undeserved reverence” to any other creature. It is this same misunderstanding which is seen in those who imagine that by bringing down the Holy Prophet (asws) to our level as simply another human, we are safeguarding the Divine Oneness, when in truth we should be recognizing the awesome status and sublime heights which Allah (Most High) honored His Messenger (asws) with, and giving him his due reverence (asws). Ubayy ibn Ka’b, when the Prophet (asws) struck his hand upon his chest to correct him, said: “I began to sweat profusely and it was as if I was looking at Allah Most High Himself” (Muslim #1356, Ahmad 5:127, 129). So, for example, in explaining the meaning of the Prophet’s (asws) words: “Do not over-extol me in the same way that Christians extol their Prophet...” (Bukhari #3189) – meaning, do not attribute Divinity to me – al-Busairi stated in his poem Burdat al-Madih: “Leave what the Christians claim concerning their Prophet, then decide and say what you wish in praise of him (asws). And attribute to his being what you can of excellence, and attribute to his dignified status as much greatness as you wish.”

¹ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:82, 266) and Abu Ya’la (2:284 #1000) in their Musnads on the authority of Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, and by Bayhaqi (Shu’ab al-Iman, #4942), Tabarani in his Mu’jam as-Saghir (2:66-67); also recorded by Imam Qushayri with his chain in his Risala (Beirut ed. 1998, p. 141).

From the Sunna

1) It is related that Jabir ibn Abdullah asked the Prophet (asws): “O Messenger of Allah! Please tell me of the first thing Allah created before all others?” and that he (asws) replied: “O Jabir, verily Allah Most Exalted created – before all else – the light of your Prophet from His Light. That light remained (“turned”) in the midst of His Power for as long as He wished, and at that time there was not a Tablet or Pen or Paradise or Fire or angel or heaven or earth. And when Allah wished to create creation, He divided that light into four parts, and from the first made the Pen, from the second made the Tablet, from the third the Throne, (and from the fourth all else)...”²

Note: This hadith is not found in the current edition of the Musannaf of Abdur-Razzaq, which is only a partial collection since a number of its hadiths are lost. However, we have an indication that it might have been originally in there because Imam Qastallani (one of the commentators on Sahih Bukhari) narrates it in his *Mawahib Laduniyya* (1:55-56) and attributes it to Abdur-Razzaq from Jabir, and similarly Hafiz az-Zurqani (one of the commentators on the *Muwatta’* of Imam Malik) in his commentary on the *Mawahib* states the same. ‘Ajluni in *Kashf al-Khafa’* (1:265) also narrates the hadith in its entirety from Imam Qastallani. The hadith scholars consider it forged because its chain cannot be found anywhere, and because its wording is flimsy and uncharacteristic of the Prophetic manner of expression.

However, the scholars consider the meaning of this hadith (specifically, the first sentence) authentic and sound, and it is supported by Qur’an (5:15) and other Sahih hadiths. Mahmud al-Alusi in his *Tafsir Ruh al-Ma’ani* (8:71) cites the hadith of Jabir from Abdur-Razzaq, and in another passage (17:105) he writes: “The Prophet’s (asws) being a mercy to all is linked to the fact that he is the intermediary of the Divine outpouring over all created things, as stated in the report that, The first thing Allah created was the light of your Prophet, O Jabir... and, Allah is the Giver and I am the distributor (Bukhari).” Other scholars who consider the meaning sound and cite it as evidence include (but are not limited to): Sayyidina Abdul-Qadir al-Gaylani al-Hanbali (in many of his books); Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari al-Hanafi in his book on the Mawlid entitled *al-Mawrid al-Rawi* (p. 40); the Hanafi mufti Abdul-Ghani an-Nabulsi in his *al-Hadiqa an-Nadiyya* (2:375); Qadi ‘Iyad in his *Shifa’* (1:19, 59-60); the Indian Hadith scholar Abdul-Hayy Lucknawi in his *al-Athar al-Marfu’a* (p. 33-34); and many others... Shaykh Ibn al-Haj al-Maliki (in his *Madkhal* 2:26-33) spoke at length about the sacred light of the Prophet (asws), and how it was a column of light glorifying Allah Most High, and how it was later deposited into the loins of Adam (alayhi salam); and he ended this section by saying: “So he (asws) is the central pivot of the entire circle of creation, and the original reason for which creation was brought into existence, and because of whose blessing certain times and seasons (e.g. Monday, Rabi’ al-Awwal) were given preference over others.”

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Ja’far al-Kattani wrote in his *Nazm al-Mutanathir* (#194) – in which he collected the hadiths which are mutawatir – that “It has been mentioned in some hadiths that the first thing Allah (Most High) created was the 1) Muhammadan Light, 2) the Throne

² Recorded by the reliable Imam and Hafiz Abdur-Razzaq San’ani (one of the Shaykhs of Bukhari and Muslim) in his *Musannaf* (one of the earliest collections of hadith). For a lengthy discussion on this hadith, see Imam ‘Ajluni’s *Kashf al-Khafa’* (hadith #827). Hafiz Suyuti (*Hawi lil-Fatawi* 1:325) states that it has no reliable chain.

(‘Arsh)... (then he proceeded to mention the Pen (Qalam), the Tablet (Lawh), the Water (see Q11:7), the Spirit (Ruh), the Intellect (‘Aql))... and in explaining the apparent contradiction between these hadiths, I say that the primacy of the Muhammadan Light is the (absolute) reality, whereas the others are of a relative primacy, in that each of those other creations constitute the first of their kind only. So, the Throne existed before the other dense bodies, and the Intellect before the other subtle bodies, and so on...and Allah knows best.” Hafiz ‘Ajluni states the same in his *Kashf al-Khafa’*, quoting from other scholars, and he also explained that the meaning of the phrase “from His Light” is not to be understood literally, but rather it is understood in the same way that the Qur’anic verse (Q32:9) about the creation of Adam from the Spirit (Ruh) of Allah is understood.

Finally, there are numerous other narrations which describe a certain physical light-nature about the Prophet (asws), such as the hadith of Ibn ‘Abbas in which he states that light would appear to come out between his teeth when he (asws) would speak.³ And Anas stated: “On the day in which the Messenger of Allah entered Madina, everything in it became lit, and on the day in which he passed away, everything became darkened.”⁴ One of the famous supplications which he (asws) used to recite before Fajr was, “and increase my light, and make me light” (Sahih Muslim 1:525), which Allah Most High no doubt answered.

2) ‘Irbad ibn Sariya related that the Prophet (asws) said: “I was the Seal of the Prophets in the Presence of Allah when Adam (asws) was between water and clay...and when I was born my mother saw a light with which she could behold the palaces of Syria...”⁵

3) Abu Hurayra related that he was asked, “O Messenger of Allah! When was prophet-hood bestowed upon you?” He replied, “While Adam (asws) was still between spirit and body.”⁶ Tajuddin as-Subki said: “It has been stated that Allah created the spirits before the bodies, and the Prophet’s reference to his prophecy in this hadith may be a reference to his blessed spirit and to the ‘reality of realities’. Our minds fall short of knowing such a reality, but its Creator knows it, as do those to whom He extends a madad (support) of light from Him...”⁷

³ Recorded by Tirmidhi in his *Shama’il* (#14), Darimi (1:44 #58 Da’if), *Diya’* (Mukhtara, 13:48), Bayhaqi in *Dala’il an-Nubuwwa* (1:215), and Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (11:416 #12181) and *Mu’jam al-Awsat* (#767).

⁴ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#3551), Ibn Majah (#1621), Darimi (#88), Imam Ahmad (3:268), Hakim (3:59), Ibn Hibban (14:601), *Diya’* (Mukhtara, 4:417-20), Abu Ya’la (6:110), Ibn Sa’d (2:274), Hafiz Khatib (13:15), and others, and is Sahih according to Tirmidhi, Hakim, Dhahabi, Ibn Hibban, and Ibn Kathir (*Bidaya*, 5:274).

⁵ Recorded by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (4:184 #16525, 16537, 5:262 #21231), Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (2:418, 600, 616-617 Sahih), Darimi (1:8-9 #13), Imam Bayhaqi in his *Dala’il an-Nubuwwa* (1:80-84,110 and 2:8), Ibn Hibban (14:313 #6404), Tabarani (*Mu’jam al-Kabir*, 8:206, 18:252-53, 20:353), Ibn Abi ‘Asim in his *Kitab as-Sunna* (p. 179 #409), Bazzar (*Zawa’id* 1:217, 3:113), Bukhari in *Tarikh al-Kabir* (6:68), Tayalisi (*Musnad*, #1236), and Ibn ‘Asakir (1:166-71). Also, Ibn Kathir narrates it in his *Tafsir* (4:360), as does at-Tabari (28:87), and Ibn al-Jawzi in *Kitab al-Wafa’* (p. 91 ch. 21); and Haythami in *Majma’ az-Zawa’id* (8:222-23 #13841-42) said that Tabarani and Ahmad narrated it with authentic chains. Imam Suyuti in his *Jami’ as-Saghir* (#4359-60) also mentions that the last part is recorded by Ibn Sa’d in his *Tabaqat* (1:102), and it is Sahih according to Ibn Kathir (*Bidaya*, 2:275), and many others.

⁶ Recorded by Tirmidhi in his *Sunan* (#3542), Hakim (2:609), Bayhaqi in *Dala’il an-Nubuwwa* (2:130), Ibn Sa’d in his *Tabaqat* (7:59), Imam Bukhari in his *Tarikh* (7:374), Khatib in his *Tarikh* (3:70, 5:82, 10:146), and others. Tirmidhi and Hakim said it was Sahih. Imam Ahmad (#16028, 19686, 22128) and Tabarani (*M. Kabir*, 12:92 #12571, 12:119 #12646; *M. Awsat*, 4:272 #4175) record the same from Ibn ‘Abbas. See also Sakhawi’s *Maqasid al-Hasana* (p. 327 #837).

⁷ Quoted in Suyuti’s *Hawi lil Fatawi* (2:100-101) and Imam Qastallani’s *Mawahib Laduniyya* (1:31-32).

4) Maysara al-Fajr also relates a similar hadith to the one above, in which he asked the Messenger (asws), “When were you a Prophet?” and he replies, “While Adam was between spirit and body.”⁸

5) Anas ibn Malik said: “Two men left the Prophet’s (asws) house in a very dark night and all of a sudden there appeared a light before them. As they separated and went their separate ways, so did the light separate with each of them.”⁹

6) Abu Hurayra related that the Prophet (asws) said, “I was the first Prophet to be created and the last to be sent,” and in another narration, “the first person to be created.”¹⁰ Imam Suyuti also cites it in the first chapter of his *Khasa’is al-Kubra*, titled “The uniqueness of the Prophet (asws) in being the first of the Prophets to be created, the priority of his prophethood, and the taking of the Covenant (mithaq) with him.” He also mentions (*Khasa’is* 1:102) that Bayhaqi (in his *Dala’il* 5:483) and Ibn ‘Asakir (in his *Tarikh Dimashq*) record that Allah Most High showed Adam all of his future children, and among these he saw a glorious light and asked, “Who is this one?” “This is your son Ahmad; he is the first, and the last, and will be the first intercessor.”

7) Ibn ‘Abbas said that, “The spirit of the Prophet (asws) was a light in front of Allah 2000 years before He created Adam. That light glorified Him and the angels glorified by his glorification. When Allah created Adam (asws), He cast that light into his loins.”¹¹ And he (asws) said, “Allah created His creation in darkness, then He cast upon it from His light.”¹² Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi wrote (*Tafsir of Q2:253*) that the angels were commanded to prostrate to Adam only because of the light of Muhammad (asws) which shined upon

⁸ Recorded by Imam Bukhari in his *Tarikh al-Kabir* (7:374 #1606), Imam Ahmad (4:66, 5:59, 379), Tabarani (*Mu’jam al-Kabir*, 20:353), Hakim (2:608-09 *Sahih*), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:438), Abu Nu’aym (*Hilya*, 7:122 and 9:53), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (*K Sunna* p. 179 #410-11, *Ahad wa Mathani* 5:347), Imam Bayhaqi in *Dala’il an-Nubuwwa* (1:85, 2:129), Ibn Sa’d (7:60), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 3:112), Ibn ‘Adiyy (4:1486), Ibn Qani’ (1:347), ar-Rafi’i in *Akhbar Qazwin* (2:243-44), and others. It is *Sahih* according to Haythami (*Majma’ Zawa’id*, 8:223), Suyuti (*Khasa’is al-Kubra*, p. 3-4), Diya’ al-Maqdisi (*Mukhtara*, 9:142-43), and others.

⁹ Recorded by Imam Bukhari in his *Sahih* (#445, 3367, 3521), Imam Ahmad (#11955, 12511, 13367), Hakim (3:288 *Sahih*), Ibn Hibban (5:376 #2030, 5:378 #2032), Tayalisi (#2147), Ibn Sa’d (*Tabaqat*, 3:606), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#1242), Nasa’i in *Fada’il as-Sahaba* (#141), Ruyani in his *Musnad* (2:389 #1378), and Bayhaqi in his *Dala’il* (6:77-78). The two men referred to were Usayd ibn Hudayr and ‘Abbad ibn Bishr, and it refers to the light of the Prophet (asws).

¹⁰ Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (*Musannaf*, 8:131), Abu Nu’aym in his *Dala’il an-Nubuwwa* (p. 6), Ibn Sa’d in his *Tabaqat* (1:149), Daylami (*Musnad Firdaws*, 3:282 #4850 and 4:411 #7190), Ibn ‘Adiyy (*Kamil*, 3:919, 1209), Tabari (*Tafsir*, 15:10, 21:125-26), Baghawi (*Tafsir*, 3:508), Ibn Abi Hatim in his *Tafsir* (in connection to verse Q33:7 which says “We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and Nuh...”), with many chains of transmission. Imam Suyuti in his *Tafsir* (*Durr al-Manthur* 5:184) records it and states that it is also recorded by Ibn Mardawayh and Ibn ‘Asakir. Haythami (*Majma’* 1:72) said: “Recorded by Bazzar with trustworthy narrators except one who is unknown (*majhul*).” However, Tabarani (*M. Kabir*, 22:333) and Ibn Abi ‘Asim recorded this hadith with similar wording, with a chain of trustworthy narrators according to Haythami (*Majma’* 8:224). *Hadith Sahih*. Cf. Hafiz ‘Ajluni in his *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#2006-07).

¹¹ Qadi ‘Iyad narrates it in his *Shifa’* (1:59), in the chapter on the nobility of the Prophet’s lineage, and Imam Suyuti states in *Manahil as-Safa’* (p. 53 #128): “Ibn Abi Umar al-‘Adani records it in his *Musnad*” (see also Matalib ‘Aliya, 4:360). Also recorded by Daylami in his *Firdaws* (2:379 #3009).

¹² Recorded from Ibn ‘Amr by Tirmidhi (#2566), Hakim (1:30-31), Bayhaqi (9:3-4), Ibn Hibban (14:43-45 #6169-70), al-Ajurri in his *Shari’a* (#337-38), Imam Ahmad (#6356, 6559), Tayalisi (*Musnad*, #2405), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 3:22 #2145), Hakim Tirmidhi in his *Nawadir al-Usul* (*Asl* #287), and Ibn Abi ‘Asim in *K. Sunna* (p. 107-08 #241-44). *Hadith Sahih* according to Hakim, Ibn Hibban, Haythami (*Majma’*, 7:193-94), and others.

Adam's forehead. Ibn 'Abbas explained taqallubaka ("your passage/movement") in Q26:218-19 ("Who sees you when you stand, and your passage thru those who prostrate") as meaning: "your descent through the loins of your prophet-ancestors."¹³ Al-Shahrastani in his *Kitab al-Milal wa'l Nihal* (2:238) states: "The light of Muhammad (asws) went from Sayyidina Ibrahim to Isma'il. Then that light passed through all his children until it arrived at Abdul-Muttalib...and with the blessing of this light Allah repelled Abraha's harm." Al-Zuhri (one of the greatest Tabi'in) narrated: "Abdullah ibn Abdul-Muttalib was the most handsome man that had been seen in Quraysh. One day he went out and was seen by an assembly of women of Quraysh, and one of them said, 'O women of Quraysh, which among you will marry this youth and catch the light that is between his eyes?' For verily there was a light between his eyes. Thereafter, Amina bint Wahb married him, and after he joined her she carried the Messenger of Allah (asws)."¹⁴ All of these narrations above address how the original light of Prophet Muhammad (asws) was passed down thru his ancestors – all of whom were upright chaste men and women – down to his father Abdullah. Let us look at a few of his other distinctions and special attributes mentioned in the hadith:

8) Imam Tirmidhi recorded (#3158-59) an authentic hadith on the authority of Mu'adh ibn Jabal, wherein the Prophet (asws) said: "My Lord came to me in the best image," and in other narrations, "I saw my Lord in the best image, and He asked me what the angels of the highest assembly argued over. I said I did not know, so He put His 'Hand' between my shoulders, and I felt its coolness in my innermost, and the knowledge of all things between East and West came to me..."¹⁵ Mulla 'Ali al-Qari quotes Ibn Zar'a, who said, concerning a similar hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas (recorded by Imam Ahmad and Tabarani, and Haythami said it is Sahih in *Majma' az-Zawa'id* 1:78-79 #247, as did al-Munawi in *Fayd al-Qadir* 4:6), about the Prophet (asws) seeing his Lord, "It is authentic (sahih), and no one denies it except a Mu'tazili."¹⁶ Also, Ibn Kathir and Ibn Abi Hatim record in their Tafsirs that in the Mi'raj, the Prophet (asws) went beyond the Sidrat al-Muntaha and heard the screeching of the Pens writing the Decree, then saw his Lord.

9) From Thawban: the Prophet (asws) said, "The earth was collected together for me so that I was shown its Easts and Wests, and the kingdom of my community will reach to the extent that it was brought together for me..."¹⁷

¹³ Recorded in the Tafsirs of Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Suyuti, Mawardi, Baghawi, Ibn Jawzi, and many others, and also by Tabarani (*Mu'jam al-Kabir* 11:362) and Diya' al-Maqdisi (*Mukhtara*, 12:101-02). Haythami in his *Majma' az-Zawa'id* (7:86, 8:214) said that this was recorded by Bazzar in his *Musnad* (*Zawa'id*, 3:62, 110) with a chain of trustworthy narrators (thiqat).

¹⁴ Recorded by Imam Bayhaqi in *Dala'il an-Nubuwwa* (1:87), Imam Tabari in his *Tarikh* (2:243), Ibn al-Jawzi in his *Kitab al-Wafa'* (Ch. 16), and others. Ibn Hisham recorded something similar in his *Sira*.

¹⁵ Also recorded by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (#16026, #21093, #22126), Darimi in his *Sunan* (2:170 #2056), Tabarani in his *Mu'jam Kabir* (1:317 #938; 8:290 #8117; and also 20:109, 141), Abu Ya'la in his *Musnad* (4:475 #2608), Ibn Sa'd in his *Tabaqat* (7:438), Hafiz al-Khatib in his *Tarikh Baghdad* (8:151), Ibn Khuzayma (*K. Tawhid*, p. 130-31), Ibn Abi 'Asim (*K. Sunna*, p. 188-192 #432-442 Sahih), Bazzar (*Zawa'id*, 3:13-15), Bayhaqi (*Asma' wa Sifat*, p. 444), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#681), Ahmad ibn Mani' (see Ibn Hajar's *Matalib 'Aliya*, 4:148), Ruyani (*Musnad* #656, 1241), and others. Haythami in *Majma' Zawa'id* (7:173, 176-179) and Suyuti in *Jami' as-Saghir* (#4377) said it was Sahih.

¹⁶ See his *Asrar al-Marfu'a* (p. 126 #478). The hadith is recorded by Imam Ahmad (5:157, 171, 175), Ibn Khuzayma in *Kitab at-Tawhid* (p. 135), Hakim (1:65 Sahih), Tabarani (*M. Kabir* 10:363, 11:242-43, *M. Awsat* 6:50), Ibn Abi 'Asim in *Kitab as-Sunna* (p. 192 #441 Sahih), Diya' Maqdisi in his *Mukhtara* (12:233-34), and others.

¹⁷ Recorded by Muslim (*Kitab al-Fitan*, #5144) and many others.

10) Abu Darda' said: "When the Messenger of Allah (asws) left us, there was not a bird that flies in the sky but that he had given us some knowledge about it." ¹⁸ This indicates his extensive knowledge of the Unseen given to him by Allah (Most High). He also said, "Truly, I do not know anything except what my Lord told me." ¹⁹

Qadi 'Iyad wrote a chapter in his *Shifa'* called "The Prophet's knowledge of the Unseen and future events." In the beginning of it he wrote: "The hadiths on this subject are like a vast ocean whose depths cannot be plumbed and which does not cease to overflow. This is one aspect of his miracles that is definitely known. We have many hadiths which have reached us by multiple paths of transmission (tawatur) regarding his familiarity with the Unseen." He then goes on to list 58 concrete examples of the Prophet's (asws) knowledge of the Unseen and the future, which are mentioned in the hadith collections of: Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Nasa'i, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, Imam Ahmad, Imam Malik, Tabarani, Abu Ya'la, Ibn Hibban, al-Hakim, al-Bayhaqi, Ibn Khuzayma, and others. It would be too long to reproduce that chapter in full, so the interested reader should read the chapter themselves. Allah says about the Prophet (asws), "And he is not stingy of (his knowledge of) the Unseen" (Q81:24).

11) Ibn 'Abbas and A'isha said, "The Prophet (asws) could see equally well during the darkness of the night and the brightness of the day." ²⁰

12) Anas, Abu Hurayra, and others related that the Prophet (asws) said, "O people! I am your Imam. Do not precede me in ruku' and sujud because in addition to seeing what is before me, I also see what is behind me." ²¹ Mujahid stated that this was his (asws) state at all times (see Ibn Hajar's *Fath al-Bari* 1:515 and *Matalib al-'Aliya* 4:140).

13) From Anas: The Prophet (asws) said: "My knowledge after my passing is (the same) as my knowledge during my life." ²²

14) Abu Dharr reported that the Messenger of Allah (asws) said, "*Truly I see that which you do not see and hear that which you do not hear...* indeed, there is not a space, four fingers wide, except that there is an angel in it bowing its head in prostration to Allah." ²³

¹⁸ Recorded by Tabarani in his *Mu'jam al-Kabir* (2:155 #1647), Imam Ahmad (#20399), Abu Ya'la (9:46 #5109), Ibn Hibban (1:267 #65), Ibn Sa'd (2:354), Bazzar (*Musnad* 9:341 #3897, *Zawa'id* 1:88), Tayalisi (#481), Ahmad ibn Mani' (*Matalib*, 4:214), and others. It is Sahih according to Haythami (*Majma' Zawa'id*, 8:263-64) and Busiri (*Ithaf as-Sada*, 1:133 #265).

¹⁹ See: Ibn Hajar's *Fath al-Bari* (13:364) and *Isaba fi Tamyiz as-Sahaba* (2:619), Ibn Hisham's *Sira* (5:203), Tabari in his *Tarikh* (2:184), and Abu Shaykh in *Kitab al-'Adhama*, Bayhaqi (*Dala'il*, 5:232), and others.

²⁰ Recorded by Bayhaqi in *Dala'il an-Nubuwwa* (6:74-75, *Da'if*), while Imam Suyuti said it was Hasan in his *Jami' as-Saghir* (#7027). Also recorded by Daylami (*Firdaws*, 1:100 #203), Ibn 'Adiyy (4:1534), Ibn Bashkuwal in his *Sila* (1:73), and others from A'isha, and by Baqi ibn Makhlad in his *Musnad* according to Ibn Hajar.

²¹ Recorded by Bukhari (#700), Muslim (#644-45), Nasa'i (#804-06), Ibn Majah (#983), Abu Dawud (#571-74), Imam Ahmad (3:161), Ibn Hibban (14:250-51 #6337-38), Bayhaqi (*Sunan*, 2:117, 3:100 and *Dala'il*, 6:73-74), Abdur-Razzaq (#2427, #2462-63), Bazzar (*Zawa'id*, 1:245), and others.

²² Recorded by Ibn Mandah in his *Fawa'id* (p. 82 #56), Hafiz Asbahani in his *Tarhib* (#1647), and Daylami (see *Kanz al-'Ummal* #2242). Also mentioned by Suyuti in his *Khasa'is* (2:490) and others.

²³ Recorded by Tirmidhi (*Kitab az-Zuhd*, #2234), Ibn Majah (#4180), Imam Ahmad (#20539), Hakim (4:579), Abu Nu'aym (*Hilya* 2:217), Tabarani (*M. Kabir*, 3:201), Abu Shaykh (p. 178 #509), Ibn 'Asakir (52:381), and Daylami (1:100 #202). It is Sahih according to Hakim and Dhahabi.

15) The Prophet (asws) said, “Truly my eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep.”²⁴

16) Anas ibn Malik reports that the Prophet (asws) said, “O people! *Verily I am not like you*. Indeed, I spend the night in the (Divine) Presence of my Lord, and it is He Who feeds me and gives me drink.”²⁵

17) While the Prophet (asws) and some of his companions were on an expedition, a Beduin came and asked for a miracle. The Prophet (asws) pointed at a certain tree and said to the Beduin, “Tell that tree that Allah’s Messenger summons you.” The tree swayed and brought itself out, and came to the presence of the Prophet (asws), saying (in an audible voice), “Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah!” The Beduin said, “Now, let it return to its place.” The Prophet (asws) ordered it to return and it did so. Then the Beduin said, “Let me prostrate to you,” and he (asws) replied, “No one is allowed to do that.” The Beduin said, “Then I will kiss your hands and feet,” and the Prophet (asws) allowed him to do so.²⁶

18) Anas (and others) related: “Once the Messenger (asws) was with a group of Muhajirun and Ansar, when a camel came along and bowed in prostration to him. His companions asked, ‘O Messenger of Allah, when beasts and trees bow in prostration to you, are we not more duty bound to bow in prostration?’ He answered: “It is not appropriate that any human being should prostrate to another human being.”²⁷ Mu’adh also prostrated to him (asws), and he only said, “Do not.”²⁸ The Prophet (asws) neither called this shirk nor asked Mu’adh to repeat the Shahada and renew his Islam. Nor did he (asws) call it shirk when Qays ibn Sa’d affirmed his desire to prostrate to him (Abu Dawud #1828, Hakim 2:187 Sahih), nor did he ask him to renew his Islam. And when Khuzayma ibn Thabit told the Prophet (asws) that he dreamt that he prostrated on his (asws) forehead, the Prophet (asws) lied down and told him, “realize your dream,” and he prostrated on his forehead (Imam Ahmad 5:215 Sahih). We are not encouraging prostration to him – which is haram according to these hadiths, for he forbade that – but rather to point out to those ignorant of his mighty status and blazing light how the Sahaba revered him to such a high level that they found no hesitation in wanting to prostrate to him out of respect. Indeed, Imam Dhahabi confirmed this

²⁴ Bukhari (#1079, 1874), Muslim (#1219), Ibn Khuzayma (#48-49, also: #1166), Nasa’i (#1679), Imam Malik (#243), Hakim (2:431), Ibn Hibban (6:186, 14:297), and many others.

²⁵ Bukhari (#1827-28), Muslim (#1844, 1850), Imam Malik (#590-91), Abu Ya’la (#1133, 1407, 2874, 3282, 6088 Sahih), Imam Ahmad (#6125), Ibn Khuzayma (#2070-72), Ibn Hibban (#3581), and many others.

²⁶ Darimi (#16), Abu Ya’la (10:34 #5662), Ibn Hibban (14:434 Sahih), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 3:133-34), Ruyani (#37-38), and Tabarani (M. Awsat, #5068). It is Sahih according to Hafiz Busiri (Ithaf as-Sada, 9:111 #7243). Other hadiths about trees moving for him were recorded by Ibn Majah (#333), Ahmad (4:171), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 9:53, 81), and Abu Ya’la (Hasan according to Ibn Hajar in Matalib 4:196-97).

²⁷ Recorded by Ibn Abi ‘Asim (Ahad wa Mathani, 4:73), Darimi (#17), Imam Ahmad (#12153), Tabarani (M. Kabir 11:356-57, M. Awsat 9:81-82), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 3:150-52 Hasan), Bayhaqi (Dala’il, 6:29), and Ishaq ibn Rahawayh (Matalib, 4:190-91). For more see: Ibn Majah’s Sunan (#1842), Musnad Ahmad (5:214-15), Diya’ (12:338-39), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#216, 1051), and others. Ibn Kathir in his Bidaya (6:137-38) accepts Ahmad’s chain as authentic. Cf Haythami (Majma’ 9:7). As for the clause at the end of some of its narrations “worship your Lord and revere your brother Muslim,” it is not an authentic part of it.

²⁸ Recorded by Ibn Majah (#1843), Ahmad (4:381), Diya’ (Mukhtara, 13:124-25), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 2:179-80), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 5:208, 8:31, 20:52), Hakim (4:172), Ibn Hibban (6:186), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:397), Bayhaqi (Sunan, 7:291-92), Tahawi (Mushkil Athar, 2:210), and Baghawi in his Tafsir (Q2:228, 4:34). It is Sahih according to Hakim, Dhahabi, Diya’, Busiri (Ithaf, #3833), and Haythami (Majma’ 4:309-10).

when he wrote: “Do you not see that the Sahaba, in the immense amount of their love for the Prophet (asws), 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 brothers of Sayyidina Yusuf (asws) prostrated to him. Similarly, the prostration of a Muslim to the grave of the Prophet (asws) is for the intention of magnification and reverence. One is not imputed disbelief (kufr) because of it whatsoever, but he is being disobedient to his command. Let him therefore be informed that this is forbidden. Similarly in the case of one who prays towards his grave...”²⁹

19) Imam Malik was asked by the Khalif 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?” Imam Malik replied, “How could you turn your face away from him (asws) when he is your means (wasila) and your father Adam’s means to Allah on the Day of Rising? No, rather you should face him (asws) and ask for his intercession so that Allah will grant it to you, for Allah said, ‘If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked Allah’s forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-Returning, Most Merciful (Q4:64)’.”³⁰ I wonder today whether Imam Malik, for these words of his, would be considered a heretical innovator outside of Islam by some of our self-appointed modern scholars.

20) Sayyidina Umar and others related that the Prophet (asws) said: “When Adam (asws) committed his mistake he said, ‘O my Lord, I am asking You to forgive me for the sake of

²⁹ In his Mu’jam al-Shuyukh (1:73), in the entry about his Shaykh Ahmad al-Qazwini (#58).

³⁰ Narrated by Qadi ‘Iyad in his *Shifa’* (2:26-27) and *Tartib al-Madarik* (1:113-14) with an authentic chain, Imam Subki in his *Shifa’ as-Siqam* (Ch. 4, 7), Qastallani in his *Mawahib Laduniyya*, Ibn Bashkuwal (*Qurbah* p. 84), and others. The chain is as follows: a group of the teachers of Qadi ‘Iyad narrated to him from Abu’l Abbas Ahmad ibn Dalhath (one of the Shuyukh of Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, who is “thiqa hafidh” – *Siyar* 18:567), from Abu’l Hasan ‘Ali ibn al-Fihri (one of the Shuyukh of Bayhaqi, d. 488H, “muhaqqiq” – Dhahabi’s *Ibar* 1:227), from Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Faraj al-Jaza’iri (“thiqa” according to Ibn Mundhir – *Sam’ani* in *Ansab* 2:55), from Abu’l Hasan ibn al-Muntab (the Qadi of Madina in his time, and one of the top Huffaz of the Malikis – Ibn Farhun in *Dibaj* and *Sakhawi* in *Tuhfa Latifa*), from Ya’qub ibn Ishaq (one of the Shuyukh of Tabarani; *Daraqutni*: “la ba’sa bih” – *Khatib* in *Tarikh* 14:291), from Khalid ibn Humayd al-Iskandarani (d. 169H, a faqih among the companions of Imam Malik – see *Tartib al-Madarik* 1:178 and *Khafaji’s Nasim ar-Riyad* 3:397; this is not Ibn Humayd ar-Razi as some have claimed), from Imam Malik (d. 179H). Not one of the Maliki scholars rejected it or stated it was false, and all of them accepted it and acted upon it; so no attention is paid to Ibn Taymiyya, who rejected it, supposedly knowing more about what Imam Malik said or didn’t say than the Maliki scholars themselves! What also supports this is that when the Prophet (asws) himself would visit the graves of Madina and greet them and make du’a, he would face the graves, as is specifically mentioned in the hadiths about that... meaning facing the grave when making du’a is a Sunna. And when Ibn Umar would come to Madina, he would first visit his (asws) grave and make du’a facing him, and do the same with Abu Bakr and ‘Umar (*Hilya*, 1:308-09). Nor can Ibn Taymiyya or his followers name a single Sahabi who said it was disliked or prohibited to face his grave (asws) when making du’a. In addition, it is the madhhab of Imam Malik that one makes du’a facing the Prophet’s grave (not the Ka’ba) when one visits and greets him (asws), as related from Malik by Ibn Wahb, Ashhab, and others, and recorded in the books of Maliki Fiqh (e.g. Ibn Mawaz, Ibn Juzayy’s *Qawanin Fiqhiyya* 1:95, *Qarafi’s Dhakhira* 3:375-76, Ibn Rushd’s *Bayan wa Tahsil* 18:108, 444-45, 601-03, etc). The most Imam Malik ever said – as stated in *al-Mabsut* by Qadi Isma’il (broken chain) – is that it is disliked specifically for residents of Madina to spend hours every day making du’a at his grave, but not for those visiting from outside Madina. There is no book of Maliki Fiqh which states that it is disliked to make du’a at his grave, or which weakens this story of Malik with Abu Ja’far. The other madhhabs also mention specifically facing him (asws) when making du’a at his grave: (Hanafi): *Tabaqat al-Hanafiyya* 1:282, *Ibn Humam’s Sharh Fath al-Qadir* 3:180-81; (Shafi’i): *Nawawi’s Majmu’* 8:201-02; (Hanbali): *Ibn Qudama’s Mughni* 3:297-99.

Muhammad.’ Allah said, ‘O Adam, how do you know about Muhammad?’ Adam (asws) replied, ‘O my Lord, after You created me with Your Hand and breathed into me from Your spirit, I raised my head and saw written on the heights of the Throne ‘La Ilaha Illa-Allah Muhammad Rasul-Allah’, so 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.’”³¹

21) About the related hadith which states, “Were it not for you (O Muhammad), I would not have created the heavenly spheres (aflak),” Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari said in *al-Asrar al-Marfu’a* (#754-755): “as-Saghani said it is forged (mawdu’); however, its meaning is sound, as Daylami (Firdaws, 5:338 #8095) has narrated³² on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas that the Prophet (asws) said: ‘Jibril (as) 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.’” It is also interesting to see what Ibn Taymiyya wrote in his collection of *Fatwas* (11:95-97): “Muhammad (asws) is the chief (sayyid) of all the children of Adam,³³ the best of creation and 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 not have created a Throne, or Kursi, or a heaven, earth, sun, or moon.” However, this is not a hadith on the

³¹ Recorded by Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (2:615) who said it was Sahih while Dhahabi said it was Mawdu’, Imam Bayhaqi in his *Dala’il an-Nubuwwa* (5:489), Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Awsat* (6:313-14 #6502) and *Mu’jam as-Saghir* (2:82-83), Ibn ‘Asakir (*Tarikh*, 7:437), and al-Ajurri in his *Shari’a* (p. 432). Their chains all contain Abdur-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Aslam, who’s narrations are Da’if because of his mistakes and weak memory (see Ibn Hajar’s *Tahdhib* 6:161-62), as Bayhaqi said. al-Ajurri also related it with another Da’if chain (p. 430) without Abdur-Rahman. The reality is that this hadith is Hasan, not Mawdu’ as Dhahabi stated, for the following reasons. 1) Abdur-Rahman is not a liar or forger, but only Da’if, and the text is not disclaimed (munkar). He is also one of the narrators in Ahmad’s *Musnad* (#5465, 10968-69), which is established as not having a single Mawdu’ hadith. Bayhaqi also records this in his *Dala’il*, in which, as he said in its introduction, he did not put any forged reports according to him. We also see Imam Shafi’i himself accepting his narrations as proof for certain positions of halal and haram in his *madhhab* (*Kitab al-Umm* 2:256, and his *Musnad* p. 340 #607). 2) It has other supporting narrations with stronger chains, which do not contain Abdur-Rahman: A) Hafiz Abu’l Shaykh (K. ‘Adhama, p. 391 #1075) and Ibn Mundhir in his *Tafsir* narrated this hadith thru Muhammad al-Baqir from his grandparents, as cited by Suyuti in his *Tafsir Durr al-Manthur* (1:142, of Q2:37). B) The most authentic chain for this hadith is not thru ‘Umar but thru Maysarat al-Fajr, and is narrated by the Hafiz Abu’l Husayn Ibn Bishran (one of the Shuyukh of Bayhaqi and al-Khatib), as recorded by Ibn Jawzi in his *Kitab al-Wafa’* 1:33 (which he said contains only authentic narrations) and Burhan ad-Din al-Halabi in his *Sira* (1:355), with a strong and sound chain (see: *Salihi* in *Subul al-Huda* 1:85-86). All of its narrators are trustworthy (thiqa sahih) except one (Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Ishaq ibn Salih), who is Saduq (see *Khatib’s Tarikh* 4:28), making this narration by itself Hasan or even Sahih. Also, Bayhaqi quotes the first part of this hadith with the same chain from Maysara in his *Dala’il* (1:84). See Abdullah al-Ghumari’s *al-Radd al-Muhkam al-Matin* (p. 138-39) and Shaykh Mahmud Mamduh’s *Raf’ al-Minara* (p. 247-49). Ibn Taymiyya also quotes both versions saying, “these two are like the explanation of the authentic hadiths on this subject” (*Fatawa*, 2:150, 159). Imam Subki said it was Sahih in his *Shifa’ as-Siqam* (p. 134-135). So with the Da’if hadith in Hakim and Tabarani, plus Abu’l Shaykh’s and Ibn Mundhir’s narration, plus the strong narration of Ibn Bishran, this hadith becomes at least Hasan.

³² Also recorded by al-Khallaal in his *Kitab as-Sunna* (1:237, 261), and by Hakim (*Mustadrak*, 2:614-15) who said it was Sahih, and Abu’l Shaykh in *Tabaqat al-Muhaddithin*, and others. All of the narrators in its chain are trustworthy (thiqa) except ‘Amr ibn Aws al-Ansari, who is “mastur” (unknown status, no one discredited him) according to Dhahabi, which means that at worse the hadith is Da’if, for the narrations of the “mastur” are accepted according to Dhahabi himself (in his *Mizan* 1:556, 2:40, 93, and 3:426) and others (such as Ibn Salah in his *Muqaddima*, p. 145). As for Dhahabi’s words “I think it is forged,” they are not accepted because he brings no proof, and its chain contains no liar or forger.

³³ A mass-transmitted (mutawatir) hadith recorded by Bukhari (#4343), Muslim (#4223), Ibn Hibban (14:381, 398), Hakim (1:30, 4:573 Sahih), and many others.

authority of the Prophet...but it may be explained from a correct aspect...Since the best of the righteous of the children of Adam (asws) is Muhammad (asws), creating him was a desirable end of deep-seated purposeful wisdom, more than for anyone else, and hence the completion of creation and the fulfillment of perfection was attained with Muhammad (asws)...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, then it is acceptable". Imam Ahmad Dardir (one of the top authorities of the Maliki madhhab, who wrote *Sharh as-Saghir*, the most relied upon book of Maliki fiqh) similarly states: "Every tangible and intangible blessing (baraka) of Allah Most High in the heavens and the earth emanates from (meaning thru) the barakat of our Prophet Muhammad alayhi salat wa salam³⁴, who is without doubt the noblest creation of Allah absolutely and without exception... and his light (asws) is the origin of all lights and dense bodies, as he (asws) stated to Jabir. So he is the ontological intermediary (wasita) for all of creation, and had it not been for him there would be nothing created, as Allah said to Adam, 'Were it not for him, I would not have created you'" (*Sharh al-Saghir*, 4:777-78).

22) Ka'b al-Ahbar (d. 32H.) said:³⁵ "Not a day goes by without seventy thousand angels descending upon the grave of the Prophet (asws), surrounding him and sending salawat upon him until night falls. When they ascend another such group of angels take their place and do the same; until when the earth splits open before him (asws), he comes out with 70,000 angels in procession around him." Related to this, there is consensus³⁶ among the scholars of the four madhhabs that the blessed place which contains his blessed fragrant body (asws) is superior to any other place on earth, and some (e.g. Ibn 'Abidin al-Hanafi, Ibn 'Aqil al-Hanbali, Salim an-Nafrawi al-Maliki) added even superior than the Divine 'Arsh.

23) Finally, the Sahabi Abdullah ibn Salam said: "In truth, the noblest and most honorable of all the creations in the sight of Allah is Abu'l Qasim (Muhammad asws)."³⁷

³⁴ The commentator, Shaykh Ahmad as-Sawi, stated here that it is necessary to believe this, and that whoever denies this has lost the benefit of this world and the Next. Imam Shafi'i himself, in the introduction to his *Risala*, stated the same thing as Imam Dardir. An indication of this reality can be found in the Prophet's statement, as recorded by Bukhari (3:1134): "Indeed, Allah is the Giver, and I am the distributor (Qasim)".

³⁵ Recorded (with authentic chains to Ka'b) by Darimi (1:57 #94), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, 3:492), Ibn Mubarak in *Kitab az-Zuhd* (1:558), Abu Nu'aym (Hilya, 5:390), Qadi Isma'il (Fadl as-Salat, #102), and Abu'l Shaykh.

³⁶ Consensus on this is documented by: Ibn Habira in *Fiqh 'ala Madhahib al-A'imma al-Arba'a* 1:337. Also: (Hanafi): Ibn 'Abidin (*Hashiya*, 2:626), Tahtawi (*Hashiya Maraqi Falah*, p. 70). (Maliki): Qadi 'Iyad (*Shifa'*, 2:58), Hattab (*Mawahib Jalil*, 3:344-45), Qarafi (*Dhakhira*, 3:378, 381), Nafrawi (*Fawakih Dawani*, 1:45). (Shafi'i): Nawawi (*Majmu'*, 7:389), Ibn Kathir (*Bidaya*, 3:205), Suyuti (*Khasa'is*, 2:351), Munawi (*Fayd Qadir*, 6:264). (Hanbali): Ibn 'Aqil (see: Subki's *Shifa' Siqam* and Ibn Qayyim's *Bada'i Fawa'id* 2:147), Ibn Muflih (*Mubdi'*, 3:70).

³⁷ Recorded by Bayhaqi in his *Dala'il an-Nubuwwa* (5:485) and *Shu'ab al-Iman* (1:170, 331), Ibn Mubarak (*Kitab az-Zuhd*, #398), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:419), Hakim (4:568), and al-Harith in his *Musnad* (*Zawa'id*, p. 283 #939). It is *Sahih* according to Hakim, Dhahabi, and Busiri (*Ithaf*, 10:583, 641). See also Darimi's *Sunan* (#47-48) and Tayalisi's *Musnad* (#252) for narrations of similar import.

TOPIC:
The Reality of the Existence of Awliya' and their Hierarchies

Allah says (10:62-64): “Behold! Verily, the Awliya' of Allah ³⁸ are those upon whom there is no fear, nor do they grieve. Those who are fully confirmed in certainty of faith, and who are in perpetual wariness of Allah. Theirs is the good news in this life and in the hereafter, and there is no change to the Decrees of Allah...”

This ayah truly is enough for those of understanding, but it is not all that is mentioned about the reality of these few elect Awliya' of Allah.

Allah (Most High) has made among His servants those who are righteous, and those who are at more sublime levels of righteousness. He has placed each of His servants in varying levels, some occupying a common level, some occupying the level of the righteous, others occupying the level of the Awliya', and some occupying the level of those brought to close proximity to the Divine Presence. This reality is something attested to in many places in the Qur'an and many hadiths, and is something which needs no extensive proof.

The existence of the Awliya', their characteristics, their levels, and their numbers is what we will explore in this chapter. Within the level of the Awliya', Allah has established a hierarchy, above which there is no hierarchy. These servants occupy the most sublime levels of proximity to Allah, enjoying what even some of the angels do not possess. He has furthermore granted these special elect servants manifest gifts and abilities, which the common man would find difficult to understand. Allah has revealed to them the secrets of His Attributes, and the secrets of His Kingdoms, and placed in their hands the reigns of authority and control, so that they can dispense with the creation as true representatives (Khulafa') of their Master.

Imam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti wrote an essay in his collection of fatwas, al-Hawi lil Fatawi, and called it: “The narrations which demonstrate the existence of the Qutb and the Awtad and Nujaba and Abdal.” At the beginning of it, he writes: “It has reached me that some of those who possess no knowledge deny what is famously known among the noble Awliya', namely, that among them exist Abdal (substitutes), Nuqaba (chiefs), Nujaba (nobles), Awtad (supports, or pegs), and Aqtab (poles, or axial pivots), while there are numerous hadiths and narrations which affirm their existence and reality. So I have collected these narrations in this booklet to be of benefit. And know that the denial of the stubborn is not to be given any weight or importance... So I say, it is authentically narrated from (and then he lists 18 Companions and Followers), and those after them, innumerable reports which attest to the above.” ³⁹ Then for the next 15 pages he lists over 50 narrations to demonstrate his point, from which we will choose a few, also adding some that he did not mention.

³⁸ The Arabic word Wali (pl. Awliya') is usually translated as “saint,” but since this translation has Catholic overtones, I choose to avoid it. A Wali is one who 1) occupies a very close station to Allah, 2) receives an inheritance from one or more Prophets, and 3) is protected by Allah from major sins and repetition of sins in general, and kept in a state of obedience.

³⁹ See Hawi li-l Fatawi (2:241ff), and for more information on hadiths about the Abdal see 'Ajluni's Kashf (#35) and Sakhawi's Maqasid (#8).

1) From Umm Salamah: “Disagreement will occur at the death of a Khalif and a man of the people of Madina will come quickly to Makka. Some of the people of Makka will come to him...and swear allegiance to him between the Corner (Rukn) and Maqam. An expeditionary force will be sent against him from Syria...when the people see that, the Abdal of Syria and the best people of Iraq will come to him and swear allegiance to him...”⁴⁰ This hadith alone suffices as evidence of their existence to the end of times.

2) From Abu Sa’id al-Khudri: “The Abdal from my nation did not enter into Paradise with their actions, but rather through the mercy of Allah, through the unparalleled generosity of their souls, the fact that they hold no grudge or hatred against anyone and their hearts being at peace with everyone, and through mercy for the entirety of Muslims.”⁴¹

3) From Abu Darda’: “The Abdal have not come to be greater than the rest of the people by performing much fasting or prayers or tasbih, but rather by excellent morals, being true in their scrupulousness, their sound intentions, their hearts being at peace with all Muslims, and giving others sincere counsel for the sake of Allah.”⁴²

4) Abu Darda’ said: “When Prophethood ended – and they were the supports (Awtad) of the earth – Allah substituted their places with 40 men from the nation of Muhammad (blessings and peace be upon him), who are named “Abdal” (the Substitutes). Not one of them dies except that Allah replaces him with another one to take his place, and they are now the supports of this earth. The hearts of 30 of them contain the same certainty (yaqin) which Sayyidina Ibrahim (asws) had. They did not succeed or rise above the other people with much fasting or prayer...but rather through being truthful in their scrupulousness, having noble intentions, having sound wholesome hearts, and giving all the Muslims sincere counsel, desiring by that the Pleasure of Allah, with patient forbearance, and a merciful core (of being), and humility without being meek. They do not curse anyone, or harm anyone, nor do they see themselves as being higher or nobler than anyone under them, or envy those above them. They do not fake their humility, nor fake their being dead to the world, nor are they ostentatiously impressed with themselves. They do not love the world, nor love for its sake...”⁴³

5) Hudhayfa ibn Yaman said: “The Abdal in my community are in Syria, and they are 30 men on the way of Ibrahim (asws)... And the group (of righteous Awliya’) in Iraq are 40 men... 20 of them are on the way of ‘Isa (asws), and 20 of them have been given some of the instruments which the Khalifa Da’ud (asws) was given.”⁴⁴

6) From ‘Ali: “The Abdal are in Syria, and they are 40 men. Whenever one of them dies,

⁴⁰ Recorded by Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Mahdi, #3737), Imam Ahmad (6:316), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:609), Abdur-Razzaq (11:371 #20769), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 2:35 #1153, 9:176 #9459, and M. Kabir, 23:296, 389-90), Hakim (4:431), Ibn Hibban (15:158-59), Abu Ya’la (12:370 #6940 Hasan), Ishaq ibn Rahawayh, and Ibn ‘Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (1:292-93). Mundhiri, Ibn Hibban, Hakim, Dhahabi, and Haythami (7:315) said it is Sahih.

⁴¹ Recorded by Bayhaqi (Shu’ab al-Iman, 7:439 #10893), and similar versions by Ibn Abi Dunya (Kitab al-Awliya’ p. 28 #58), Hakim at-Tirmidhi (Nawadir, Asl #51) and others. Hadith Da’if.

⁴² Recorded by Hakim at-Tirmidhi in Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #51). A hadith of similar wording was recorded by Daylami (Firdaws, 2:344) and Ibn ‘Asakir (1:292) from Anas, and Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Awliya, #8) from ‘Ali.

⁴³ Recorded by Hakim Tirmidhi (Asl #51), and Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Awliya, #57) from Abu-z Zinad.

⁴⁴ Recorded by Hakim at-Tirmidhi in Nawadir al-Usul (Asl. #51).

Allah substitutes another in his place. By means of them, Allah brings down the rain, gives victory over enemies, and diverts punishment from the people of Syria.”⁴⁵

7) Also from Imam ‘Ali: “Do not curse the people of Syria, for the Abdal are among them, but curse their injustice.”⁴⁶

8) Also from Imam ‘Ali: “The Abdal are from Syria, and the Nujaba’ are from Egypt, and the elite righteous servants (‘isaba) are from Iraq.”⁴⁷

9) From Anas: “The earth will never be empty of 40 men who are similar to the Intimate Friend of Allah (Sayyidina Ibrahim). By them rain falls and victory is granted. Not one of them dies except that Allah replaces him with another.” Qatada said, “We do not doubt that Hasan al-Basri is one of them.”⁴⁸

10) From ‘Ubada ibn Samit: “The Abdal in this community are thirty, their hearts like the heart of Ibrahim (asws) the Intimate of the All-Merciful. Whenever one of them dies, Allah substitutes another one in his place.”⁴⁹

11) Also from ‘Ubada: “The Abdal in my community are thirty. By them, the earth is established (bihim taqum al-Ard), and by them you are sent rain, and by them you are granted help and victory.”⁵⁰

12) Abu Hurayra said: “I entered upon the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) in the mosque, and he said to me, “O Abu Hurayra, in this hour, a man will walk through this door, who is one of the seven people of the world through whom Allah diverts punishment from the Earth’s inhabitants.” Just then a Habashi (Ethiopian) entered in

⁴⁵ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (Musnad, 1:112 #854 and Fada’il as-Sahaba, #1675), Diya’ al-Maqdisi in al-Mukhtara (2:110), Ibn ‘Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (1:289, 296), Hakim Tirmidhi in Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #222), and Muhammad ibn Abdul-Hadi in Fada’il al-Sham (p. 43 #15). Shurayh narrated from Miqdad, who is older than ‘Ali. Munawi in his Fayd al-Qadir, Haythami (10:62 #16671), Sakhawi (Maqasid #8), and Suyuti (Jami’ as-Saghir #3035) said it is Hasan, and it has over ten routes of transmission from ‘Ali as stated by Munawi.

⁴⁶ Recorded by Hakim (4:553), who said, along with Imam Dhahabi, that it is Sahih. Also recorded by Imam Ahmad (Fada’il as-Sahaba 2:905), Abdur-Razzaq (Musannaf, 11:249 #20455), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 4:176 #3905), Ibn Abi Dunya (Kitab al-Awliya’, #70), Bayhaqi (Dala’il an-Nubuwwa, 6:449), Diya’ al-Maqdisi (Mukhtara, 2:111-12), Ishaq ibn Rahawayh (Matalib, 3:377 – Sahih according to Busiri 10:332 #7930), Nu’aym ibn Hammad in his Fitan (#651 Sahih chain), Ibn ‘Asakir (1:296-97), and others.

⁴⁷ Recorded by Ibn ‘Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (1:296-97, 300), al-Khallal, and ad-Dani in his Sunan al-Warida fi’l Fitan (#598). Cf. Suyuti’s Hawi lil Fatawi (2:466-67).

⁴⁸ Recorded by Tabarani in Mu’jam al-Awsat (4:247 #4101) and al-Kabir (10:224 #10390 – see Suyuti’s Hawi lil Fatawi 2:247), Abu Nu’aym (Ma’rifat as-Sahaba #4013), Ibn Hibban in his Tarikh from Abu Hurayra (Da’if, see Hawi 2:248 and Jami’ Saghir #7379-80), and Ibn ‘Asakir (1:298) and ad-Dinawari (in his al-Mujalasa) from Qatada. See Majma’ az-Zawa’id (10:63 #16675) of al-Haythami. Hadith Hasan.

⁴⁹ Imam Ahmad (5:322 #21689), Tabarani (M. Kabir), Ibn ‘Asakir in his Tarikh (1:292), Hakim at-Tirmidhi in his Nawadir (Asl #51), Ibn Kathir (Tafsir of Q2:251), Daylami (Firdaws, 5:232 #7714), Abu Nu’aym in his Akhbar Asbahan (1:180), and al-Khallal in his Karamat al-Awliya’. Haythami (in his Majma’ az-Zawa’id 10:62 #16672), Suyuti (Jami’ as-Saghir #3032-33), Munawi, and others said it is Sahih.

⁵⁰ Recorded by Tabarani in Mu’jam Kabir, Ibn ‘Asakir (1:277, 298), Bazzar, and others. Sahih according to Suyuti and Munawi, and Haythami (10:63 #16673) said he did not know one of the narrators, but the rest are of the Sahih. A similar hadith was also recorded by Tabarani in his Kabir (18:65) and Ibn ‘Asakir (1:290) on the authority of ‘Awf ibn Malik, which is sound (Hasan) according to Munawi, and thru Ibn Mas’ud (M. Kabir 10:181 – also by Abu Nu’aym in Hilya 4:173-74). Cf. Suyuti’s Jami’ as-Saghir (#3034, “Hasan”).

through that door. He was bald and maimed, and was carrying a container of water on his head. So he said, “O Abu Hurayra, that’s him,” and then said to the man three times, “Welcome to Yasaar (other versions mention Hilal).” This man used to sweep and clean the Mosque, and he was a servant of Mughira ibn Shu’ba.⁵¹

13) From Abu Qilaba: “There will never cease to be in my Ummah seven, and they will never ask Allah without Him answering them. By means of them, you are given rain, victory, and protection (from enemies, harm, etc...).”⁵²

14) Abdullah ibn ‘Amr narrated that the Prophet (salla allahu alayhi wa sallam) said: “In every generation of my community, there will be Sabiqun (forerunners).”⁵³

15) “The land of greater-Syria (Sham) is the quintessence (safwa) of Allah’s lands on earth, and to it He draws His elect (safw) worshippers.”⁵⁴

16) “The folk (Ahl) of the Qur’an are the folk of Allah (Ahl ul-Laah) and His elect.”⁵⁵

The previous two hadiths support the meanings of the previous hadiths, which state that Allah has special elect servants, and that they are concentrated in Sham, among other places.

17) From Anas: Allah said, “The most beloved of My worshippers to Me are those who love each other purely for My sake, who frequent the masjid, and ask forgiveness in the pre-dawn hours. These are the ones whom I would bring to My attention when I wish to punish My creation, and then I divert My punishment from My creation because of them.”⁵⁶

18) From Abu Hurayra: “Verily, there are supports (Awtad) for the masjid, whose sitting-companions are the angels, seeking them out. So if they are in need, they (the angels) help

⁵¹ Recorded by Hakim at-Tirmidhi in Nawadir (Asl #123) and Khatm al-Awliya (p. 443), Abu Nu’aym in his Hilya (2:24, 81) and Ma’rifat as-Sahaba (5:2810 #3079), Ibn ‘Asakir in his Tarikh (3:200), Ruyani in his Musnad (3:335), Abu Muhammad al-Khallal in Karamat al-Awliya’, Ibn al-Athir in his Usd al-Ghaba (5:124), and others. See also: Ibn Hajar’s Isaba fi Tamyiz as-Sahaba (6:550).

⁵² Recorded by Abdur-Razzaq in his Musannaf (11:250 #20457) and Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Awliya, #69). This hadith is mursal Sahih, because Muslim recorded the exact same chain in his Sahih (#3166), and all of its narrators are of Bukhari’s Sahih (#206, 2195, 3113).

⁵³ Recorded by Abu Nu’aym in his Hilyat al-Awliya’ (1:8 Sahih, 8:278), Daylami (Musnad Firdaws, 3:140 #4375), and Hakim at-Tirmidhi (Asl #72, #144).

⁵⁴ Haythami in his Majma’ (10:58-59 #16647-48) and Mundhiri in his Targhib (4:60) state that it is authentic. Hakim in his Mustadrak (4:509-10), along with al-Dhahabi, also said it is Sahih. Also recorded by Ibn Hibban (16:295), Bayhaqi (Sunan al-Kubra, 9:179), Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (18:251, and #7718, 7796) and Awsat (4:154), Imam Ahmad (#16391), Abu Dawud (#2124), Abdur-Razzaq (#20459), Ibn ‘Asakir (1:66-67), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 3:323), Daylami (Firdaws, 3:62 #3889, 5:348 #8125), Abu Nu’aym (Dala’il, p. 199), and others. For more on this hadith, see ‘Ajluni’s Kashf al-Khafa’ (#1526) and Sakhawi’s Maqasid (#583).

⁵⁵ Ibn Majah (Muqaddima, #211), Darimi (#3192), Imam Ahmad (#11831, 11844, 13053), Tayalisi (#2238), Abu Nu’aym (3:63, 9:40), Nasa’i (Sunan al-Kubra, #8031), Hakim (1:556 Sahih), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, #2688-89), Hakim at-Tirmidhi (Nawadir, Asl #67), al-Khatib in his Tarikh (2:311, 5:357), Harith (Zawa’id, p. 229 #732), and Daylami in Firdaws (1:494 #1649). See also: Hafiz Sakhawi (Maqasid, #249), Hafiz ‘Ajluni (Kashf al-Khafa’ #16, #768, #811). It is Sahih, according to Suyuti (Jami’ Saghir, #2374) and Mundhiri (Targhib wa Tarhib, 2:354).

⁵⁶ Recorded by Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, #9052), Abdur-Razzaq (11:204 #20329), Ibn Abi Shayba (Musannaf, 8:122), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 2:85 #1328, from Abu Darda’, also 1:203 #651), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Awliya, #76), and Daylami (Firdaws, 3:229 #4522), with different chains of transmission.

them; and if they fall ill, they visit them; ... and when they are present (in the masjid), they say, “invoke Allah, may Allah invoke you.”⁵⁷

19) Another hadith which supports the meaning of many of the above narrations is related on the authority of Sa’d, which states: “Indeed, Allah supports this Ummah by their weak members, thru their prayers, supplications, and sincerity,” and in another narration, “Is it not thru the weak among the Ummah that you are granted provision and victory?”⁵⁸ Abu Hurayra and others also related that the Messenger of Allah (asws) said: “Were it not for servants of Allah bowing, infants feeding, and animals grazing, then Divine wrath would pour down upon you.”⁵⁹ And from Ibn ‘Umar: “Allah repels calamities from 100 households due to the presence of one righteous Muslim amongst them.”⁶⁰

20) Finally, Ibn ‘Asakir (1:299) and Ibn Abi Khaythama narrate that Uthman ibn ‘Ata was having a conversation with his father, who told him, “The Abdal are forty Insan (humans).” So he said to his father, “Forty men?” and his father replied, “Do not say men, but rather say humans, for there could be women among them.”⁶¹ This indicates that this hierarchy of Awliya’ is not only occupied by men, but also by women.

Hafiz Sakhawi in his *Maqasid al-Hasana* (p. 10 #8) and Hafiz Suyuti in his *Hawi lil Fatawi* (2:250-51) state that Ibn ‘Asakir (*Tarikh Dimashq* 1:300) and Hafiz al-Khatib (*Tarikh Baghdad* 3:75-76) both relate that Abu Bakr al-Kattani said: “The Nuqaba are 300, the Nujaba are 70, the Abdal are 40, the Akhyar are 7, the ‘Umud (supports) are 4, and the Ghawth is 1. So the dwelling of the Nuqaba are in the Maghrib, the Nujaba in Egypt, the Abdal in Sham, the Akhyar travel throughout the Earth, the ‘Umud are in the corners of the Earth, and the Ghawth is in Makka. So when a need arises among the commonality, the Nuqaba plead to Allah to fulfill it, then the Nujaba, then the Abdal, then the Akhyar, then the ‘Umud, and if they are answered by Allah (it stops with them), and if not, then the Ghawth pleads, and he does not complete his request until it is answered.”

⁵⁷ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (#9056), Abdur-Razzaq (11:297 #20585), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:172), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, #2952-53), Ibn Najjar (see *Kanz al-Ummal*, #20350), and Daylami (1:254 #784). Haythami said in *Majma’ Zawa’id* (2:22 #2025) that Ahmad’s chain contains Ibn Lahi’a. However, Abdur-Razzaq’s narration is from the trustworthy (thiqa) Ma’mar from the thiqa Tabi’i ‘Ata al-Khurasani from an un-named Sahabi (all of whom are thiqa anyway), which is the same chain in Muslim’s *Sahih* (#1623). Also, Hakim recorded this hadith from Abdullah ibn Salam in his *Mustadrak* (2:398), and both he and Dhahabi said it was *Sahih*.

⁵⁸ Recorded by Nasai (6:45-46 #3127-28), Tirmidhi (K. Jihad, #1624 *Sahih*), Abu Dawud (#2227), Imam Ahmad (1:173, 5:198), Hakim (2:106, 145 *Sahih*), Abu Nu’aym (*Hilya*, 5:26, 100, 8:290), Tabarani (M. *Awsat*, #2249, 4148), Ibn ‘Asakir (19:253, 55:243), Bayhaqi (*Sunan* 3:331,345, *Shu’ab* #10495), Abdur-Razzaq (5:303), Ibn Hibban (#4767), and others, and Bukhari has a chapter in his *Sahih* (K. Jihad) entitled “On seeking help thru the weak and the pious during battle.” *Hadith Sahih*.

⁵⁹ Recorded by Abu Ya’la (#6402, 6633), Bayhaqi (*Sunan* 3:345 #6482-83, *Shu’ab* #9820), al-Khatib in his *Tarikh* (6:64), Tabarani (M. *Awsat*, 6:327 #6539, 7:134 #7085), Ibn ‘Adiyy (*Kamil*, 4:1622), and others, and it is *Hasan li-ghayrihi*. See Suyuti’s *Jami’ as-Saghir* (#7523) and Sakhawi’s *Maqasid* (#882).

⁶⁰ Recorded by Tabarani (M. *Awsat*, #4080 - *Da’if*: Haythami’s *Majma’* 8:164, Suyuti’s *Jami’ Saghir*, #1794).

⁶¹ Hafiz Suyuti mentioned a hadith of similar import in his *Jami’ as-Saghir* (#3036), which is recorded by al-Khallal (*Karamat al-Awliya’*) and Daylami (*al-Firdaws*, 1:154-55 #404) from ‘Ata from Anas: “The Abdal are 40 men and 40 women...”, and it has other chains recorded by Abu Bakr Ibn Lal in *Makarim al-Akhlaq* (from Hasan al-Basri from Anas) and Ibn ‘Asakir in his *Tarikh* (from Yazid al-Raqashi from Anas), and it is *Da’if* according to Sakhawi (*Maqasid*, #8). See also Suyuti’s *Hawi lil Fatawi* 2:250.

Shaykh al-Yafi'i wrote in his book *Kifayat al-Mu'taqid* ("Sufficiency of the Believer"): "The righteous (Saliheen) are many, and they mix with the common people for the sake of their worldly and other-worldly benefit. And the Nujaba' are fewer in number than the righteous, and the Nuqaba' are fewer in number than the Nujaba', and they mix with the elect servants. And the Abdal occupy the great countries of the earth. They only occupy a country one after another, so blessed be the people of a land among whom are two Abdal. And the Awtad are 4, one in Syria, one in Yemen, one in the East, and one in the West. And Allah causes the Qutb to travel the four horizons of the Earth, just as the constellations travel their course across the sky. And the states of the Qutb are veiled from the common and the elect, out of Allah's jealousy for him, except that he is seen to be (at the same time) knowledgeable and ignorant, dim-witted and intelligent, taking and leaving, near and far, gentle and harsh, safe and dangerous... (meaning that he combines in himself the opposites). And the states of the Awtad are revealed to the elect. And the states of the Abdal are revealed to the elect and the Gnostics (who are under the elect). And the states of the Nuqaba' and the Nujaba' are veiled from the common, but they are revealed to each other. And the states of the righteous are revealed to both the common and the elect, so that Allah's plans may be enacted. The number of the Nujaba' are 300, and the number of the Nuqaba' are 40, and the number of the Abdal is said to be 30, or 14, or 7 (and this is the most correct number), and the number of the Awtad are four. So when the Qutb dies, Allah replaces him with the best of the four Awtad. And when one of the four die, Allah replaces him with the best of the seven Abdal... and so on. And when Allah desires to start the Day of Judgment, He takes the life of all of them. Because of them and through them, Allah sends down rain from the sky and averts His punishment and tribulations from His servants... And the Qutb is the one mentioned who is upon the heart of the angel Israfil (upon him be peace), and his relation to the rest of the Awliya' is like the center of the circle in relation to the circumference, and thus it is through him that Allah sets right the affair of the world... the Prophet (upon him be blessings and peace) did not mention anyone as being upon his heart, since Allah never created anyone whose heart could be comparable to his heart in its luminousness, subtlety, and nobility. So the hearts of the remaining Prophets and Angels and Awliya' are to his heart like the light of the distant stars compared to the perfect light of the proximate Sun." This was repeated and confirmed by Ibn Hajar al-Makki al-Haytami in his *Fatawa Hadithiyya* (p. 322-23), and by Ibn 'Abidin al-Hanafi in his fatwa on the Abdal called "Ijabat al-Ghawth."

Hafiz Sakhawi states in his *Maqasid* (p. 9 #8): "...And what strengthens these hadiths (about the Abdal) and confirms them, and indicates their prevalence among the 'Ulama is that Imam Shafi'i would sometimes comment about someone and say, "We used to count so-and-so as one of the Abdal," and Bukhari would say, "They would not doubt that so-and-so was one of the Abdal," and other Imams and Huffaz ⁶² who would describe people in such a way." This shows that it was a known and accepted truth among the Salaf that these categories of Awliya' existed. For more examples, see Suyuti's *Hawi lil-Fatawi* (2:251-55).

Finally, Ibn 'Abidin quoted Hafiz Ibn Hajar who said in his *Fatwas*: "The Abdal were mentioned in numerous narrations, some of them authentic (Sahih), and others not authentic. As for the Qutb, he was mentioned in some later narrations (Athar). And as for the Ghawth – in the description given him common among the Sufis – it is not established (in any authentic

⁶² Such as in the Sunan of Abu Dawud (#2596), Ibn Majah (#3339), and Darimi (#3295), and the Musnad of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (#15117, #16542, #17132), and Ibn Abi Dunya (many books) for example.

narration).” Then Ibn ‘Abidin commented: “We will quote in what follows Imam Shafi’i’s explanation of the Ghawth as being the Qutb, and this proves its being established and that they refer to one and the same thing, so know this. And the intention of the Hafiz (Ibn Hajar) was that mention of the Ghawth is not found in any Sahih hadith, but the fact that it is widespread and well-known, and frequently mentioned among the people of this pure path (the Sufis), is enough to indicate its established basis.”

The famous ‘Hadith of the Wali’

Imam al-Baghawi in his Tafsir (on Sura 42) narrated on the authority of Anas that the Prophet (asws) said that Jibril said that Allah said: “Whoever humiliates/shows animosity to a Wali of mine, then he has openly declared war against Me, and indeed I get angry/jealous for the sake of My Wali just as the lioness jealously protects her cubs (lest they fall into harm). And my believing servant does not come close to Me with anything similar to what I have obligated him to do. And my servant continues to draw closer to me through performing supererogatory acts of adoration until I come to love him. And when I love him, I am for him his hearing, seeing, ‘hand’ (power), support, heart, intellect, and tongue. If he calls Me, I answer him, and if he asks Me, I give him what he asks. And I do not hesitate in doing anything as I hesitate in taking the soul of this believing Wali of Mine, who wishes not to die and whom I wish not to harm, but such (death) is inevitable. And there are among My believing servants those who seek from Me success in performing a certain act of devotion, but I prevent them from it so that ostentation does not enter their hearts and thus corrupt that act. And there are some of My believing slaves whose faith is not sound except in his being wealthy, and if I made him poor his faith would be corrupted or lost. And there are others whose faith is not sound except in their being poor, and if I made them rich, then it would corrupt or damage their faith...that is because I manage the affairs of My servants out of My knowledge of their hearts, for I am All-Knowledgeable and All-Aware.”⁶³

This hadith, as do all the other hadiths above, and as the Qur’an itself demonstrates in the numerous places where it mentions the various levels of the servants, goes to demonstrate the reality and existence and nature of these Awliya’ (Intimate Friends of Allah), and so no one has the right to deny their existence and special distinction after this knowledge has come to them.

The Wali’s Miraculous Knowledge of the Unseen

⁶³ This is a very famous hadith, and it is narrated through multiple narrations, each containing more or less what was mentioned above (which is the fullest narration). Imam Bukhari narrated it in his Sahih (Kitab ar-Riqaq #6021) from Abu Hurayra, Ibn Majah (Kitab al-Fitan, #3979) from Umar, Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (6:256) from A’isha and his Kitab az-Zuhd (p. 61, 65), Ibn Hibban (2:58 #347), Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (8:221 #7880; 12:145 #12719) and al-Awsat (1:192 #609; 9:139 #9352), Abdur-Razzaq (11:192-93), Quda’i (Musnad Shihab, 2:327-28 #1456-57), Ibn Abi Dunya in his Kitab al-Awliya (#1, #45) also on the authority of Anas, Abu Nu’aym in his Hilyat al-Awliya’ (1:5; 8:318), Abu Ya’la in his Musnad (12:520) from Maymuna, Bazzar (Zawa’id, 4:241-42, 248), Hakim at-Tirmidhi in his Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #75, #162, #228), Daylami in his Firdaws (3:215 #4472 and 3:216 #4475), Imam Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (3:346) and Kitab az-Zuhd (p. 269-70 #696,99), Ibn Shahin (Targhib, #285), Imam Qushayri with his chain in the Risala (p. 292, 348), Ibn ‘Asakir in his Tarikh (7:95), Abu ‘Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami (Forty Hadiths on Tasawwuf, #36), and others. Hadith Sahih.

Just as it is the belief of Ahlus-Sunna that the Prophets (upon all of them be blessed peace) have miracles (mu'jizat), among which is included knowledge of the Unseen continually bestowed to them by Allah, it is also the doctrine of Ahlus-Sunna that the Awliya' – who are the inheritors of the Prophets – have a share in these grants (karamat) from Allah, among which is “Kashf” (unveiling/perception of the unseen). No one denies this except the Mu'tazila and others with invalid beliefs and doctrines. Strangely enough, however, there have come to be certain groups among Muslims today who only know how to denigrate the status of the Prophets and their inheritors, and seek to make everyone “equal”, and thus deny the special favors and grants and miracles with which Allah has blessed some of His elect worshippers. That is because the materialist secular ideology has taken a firm grasp of their hearts and minds. In what follows, we will demonstrate how the Awliya' having knowledge of the Unseen (and other miraculous abilities) is a fact attested to by the Qur'an and Sunna and the experience of the righteous Muslims throughout the centuries of the history of Islam, and does not constitute, as some misguided Muslims claim, kufr or shirk.

From the Qur'an...

1) The Wali who was with Sayyidina Sulayman (asws) and brought him the throne of Bilqis quicker than the blink of an eye. He was characterized as “one who had knowledge of the Book,” as Allah stated, “One with whom was knowledge of the Book said, ‘I will bring it to you before your gaze returns to you...’ (Q27:40)”, and this is Asaf ibn Barkhiyya (a non-prophet human), the scribe and relative of Prophet Sulayman, according to the Tafsir of Ibn 'Abbas and the majority of commentators.

2) Similarly, Sayyidina al-Khadir (although considered by some to be a Prophet) possessed knowledge which Sayyidina Musa (asws) did not have, which came to him directly from the Presence of Allah without intermediary, as stated in Q18:65. Baghawi stated in his Tafsir of this verse: “He taught him the inward (batin) knowledge by inspiration (ilham).”

3) Sayyida Maryam was a Siddiqah (see Q4:69 and Q5:75), which is one of the highest categories of Ihsan, and she was granted numerous miracles, such as being provided for without intermediaries or secondary causes (Q3:37), and giving birth without human impregnation (Q3:47 and Q19:20), and super-human strength (Q19:25). It is also worthy of consideration here to point out that Sayyida Maryam was the inheritor of her personal caretaker, Prophet Zakariyya (asws), and so she inherited his miracle of conception outside of human norms (see Q3:38-41 and Q3:45-47), which supports the doctrine that the miracle (Karama) of the Wali is following and in support of the miracle (Mu'jiza) of the Prophet he or she inherits from. Therefore, Awliya' can have the same miracles as Prophets, as long as the Wali acknowledges his/her inferior and dependent status in relation to the specific Prophet.

4) Allah (Most High) says: “He is the Knower of the unseen (ghayb), and does not reveal His Unseen to anyone, except one chosen from His messengers...” (Q72:26-27).

Some people use this verse to disprove the Wali's knowledge of the Unseen. This interpretation, however, is not the one supported by the Qur'anic commentators of Ahlus-Sunna but by the Mu'tazila (such as Zamakhshari in his Kashshaf). Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani explained this verse thus: “It follows from this verse that Prophets can see some of the Unseen, and so do the Awliya' that follow each particular Prophet also, as each takes from his Prophet

and is graced (yukram) with his knowledge.” (See Fath al-Bari 8:660). He also quotes Imam Qurtubi’s words confirming this: “The truthful, righteous Muslim is he whose state matches that of Prophets and thereby is given some of the same kind of miraculous grant they were, and that is to behold the Unseen... as for the disbeliever (kafir) and the corrupt (fasiq) – then no.” (See Fath al-Bari 12:449). Imam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti also quotes Shaykh ‘Afif ad-Din al-Yafi’i who wrote: “And it is established that whatever is possible for the Prophet as a miracle, is similarly possible for the Wali as a Karama, on the condition that it not be a challenge against the Prophet. And no one denies this fact except an ignorant one.” (See Hawi lil Fatawi 2:150).

Imam Baydawi wrote about this verse in his Tafsir (Anwar at-Tanzil): “Some use it as proof against the Karamat, and the rebuttal to this view lies in the fact that this verse specifically speaks of the Messenger’s beholding of what will occur without an intermediary. Whereas the Karamat of the Awliya in regards to the Unseen knowledge occurs thru the inspiration (talaqqi) of the angels, like our beholding the states of the Hereafter thru the intermediary of the Prophets...”

Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi in his Tafsir (Mafatih al-Ghayb) said: “His Word ‘does not reveal His Unseen’ is not un-specific, but is rather taken to mean that He doesn’t reveal a certain unseen from among His unseen knowledge. So we take it to refer specifically to the moment of the occurrence of the Day of Rising (Qiyama). Therefore, the meaning of this verse would be that He does not reveal the moment of its occurrence to anyone. As a result, there is no indication in this verse that He does not reveal anything of His Unseen whatsoever to anyone. And that which supports this interpretation is that He mentioned this verse directly after His saying ‘Say: I do not know if that which is promised you is near, or if my Lord will make for you a space of time’ (Q72:25), meaning, ‘I do not know the moment of the coming of the Day of Rising,’ right after which He said, ‘Knower of the Unseen, He does not reveal His Unseen to anyone...,’ meaning that He does not reveal the specific moment of the Day of Rising to anyone. And if you say, ‘how can this interpretation be valid if He said after it “except whom He is pleased to choose from His messengers (for this knowledge)...” when He has not vouchsafed any of the Messengers with knowledge of the Hour? Then our response is: Rather, He reveals its time when its determined moment closely approaches, as He says, “on the Day when the sky is split with the heavy clouds and the angels are made to descend” (Q25:25), and at that moment, the angels (who are also His messengers) will know the occurrence of the Hour. In addition, the exception in the following verse could be separate, so that it would mean: ‘He does not reveal the knowledge of the specific time of the Last Hour, which is knowledge special to Him. However, to those of His messengers whom He chooses, He sends guardian angels before them and behind them to guard them from the evil Jinn and keep the revelation safe and unchanged.’ For this verse came as an answer to the one who asked him (asws) about the time of the Hour’s occurrence in a demeaning and insulting way...” This interpretation is also mentioned by Mawardi in his Tafsir (an-Nukat wa’l ‘Uyun), who said that Ibn Abi Hatim also mentioned it.

Imam Nasafi in his Tafsir (Madarik at-Tanzil) and Ibn ‘Ajiba al-Maghribi in his Tafsir (al-Bahr al-Madid) both said: “Meaning: except a messenger whom He chose for knowledge of some of His Unseen, so that his informing his people will be a miracle for him. And as for the Wali, if he is informed of something from the Unseen, it is not binding for him, for he would have been informed of it through a vision (ru’ya), or perspicacity (firasa), or inspiration

to his heart. And every miracle (karama) of the Wali is counted as a miracle (mu'jiza) for the Prophet (he inherits from).” Then Ibn ‘Ajiba goes on to quote Abu Su’ud, who said: “And there is nothing in the verse to indicate the denial of the Karamat of the Awliya’ in relation to ‘unveiling’ (Kashf), for the specification of the highest and fullest degree of unveiling as belonging to the Messengers does not necessarily disprove the Wali’s acquiring a certain level or degree of unveiling, and there is no Wali who claims that he shares the same degree of unveiling as the Messengers do – which results from direct revelation (wahy).”

5) Allah mentions the eyes of the heart in a number of verses, such as: “...For surely the (physical) eyes do not go blind, but it is the hearts which are in the breasts that go blind” (Q22:46). Therefore, just as we have physical eyes (basar) in our head, we also have spiritual eyes (basira) in our hearts. Khalid ibn Ma’dan said: “Every slave has two eyes in his face by which he sees this world, and two eyes in his heart by which he sees the next world. So if Allah desires good for His slave, He opens the two eyes of his heart, and he sees what is promised him in the unseen, and they (those eyes) are from the unseen...”⁶⁴ And the Prophet (asws) also said, “Blind is not the one whose physical eyes (basar) are blind, but whose spiritual eyes (basira) are blind.”⁶⁵ Allah also said: “Truly in that there is a reminder for one who has a heart...” (Q50:37), and connected to this is His words, “A vision (tabsira) and a reminder for every repentant worshipper” (Q50:8). Everyone has a heart, but what He (Most High) means here is those among the believers whose hearts are alive and have their spiritual eyes open in them. “...I call to Allah with spiritual insight (basira), I and those who follow me...” (Q12:108). Those who follow the Prophet (asws) in his words, actions, and spiritual states, obtain a share of his Prophetic insight and the love of Allah (see Q3:31). And those whom Allah loves, He becomes his ears and eyes by which he hears and sees.

6) According to Ahlus-Sunna, all the Prophets (alayhim salam) were males (see Q12:109). But the Qur’an mentions examples of non-Prophets receiving “wahy,” such as: Maryam (Q19:25), the mother of Musa and Harun alayhim salam (Q20:38, 28:7), and the disciples of Sayyidina ‘Isa (Q5:111). The scholars of Tafsir agree unanimously that this “wahy” refers to inspiration (ilham) and unveiling (kashf), and not revelation which only Prophets receive. However, Allah called it wahy because, again, the miracle of the Wali is counted as a miracle of the Prophet he inherits from, and whatever miracles the Prophets have, so can a Wali.

7) Allah describes in the Qur’an how the angels communicated directly with Maryam (Q3:42), in imitation of the Prophet she inherited from (Q3:39), meaning it is possible for the Wali to communicate with angels. Muslim recorded in his Sahih (Kitab al-Birr, #4656) that “a man was visiting his brother in another city, and Allah set an angel on his path to guard him in it, so the angel spoke to him (i.e. directly) and said...”

Allah also said: “Those who say ‘Our Lord is Allah’ and then stand upright (in fulfillment of their claim), the angels descend upon them saying, ‘...We are your Awliya’ in this life and the

⁶⁴ Recorded by Ibn Jarir at-Tabari in his Tafsir of Q47:24 with a sound (Hasan) chain of narrators, Ibn Mundhir in his Tafsir (Q47:24), Suyuti in his Tafsir Durr al-Manthur (Q47:24), Hakim Tirmidhi in Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #1), and Daylami in his Firdaws (4:309 #6449) from Mu’adh. Cf. Qurtubi’s Tafsir (Q22:46).

⁶⁵ Recorded by Suyuti in his Tafsir (Q22:46), Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab al-Iman (2:126 #1372), Hakim Tirmidhi in Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #39), Daylami in his Firdaws (#5268), ‘Askari in his Amthal, and Abu Nasr as-Sajazi in his Ibana, on the authority of Abdullah ibn Jarad. Hafiz Suyuti said Bayhaqi’s chain is Da’if (Jami’ Saghir, #7569) and Munawi agreed. Cf. Sakhawi’s Maqasid (#911).

next” (Q41:30-31). Fakhruddin ar-Razi writes (Tafsir, 7:371): “Meaning, that the angels leave effects and impressions upon the pure human souls, which include inspirations (ilham) and unveilings (kashf), just as the devils leave effects upon the impure souls, by whispering in them and giving false impressions and lies... and this is well-known to the masters of kashf and ilham, for they say: Just as this Walaya is achieved during this life, it remains and continues into the next life, for these connections (between the human and angelic realm) are fundamental and indissoluble. Rather, after physical death, they become stronger, because the essence of the human is of an angelic nature, like a ray of light in relation to the sun... and the bodily attachments are what come between the human and this spiritual realm, as the Prophet (asws) said, ‘Were it not for the fact that the devils surround the hearts of the humans, they would behold the hidden spiritual domains (malakut) of the heavens.’”⁶⁶

From the Sunna

1) “Whoever sees me in a dream has truly seen me, for Shaytan cannot take on my form, and the believer’s dream-vision (ru’ya) is one part of 46 parts of Prophecy.”⁶⁷ 2) “The dream-vision (ru’ya) is one-forty-sixth part of Prophecy.”⁶⁸ 3) “When the Hour draws near, almost no dream-vision of the believer will be false. The believer’s dream-vision is one part of 46 parts of Prophecy, and Prophecy never lies.”⁶⁹ These hadiths show that the righteous believers inherit some of the Prophetic ability of perception of the Unseen.

4) Harith ibn Malik al-Ansari passed by the Prophet (asws) who asked him, “How are you this morning, O Harith?” and he replied, “This morning I am a true believer in Allah.” The Prophet (asws) said: “Take care of what you say, for everything has a proof to it, so what is the proof of your belief?” He said: “I have turned myself away from this world by keeping awake at night and staying thirsty by day; and I can almost see the Throne of my Lord in full view before me, and I can see the people of the Garden visiting each other, and the people of the Fire wailing to each other.” The Prophet (asws) said, “O Harith! You have realized (the truth), therefore cling to it.” Some versions add, “(This is) a believer whose heart Allah has illumined.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Recorded with similar wording by Imam Ahmad (2:353, 363), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:446), Ibn Abi Hatim, and Ibn Mardawayh. A related hadith from Anas states: “The devil places his snout upon the heart of the son of Adam, so when he invokes Allah, the devil retreats, and if he becomes heedless, the devil swallows his heart.” Recorded by Ibn Abi Dunya (Maka’id Shaytan, #22), Abu Ya’la (#4301), Tabarani (K. Du’a, #1862), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 1:402 #540), Ibn ‘Adiyy, Ibn Shahin (Targhib, #154), Abu Nu’aym (6:123, 268), Hakim Tirmidhi, and others, with a Da’if chain. Hakim recorded a Sahih corroborative narration (Mustadrak, 2:541) for this hadith. So with constant dhikr, the malakut is opened up before the believer’s vision, as in the hadith of Harith below.

⁶⁷ Recorded by Bukhari (#6479) and Muslim (#4206), and many others.

⁶⁸ Recorded by Bukhari in his Sahih (#6468, 6472-74) and Muslim (#4201), and numerous others.

⁶⁹ Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab at-Ta’bir, #6475), Muslim (#4200), Tabarani (M.Awsat, #2057), and many others.

⁷⁰ Recorded by Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (3:266 #3367), Quda’i (Musnad Shihab, 2:127 #1028), Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 1:242), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 1:26 #32), Ibn Abi Shayba in his Musannaf (7:226-27) and his Kitab al-Iman (#114-115), Abdur-Razzaq (11:129 #20114), Imam Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab al-Iman (7:362-63) and Kitab az-Zuhd (p. 355 #971), Ibn Mubarak in Kitab az-Zuhd (p. 106 #316), Ibn ‘Asakir (38:274, 54:227-28), Hakim Tirmidhi (Asl #6, #21, #53, #57, #265), al-‘Askari in his Amthal, Ibn Mandah, ‘Abd ibn Humayd in his Musnad (#444), Abu ‘Abdur-Rahman Sulami (Forty Hadiths, #10), and others, and also mentioned by Abu Hanifa (Fiqh al-Akbar), Ibn Hajar (Isaba, #1480), and Haythami in his Majma’ (1:57). It also has a supporting narration from Ibn Mas’ud, Ibn ‘Abbas, and others, recorded by Hakim (4:311), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:126-27), Ibn Mubarak (Zuhd, p. 106-07 #315), Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab (#10552) and Zuhd (#983), Ibn Abi Dunya (Qasr al-Amal, #129), Hakim Tirmidhi (Asl #86), and by Tabari (with numerous chains), Ibn Kathir, Suyuti, ar-Razi,

5) “In the nations before you were people who were spoken to (muhaddathun) without their being Prophets. If there is anyone in my community, it is ‘Umar ibn Khattab.”⁷¹ In his narration Imam Muslim adds, “Ibn Wahb explained ‘spoken to’ to mean ‘inspired’ (mulhamun),” and this is the majority’s opinion according to Ibn Hajar in his *Fath al-Bari* (7:62), who adds, “spoken to” means, “by the angels.” In his explanation on *Sahih Muslim*, Imam Nawawi writes on this hadith: “. . .there is in this a confirmation of the miracles of Awliya” (Kitab Fada’il as-Sahaba, Ch. 2, #10). What is meant by the hadith is the perfection of the quality of Ilham (inspiration) in Sayyidina ‘Umar, not its total lack in other Muslims, as Hafiz Ibn Hajar explained in his commentary on this hadith.

One of the famous karamat cited concerning Sayyidina ‘Umar is his giving a khutba in Madina, and suddenly seeing the Muslim army in Nihawand losing the battle, and crying out to their leader: “O Sariya, the mountain! The mountain!” and the army’s ability to hear that call and flee to the mountain, and thereby win the battle.⁷² Muhib at-Tabari in his *Riyad an-Nadira* and others recorded that someone who was staring at a woman's leg walked into the presence of Uthman ibn ‘Affan, who said, “Do people walk in here with the marks of adultery (zina) upon their eyes?” And he asked ‘Uthman, “Is there revelation after the Qur’an?” and he answered, “No, rather true spiritual vision (firas).”

6) Abu Sa’id al-Khudri reported that the Prophet (asws) said: “Be wary of the spiritual vision (firas) of the believer, for indeed he sees by the Light of Allah.”⁷³ Similar to this is the hadith (reported thru Anas and others) in which he (asws) said: “Indeed, Allah has servants who know (the truth about people) through reading the signs (tawassum).”⁷⁴

Qurtubi, Baghawi, Baydawi, Ibn ‘Atiyah, Ibn Jawzi, Nasafi, al-Khazin, Abu’s Su’ud, Ibn Abi Hatim, and others in their Tafsirs of Q6:125 and Q39:22, and its chains support each other according to Ibn Kathir, Shawkani, and others. In it the Prophet (asws) said: “Indeed, when the light enters the heart of a believer, it expands and widens.” They asked him, “Is there a sign of this?” He (asws) replied, “Yes, turning away in disgust from the lower world, turning wholly towards the Akhira, and preparation for death before it comes,” then he recited this verse. Harith’s case is a concrete example of this hadith.

⁷¹ Bukhari (#3210, 3413), Muslim (#4411), Nasa’i (Sunan Kubra, #8119-20), Tirmidhi (#3626), Imam Ahmad (#23150), Tayalisi (#2469), Humaydi (#255), Ibn Hibban (#6894), Hakim (3:86), Bayhaqi (Dala’il, 6:369), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:479), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 7:18, 9:66), Baghawi (#3873), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (#1261), and others.

⁷² This report is famous and is recorded by Abu Nu’aym and Bayhaqi in their *Dala’il an-Nubuwwa* and many others. See also Sakhawi’s *Maqasid al-Hasana* (#1331) and ‘Ajluni’s *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#3172).

⁷³ Tirmidhi (#3052, Tafsir of Q15:75), Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (8:121 #7497), *Awsat* (#3254, 7843), and *Musnad al-Shamiyyin* (2:407 #2042) from Abu Umama, Hafiz al-Khatib (3:191, 5:99, 7:242), Abu Nu’aym (4:81, 94 and 6:118 and 10:281-82), Bayhaqi in his *Kitab az-Zuhd* (#358), Quda’i (*Musnad Shihab*, 1:387 #663), Ibn ‘Asakir (14:67), Bukhari (*Tarikh*, 7:354), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (K. *Fadl al-‘Ilm*), Abu ‘Abdur-Rahman Sulami (*Forty Hadiths on Tasawwuf*, #35), Hakim at-Tirmidhi (*Nawadir*, Asl 227, 260), Daylami (1:116 #256), Tabari and Ibn Kathir in their Tafsirs, Imam Qushayri (*Risala*, p. 266), and others, and it is Hasan according to Haythami (10:268), Suyuti (*La’ali Masnu’a* 2:329-30, *Jami’ as-Saghir* #151), Shawkani (*al-Fawa’id*, p. 243-44), and others.

⁷⁴ Recorded by Tabarani in *Mu’jam al-Awsat* (3:207 #2935), Quda’i in *Musnad Shihab* (2:116 #1005), Hakim Tirmidhi in *Nawadir* (Asl #227), Bazzar (*Zawa’id al-Musnad*, 4:243), Daylami (1:226 #681), Ibn as-Sunni, Abu’l Shaykh in his *Thawab*, Abu Nu’aym in his *Tibb an-Nabawi*, and in the Tafsirs (for Q15:75) of Ibn Jarir at-Tabari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Abi Hatim, and others. Sakhawi said it was sound (Hasan) in his *Maqasid al-Hasana* (p. 20 #23), as did Imam Suyuti (*Jami’ Saghir* 2:477), Hafiz ‘Ajluni in *Kashf al-Khafa’* (1:42), Haythami (10:268), and Ibn Hajar (*Mukhtasar al-Zawa’id*, 2:506, #2302). Hafiz Sakhawi in his *Maqasid* (#1234) also mentions the corroborating hadith recorded by Daylami (*Firdaws*, 4:464 #6837), Abu Nu’aym (*Hilya*, 8:46), and Hafiz al-Khatib in his *Tarikh* (5:315), from Ibn ‘Abbas, “The believer sees by the light of Allah from which he was created.” Cf. Suyuti’s *La’ali al-Masnu’a* 2:181.

Hafiz Sakhawi in Tarjamat Shaykh al-Islam *Qutb al-Awliya* Abi Zakariyya an-Nawawi (p. 33) wrote, “It is well known that he (Nawawi) used to meet with al-Khadir and converse with him, among other unveilings (*mukashafat*).”

Any of those Muslims today who claim that they (and only they) are truly following the Salaf and who believe in whatever Ibn Taymiya said should consider what even he wrote in his books, such as the following (From *Furqan bayna Awliya Rahman* ..., p. 52): “It is established that the Awliya’ possess spiritual communications (*mukhatabat*) and unveilings (*mukashafat*).” Ibn Taymiya and his student Ibn Qayyim in many of their writings affirmed Kashf and Ilham as a true Karama of the Awliya’ (see for example: Ibn Qayyim’s *Madarij as-Salikin* 2:192, 3:178-83, Ibn Taymiya’s *Majmu’ Fatawa* 10:548, 11:65).

Lest someone also think that by these “unveilings” the Sufis seek to subvert the Shari’a, consider these words of some of the greatest Sufi Masters that ever lived: Shaykh Abu’l Hasan ash-Shadhuli warned, “If your kashf opposes the Book and the Sunna, leave the Kashf and tell yourself that Allah has guaranteed infallibility to the Book and Sunna, but He has not guaranteed it for Kashf.”⁷⁵ Shaykh al-Akbar Muhyiddin Ibn al-‘Arabi said: “Someone in this community who claims to be able to guide others to Allah, but is remiss in but one rule of the Shari’a – even if he manifests miracles which stagger the mind – we do not even turn to look at him, for such a person is not a (true) Shaykh, nor is he speaking the truth, for no one is entrusted with the secrets of Allah Most High save one in whom the ordinances of the Shari’a are preserved” (cited in Nabhani’s *Jami’ Karamat al-Awliya* 1:3; see also the Shaykh’s *Futuh* Ch 184 – On Karamat). And Shaykh Abdul-Qadir al-Gaylani writes in his *Futuh*: “...and their leader in this is the Sultan of the gnostic knowers of Allah, Abu Yazid al-Bistami, who said, ‘If you see him fly in the air and walk on water do not be deluded by him, but see how he stands on the orders and the prohibitions (of the Shari’a)’⁷⁶.”

Finally, Shaykh Abdur-Ra’uf al-Munawi wrote (*Fayd al-Qadir*, 2:515): “Know that the basis and foundation of *firasa* is to lower the eyes from forbidden sights. Shah al-Kirmani said: ‘Whoever builds his outward with imitation of the Sunna, and his inward with continuous watchfulness (*muraqaba*), and holds back his lower self from its desires, and lowers his vision from forbidden sights, and habitually eats only the halal, then his *firasa* will never err.’ So whoever is given success in this, he beholds the realities (*haqa’iq*) with his heart directly.”

Question: The Sufis claim that they can have a vision of the Prophet Muhammad (asws) while they are awake. Is this possible according to the Qur’an and Sunna?

It is indeed possible to have a vision of the Prophet Muhammad (alayhi salat wa salam), and other Prophets and Angels while one is awake, and there is no denying this, as it is considered one of the “karamat” or Divine special graces of the Awliya’, and belief in the Karamat of the Awliya, like the Mu’jizat (miracles) of the Anbiya’, is an established pillar of the ‘Aqida of the Din of Islam, as is recorded by Imam Tahawi, Imam Abu’l Hasan al-Ash’ari, Imam Abu Mansur al Maturidi, Imam Ibrahim Laqqani, Imam Sunusi, Imam

⁷⁵ Quoted, among other biographers, by his grand-student Shaykh Ibn ‘Ata’illah as-Sakandari in his *Lata’if al-Minan* (Ch. 1), Ibn ‘Imad al-Hanbali in his *Shadharat al-Dhahab* (5:279), and Ibn ‘Ajiba in his *Iqadh al-Himam*.

⁷⁶ See also Imam Abu’l Qasim Qushayri’s famous *Risala* (p. 38-39).

Abdullah al-Haddad, and other Imams of 'Aqida, according to the Ahlus-Sunna wa'l Jama'a, and anyone with a basic foundation in the knowledge of 'Aqida knows this to be a fact. Let us see what some of the major scholars of Islam have to say about this:

The late Shafi'i Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami wrote in his *Fatawa al Hadithiyya* (p. 212-13) the following: Question: "Is it possible to have a vision of the Prophet (saws) while awake?"

Answer: Some deny this, and others accept it as possible, and these are correct, and many people whose righteousness is not doubted have reported this experience, and have found proof for this in the hadith recorded by Imam Bukhari (in *Kitab at-Ta'bir*): "whoever sees me while asleep shall see me while awake (yaqadha)," meaning, with the physical eyes of his head; and some have said meaning with the spiritual eyes of his heart. The possibility of this "wakefulness" (yaqadha) referring to that of the Judgment Day is very slight, because in that case there would be no benefit or purpose in this specification found in the hadith, because on the Day of Judgment, his whole community will see him - whether they saw him earlier in a dream-vision or not. And in Ibn Abi Jamra's commentary on Bukhari's *Sahih*, we find that he favored this interpretation as applicable to the one who has the requisite preparedness by faithful following of the Sunnah, and also to the one who does not, in a non-specific sense...

Imam Muslim recorded in his *Sahih* that the angels used to greet 'Imran ibn Husayn as an honor for him for his patience in the pain of hemorrhoids, and when he had himself cauterized, the angels stopped greeting him, and when he stopped the cauterization - meaning he was healed - the angels returned to greeting him, because the cauterization - which is against the sunnah - stopped them from coming to greet him, even though he was in great need of it, for it was a defect in reliance and submission and patience. And in the narration of Bayhaqi, "the angels used to shake his hands until he had himself cauterized, then they stopped."

And Ibn al-Haj al-Maliki in his *Madkhal* said that beholding him (saws) while awake is very rare, and it occurs only with those who are realized in a state that is rare to find these days, and almost non-existent, while we do not deny its occurrence with the great *Awliya'* among us, whom Allah has safe-guarded in their inward and outward...some of the scholars of the outward have denied the possibility of this, based on the fact that the evanescent eye cannot behold the abiding, namely, the being of the Prophet (saws) in the world of eternity, while the eye of the viewer is in this vanishing world. And he answered this and said that when the believer dies, he sees Allah Who does not die; and Imam Bayhaqi made reference to his response when he said that the Prophet (saws) saw the other Prophets on the night of the Ascent (*mi'raj*). And al-Barizi said: it has been soundly transmitted from a group of the *Awliya* that they saw the Prophet (saws) while in a wakeful state during their lives, after the Prophet's passing...

Furthermore, it is not impossible to see the being of the Prophet (saws) after his death, for he and the other Prophets are alive, their spirits having been returned to them and permission granted to them to leave their graves and function in the lower and upper spiritual dominions (*malakut*)... (end of Ibn Hajar's words).

Also, the great scholar and Imam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti wrote in his collection of fatwas *al-Hawi lil Fatawi* (2:474ff) a chapter which he titled: *Tanwir al-Halak fi Imkan ru'yat an-Nabiyi*

wa'l Malak, or "The 'Illumination of the Intense Darkness' concerning the Possibility of Seeing the Prophet and the Angel(s)," in which he also analyzed this question in his usual masterful way. What follows is a summary of some of the major points he made:

"A group of people today who have no foundation in knowledge (of the Din) got carried away in denying this and expressed disbelief, and claimed that it was impossible. So I compiled this booklet... and we begin with the authentic (sahih) hadith which applies directly to this subject. Bukhari (in Kitab at-Ta'bir), Muslim, Abu Dawud (and others) recorded that Abu Hurayra (radiyallahu anhu) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (alayhi salat wa salam) said, "Whoever sees me in (their) sleep, then he will surely see me in their wakefulness, and the shaytan cannot impersonate me/take on my form."

"The majority (of scholars) have interpreted this hadith according to its literal import, namely, that whoever sees him in his sleep in a dream, then he will also necessarily see him while awake, with the physical eyes of his head, or others say with an eye of his heart. Such an interpretation has been recorded for example by the Maliki scholar and Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi, and the Maliki scholar Abu Muhammad Ibn Abi Jamra wrote in his notes to the hadiths he commented on in the Sahih of Bukhari:

"Is the promise given in this hadith applicable in a general sense to all who see him during their sleep, or in a specific sense only to those who have a special preparation (for that vision) and faithful following of his Sunna (alayhi salat wa salam)? The wording seems to indicate that it is applicable in a general sense, and whoever claims it is only applicable (to a select few) in the specific sense, without there being any specification by the Prophet (asws) himself, then such a one is an extremist... Some people have denied its general import, saying, "How could someone who has died be seen by a living person in this world?" And in this argument there are two dangerous falsehoods, namely 1) lack of trust or acceptance of the truthful Prophet's words, and 2) ignorance of the Power of Allah and thinking it is limited, as if he never listened to the story of the cow in surat al Baqara wherein Allah said (Q2:73): "So strike the corpse with a part of it (the dead cow's flesh); in such a way does Allah revive the dead to life..." or the story of the Prophets Ibrahim and 'Uzayr (alayhim salam) recorded in Q2:259-260. Whoever has the ability to do these things, surely has the ability to cause the vision of the Prophet (asws) during sleep to be a means towards the vision of him during wakefulness. And it is mentioned that one of the Companions – I believe Ibn 'Abbas – saw the Prophet (asws) in his sleep (after his passing asws) and recalled this hadith and kept reflecting upon it, and then came to one of the wives of the Prophet (asws) - I believe Maymuna - and told her of his dream, and she stood and brought him the Prophet's mirror. Then Ibn 'Abbas said, "so I looked in the mirror, and saw the form/picture of the Prophet (asws), and did not see any reflection for myself in it". Furthermore, it is also related that numerous Muslims from earlier (salaf) and later (khalaf) generations would see him in their sleep, and they would believe in the promise of this hadith, and would later be blessed with seeing him in their wakeful state. They would ask him about things that were bothering them, and he would direct them to the means of the solution to that matter, and it would happen exactly as he (asws) described it. Furthermore, the one who denies the possibility of this vision (during a wakeful state) has only two options open for him; either he believes in the karamat (of the Awliya'), or he denies the

karamat. If he is one of those who denies the karamat, then there is no discussion with him, because he denies something confirmed by the Sunna with inarguable proofs. And if he is of those who accept the karamat, then this is merely one type of them; for to the Awliya' are disclosed a great number of things from the higher and lower worlds. So it is not conceivable that one type (of karama) be rejected while another type be accepted."

Then Imam Suyuti listed example after example of specific Awliya and their experiences in seeing the Prophets and Angels while awake... the reader is advised to read this chapter in full for further information.

Furthermore, the Maliki Imam al-Qadi Abu Bakr ibn al-'Arabi – who was the student of Hujjat al-Islam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali – wrote in his Qanun at-Ta'wil: "The Sufis have stated that when the human achieves a certain purity of being and a disconnection from attachments...and moves toward Allah with his whole being with sincerity in constant knowledge and action, then his heart is unveiled and he is able to behold the angels and hear their words, and behold the spirits of the Prophets and hear their words. And the vision of the angels and the prophets and hearing their words is possible for the believer as a Divine grace (karama) and also for the disbeliever as a punishment."

Imam Suyuti goes on to record the words of Shaykh Akmaluddin al-Hanafi (commentator on the 'Aqida Tahawiyya), who stated in Sharh al-Mashariq in commentary on this hadith: "The meeting of two people during wakefulness and sleep occurs by virtue of a certain unity between them, which has five aspects: a total joint connection between the essences (of the two), or a shared connection between an attribute, or between a state of being (haal), or between actions, or between degrees and levels. Every connection between two things (or more) that is conceivable necessarily falls within these five, and in accordance with the intensity of the connection between the two and its weakness, they either meet frequently or not...And the mutual love between them could become strong enough that they can meet and never part, and the opposite to this is also true. When all five aspects are realized and the connection is consolidated and completed between the subject and the souls of the perfected ones from the past, then he can meet with them as he wishes."

Other scholars who wrote about and documented the possibility of seeing the Prophet (asws) while awake are: Sultan al-'Ulama 'Izz ibn Abdus-Salam in his Qawa'id al-Kubra; Ibn al-Haj al-Abdari al-Maliki in his Madkhal; al-Qadi Sharafuddin Hibatullah al-Barizi in his book "at-Tawthiq..."; 'Afif ad-Din al-Yafi'i in Rawd ar-Rayaheen, and many others. Imam Suyuti himself saw the Prophet (asws) while he was awake more than 70 times, as mentioned by Ibn 'Imad al-Hanbali in Shadharat al-Dhahab, and other biographers.

Finally, Prophet Muhammad (asws) said: "Indeed, there will be people in my nation to come after me, who will wish to gain vision of me even if it means selling their family and property."⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Muslim (#5060), Hakim in his Mustadrak (4:85), Imam Ahmad (2:417), Ibn Hibban (16:214), and others.

TOPIC:
Tawassul ⁷⁸ and Tabarruk

Allah (Most High) said: “And avidly seek the means of proximity (wasila) to Him...” (Q5:35).
⁷⁹ And He said (in Q10:2): “...and give glad tidings to the believers that they have with their Lord a truthful forerunner (qadamu sidq)...” About this verse, Imam Qurtubi wrote in his Tafsir: “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 (*tawassaluna* bi ila rabbikum).”

⁷⁸ The grammarians and scholars of language define Tawassul as “seeking proximity to and favor from someone” and Wasila as “that thru which proximity/favor is achieved from someone.” The scholars of Tafsir (see Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi, Tabari, Baghawi, etc) are also all in agreement on this definition. In this context, it refers to seeking proximity to and favor from Allah thru the means of someone. Those who are against Tawassul by means of righteous slaves begin by giving a *false* definition of Tawassul such as “setting up independent intermediaries alongside of Allah,” and all they do then is expose their ignorance of the Arabic language. The famous hadith in Bukhari (#2111, 3206) about the three people trapped in a cave, each asking Allah to move the boulder by virtue of some good deed each did, is an example of Tawassul to Allah thru righteous acts. If one is allowed to do tawassul thru acts, which are created (Q37:96), then one can do tawassul thru other creations. Tawassul thru righteous worshippers is also legitimate and allowed in Islam, for in both cases, the basis of Tawassul is the honorable rank and lofty value that the means (wasila) used (whether action or person) has with Allah, and not because the means used is considered to be an effective agent independent of Allah. So, just as the three people in the hadith did not make Shirk with their righteous actions, similarly those who make Tawassul thru righteous slaves do not consider those slaves as associates or partners next to Allah having independent effective power or influence, but base their Tawassul thru them on the lofty and honorable rank (Jah) they have with Allah. Furthermore, it is also necessary to point out that physical death does not nullify this honorable rank of the righteous worshipper with Allah, for the Anbiya’ and Awliya’ continue to have their ranks and stations with Allah after their physical death just as they did during their earthly lives, and this is something undisputed. For example, Allah says about Prophet ‘Isa (asws): “having an illustrious rank of honor (Jah) with Allah in this world and the Next, and he is from those brought near” (Q3:45). Therefore, the prohibition of Tawassul thru physically dead righteous slaves is a hollow argument, for it is based entirely on the incorrect assumption that the honorable rank is attached to biological life (so that it is no more when life ends). So in response to their claim that “the physically dead have no power to benefit or harm,” we say: 1) well, neither do the biologically living (see Q10:18, 49, 25:2-3, 34:22, 48:11), 2) Tawassul is not on the basis of their independent ability to benefit or harm anyway, but rather on the basis of their lofty rank with Allah, which stays with them forever, and 3) the Prophets, Awliya’, and martyrs are alive in their graves with a special life, as detailed later. Finally, Shaykh Abdullah ibn Siddiq al-Ghumari wrote in his ar-Radd al-Muhkam al-Matin (p. 55): “To ask Allah for the sake of (bi-haqq) someone is in reality nothing more than making Tawassul thru one of the Attributes of Allah. So the one who says “O Allah, I ask You by Your Prophet...” means “I ask You for the sake of Your love for and ennoblement of him,” and Allah’s love for and ennoblement of someone is an Attribute-of-Act (sifat fi’il), and this (Tawassul thru Divine Attributes and Acts) is permissible by consensus. The same is said concerning Tawassul thru one of the Sahaba or Awliya’, for this means Tawassul thru Allah’s love of them and honoring them in accordance with their lofty station before Him. And this is what is intended behind the act of Tawassul, even if the person making Tawassul does not explicitly mention it. For in any case it is engraved in the core of their being, and this can be seen in the fact that no one has ever asked Allah something for the sake of rebellious sinners... Seeing that Tawassul thru a creature means Tawassul thru Allah’s love of that creature, then whether that creature is biologically alive or dead makes no difference, for Allah’s love for His Awliya’ and elect worshippers is not cut off at their death, nor does it even rely on their being aware of someone making Tawassul thru them or for their sake.”

⁷⁹ Imam Ahmad (Fada’il Sahaba, 2:841) and Hafiz Khatib (1:149) recorded with a Sahih chain that Hudhayfa said: “The fortunate ones among the Sahaba know that Ibn Um ‘Abd (Ibn Mas’ud) is among the closest of means (wasila) to Allah.”

Hadiths about Tawassul

1) Anas ibn Malik narrated that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab 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 ‘Abdul-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. ‘Umar added, after making this supplication: “He (al-‘Abbas), by Allah, is the means (wasila) to Allah.”⁸⁰

Imam Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani said in commentary on this hadith (Fath al-Bari 2:496-97): “Ibn Umar said, “During this drought Umar gave a speech and in it said, ‘the Messenger of Allah (asws) used to see ‘Abbas just as a son considers his father, so follow his treatment of his uncle ‘Abbas and take him as a means (wasila) to Allah.’...In this incident we learn of the desirability (istihbab) of seeking intercession through the people of piety and righteousness and through the Prophet’s household” (end of his words).

Hafiz Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in his al-Isti‘ab (2:814) commented that ‘Umar chose 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 because the Prophet’s (asws) means is no longer available that ‘Umar used al-‘Abbas as a wasila (to Allah). This is because the one who is sought after in tawassul does not himself fulfill the need of the seeker, so that his death would prevent any future help from him. Rather, the one sought after intercedes with Allah by virtue of his rank with Him (Most High), so that Allah would fulfill that person’s need, and physical death does not abolish this rank. Furthermore, Umar’s tawassul thru al-‘Abbas is in fact tawassul thru the Prophet (asws), by virtue of al-‘Abbas’s proximity to him (asws). For the historian Zubayr ibn Bakkar in his Ansab (as quoted by Hafiz Ibn Hajar in his commentary on the hadith) narrated that al-‘Abbas then said: “O Allah! Tribulations do not descend except because of sin, and they are not removed except by repentance, and the people have turned to You thru me because of my closeness and relation to Your Prophet...” This can also be understood from Umar’s wording when he said, “by the uncle of our Prophet” instead of “by al-‘Abbas.”

Imam Bukhari relates in the previous hadith that Abdullah ibn Dinar said: “I heard Ibn Umar making a speech and quoting some verses of poetry from Abu Talib, which were:

“wa Abyada Yustasqa-l ghamamu *bi-wajhihi*, thimalul yataama ‘ismatun lil araamili/
Yaludhu bi-l Halaak min Aali Hashimi, fahum ‘indahu fi ni`matin wa fawaadili...”

“And a fair-skinned one, *through whose countenance* rain is sought from clouds, a support for the orphans and protection for the widows/

⁸⁰ Imam Bukhari in his Sahih (Kitab al-Istisqa’, hadith #954), Ibn Khuzayma (Kitab as-Salat, #1421), Hakim (Mustadrak, 3:334 Sahih), Ibn Hibban (7:110 #2861), Bayhaqi in his Dala’il (6:147) and Sunan al-Kubra (3:352), Tabarani (Mu‘jam al-Kabir, 1:72 #84 and Mu‘jam al-Awsat, 3:49 #2437), Baghawi in Sharh as-Sunna (3:409 #1165), Abu Nu‘aym (Dala’il, p. 206), Ibn ‘Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (26:355). Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr also relates it in al-Isti‘ab bi ma`rifat al-ashab, Zubayr ibn Bakkar in his Ansab, and Ibn Sa’d in his Tabaqat (4:29).

The family of Hashim see in him safety from destruction, so that they find with him great bounties and much blessings.”⁸¹

And Umar ibn Hamza said that Abu Salim said: “As I beheld the face of the Prophet (asws), I remembered these words of the poet, and behold! He did not descend from the pulpit until the clouds gave rain like water spouts!”⁸² Badruddin al-‘Ayni in his commentary (‘Umdat al-Qari 7:30) explained that this is nothing other than tawassul thru the Prophet (asws) to Allah Most High, by the blessings (baraka) of his noble face. This abolishes the claim of a few people that tawassul can only be thru the supplication of a righteous person, and not his blessed being and rank with Allah.

We would also appreciate it if those who reject tawassul thru the righteous slaves could give us the name of a Companion who responded to ‘Umar when he made tawassul thru al-‘Abbas (Allah be pleased with them) by saying, “Allah is closer to you than any other creature, you need to call on Him directly and not set up intermediaries between you and Him,” or any similar objections.

2) It is related from Malik al-Dar, ‘Umar’s treasurer, that the people suffered a drought during the khilafa of `Umar, whereupon a man (Bilal ibn al-Harith) 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 (asws) 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, who said: “O my Lord, I spare no effort except in what escapes my power!”⁸³

The legal inference here is not from the dream, or that the Companion is un-named in some of the reports. Rather, the inference from this hadith is based on the action of Umar and the other companions. The fact that Bilal came to the grave of the Prophet, called out to

⁸¹ NOTE: This has been mis-translated by Hilali and Khan, who say “and rain from the clouds is sought through the du’a of the Prophet,” whereas this is an interpolation of their own and not found in the Arabic text of the hadith, and none of the classical commentators on the Sahih, such as Imam Ibn Hajar or Imam Qastallani or Hafiz al-‘Ayni, interpreted it this way.

⁸² Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab al-Istisqa’ #953), Ibn Majah (#1262), Imam Ahmad (2:93 #5415), Bazzar (Musnad, #58), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:477), and Bayhaqi in his Dala’il (6:140-42) and Sunan (3:88).

⁸³ Bayhaqi (Dala’il, 7:47), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:482-83), Bukhari in his Tarikh al-Kabir (7:304), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in his Isti’ab (2:464), Ibn ‘Asakir (44:345, 56:489), Tabari (Tarikh, 2:509 with another chain), Ibn Abi Khaythama (2:80), and is Sahih according to Ibn Kathir (Bidaya wa Nihaya 7:91-92=7:101 and Tafsir 1:91) and Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari 2:495-96). Ibn Hajar cites the hadith in Fath al-Bari (Kitab al-Istisqa’ Ch. 3) and in his Isaba (3:484), and identifies Malik al-Dar as `Umar’s treasurer and says that the man who visited and saw the Prophet in his dream is identified as the Companion Bilal ibn al-Harith. Ibn Sa’d (Tabaqat, 5:12) also identified Malik ad-Dar and his known trustworthiness, so the claim by Albani that this hadith is weak because he was unknown is false. Also, Ibn Abi Shayba’s chain (up to Malik ad-Dar) is the exact same chain found in Sahih Bukhari (#457, 4554) and Muslim (#40, 81). Others argue for the hadith’s weakness by claiming that there is a break in the link between Abu Salih and Malik ad-Dar, but this is false because 1) Abu Salih is from (and lived in) Madinah like Malik ad-Dar, 2) Abu Salih mostly narrated from Sahaba (such as Abu Hurayra), as seen in Bukhari, Muslim, and elsewhere, 3) Abu Salih was not a concealer (mudallis), and 4) his living in the same time and place as Malik ad-Dar is enough to prove a connection in the chain between them, as Muslim outlined in the introduction to his Sahih. Finally, the argument that “Malik ad-Dar is the only one who narrates this story, and therefore it is doubtful it happened” is silly, for even the famous hadith “actions are by intentions” is narrated only thru Yahya ibn Sa’id, and yet it is so fundamental that it is considered “a third of knowledge”!

him, and asked him to ask for rain is a proof that these actions are permitted, and that the Sahaba saw nothing wrong with this, making it a “silent consensus”. ‘Umar did not tell him “tawassul thru the Prophet (asws) is forbidden after he (asws) has passed away,” or make any other similar objection. This shows clearly that – according to the understanding of the Sahaba – it is permissible to seek the Prophet (asws) for help after his passing, and to use him as an intermediary and a means (wasila) to Allah in one’s needs, as long as one is aware that it is Allah firstly and lastly Who disposes of all affairs. Furthermore, *if tawassul were an act of worship, then it would be forbidden to do tawassul thru anyone, whether alive or dead.*

It is interesting to note that in his edition of Ibn Hajar’s Fath al-Bari, the Salafi scholar Bin Baz rejects the hadith as a valid source for seeking rain through the Prophet (asws), and condemns the act of the Companion who came to the grave, calling it munkar (evil) and wasila ila al-shirk (a means to Shirk). So much for “following the Salaf”!

3) Uthman ibn Hunayf narrated that a blind man came to the Prophet (asws) and said: “Invoke Allah for me that he help me.” The Prophet said: “If you wish, I will delay this, and it would be better for you, and if you wish, I will invoke Allah for you.” He said: “Then invoke Him.” So the Prophet told him: “Go and make ablution, pray two raka’at, and then say the following: “O Allah, I am asking You and turning to You by Your Prophet (bi-nabiiyika) Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy; *O (Ya) Muhammad*, I am turning thru you to my Lord regarding my present need/I am asking my Lord with your intercession concerning the return of my sight so that He will fulfill my need; O Allah, allow him to intercede (with You) for me.”⁸⁴ The Prophet’s (asws) order here is general, unconditioned, and valid for all Muslims until the end of time, for the following reasons.

- This invocation was used after the Prophet’s passing. On the authority of Uthman ibn Hunayf’s nephew Abu Umama: “A man would come to Uthman ibn Affan for a certain need, but he wouldn’t pay attention or take care of his need. He complained of his condition to Uthman ibn Hunayf who told him: “Go and make ablution, then pray two raka’at, then say (this du’aa of the blind man), then go to Uthman again.” The man did that then came to Uthman, whose attendant took his hand, and brought him to sit with Uthman, who said, “tell me your need” and he took care of it. Then the man went to Ibn Hunayf and thanked him for talking to Uthman, but he said: “I didn’t speak to him, but I saw the Prophet when a blind man complained to him of his blindness say... (and he mentioned the above hadith).”⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Bukhari in his Tarikh al-Kabir (6:209-10), Imam Ahmad (4:138), Tirmidhi (5:569 #3502), Ibn Majah (1:441 #1375), Nasa’i (#658-660) and Ibn as-Sunni (#628) in their ‘Amal al-yowm wa-l layla, Hakim (1:313, 526-27), Bayhaqi (Dala’il, 6:166-68), Ibn Khuzayma (2:225 #1219), Tabarani (see next note), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (Musnad, #379), Dinawari (Mujalasa, #1064), Ibn ‘Asakir (6:24), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Mujab id-Da’wa, p. 85 #127), and Ibn Abi Khaythama in his Tarikh, and declared Sahih by: Suyuti (Jami’ Saghir, #1508), Munawi, Ibn Khuzayma, Tabarani, Sakhawi, Mundhiri (Targhib 1:473-76), Haythami (Majma’ 2:279), Shawkani, Ibn Hibban, Bayhaqi, Nawawi (al-Adhkar, p. 244), Ibn Hajar (Amali al-Adhkar), Hakim, Dhahabi, Tirmidhi, and others.

⁸⁵ Tabarani (M. Saghir 1:183-84, M. Kabir 9:17-19, Kitab ad-Du’a p. 320-21), Bayhaqi (Dala’il, 6:166-68), and Abu Nu’aym (Ma’rifat as-Sahaba, #4928). It is Sahih according to Tabarani, Haythami (2:179 #3668), Shawkani (Tuhfat al-Dhakhirin, p. 37), Bayhaqi, Mundhiri, and others. Some (Albani and his followers) try to refute this hadith with a number of weak arguments, namely: 1) Tahir ibn ‘Isa – the one from whom Tabarani narrates – is unknown (majhul), but this does not harm the strength of the hadith because Tabarani himself stated that it is Sahih, which means he declared every narrator of its chain trustworthy (including his own Shaykh Tahir), and

- So Uthman ibn Hunayf – the Companion who witnessed this incident and narrated this hadith – was more familiar with the Prophet’s (asws) intent, and we see here that he understood it as applicable for all times and people without any constraints or limitations, which is why he continued to use it and teach it to others after the Prophet’s (asws) passing.
- Tirmidhi, who narrated this hadith, stated in his ‘Ilal that all of the narrations contained in his Sunan are acted upon except for two hadiths, neither of which is this hadith of tawassul. Furthermore, all of the scholars of hadith and fiqh understood this hadith’s general application to all times, places, and people, and this is why they (such as Bayhaqi, Nawawi, Haythami, Mundhiri, Shawkani, etc) titled the chapter headings under which they included this hadith with titles that demonstrate this unspecified generality. In fact, this du’a of tawassul has become part of the supplication traditionally made after the salat al-haja, or “prayer of need.” This shows they all agree on the fact that it is acted upon in all situations, and had it been abrogated or conditioned in any way, they would have mentioned it...and none did.
- If this hadith was specifically and exclusively meant for the blind man, or only to be used in the presence of the Prophet (asws) during his earthly life, then he (asws) would have explained so, and notified those around him, as he did in other occasions (for example, Bukhari #5130). Otherwise, it would amount to expecting them to know by themselves what they could not know except thru revelation, which would be a clear deficiency in conveying the message.
- Ibn Abi Khaythama in his Tarikh mentioned the additional statement of the Prophet (asws) at the end of the hadith, narrated thru Hammad ibn Salama: “And if you ever have a need again, then do this (act of tawassul),” which is an explicit indication of its unconditioned applicability for all times and people. And it is an established principle in the science of hadith that the additions narrated thru trustworthy (thiqa) narrators are accepted and acted upon ⁸⁶.

also because there are others besides him who narrate this hadith. 2) Shabib ibn Sa’id – who is alone in narrating this story (of Uthman ibn ‘Affan) from Rawh ibn al-Qasim (both Shabib and Rawh are narrators in Bukhari’s Sahih) – is a Da’if narrator because of his weak memory, but this is untrue because Shabib was declared trustworthy (thiqa) by Tabarani, Hakim (1:526, Dhahabi agreeing), Ibn al-Madini, Nasa’i (Tahdhib, 4:269), al-Dhuhli, Daraqutni, Ibn Hibban, Abu Hatim, and Abu Zur’a, and none of them stipulated that his narrations be from Yunus ibn Yazid in order to be authentic (as Albani claimed). Ibn Abi Hatim considers this chain faultless (‘Ilal 2:190). Ibn ‘Adiyy said (Kamil 4:1347) that his hadith are weak only if Ibn Wahb narrates from him specifically in Egypt. Ibn Hajar also said about Shabib in his Taqrib: “his hadith are authentic if his son Ahmad narrates from him, but not if Ibn Wahb narrates from him.” This is indeed the case, because his two sons Ahmad and Isma’il narrate this same story from Shabib while in Basra, as recorded in Bayhaqi’s Dala’il, and Ahmad is a thiqa narrator in Bukhari’s Sahih; and the great Hafiz Ya’qub al-Fasawi narrates it from Ahmad, so this chain is utterly Sahih. We also see that there is no difference between his narration to his two sons in Basra (his hometown) and to Ibn Wahb in Egypt, so that in this specific case Ibn Wahb is correct, as Ibn Abi Hatim noted. 3) Shabib “contradicted” the other Huffaz who narrated this hadith when he mentioned the story, and thus it has to be false. This is a misunderstanding because according to hadith science (see Ibn Rajab’s Sharh ‘Ilal Tirmidhi p. 310), a conflicting addition is only unaccepted when all of the Huffaz narrate the same incident in the same setting with the same chain of narrators. However in this case, this doesn’t apply because there are multiple different chains of narration for this hadith, given in different settings, and the additional story does not conflict with the original hadith, but supports it. Finally, no Hafiz before Albani ever weakened this story, and since Albani himself is not a Hafiz, his words have no authority.

⁸⁶ As outlined by Ibn Salah in his Muqaddima, Nawawi in Sharh Muslim (1:32), Hafiz Khatib in his Kifayah, and many others. Also, Ibn Hibban in his Thiqaat (8:1) said about another hadith: “Hammad ibn Salama is alone in

- The Prophet (asws) told him to “go and make ablution,” meaning that he left his presence, and was not with him when he called out, “O Muhammad...” This shows that it is just the same whether tawassul is done in the presence or absence of the Prophet or Wali. Furthermore, the entire Ummah calls out to the Prophet (asws) directly during the tashahhud, when they say, “peace be upon you, O Prophet...”, and it is impossible that they would all agree upon speaking directly to “someone dead who is unable to comprehend or perceive.”
- Finally, the blind man asked the Prophet (asws) to pray for him, and instead the Prophet (asws) taught him this du’a of tawassul. So his preferring not to make du’a then and there indicates that he intended to set a general precedent for his Ummah. And had the Prophet (asws) made du’a for the blind man (which the hadith does not imply at all), then Uthman ibn Hunayf would have mentioned that, for he witnessed the event and stayed with the Prophet (asws) after the blind man left, and the Prophet (asws) would have made du’a for him like he did for others, instead of telling him to go make ablution and pray.

This important hadith of ‘Uthman ibn Hunayf shows that the Prophet (asws) continued to be sought by the Companions and Followers as a means of benefit even after he left this life. If tawassul were idolatry (shirk), or if there were any suspicion of idolatry in it, the Prophet (asws) would not have taught it to the blind man and to his community in the first place. How could the Prophet (asws) teach his companions something that could lead to shirk without notifying or explaining that to them?

And the notion that tawassul thru someone is permissible only during his lifetime, but not after his death, is unsupported by any viable foundation from the Shari’a, nor is it even applicable, for the tawassul is not through the life of the person, but through his honorable status with Allah, which is not confined to his biological life on earth, as we saw before. As for the claim by some that ‘Umar’s preference of tawassul thru ‘Abbas instead of the Prophet (asws) himself after his passing overturns the application of the hadith of the blind man, then this is ignorance of the principles of hadith, for the hadith of the blind man is marfu’ (an act of the Prophet) whereas the hadith of Umar’s tawassul thru ‘Abbas is mawquf (an act of the Companion), and the marfu’ always takes precedence over the mawquf.

4) ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar (after the Prophet’s passing away) felt a cramp in his leg, whereupon someone said to him, “Mention (udhkur) the most beloved person to you,” and Ibn Umar said: “O (Ya) Muhammad!” and was relieved of his cramp. A similar incident is recorded involving Ibn ‘Abbas.⁸⁷ They saw no problem in calling out to someone absent.

narrating this additional statement, and he is trustworthy and reliable (thiqa ma’mun), and the additions narrated thru trustworthy narrators are accepted according to us...”

⁸⁷ Recorded by Imam Bukhari with a Sahih chain in his Adab al-Mufrad (#967), and Ibn as-Sunni with many chains in his A’mal al-Yowm wa’l Layla (#168-170, 172), and recommended by Nawawi (al-Adhkar, p. 387), Shawkani (Tuhfat al-Dhakhirin, p. 206-07), Ibn Taymiyya (Kalim at-Tayyib), Sakhawi (Qawl al-Badi’), and others. For other examples of Salaf making Tawassul thru the Prophet (asws) and asking for aid (Madad), see Tabarani’s Mu’jam al-Kabir (24:433-34), Ibn Hajar’s Isaba (4:631), Tabari’s Tarikh (3:336, 3:647-48), Ibn ‘Asakir’s Tarikh (25:96, 66:161), Abu Nu’aym’s Hilya (10:343), Ibn Kathir’s Bidaya wa Nihaya (6:324, 8:193, 12:150-51, 13:188-92), Ibn Jawzi’s Sifat as-Safwa (4:282-83) and Muntadham (9:74-74), Ibn Athir’s Kamil (4:200, 5:114, 8:506), and Ibn Abi Dunya (Mujab id-Da’wa, #82).

5) The narration of al-'Utbi: "As I was sitting by the grave of the Prophet (asws) a Beduin 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 you and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Q4:64), so I have come to you asking forgiveness for my sin, seeking your intercession with my Lord." Then he recited 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 you inhabit, and in which are found purity, bounty, and munificence." Then he left, and I slept and saw the Prophet in my dream, and he said: "O Utbi, run after the Bedouin and give him glad tidings that Allah has forgiven him." ⁸⁸

6) Aws ibn Abdullah related that the people of Madina complained to A'isha of the drought 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 that, after which they were watered with such rain that vegetation grew and camels got fat. They called it the Year of Plenty." ⁸⁹ The hadith scholar and historian of Madina Imam 'Ali al-Samhudi (d. 922) confirmed the truth of Darimi's narration by saying, after citing it in his *Wafa' al-wafa'* (2:559-60): 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..." This shows without doubt that the basis of the beliefs and acts of the Sufis lies in the beliefs and acts of the pious Salaf.

7) Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud related that the Prophet (asws) said: "If one of you is alone in an empty place, and his riding mount escapes from him, then let him cry out, "O servants of Allah! Catch (my riding mount)...O servants of Allah, Catch!" (3 times) for Allah would

⁸⁸ This report is famous and is related by Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Iman* (#4178), Imam Nawawi in his *Adhkar* (p. 265-66) and his *Majmu'* (8:217), al-Qurtubi and Ibn Kathir in their tafsirs of Q4:64, Ibn Kathir's *Bidaya wa Nihaya* (1:180), Taqi ad-Din Subki in *Shifa as-Siqam* (p. 52), Ibn al-Jawzi in *Muthir al-gharam* (p. 490), Ibn 'Asakir in *Mukhtasar Tarikh Dimashq* (2:408), al-Haytami in *al-Jawhar al-Munazzam*, Ibn Najjar in his *Akhbar al-Madina* (p. 147), and by many others. Even if it is not Sahih, none of the many scholars of the Four Schools have rejected it. It also supports the practice of visiting the Prophet (asws) in his grave. Al-Samhudi, after mentioning this story of 'Utbi, also mentioned that Imam 'Ali himself narrated a similar story (*Wafa' al-Wafa'*, 4:1361-62).

⁸⁹ Imam Darimi in Ch. 15 to the Introduction of his *Sunan* (1:43 #92) entitled "Allah's generosity to His Prophet after his passing." Hadith Hasan, and it is close to being Sahih because all of its narrators are found in *Sahih Bukhari* (#262, 4481, 4672-73) and *Muslim* (#768, 2862) except one ('Amr ibn Malik an-Nukri), and he is trustworthy according to Dhahabi (*Mizan* 3:286 and *Mughni* 2:489) and Ibn Hibban (*Thiqat* 7:288) and others (such as Mundhiri and Haythami). As for what Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal said about him ("it is as if my father weakened him"), then this cannot be a conclusive basis for any claim of his weakness (see *Muqadimat Fath al-Bari* p. 397), and furthermore it is not explained. Albani tries to also weaken this hadith by pointing out that the memory of Abu Nu'man (whom Darimi narrates from) deteriorated at the end of his life, but this in fact does not matter because 1) both Bukhari and Muslim recorded hadiths from him, which must have been before his memory deteriorated, and so whatever Darimi records from him must have been even earlier, because Darimi is one of the Shaykhs of Bukhari and Muslim (as concluded by Ibn Salah in his *Muqaddima* p. 426 and others), and 2) Daraqutni stated (as quoted by Dhahabi in his *Mizan* 4:8, also see his *Kashif* 3:79) that "after his memory deteriorated he did not transmit any more hadiths to anyone, and he is *thiqa*." Therefore, this hadith is either Hasan or Sahih. It is also recorded by Ibrahim al-Harbi in "Gharib al-Hadith."

have a present (unseen servant) there who will catch hold of it.”⁹⁰ And in a similar narration, he said: “If one of you becomes lost or if you need help, and you are in a place that has no other humans, then call out, “O servants of Allah, help me! (aghithuni, a’inuni)” three times, for indeed Allah has servants who are unseen.”⁹¹ For the Prophet (asws) also said, “Allah has creatures whom He created for the fulfillment of the needs of people, whom the people go to and seek out for their needs, and they are the secure (on Judgment Day) from the Wrath of Allah.”⁹²

This is “implemented” in the hadith recorded by Bukhari in his Sahih (#3114) that Hajar, when she was running in search of water between Safa and Marwa, heard a voice and said: “O you whose voice you have made me hear! If there is a ghawth (helper) with you (then help me)!” and an angel appeared at the spring of Zamzam. Even clearer than this is the famous hadith of intercession (shafa’a) in Bukhari and Muslim, in which the people on the Day of Judgment will first go to Adam, then Nuh, then Ibrahim, and so on, until they come to the Prophet Muhammad (upon all of them be blessings and peace), and the hadith explicitly states, “they will run to them and seek their help (istaghatu bihim).”⁹³ When one considers this hadith, one notices that the people flee to these Prophets (upon them be peace) for no other reason except their lofty status (Jah) and rank with Allah, and this fact is undeniable. Indeed, Allah says about certain of His righteous servants, “And he was of esteemed status (Wajih) in the sight of Allah” (Q33:69), and “...of exalted status (Wajih) in this world and the Next, and among those brought near” (Q3:45), and other similar examples.

Furthermore, the Prophet (asws) did not state or imply that this was shirk or kufr because they “sought help from other than Allah Himself.” And if it is not considered shirk/kufr then, then it cannot be considered shirk/kufr in this world either,⁹⁴ and there is no

⁹⁰ Recorded by Tabarani (Kabir, 10:267 #10518), Ibn as-Sunni (#508), Abu Ya’la (9:177 #5269), and Daylami (Firdaws, 1:401 #1317). Hadith Da’if. See also al-Munawi’s Fayd al-Qadir (1:307), Haythami’s Majma’ (10:132 #17105), and Ibn Hajar’s Matalib ‘Aliya (4:25).

⁹¹ Recorded by Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (17:117) from ‘Utba, and from Ibn ‘Abbas by Ibn Abi Shayba (Musannaf, 7:132), Bazzar (Zawa’id 4:34), Imam Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab (1:183 #167 and 6:128 #7697), and others. Hafiz Ibn Hajar said (Sharh Ibn ‘Allan 5:151) it is “hadith Hasan”, and Haythami said the narrators of Bazzar’s chain are trustworthy (Majma’ Zawa’id, 10:132 #17104). See also Bayhaqi’s Sunan al-Kubra (3:52) and Hakim’s Mustadrak (1:320), where they explain that if a Da’if hadith is implemented by the righteous scholars (as is the case in the previous narration of Ibn Mas’ud), then it strengthens the status and authenticity of the hadith.

⁹² Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (#3334) and Makarim al-Akhlaq (#82) from Ibn ‘Umar, and Suyuti said it is Hasan (Jami’ Saghir, #2350). Also recorded by Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 3:225), Abu’l Shaykh in K. al-Thawab from Imam ‘Ali, and ad-Dinawari in his Mujalasa (#3482) from Abu Hurayra. These chains strengthen each other and bring it up to the level of “Hasan li-ghayrihi”.

⁹³ See Bukhari’s Sahih (Kitab az-Zakat, #1381) and Fath al-Bari (3:338, 11:441), Ahmad’s Musnad (3:178), Tabarani’s Awsat (8:310-11 #8725), Tahawi (Mushkil Athar), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 3:269), Daylami’s Firdaws (2:529), and Tabari (Tafsir, 15:146). The Hadith al-Shafa’a in general is mass-transmitted (mutawatir) and recorded by many hadith collectors, and is one of the fundamental beliefs of Ahl as-Sunna wa’l Jama’a.

⁹⁴ Tabarani (M. Kabir, 20:365) and Ahmad (3:500) recorded that a boy came to the Prophet (asws) and asked him to include him in his intercession on the Day of Qiyama, and the Prophet (asws) agreed. This hadith is Sahih according to Hafiz Haythami (Majma’ 10:369 and #3503) and Hafiz ‘Iraqi (see Munawi’s Fayd al-Qadir 5:180). For other examples see Tayalisi (#1091), Bayhaqi (Dala’il, 7:87), Hakim (1:66-67 Sahih), Tabarani (Awsat, #1395), and more. As for the hadith in which he (asws) said, “O Fatima! Save yourself from the Fire, because I have no ability to benefit or harm you”, Ibn Hibban (2:412) commented, “this hadith is abrogated because it would imply he intercedes for no one, whereas the intercession was (revealed) later in Madina,” and he (asws) said this to Fatima in the very beginning of his da’wa when Allah ordered him to warn his family (see Q26:214). It is also abrogated by two other Sahih hadiths: 1) “Every blood-tie (sabab) and relation (nasab) is cut off on

difference in the matter of shirk between this world and the next. And as for those who claim there is, then let them bring a concrete proof from the Shari'a stating such. As for the famous hadith of Ibn 'Abbas (Nawawi's Forty, #19), in which the Prophet (asws) advises him, "O youth, if you ask then ask Allah, and if you seek help then seek help from Allah," it does not contradict this hadith of calling out to someone invisible for help (which also happens to be related by Ibn 'Abbas), and does not constitute a proof against it, unless we take it according to its apparent literal meaning. If we do, then it would mean we should not ask anyone for absolutely anything, no matter how paltry or small (like a drink of water), and this is of course illogical and against common experience. So it must be specified and restricted to apply to only those things that are impossible except for Allah, such as forgiveness of sins. Furthermore, this hadith indicates the prohibition of asking other than Allah, whereas in Tawassul, the person asks Allah for the sake of His Prophet or Wali, and between the two is a big difference. Finally, Hafiz Ibn Rajab said that hadith is "Hasan li-ghayrihi," meaning its authenticity is not as strong as this hadith of calling out someone invisible for help.

From this hadith we learn that 1) asking help from someone other than Allah does not constitute disbelief (kufr), and 2) it is permissible to call out to the invisible or the absent for help in one's needs, as long as one remains cognizant that Allah is the ultimate source of all help given through His creatures.

Many scholars mentioned this authentic hadith in their books, such as Ibn al-Qayyim in his *al-Wabil as-Sayyib* (p. 185) and Imam Nawawi in his *Kitab al-Adhkar* (p. 288). And Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali in his *al-Adab al-Shar'iyya*, after mentioning this hadith, recorded that Abdullah (the son of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal) stated that he heard his father say, "I made five pilgrimages, and in one of them I went walking and lost my way. So I began saying, "O servants of Allah! Direct us to the path," and I repeated that until I found my path again." Similarly, Imam Nawawi and Hafiz Tabarani (17:117), after mentioning this hadith, stated that they themselves used it and it worked for them. Imam Shawkani said about these hadiths in *Tuhfat adh-Dhakhirin* (p. 155-156): "In the hadith there is evidence that it is permissible to ask help from those one does not see among the servants of Allah, whether angels or good jinn, and there is nothing wrong in doing it; just as it is permissible for someone to seek the help of humans if his mount becomes unmanageable or runs loose."

8) The Prophet said on the authority of Anas ibn Malik: "O Allah, grant forgiveness to my mother Fatima bint Asad (the wife of Abu Talib), and make vast for her the place of her going by the right (haqq) of Your Prophet and of those Prophets who came before me."⁹⁵ This is explicit tawassul thru the Prophets, and this shows there is no difference between

Qiyama except my blood-tie and relation", which is recorded by Tabarani (M. Kabir 3:44-45, 20:25-27, M. Awsat 4:257, 6:357), Diya' (1:197-98), Hakim (3:142), Imam Ahmad (4:323, 332), Bayhaqi (Sunan, 7:63-64), and many others, and is Sahih according to Haythami (Majma', 4:271-72, 9:173), Diya', Hakim, Suyuti (Jami' Saghir, #6309), and Busiri (Ithaf as-Sada, 9:48 #7069). This is the exact and only reason why Umar wanted to marry Um Kulthum, the young daughter of 'Ali. 2) "What is wrong with some people who claim the blood-ties of the Messenger will not benefit his people on Qiyama? By Allah, my blood-ties remain connected in this life and the Next..." which is recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:62), Hakim (4:74-75 Sahih), Abu Ya'la (#1238), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 3:111, 152-53), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#984), and others, and it is Hasan according to Haythami (Majma', 10:364).

⁹⁵ Recorded by Tabarani (Kabir, 24:351 and Awsat, 1:67-68) and Abu Nu'aym in his *Hilya* (3:121). Ibn Abd al-Barr narrates a similar hadith on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas. Haythami said (Majma' 9:257): "Its chain of

the living and the dead in the context of tawassul. Also, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri relates that the Prophet 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 to You that my going forth be not out of pride or vanity..."⁹⁶ This hadith constitutes tawassul through the generality of Muslims, both the living and the dead. Also, as-Sindi (the commentator of Ibn Majah) wrote about the words "by the right (haqq) of those who ask You": "Meaning, that I am using them as a means to You so that my need is fulfilled and my request is granted, because of the nobility and honor these people ('those who ask') have with You..." There is no doubt that the haqq of the righteous does not annihilate at death, but rather becomes confirmed, for the Hereafter is the place of Allah's fulfillment of the rights (haqq) of His pious worshippers, as an act of His ennoblement of and love for them. Finally, Tabarani (M Kabir, 2:109) and Imam Ahmad (Fada'il as-Sahaba, #1721) both recorded with Sahih chains that Abdullah ibn Ja'far used to request from Imam 'Ali certain things "by the right and rank (haqq) of Ja'far," and Imam 'Ali would comply.

9) The Prophet (asws) said: "There will come a time to the people when a group of troops will go out and someone will say, "Is there any among you who accompanied Muhammad (asws), so that you may seek victory thru them, and become (by that) victorious?" and they will answer, "No." Then they will ask, "then one who accompanied his companion?" And if they hear about such a one, they would surely go to him, even if they have to cross the sea..." In another narration: "is there one among you who accompanied Muhammad

narrators contains Rawh ibn Salah whom Ibn Hibban (Thiqat 8:244) and Hakim (in Su'alat as-Sajazi) declared trustworthy (thiqa) although there is slight weakness in him, and the rest of its narrators are men of the Sahih". Ya'qub al-Fasawi (Ma'rifa wa Tarikh 3:406) also declared Rawh thiqa. As for those who declared him weak, such as Daraqutni and Ibn Makula, they did not provide a reason or explanation for that, and therefore his being declared trustworthy takes precedence over those who declared him weak, according to the rules of hadith science (see Hadi as-Sari, p. 437). Furthermore, Ibn 'Adiyy weakens him because "disclaimed (munkar) reports were narrated thru him," but 1) the specific narrations he lists are not the fault of Rawh but of the one who narrates from him (Hadi, p. 429), and 2) this is not enough to reject his hadiths, because for someone's hadiths to be rejected, he has to report lies or disclaimed reports with enough frequency until that becomes his known attribute. Finally, al-Shirazi in his "Alqab" records this with another chain not having Rawh. Hadith Hasan.⁹⁶ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:21), Ibn Majah (#770), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:29), Ibn Khuzayma in his Kitab at-Tawhid (p. 17-18), Tabarani (K. ad-Du'a, p. 149), Ibn as-Sunni in his 'Amal al-Yowm wal-Layla (#84-85), Bayhaqi (K. ad-Da'awat, p. 47 #65), Ibn Bishran (Amali, #753), Ahmad ibn Mani', and Ibn Ja'd (Musnad, p. 299 #2031-32). Hafiz 'Iraqi (Takhrij al-Ihya, 1:291), Ibn Hajar (Amali al-Adhkar, 1:271-73), Dimiyati, Mundhiri and his Shaykh al-Maqdisi (Targhib 2:458-59), and others state it is Hadith Hasan. Hafiz Busiri (Misbah az-Zujaja 1:99) stated that Ibn Khuzayma also recorded it in his Sahih collection (and thus Sahih according to him). All of the narrators in Ahmad's chain are men of Muslim's Sahih (see #686, 702, 999, 1686) except for 'Atiyah al-'Awfi, and this same chain is considered "hasan sahih" according to Tirmidhi (#2457, 2481). 'Atiyah was also declared Saduq (and thus Hasan) by Ibn Sa'd (Tabaqat 6:304), Ibn Shahin (Thiqat p. 172), Bazzar, Yahya ibn Ma'in, and Yahya al-Qattan (see Nash ar-Rayah 4:68), whereas those who weakened him (such as Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Sufyan Thawri, Ibn Hibban) did so because of his "concealing" (tadlis), Shi'ism, or his making mistakes. As for his supposed tadlis, it is only based on a report narrated by a liar and forger (Ibn Sa'ib al-Kalbi), making it an unfounded and unjust claim (as concluded by Hafiz Ibn Rajab in his Sharh 'Ilal at-Tirmidhi p. 471). Furthermore, in Ibn Bishran's narration 'Atiyah specifically stated: "Haddathani Abu Sa'id al-Khudri" (Abu Sa'id al-Khudri narrated to me...), which means this objection is not relevant to this hadith. As for his Shi'ism, it does not harm his trustworthiness, and this hadith has nothing in support of Shi'ism, and Bukhari and Muslim both accepted hadiths related thru Shi'i narrators (such as Abdur-Razzaq). As for his errors, even the best narrators are not immune from them, and none of those who weakened him mentioned any specific examples except Ibn 'Adiyy (Kamil 5:2007), and in this specific example, he was actually correct! In any case, his unrecorded errors would bring him down from the rank of "Sahih" to "Hasan." Therefore, his narrations are Hasan, and those who graded this hadith as Hasan – such as Ibn Hajar and 'Iraqi – are correct.

(asws)?” and they will answer yes. So they will seek out that person and find him, and seek victory thru him, and victory will be given to them.⁹⁷

This authentic hadith contains clear proof of the desirability of seeking aid and victory from Allah thru the blessed beings of the righteous, and not simply their supplications. In this specific case, tawassul was made thru them by virtue of their proximity and connection to the Prophet (asws), which was the source of their blessings. It is similar to how the Bani Isra'il used to make tawassul thru the Prophet (asws) – before his coming – to Allah, to grant them victory over the kuffar because of him (asws), as stated in the Tafsir of Q2:89.

10) Finally, Abu Bakr al-Marwazi, one of the close companions of Imam Ahmad, narrated in his *Manasik* that Imam Ahmad preferred that every single supplication contain a tawassul thru the Prophet (asws), as found in the hadith of the blind man (see #3 above).⁹⁸ How could this great Imam of the Salaf recommend it, let alone approve of it, if it is blatant shirk as some want us to believe?

As for Imam Shawkani, he declared that Tawassul through the Prophets and Awliya' is permissible in his book "Tuhfat adh-Dhakirin," in which he devoted a whole chapter on the topic. He said in it: "In this hadith (related above) there is proof of the permissibility of Tawassul through the Prophet to Allah, with the concomitant belief that the actual doer and effective Agent is Allah Most High..." Even Ibn Taymiyya, who throughout his life wrote against Tawassul, changed his mind at the end of his life and agreed that it is permissible.⁹⁹ Other top scholars among the four madhhabs who declared tawassul thru the righteous to be permissible include: (Hanafi): Shurunbulali in *Nur al-Idah*, Tahtawi in his *Hashiya Maraqqi al-Falah*, Ibn Nujaym in his *Bahr ar-Ra'iq*, Ibn 'Abidin in *Hashiya Radd al-Muhtar*; (Maliki): Hattab and Khurashi in their commentaries on *Mukhtasar Khalil*, Sawi in *Hashiya Sharh Saghir*, Qastallani in his *Mawahib*, Ibn al-Hajj in his *Madkhal*; (Shafi'i): Subki in his *Shifa' as-Siqam*, Zakariya Ansari in *Fath al-Wahhab*, Ramli in his *Fatawa*, Nawawi in his *Majmu' and Adhkar*; (Hanbali): Ibn Qudama in his *Mughni*, Buhuti in *Kashaf al-Qina'*, Ibn Muflih in his *Mubdi' and Kitab al-Furu'*; and numerous¹⁰⁰ others.

Some people, nonetheless, in following the way of the Khawarij, object to the validity of tawassul by repeating Qur'anic verses such as: "And those who have taken protectors other than Him say, 'we only worship them so that they may bring us closer to Allah'..." (Q39:3); and "So do not call upon any other god with Allah, lest you be among the punished" (Q26:213); and "Say to them: 'Call out to those whom you imagine (have powers) beside Him, for they do not possess any power to remove affliction from you..." (Q17:56); and so on. First of all, this is a hollow argument, because these verses were revealed in the context

⁹⁷ Recorded by Abu Ya'la (4:132, 200) from Jabir, and it is Sahih according to Haythami (*Majma'*, 10:18) and Ibn Hajar (*Matalib*, 4:337). All of its narrators are men of Muslim's Sahih (#1264, 4706, 5041). It is also recorded by Bukhari (#2682) and Humaydi (#760) from Abu Sa'id with similar wording.

⁹⁸ Also recorded by Ala' ad-Din al-Mardawi in his book *al-Insaf fi Ma'rifat al-Rajih min al-Khilaf* (2:456), in which he said, "The correct position of the Hanbali madhhab is that it is permissible in one's supplications to use a righteous person (Salih) as one's means (wasila), and it is said that it is recommended and desirable to do so."

⁹⁹ Documented by: Ibn Kathir (*Bidaya wa Nihaya* 14:45), Ibn Rajab (*Dhayl Tabaqat al-Hanabila* 4:515), and others.

¹⁰⁰ In fact, Mahmud Subayh, in his book *The grave offenses Ibn Taymiyya made in relation to the Prophet (asws) and his household* (2003 Cairo ed. pp. 330-44), provided a detailed list of over 160 scholars of Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, History, and Language who made Tawassul to Allah thru the Prophet Muhammad (asws) and his family.

of the pagan idolaters, and not Muslims who believe in the Oneness of Allah and who face our Qibla in salat. Indeed, this act of taking the verses relating specifically to the idolaters and applying them to the believers is the very same dangerous innovation which the Khawarij were adept in, and because of which the Prophet (asws) and his companions considered them the worst of people.¹⁰¹ This reasoning is incorrect for a number of reasons.

1) The literal meaning of shirk differs from the meaning of tawassul. Shirk means to believe there is a partner with Allah in His Divinity (uluhiyya). As for tawassul, it means “taqarrub” (to come close), and wasila is that thru which proximity is sought. Allah said, “O you who believe, fear Allah and seek the wasila to Him” (Q5:35), and He (Most High) would not tell the believers to seek wasila to Him if it was shirk. 2) The shirk which Allah in the Qur’an blamed the mushrikin for was their worship of the angels or prophets based on their belief that they are partners and co-sharers with Allah in His Divinity, and that they have independent ability to effect things alongside of Allah, which is why we find Allah confirming His sole Oneness and authority/domination over everything when speaking against and correcting them. The Muslim who makes tawassul thru a Prophet or Wali or Scholar does not worship them – as the verses state – and never believes that they themselves (independently) can benefit or harm him. Nor does he depend upon them aside from Allah or supplicate them in addition to Allah...so these verses are irrelevant and apply only to those who lack faith in the ‘Aqida of the people of our Qibla. 3) If we extend and generalize the verses that censure the worshippers of idols to include the people of tawassul, then it must be in only one of two ways, either literally or figuratively. As for literally, we saw why this is wrong in #1 above, for the literal meaning of shirk differs from the literal meaning of tawassul. As for figuratively applying to them, we have seen in #2 that these verses are already used in their literal sense. Therefore, they cannot be used at the same time in their figurative sense, because one of the principles of Usul (as detailed in the books of Usul by Shawkani and others) is that texts cannot be used literally and figuratively at the same time, but rather one or the other, for they are mutually exclusive. 4) Allah curses those who “change/distort words from their context” (Q4:46, 5:13, 41). 5) As we saw above, the Prophet (asws) taught tawassul to the blind man, did it himself, and his companions did it during his earthly life and after his passing. It is impossible that he (asws) would teach his companions shirk, or do it himself, or that his companions after him would accept it and perform it, whereas none of them understood it as shirk or considered those verses relevant in any way; and it is from these we learn our religion.

¹⁰¹ Imam Bukhari recorded the statement of Ibn Umar to the effect that the Khawarij are the worst of the creatures because they take the verses revealed about the Kuffar and apply them to the believers, in his Sahih (Kitab Istibat al-Murtaddin, chapter on ‘killing the khawarij and mulhideen after establishing the proof against them’) in ta’liq form. Similarly, Ibn ‘Abbas said: “Do not be as the khawarij, who interpret verses to apply them to the people of the Qibla whereas they were revealed concerning the people of the Book and the pagans, lacking knowledge of their meanings, so that they allowed the spilling of (their) blood and the theft of wealth, and claimed that the people of the Sunna were misguided. So you must have knowledge of what the Qur’an came down with.” In addition, Imam Ibn Hajar in his Fath al-Bari, in commenting on the above statement of Ibn Umar, stated that numerous hadiths were related with the same meaning, recorded by Muslim (from ‘Ali and Abu Dharr), Imam Ahmad (from Anas and Abu Sa’id), Bazzar (from A’isha), Tabarani (Abu Umama), Ibn Abi Shayba (from Abu Hurayra), and others. Finally, Abu Sufyan asked Jabir: “Did you (plural) used to call anyone from the people of the Qibla a Kafir?” and Jabir answered “No!” “Did you used to call any of them Mushrik?” “No, may Allah protect us!” (Tabarani: M. Awsat 7:230, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr: Tamhid 17:21, Abu Ya’la: Musnad 4:207 Sahih).

Multiplying and Dividing the Oneness of Allah

Perhaps one of the most dangerous, if not the ultimate, of innovations ever to strike Islam is Ibn Taymiyya's invention¹⁰² of "multiple tawhids", namely: 1) Tawhid al-Rububiyah (Oneness of Lordship and Control); 2) Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah (Oneness in Worship of His Divinity); and some add 3) Tawhid al-Asma' wa'l Sifat (Oneness of His Names and Attributes). On the basis of this innovation, he and his followers concluded that the majority of Muslims are actually non-believers and idolatrous polytheists, because everyone – believer and idolater alike – shares in the belief of Tawhid Rububiyah, and only the true Muslims have the additional other two. The modern-day neo-kharijis who sympathize with this innovation uphold it as the key to differentiating and judging between every Muslim to determine whether he is on the path (manhaj) that will end up taking him to Paradise or Hell, and they are mistaken because of the following:

- If such a division of Tawhid was essential to have the correct 'Aqida and understanding, why do we not see these terms/concepts in the Qur'an, Hadith, or statements from the Salaf prior to their inventor, Ibn Taymiyya? In every way one looks at it, these terms and concepts are a true blameworthy innovation. Neither Allah, nor His Messengers, nor any believing soul prior to Ibn Taymiyya ever said that Tawhid consists of two or three parts, or that "whoever does not know Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah, his knowledge of Tawhid al-Rububiyah is not taken into account, because the idolaters (mushrikin) also had such knowledge." If "every innovation leads to Hell," then this dangerous innovation puts nearly everyone in Hell!
- When the Prophet (asws) sent some of his Sahaba to different areas to invite the people to the Din of Islam (such as Mu'adh to Yemen), he did not tell them to "call the people to Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah after confirming their Tawhid al-Rububiyah," but simply to witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad (asws) is His Messenger, and to repudiate idol worship (see also Q16:36)
- The concept and belief of shirk is the polar opposite of the concept and belief of tawhid, so how is it that the belief of the people of shirk can be even called a "tawhid," the Tawhid of Rububiyah? If what the mushrikun believe in should be called a Tawhid, then this Tawhid (which then becomes meaningless) should not be made a necessary component of this "trinity of tawhids" (three and one at the same time), and we should only suffice with and concern ourselves with Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah wa'l Asma. Is this not an insult to the concept of Tawhid?
- Furthermore, do the idolaters actually believe in Tawhid al-Rububiyah, that Allah is the Creator of everything and has complete and sole control over all things, according to this faulty understanding and innovation of Ibn Taymiyya? The Qur'an provides ample evidence to the contrary. For example: 1) Prophet Yusuf (asws) asks, "Which is better – multiple lords (Arbab, plural of Rabb) or Allah, the One, the Dominating?" (Q12:39). Meaning, they believed in multiple Rabb's, not one Rabb (Tawhid al-Rububiyah) as Ibn Taymiyya claimed. And he (asws) emphasized this by describing Allah as "One, Dominating" because they believed in more than one god, each having independent control over some dominion. And in the following verse, he describes both the "tawhid of lordship" and the "tawhid of worship" as one and

¹⁰² See, for example, his Fatawa (1:219, 2:275), Minhaj as-Sunna (2:62), and many other books and letters of his.

the same thing: “Indeed, the authority belongs wholly to Allah, He has commanded you to worship only Him...” (Q12:40). They believed other gods also had independent authority and control alongside of Allah, and therefore worshipped other than Him in addition...meaning they had neither Tawhid al-Rububiyah nor Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah, which are inseparable. 2) Allah asks the Prophet (asws) to make an oath with the People of the Book that “we shall not take other lords (Arbab) aside from Allah...” (Q3:64). Also: “He would never order you to take the angels and the prophets as lords (Arbab); would he command you to disbelieve after you have believed?” (Q3:80). These examples are also clear that the Kuffar did not have Tawhid al-Rububiyah, but believed in multiple lords (Arbab). 3) Allah describes the unbelievers and says, “yet they disbelieve in the All-Merciful (ar-Rahman); say: ‘He is my Lord, there is no god but He’” (Q13:30). As for the unbelievers, they did not acknowledge ar-Rahman as their Rabb. He also speaks of “those who *disbelieve in their Lord*” (Q6:1, 14:18, 67:6), meaning they had no Tawhid al-Rububiyah. 4) Allah says, “Say: Consider this. If Allah were to take away your hearing and vision, and seal your hearts, which other god (Ilah) aside from Allah would be able to bring them back to you...” (Q6:46). In other words, their belief that others have authority and control aside from Allah is challenged. Notice also that He used the term “Ilah” in connection with the concept of Tawhid al-Rububiyah, meaning that Tawhid al-Rububiyah and Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah are one and the same, inseparable, in contrast to Ibn Taymiyya’s view, and that it should be called what it simply is: Tawhid!. 5) Allah says, “They think about Allah that which is not the truth, the thinking of the Jahiliyya, when they say ‘do we have any control over the matter?’ Say: ‘the matter is entirely in His control’...they say, ‘If we had any control, we would not have died here’” (Q3:154), and “O you who believe! Do not be like the Kafirin, who say, ‘...if they were with us, they would not have died or perished,’ and Allah is the Giver of life and death” (Q3:156). In other words, the thinking and belief of the Kafir – from the Jahiliyya – is that other than Allah also has control over things, in contrast to the believer who believes Allah has sole control and power over all things. 6) Allah reported Fir’awn as saying, “I am your Lord (Rabb) Most High!” (Q79:24), and “I know of no other God (Ilah) for you all besides me” (Q28:38, cf. 40:37). He also called Musa (asws) crazy when he (asws) described who the “Lord of the Worlds” was, and threatened him if he (asws) acknowledged any God besides him (Q26:23-29). Does this sound like someone who believes in Tawhid al-Rububiyah? Also, Allah used Rabb and Ilah in the same context with the same meaning. Since there is no difference between the two, then there is no difference between Tawhid al-Rububiyah and Uluhiyyah, and they are one and inseparable. 7) Allah said: “Do you not see the one who argued with Ibrahim about his Lord?” (Q2:258). Well did he (Nimrud) not already believe in Tawhid al-Rububiyah? Apparently not, because he also claimed the power to give life and death. 8) The unbelievers said to Hud (asws): “We only say that some of our gods may have smitten you with evil...” (Q11:54). In other words, they believed their idols had the power to harm and benefit, and thus did not have Tawhid Rububiyah. In all of the above, without touching yet the concept of the “oneness of worship” (Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah), we have already seen a fundamental difference between the believers and non-believers in the concept of “oneness of lordship and control” (Tawhid al-Rububiyah). It is on the foundation of their belief that others share in His Lordship that they built their conviction that those whom

they took as other lords besides Him also deserve worship. Therefore, the non-believers do not believe in any “Tawhid al-Rububiyah” or any other “Tawhid”.

- Those who object will say that these terms – even if not found “explicitly” in the Qur’an or Hadith or any source of Islam – are simply convenient terms helpful in organizing and understanding the concept of Tawhid in Islam, and that we can find their “meanings” in the sources of Islam. Firstly, if this is the case, then they should be prepared to accept “Tasawwuf” as part of Islam, because even if the term itself is not explicitly mentioned, its meaning is easily found in the sources of Islam... otherwise, it would be hypocritical. Secondly, the conclusions of Ibn Taymiyya and his followers have effectively taken this “helpful classification system” away from a harmless means of understanding ‘Aqida, into a harmful and dangerous excuse of accusing Muslims who believe in Allah’s Oneness and testify with the two Shahada’s of nonetheless still being idolaters on the way (manhaj) of the people of Hell. They end up, just like the khawarij before them, misusing such verses as “And most of them believe not in Allah except they associate partners with Him” (Q12:106), applying it to the people of our Qibla, claiming that “they believe in Tawhid al-Rububiyah but not in Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah, and therefore they are still idolaters,” and other similar dangerous nonsense. Whereas the understanding of all Muslims from the time of the Prophet (asws) onward was that this verse and others like it meant that the idolaters believed that others shared in the Divine Qualities of Allah, and believed in partners alongside of Him also having power and control and authority, which lead to them worshipping those partners too.

Tabarruk (Seeking blessings through the Righteous and their relics)

Hafiz Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari 5:342) wrote: “Among the benefits gained (in the story of ‘Urwa ibn Mas’ud) is the extreme veneration and reverence which the Sahaba had for the Prophet (asws)... and their seeking blessings thru his relics and traces (athar).” In this there is no worship of the righteous involved, and no Muslim who seeks blessings thru the righteous believes that the blessing originates from the righteous person, but with Allah Himself. Some authentic hadiths to prove this are as follows:

1) Asma’ bint Abi Bakr said: “This is the cloak (Jubba) of the Prophet (asws), which was kept with A’isha until she passed away. And when she passed away, it came under my possession. The Prophet used to wear it, so we wash it and use the water to heal the sick because of its blessing” (Muslim #3855, Ahmad 6:347-48, 354-55). Imam Nawawi commented on this hadith (Sharh Muslim: Book 37, Ch. 2), saying: “wa fi hadha-l hadith daleel ‘ala istihbab at-tabarruk bi-Athar as-Saliheen wa Thiyabihim”, meaning in English: In this hadith, there is proof/evidence of the desirability of seeking blessings through the relics of the righteous people and their clothes.”

2) ‘Uthman 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 would look into the silver bottle: I saw some reddish hairs.”¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Recorded by Imam Bukhari in his Sahih (Kitab al-Libas, #5446).

Hafiz Ibn Hajar said (Fath al-Bari, 10:353): “They used to call the silver bottle in which the hair of the Prophet was kept juljul and that bottle was in the home of Umm Salama.” Hafiz Badr ad-Din al-Ayni (‘Umdat al-Qari, 18:79) said: “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 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 juljul.”

3) In the battle of Yarmuk, Khalid ibn Walid lost his qalansuwa (headcover) and ordered they look for it. They could not find it but he insisted until they found it, and it was old and tattered. Khalid said, “The Prophet (asws) had his hair shaved (after Hajj) and the people rushed to get it but I was first before them to get his forelock, which I then placed within this headcover. Since then I never went into battle with it except I was granted victory.”¹⁰⁴

4) Mahmud ibn Rabi’ related that the Companions would compete for whoever would get the remnant of the Prophet’s ablution water in order to put it on their faces and bodies.¹⁰⁵ Imam Nawawi in Sharh Sahih Muslim said: “In these narrations is evidence for seeking blessings with the relics of the righteous” (fi-hi it-tabarruk bi athar as-salihin).

5) 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 of us shall heal our sick with our Lord’s permission.”¹⁰⁶ Nawawi said (in Sharh 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.” Imam 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: “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 (Fath, 10:255-56): “Protective invocations – those recited and those hung upon one (‘aza’im) – have wondrous effects, the true nature of which boggles the mind.”

6) ‘Utban ibn Malik was one of the Companions of the battle of Badr. After he became blind he said to the Prophet (asws): “I would like you to pray in my house so that I can pray where you prayed.” The Prophet (asws) went to his house and asked where exactly he would like him to pray. He indicated a spot to him and the Prophet (asws) prayed there.¹⁰⁷ The

¹⁰⁴ Recorded by Hakim (Mustadrak, 3:299), Tabarani (M. Kabir, #3804), Abu Ya’la (13:138 #7183), and Abu Nu’aym in Dala’il (p. 159). It is Sahih according to Hafiz Busiri (Ithaf as-Sada, 9:249 #7668). See Ibn Hajar’s Isaba fi Tamyiz as-Sahaba (2:254) and Fath al-Bari (7:101), and Dhahabi’s Siyar A’lam an-Nubala (1:374-75, 16:130).

¹⁰⁵ Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab al-Wudu’ #181-82, and #471, #3302), Muslim (#778-79), and many others.

¹⁰⁶ Recorded by Bukhari (#5304-05), Muslim (#4069), Imam Ahmad (#23476), and many others.

¹⁰⁷ Bukhari (#406-07, 627, 645, 795, 1113), Muslim (#48, 1053), Imam Malik (#377), and many others. Hafiz Ibn Hajar (Isaba fi Tamyiz as-Sahaba, 4:424) stated that Zubayr ibn Bakkar recorded in Akhbar al-Madina (also Ruyani 2:230 #1106) that the Prophet (asws) entered the home of Sahl ibn Sa’d and sat in the middle of the house, and afterwards Sahl and his wife used to take that exact place as a place for prayer. Um Sulaym also

version in Muslim has: I ('Utban) sent for the Prophet the message: "Come and lay for me a place for worship (khutt li masjidan)," and Imam Nawawi commented: "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 righteous (*al-tabarruk bi athar al-salihin*)."

Notice how many times (nine times total in his Sharh Sahih Muslim) already Imam Nawawi has shown that these Sahih hadiths prove the permissibility and recommendability of obtaining blessings thru the righteous and their relics. Imam Nawawi also said (Sharh Muslim 5:161): "From this hadith we gain three beneficial lessons: 1) it is permitted to obtain blessings from righteous people and the objects connected to them, 2) it is recommended to pray in the places the righteous used to pray, and 3) it is recommended to seek blessings from the places where the righteous people resided." The Prophet (asws) was also told to "pray in al-'Aqiq *because it is a blessed valley*" (Bukhari #1436). It is also known that Ibn 'Umar derived blessings even from walking in the same spots where the Prophet (asws) 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 (asws) had prayed so that it would not die.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Ibn 'Umar, Mu'awiya, Salama ibn Akwa', and others used to search out the places where the Prophet (asws) prayed, and pray there for the blessings gained by that,¹⁰⁹ and other Sahaba used to ask Anas and Bilal where he (asws) used to pray so they could pray in the same spots (Tabarani's Mu'jam al-Awsat 3:350, 6:309).

7) It is related that the Prophet (asws) distributed his hair among the Sahaba on cutting it in Mina, and each Sahabi would take some for the blessing (baraka).¹¹⁰

8) Ibn Sirin said that Anas used to possess a small staff belonging to the Messenger (asws), and when he passed away, he had the staff buried with him inside his burial cloth.¹¹¹

9) Ibn Umar narrated (Bukhari 3:1237, Muslim 4:2286) that when the Companions came to the land of Thamud, the Prophet (asws) ordered them to use the well-water which the camel used to drink from. Muhammad Hattab al-Maliki (Mawahib al-Jalil 1:49) wrote – quoting Qurtubi in agreement: "This hadith is a proof of the permissibility of seeking blessings thru the remains and traces of the Prophets and the righteous, even if after many centuries."

Seeking blessing thru the Prophet's Grave:

asked the Prophet (asws) to pray in her house, so they could take that as a place of prayer too (Tabarani's Mu'jam al-Awsat, 6:305 #6481).

¹⁰⁸ Recorded by Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (5:245), Abu Ya'la (10:87-88 #5724), Humaydi (#680, 682), Bazzar (Musnad, 1:81 #129), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 4:199), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:175), and Ibn Hibban (#7074). See also Ibn Hajar's Fath al-Bari (1:569-70) and Imam Dhahabi's Siyar A'lam an-Nubala (Chapter on Ibn 'Umar).

¹⁰⁹ For example: Bukhari (Kitab as-Salat, #448, 461-62, 472), Nasa'i (#1709), Imam Ahmad (2:75, 4:419), Bayhaqi (3:25), Tayalisi (#514), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#774), Tabari's Tafsir (11:33), Ibn Abd al-Barr's Tamhid (5:119, 6:228, 13:65), Nawawi's Sharh Sahih Muslim (5:161, 13:178) and Tahdhib al-Asma' (1:262), Ibn Hajar's Fath al-Bari (1:522, 571), Haythami's Majma' az-Zawa'id (3:295, 8:265), Malik's Muwatta' (1:423), Ruyani's Musnad (#741, 757-59, 1142), Humaydi (#149), and others.

¹¹⁰ Recorded by Bukhari (#166), Muslim (#2298), Tirmidhi (#836), Abu Dawud (#1691), Imam Ahmad (3:137, 146), Hakim (1:474), Ibn Hibban (#3879), Ibn Khuzayma (#2928), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 4:292), and others.

¹¹¹ Recorded by Bazzar in his Musnad (Zawa'id, 1:395 #840). Haythami said (Majma' az-Zawa'id, 3:45) its narrators are all trustworthy (thiqat), making this hadith authentic.

10) Dawud ibn abi Salih says: “[The Caliph] Marwan [ibn al-Hakam] one day saw a man placing his face on top of the grave of the Prophet (asws). 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.”¹¹² Muhammad ibn al-Munkadir – one of the Tabi’in – used to place his cheek on the noble grave of the Prophet (asws), and when asked about that he said, “I find certain thoughts that disturb me, so *I seek help from the grave of the Prophet (asws)*”.¹¹³ Mu’adh also came to the grave of the Prophet and sat weeping, and Bilal traveled from Syria to his grave (asws) and cried, rubbing his face against it.¹¹⁴

11) 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: “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.”¹¹⁵

12) 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 end 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 to Allah hoping He would answer their supplication because they were placing their hands where the Prophet placed his while making their supplication.¹¹⁶ Also, Ibn ‘Umar used to touch the seat of the Prophet’s minbar and then wipe his face for blessing.¹¹⁷ Many other Sahaba used to come to

¹¹² Recorded by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (5:422 #22482), Tabarani in his Mu`jam al-Kabir (4:189) and his Mu`jam al-Awsat (1:199) according to Haythami in al-Zawa'id (4:2, 5:245), Ibn ‘Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (57:249-50), Hakim in his Mustadrak (4:515); both the latter and Dhahabi (as well as Suyuti in Jami’ Saghir #9728) said it was sahih. It is also cited by al-Subki in Shifa' al-siqam (p. 126). Hadith Hasan. This is also a proof for visiting the Prophet (asws) in his grave.

¹¹³ Recorded by Imam Dhahabi in his Siyar (5:358-59) and Ibn ‘Asakir in his Tarikh Dimashq (56:50-51). They did not say this was shirk, or make any other negative comment.

¹¹⁴ Mu’adh: Recorded by Ibn Majah in his Sunan (2:1320 #3979), Hakim (Mustadrak: 1:4, 3:270, 4:328 Sahih), Tabarani in Mu`jam as-Saghir (2:45-46) and Awsat (#4950, 7112) and Kabir (20:36-37, 154), Quda’i in his Musnad Shihab (2:147 #1071 and 2:252 #1298), Ibn Abi Dunya in Kitab al-Awliya’ (p. 11 #6). Bilal: Ibn ‘Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (7:137) with a strong chain - Shawkani (Nayl al-Awtar 5:180); and Ibn Athir (Usd al-Ghaba, 1:244).

¹¹⁵ This was narrated by ‘Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his book: al-‘Ilal wa ma`rifat al-rijal (2:492), Ibn Kathir in his Bidaya (2:8), and by Imam Dhahabi in his Mu`jam al-Shuyukh (1:73) and his Siyar A`lam an-Nubala (11:212), who also mentions that Imam Ahmad used to take a hair of the Prophet (asws), kiss it and put it on his eyes, and dip it in water and drink that water to obtain cure. Then he wrote: “Where is the critic of Imam Ahmad now?... may Allah protect us from the opinion of the Khawarij and innovations!” meaning, he considered those who objected to tawassul and tabarruk to be Khawarij and innovators. See also Ibn Taymiyya’s Iqtida Sirat al-Mustaqim (p. 367), where he mentions other Salaf who did the same.

¹¹⁶ Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba in his Musannaf (4:557), in the chapter entitled: “Touching the grave of the Prophet” with a sahih chain according to Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani; and also recorded by Qadi ‘Iyad in his book al-Shifa’ (2:55), 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,” and by Ibn Sa’d in his Tabaqat.

¹¹⁷ Recorded by Ibn Hibban (Thiqat, 4:9), Qadi ‘Iyad in al-Shifa’ (2:55), Ibn Sa’d in his Tabaqat (1:13), al-Mardawi in his Insaf (4:54), and Ibn Muflih in his Furu’ (3:523). Qadi Ismail in his Fadl as-Salat ala-n Nabi (#100) also recorded with a Hasan chain that Ibn Umar used to pray two rak’as and then go to the Prophet (asws) and put his right hand on his grave (his back to the Qibla), and give his salams to him (asws), then to Abu Bakr and his father. The late Salafi scholar Bin Baz dared to call this act of his Shirk!!

the Prophet (asws) in his grave and make du'a, such as Usama ibn Zayd,¹¹⁸ Anas ibn Malik,¹¹⁹ 'Uqba ibn Amir,¹²⁰ and Bilal ibn Harith al-Muzani.

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 (and by extension his righteous inheritors) touched. [Those who condemn the Muslims who make regular use of Tawassul and Tabarruk as idolaters might as well condemn someone who eats food as being an idolater because he depends on food for nourishment instead of Allah! The reality is you are not “depending upon” the food, but rather simply using it as a means to gain Allah’s nourishment. In exactly the same way, you are not “depending on the Awliya” instead of Allah, but just using them as a means to Allah’s blessings. And Allah says to “actively seek the means (wasila) to Him” – Q5:35.

Some might object and say that Sayyidina Umar had the tree of the Hudaibiya Pact cut down,¹²¹ supposedly because he was against what the other Sahaba were doing by praying there for the sake of gaining blessings from it. However, this is incorrect for a number of reasons. Firstly, the reality is – as Ibn Umar and others stated – that the specific tree could no longer be located after the year of the Bay'a, and the people still tried to look for it even years after Umar's death,¹²² meaning that he did not cut it. Secondly, the story of his cutting the tree down is narrated with a very weak broken chain, and it contradicts the above narration of Bukhari and Muslim, so it is most likely false. Thirdly, it also contradicts what is known about Sayyidina 'Umar, namely, that he (like his son Ibn 'Umar) used to seek out the places in which the Prophet (asws) prayed so that he could pray there himself.¹²³ Finally, it would be the height of heresy to imagine that the Sahaba began to commit shirk a few years after the Prophet's (asws) passing, and accepting this story would imply that they did.

Finally, perhaps the greatest evidence of the permissibility of Tabarruk is the story of the holy Tabut (wooden chest), as recorded in the Qur'an (2:248): “And their Prophet said to them: ‘Verily, the Sign of his authority is that there shall come to you the Tabut with... the Relics left by the Family of Moses and the Family of Aaron, carried by Angels’”. The Jews of that time, before embarking on a battle, would put this holy chest in front of them and pray, and they would then be victorious by the blessing of that chest, which contained the sandals, clothes, sticks, and other blessed relics of the Prophets Musa (asws) and Harun (asws).

¹¹⁸ Recorded by Tabarani (M. Kabir 1:166) and Diya' al-Maqdisi in his Mukhtara (4:105 Sahih). Haythami also said it is Sahih (Majma' az-Zawa'id 8:64-65).

¹¹⁹ Recorded by Bayhaqi in his Shu'ab al-Iman (3:491) with a Hasan chain.

¹²⁰ Mentioned by Nawawi in his Tahdhib al-Asma' (1:308-09).

¹²¹ Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba and Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqat with a weak broken chain.

¹²² Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab al-Maghazi #3844-46), Muslim (Kitab al-Imamah #3459-61), Tabarani (Mu'jam al-Kabir, 20:347-48), and many others.

¹²³ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (1:38), Diya' (Mukhtara, 1:350-51), Ibn 'Asakir (Tarikh, 66:285-86), and others, and it is Sahih according to Ibn Kathir in his Bidaya (7:58).

TOPIC:
The Graves of the Righteous and Practices Connected to Them

The Life in the Grave and the Hearing of the Dead

It is firmly established as the 'Aqida of Ahlus-Sunna wa'l Jama'a that the people in their graves are nonetheless alive, and that they are fully capable of hearing and understanding and perceiving...faculties which are characteristic of the living. This is in contradistinction to the materialist secular philosophy according to which the occupants of the graves are non-existent, without souls, and thus cannot hear or perceive or understand. Sadly, this secular mindset has afflicted some of the Muslims in the recent past, who end up believing that the Prophets and Awliya in their graves are unable to hear or understand what the living say to them, and they brand whoever "speaks to the dead" as Kafirs, when in reality they are the ones ignorant of their Din and what it teaches. In this chapter we will attempt to clarify this error, and mention numerous examples in the Sunna that prove very clearly that the Prophets and Awliya are alive, are able to hear and understand and perceive, can visit one another and communicate with each other, and can pray on behalf of those living upon the earth. As Shaykh al-Islam Imam Suyuti writes in his *Hawi lil Fatawi* (2:147): "The life of the Prophet (asws) in his grave - he and the remaining Prophets - is well-known among us as absolutely correct, due to the numerous proof-texts that indicate so, which have reached the status of tawatur (mass-transmission)." Let us then go through a partial list of examples of proof-texts in the Qur'an and Sunna which prove our point...

From the Qur'an

- 1) Allah said: "And do not say that those who are slain in the Way of Allah are dead. Rather, they are living, but you do not comprehend (in what way)." (Q2:154).
- 2) Allah said: "And reckon not that those who have been killed in the Way of Allah are dead. No! They are alive with their Lord, provided for (continually). They are jubilant because of what Allah in His Grace has given them, rejoicing in the good news..." (Q3:169-171). It is impossible and illogical that Allah continues to provide sustenance to those who are dead (in the atheistic concept).
- 3) As for the verse in which Allah says: "Surely you cannot make the dead to hear," (Q27:80) or "but you cannot make those in the graves to hear" (Q35:22), this is not a proof against the hearing of the dead, for it does not refer to the faculty of hearing but rather to understanding and accepting guidance. And in numerous places in the Qur'an, Allah refers to those who are blocked from accepting guidance and those who cannot understand guidance as "those who cannot hear," such as in: Q3:193; 6:25, 39; 7:100, 179, 198; 8:21, 23; 10:42; 11:20; 32:12; 41:4; 45:8 and so on.
- 4) The Prophets Salih and Shu'ayb (alayhim salam) spoke to and addressed the kuffar among their people after they had died (Q7:79, 93), and this would not be possible if they knew that the dead had no awareness or life, or could not hear or understand.

From the Sunna

- 1) Anas ibn Malik related that when the Prophet Muhammad (asws) was taken up into the heavens in the Mi'raj, he passed by Sayyidina Musa (alayhi salam) and found him standing and praying in his grave.¹²⁴
- 2) Also from Anas: "The Prophets are alive in their graves, praying."¹²⁵
- 3) Aws ibn Aws al-Thaqafi related that the Prophet (asws) said: "The best of your days is the day of Friday, so increase your prayers of benediction (salawat) upon me, for your prayers are shown before me," and in other narrations, "your prayers reach me from wherever you are." They asked him, "How could our prayers be shown to you when you have decomposed in your grave?" He answered, "Verily Allah has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of the Prophets. Therefore, the Prophet of Allah is alive and sustained."¹²⁶
- 4) 'Ammar ibn Yasir said he heard the Prophet (asws) say: "Allah has a special angel who hears the number of creations, and who is stationed at my grave, and if someone sends salawat to me, then he hears it and delivers it to me."¹²⁷ This is supported by the other

¹²⁴ Recorded by Muslim (2:268 #4379-80), Nasa'i (3:215-16 #1613-19) and Sunan al-Kubra (1:419), Imam Ahmad (Musnad 3:120, 148, 5:365 and K. Zuhd, p. 74), Ibn Hibban (1:241-42 #49-50), Abu Ya'la (6:71, 7:117, 126 Sahih), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:446), Abdur-Razzaq (3:577 #6727), Tabarani (M. Kabir 11:111, M. Awsat 8:13), Bayhaqi (Dala'il, 2:387 and Hayat al-Anbiya', #6-8), Abu Nu'aym (Hilya, 6:253), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 3:104), Baghawi in Sharh as-Sunna (13:351), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#1203), and Ahmad Ibn Mani'.

¹²⁵ Recorded by Abu Ya'la (6:147 #3425 Sahih) and Bazzar (Zawa'id, 3:100-01) in their Musnads, Ibn 'Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (4:285), and Imam Bayhaqi in his book Hayat al-Anbiya' fi Quburihim (#1-3, Sahih according to Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari 6:487), Abu Nu'aym in Akhbar Asbahan (2:38), Daylami (Firdaws, 1:154 #402), Ibn 'Adiyy (al-Kamil, 2:739), Tammam (Fawa'id, 1:33), and others. Haythami (Majma' az-Zawa'id, 8:211 #13812), Suyuti, Munawi (Fayd al-Qadir, 5:467), Bayhaqi, Ibn Hajar (Matalib, #3452), and others said it is Sahih.

¹²⁶ Recorded by Abu Dawud (#883, 1308), Nasa'i (3:91 #1357), Ibn Majah (#1075, 1626), Imam Ahmad (4:8), Darimi (#1526), Ibn Abi Shayba (2:398-99), Ibn Khuzayma (3:118 #1733-34), Ibn Hibban (3:190-91 #910), Hakim (1:278 Sahih), Tabarani (Kabir 1:216 #589, 3:82, Awsat 5:97 #4780), Abu Ya'la (11:176 #6286), Abu Nu'aym (Dala'il p. 206), Bayhaqi (Sunan 3:248, Shu'ab 1:215, 3:109-110, Hayat Anbiya #10 Sahih), Qadi Isma'il (#22, 24, 29), Hakim Tirmidhi (Asl #267), and Musaddad (Ibn Hajar's Matalib, 4:8). Hadith Sahih (Nawawi Adhkar p. 162, Mundhiri 2:498, 502-03). Hafiz 'Ajluni also quoted the hadith (Kashf, #1443): "Beautify your gatherings with Salawat upon me, for your salawat reach me from wherever you are," and he stated it was part of a strong authentic hadith. Also, Tabarani (Mu'jam al-Awsat 1:83, 4:184), Ibn Abi Shayba (2:399), and Bayhaqi (Shu'ab 3:110, Hayat Anbiya #11) recorded that the Prophet (asws) said, "make frequent salawat upon me on the night (preceding) Friday, for indeed your salawat are presented to me"; and Bayhaqi (Sunan 3:249, Hayat al-Anbiya' #12) and Daylami (1:105) recorded with a strong (Hasan) chain (see Fath al-Bari 11:167, Mundhiri 2:503) from Abu Umama that he (asws) said, "...for the salawat of my Umma are shown to me every Friday, so whoever sends more will have a closer station with me", and in the narration of Anas, "the day of Jum'a and its night... and whoever does that I will be his intercessor during the Judgment." Cf. 'Ajluni (Kashf, #501).

¹²⁷ Recorded by Bazzar (Musnad 4:255 #1274, Zawa'id 4:47), Harith (Zawa'id, p. 318-19), Abu'l Shaykh (K. 'Adhama, #341), Ibn Muqri' (Mu'jam, #718), 'Uqayli (Du'afa, 3:249), Ibn 'Asakir, Ruyani, Daylami from Abu Bakr, and others. Haythami (Majma' 10:162) said it is Da'if because its chain contains Nu'aym ibn Damdam and 'Imran ibn al-Himyari. However, its chain should be considered Hasan, because: 1) Ibn Hajar said (Lisan al-Mizan, 6:169) that he was unable to discover who had declared Nu'aym weak, and that Sufyan ibn 'Uyayn and other trustworthy narrators took from him, and this raises his status from "unknown" to "Hasan"; 2) 'Imran is "thiqa" according to Ibn Hibban (Thiqat, 5:223), and Ibn Abi Hatim mentioned him (Jarh wa Ta'dil, 6:296) without discrediting him; 3) Daylami's chain contains neither Nu'aym nor 'Imran; and 4) it has authentic corroborative narrations, mentioned by Hafiz Suyuti in his La'ali Masnu'a (1:259-60), such as in Isma'il al-Qadi's Fadl as-Salat 'ala-n Nabi (#27), Bayhaqi's Hayat al-Anbiya' (#13, 17) and Shu'ab al-Iman (2:218 #1584), Ibn Abi

hadith (thru Ibn Mas'ud): "Allah has angels who roam the earth and deliver the greetings of my community to me."¹²⁸ This would be meaningless if he were dead.

5) From Abu Hurayra: "By He in Whose Hand is my soul, 'Isa ibn Maryam will descend, and when he comes to my grave, and calls out "Ya Muhammad," I will answer him."¹²⁹

6) Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab said: "I used to stay in the Masjid of the Prophet (asws) during the days of extreme heat, while the people were fighting and there would be no one in the masjid besides me, and whenever the time for prayer would come, I would hear the Adhan and Iqama coming from inside the grave of the Prophet (asws)."¹³⁰

7) Allah Most High said in Q3:169, "and reckon not that those who have been killed in the Way of Allah are dead. No! They are alive with their Lord, provided for (continually)." This verse speaks of the martyrs (shuhada'), and the Prophets are more worthy of this distinction (and likewise the Veracious Siddiqun) for they are greater than the martyrs (Q4:69), and so they are included in the meaning of this verse. Furthermore, it is established that the Prophet Muhammad (asws) died a martyr, for A'isha relates that in the sickness in which the Prophet (asws) passed away, he said, "I still experience the pain from eating the poisoned food in Khaybar, and now it has severed my aorta";¹³¹ and Ibn Mas'ud said, "Allah took him as a Prophet and took him as a martyr (shahid),"¹³² showing that he (asws) is alive in his grave.

8) We have also seen the authentic narrations in the chapter on Tawassul, wherein the Companion Bilal ibn al-Harith goes to the Prophet's grave and speaks directly to the Prophet (asws) and asks him to pray for rain, and no one censured this action of his, indicating that it was the common understanding of the Sahaba that the Prophet (asws) was alive in his grave, and is able to hear those who speak to him. Also, the famous narration of al-'Utbi, wherein a Beduin Arab similarly goes to the Prophet's grave and speaks directly to the Prophet (asws) and asks him to pray for his forgiveness, indicating that this common understanding (of the Prophet's life in his grave) was passed down to the following

Shayba's Musannaf (2:399), Ishaq ibn Rahawayh's Musnad (Sahih chain), Ibn Bashkuwal's Qurbah, and others. Another hadith (Sahih, mursal from Mujahid) states: "Indeed, you are presented before me with your names and your identifying marks, so beautify your salawat upon me," recorded by Abdur-Razzaq (#3111).

¹²⁸ Recorded by Hakim (2:421) who said it is Sahih, along with Dhahabi. Hafiz al-Munawi (Fayd al-Qadir 2:479) said: "Recorded by Ahmad (1:441 #3484), Nasa'i (#1265), Ibn Hibban (3:195 #914), and Hakim. And Haythami and 'Iraqi stated it is Sahih." Also recorded by: Nasa'i in his Sunan al-Kubra (3:43) and his 'Amal al-Yowm... (#66), Darimi (2:317 #2655), Bayhaqi (Sunan al-Kubra 1:380, Shu'ab al-Iman 2:217 #1582, Hayat Anbiya, #16), Tabarani in his Mu'jam al-Kabir (10:271), Abu Ya'la (9:137), Abdur-Razzaq (#3116), Ibn Abi Shayba (2:399, 7:428), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 1:397), Qadi Isma'il (#21), Ibn Mubarak in K. Zuhd (p. 364 #1028), Abu Nu'aym (Hilya 8:130, Akhbar Asbahan 2:205), Hafiz Khatib (Tarikh, 9:104), Abu Shaykh ('Adhama, #515), Ibn 'Asakir (Tarikh, 9:189), Baghawi (#687), Ibn 'Adiyy (3:1092), Daylami (Firdaws, 1:226), and others.

¹²⁹ Recorded by Abu Ya'la (11:462 #6584), Hakim (2:595), and Ibn 'Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (47:493-96). It is Sahih according to Hakim, Dhahabi, and Haythami in Majma' az-Zawa'id (8:211). Hafiz Ibn Hajar also mentions it in his Matalib 'Aliya, chapter on "his life in his grave." One of the lessons we gain from this hadith is the desirability of visiting the Prophet (asws) in his noble grave.

¹³⁰ Abu Nu'aym in his Dala'il an-Nubuwwa (p. 206), Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqat (5:132), Zubayr ibn Bakkar in his Akhbar al-Madina, and Imam Darimi in his Sunan (#93). See also Dhahabi's Siyar (4:228-29).

¹³¹ Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab al-Maghazi, ch. #79), Bayhaqi (Dala'il, 4:256-64), and many others.

¹³² Recorded by Imam Ahmad (#3435, 3679, 3925), Abu Ya'la (9:132), Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqat al-Kubra (2:201), Bayhaqi in his Dala'il an-Nubuwwa (4:256-64), Tabarani in Mu'jam al-Kabir (10:134 #10119), and Hakim in his Mustadrak (3:58 Sahih). See Haythami's Majma' Zawa'id (8:4-5).

generations of the Salaf. Furthermore, Nafi' related that whenever Ibn 'Umar would return from traveling, he would come to the grave of the Prophet (asws) and say, "Peace be upon you O Messenger of Allah! Peace be upon you O Abu Bakr! Peace be upon you O Father!"¹³³ addressing them directly (in one narration, he did this over 100 times).

9) Abu Hurayra reported that the Prophet (asws) said: "No one sends greetings to me without Allah returning my Ruh to me so that I return his greeting."¹³⁴

One might say: "This hadith contradicts the other ahadith above, which indicate that his life in his grave is continuous, whereas according to this hadith, it appears that his life is discontinuous, for his spirit has to return to him every time someone sends blessings and greetings to him." Imam Suyuti in his *Hawi lil Fatawi* (2:150-155) dealt at length with this issue, and brought up 15 reasons why this interpretation of the hadith is incorrect, and that the favored interpretation - according to the grammatical construction of the Arabic wording, and for other reasons - is that after his passing, his spirit (ruh) was returned to him by Allah, so that he remains living without interruption, so that even if a Muslim were to send greetings to him, he (asws) would return the greetings and be able to do that because of the existence of life in him. Indeed, Allah says: "Our Lord, you have made us die twice and made us live twice..." (Q40:11), showing that spirits are not "returned" more than twice. And if a certain hadith contradicts the Qur'an and the mass-transmission of other authentic hadiths, then it must be interpreted or otherwise it is counted as insignificant. And the other favored and correct interpretation is that in the Barzakh, the Prophet (asws) is absorbed in witnessing his Lord and occupied with the states of the Barzakh and tending to different matters (e.g., beholding the works of his community, asking forgiveness for them, making du'a for them, tending the funerals of righteous servants, visiting other spirits, etc), so that when someone sends greetings to him, his consciousness is directed away from that absorption (so that is the returning of his spirit to pay attention to the greeter, for the spirit goes wherever the thoughts go) and he is able to return the greeting of the person, after which he returns to his absorption in the spiritual states he was in. This is similar to his states of revelation while he was in this world, wherein he would be consumed by the revelation and thus absent from this world and its affairs. Also, it is similar to the hadiths of the Night Ascension, when he said, "I woke up and I was in the Masjid al-Haram." He did not mean by that that he was previously asleep, for the Isra was not a dream during his sleep, but rather he meant that he came back fully to his worldly senses after being absorbed in witnessing the marvels of the spiritual domains.

10) The Prophet (asws) said, "Whoever dies and does not leave behind a will (wasiyya), then he will not be permitted to speak with the dead;" they asked him, "and do the dead speak?"

¹³³ Recorded by Malik (#359), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (*Istidhkar*, 1:184), Abdur-Razzaq (3:576 #6724), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:222), Bayhaqi in his *Shu'ab al-Iman* (#4150) and Sunan al-Kubra (5:245 #10406), Abu Nu'aym (*Hilya*, 1:308-09), Qadi Isma'il (#98-101), Musaddad, and Ibn Abi Umar al-'Adani in their *Musnads* (*Matalib*, 2:69) with *Sahih* chains according to Ibn Hajar and Busiri (*Ithaf* #3214).

¹³⁴ Imam Ahmad (2:527 #10395), Abu Dawud (*Kitab al-Manasik* #1745), Bayhaqi in his *Shu'ab al-Iman* (2:217, 3:490-91), Sunan al-Kubra (5:245 #10405), and *Hayat al-Anbiya* (#15), Ibn 'Asakir (56:302), Abu Nu'aym in *Akhbar Asbahan* (2:353) and *Hilya* (6:349), Tabarani in *Mu'jam al-Aswat* (3:262, 9:130-31), Bazzar, and others. It is *Sahih* according to Ibn Hajar (*Fath* 6:488), Imam Nawawi (*Adhkar*, p. 163 #346), 'Ajluni (*Kashf* 2:253), and others, and forms one of the strongest proof-texts for visiting the Prophet in his grave, as concluded by Ibn Hajar in his *Talkhis al-Habir*, Ibn Qudama (*Mughni*, 3:297), Shawkani, Bayhaqi, and many others.

and he said, “Yes, they speak and visit each other.”¹³⁵ Similar to this is the hadith (from Jabir, Anas and Abu Hurayra) in which the Prophet (asws) advises us to bury the dead with a beautiful kafan (cloth), because they visit one another in the grave.¹³⁶

11) Ibn Mas’ud reported that the Prophet (asws) 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, for your actions will be presented to me (in my grave) and if I see goodness I will praise Allah, and if I see other than that I will ask forgiveness of Him for you.”¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Recorded by Hafiz Abu Shaykh in Kitab al-Wasaya (Da’if – Ibn Hajar’s Isaba 5:496 #7227) from Qays ibn Qubaysa, and Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Qubur, #137). See also Nasa’i (4:8 #1810), Hakim (2:533) and Tabarani in Mu’jam Kabir (4:129) and Awsat (1:53) for hadiths of similar import, and Suyuti’s Sharh as-Sudur (Ch. 43).

¹³⁶ Recorded by Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, #9268), Abdur-Razzaq (3:431), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:153), Tabarani (M. Saghir 1:139), Daylami (Firdaws, 1:134), Hafiz Khatib (4:160, 9:80), ‘Uqayli (2:55), Abu Nu’aym (Akhbar Asbahan, 2:346), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Manamat, #162), Ibn ‘Adiyy (3:1105), and others. ‘Uqayli said it has a strong chain from Jabir, and Suyuti said its many chains make it hasan sahih (La’ali, 2:366-67). Sakhawi wrote (Maqasid, #75): “This was recorded by al-Harith ibn abi Usama and Ahmad ibn Mani’ in their Musnads... and it has other supportive narrations (shawahid) in Muslim (#1567), Abu Dawud (#2737), Nasa’i (#1869), and Tirmidhi (#916)”. See also Ibn Rajab’s Ahwal al-Qubur (Ch. 7) and Suyuti’s Sharh as-Sudur (Ch. 36).

¹³⁷ Recorded by Bazzar (Musnad 5:308-09 #1925; Zawa’id 1:397 #845), al-Harith ibn Abi Usama in his Musnad (Zawa’id, p. 288 #957), Ibn Sa’d (Tabaqat, 2:194), Tabarani in his Mu’jam as-Saghir (1:198), Hakim Tirmidhi in his Nawadir (Asl #283), Daylami (Firdaws, 2:219-20 #2523), Ibn ‘Adiyy (Kamil, 3:945), Qadi Isma’il in his Fadl as-Salat ala-n Nabi (#25-26), and others. Haythami in Majma’ az-Zawa’id (9:24) stated it is Sahih, and so did Hafiz ‘Iraqi (in Tarh at-Tathrib 3:297), Imam Suyuti (in Khasa’is al-Kubra 2:281 and Jami’ as-Saghir #3770-71), Munawi (Fayd al-Qadir 3:401), Mulla ‘Ali Qari and al-Khafaji (in Sharh al-Shifa’ 1:102), az-Zurqani (Sharh al-Muwatta’ 1:97), Ibn ‘Abd al-Hadi in his Sarim al-Munki (p. 178), and others. Cf. ‘Ajluni’s Kashf al-Khafa’ (#1178) and Abu Nu’aym’s Hilya (6:179). In addition, Ibn al-Jawzi specifies in the introduction to his Kitab al-Wafa’ that he only included authentic traditions in it, and he mentions this hadith in the end. Some object by saying that Hafiz ‘Iraqi weakened its chain in his Takhrij al-Ihya’, but he wrote this before he was twenty years old, whereas he stated its chain was strong in his last book he wrote (Tarh at-Tathrib, Ch. on Jana’iz), which he did not complete. As for the objection by some that one of the narrators (Abdul-Majid ibn Abi Rawwad) is a Murji’, or that he made some mistakes, or that Yahya al-Qattan accused him of lying, then it does not harm the authenticity of the hadith. First, he was declared “thiqa” by Imam Ahmad, Yahya ibn Ma’in, Abu Dawud, Nasa’i, al-Khalili, and Ibn Shahin, and Dhahabi included him among those narrators who are Murji’i and trustworthy (thiqat) in his Mizan al-I’tidal, and in his book entitled “those who were spoken against negatively but are nonetheless thiqa” (p. 124), and Imam Muslim included him as one of the narrators in his Sahih (#2163). Secondly, numerous narrators in the two Sahih’s were discredited and spoken negatively about, and even some accused of lying, but their criticisms were ignored and they were retained as narrators of the two Sahih’s. For example: 1) Abdur-Razzaq as-San’ani, a Shi’i, who used to make mistakes according to Ibn Hibban, but Muslim recorded 400 hadiths from him; 2) Shayban ibn Farrukh, a Qadari, but declared thiqa by Ahmad, Ibn Hibban, and others, and Muslim recorded over 90 hadiths from him; 3) Abu Mu’awiya, a Murji’, who sometimes did tadlis (“concealment of sources”) according to Ya’qub ibn Shayba, but declared thiqa by ‘Ijli, Nasa’i, and others, and Bukhari recorded 50 and Muslim over 250 hadiths from him; 4) Abdullah ibn Shaqiq, a Nasibi who hated Imam ‘Ali, but declared thiqa by ‘Ijli, Abu Hatim, Ibn Ma’in, and others, and Muslim recorded over 20 hadiths from him; 5) Muhammad ibn Hatim ibn Maymun, whom Ibn Ma’in accused of lying, and Ibn Fallas said “he is nothing,” but declared thiqa by Daraqutni, Ibn Hibban, and others, and Muslim recorded over 200 hadiths from him; 6) Hisham ad-Dastuwa’i, a Qadari, and Bukhari recorded over 80 and Muslim over 100 hadiths from him; 7) Suwayd ibn Sa’id, about whom Ibn Ma’in said “his blood is lawful (to spill),” and Abu Hatim said he does much tadlis, yet Muslim recorded over 50 hadiths from him; 8) Shu’ayb ibn Ishaq, a Murji’, declared thiqa by Ibn Ma’in, Nasa’i, and others, and Muslim recorded 10 hadiths from him; 9) Ahmad ibn ‘Isa, whom Ibn Ma’in accused of lying, and Abu Hatim said “they spoke negatively against him,” yet declared thiqa by Nasa’i and Ibn Hibban, and Hafiz Khatib said, “I did not find any basis for the negative accusations made against him,” and Bukhari recorded 9 and Muslim over 30 hadiths from him; 10) Muhammad ibn Fudayl ibn Ghazwan, a Shi’i, Hasan according to Imam Ahmad, and thiqa according to Ibn al-Madini, Ibn Hibban, Nasa’i, and others, and Bukhari recorded over 30 and Muslim 60 hadiths from him... and so on. Similarly with Abdul-

Allah Himself said: “It is your actions that Allah and His Messenger will observe” (Q9:94), and “Allah will see your deeds, and so will the Messenger and the believers” (Q9:105) – Ibn Kathir in Tafsir of this ayah mentions this Sahih hadith. It is also supported by other Qur’anic ayat (Q4:41, 33:45, 48:8) in which Allah describes the Prophet (asws) as a witness (shahid) over the people, and this cannot be possible unless he sees their actions, as Sa’id ibn Musayyab concluded (see Ibn Kathir’s Tafsir of Q4:41). Some people state this hadith is weak because it “contradicts” the other authentic hadith in Bukhari in which the Prophet (asws) will express sadness that some of his sahaba are prevented from drinking from his pool, at which point the angels will say, “you do not know what they did after you,” claiming that if the former hadith were true then the angels would not have said that to him. But this is a false argument, for Hafiz Ibn Hajar said in commenting on this hadith (in Fath al-Bari 11:385): “those who are prevented from the Pool are the hypocrites and apostates, and the actions of these are not presented to him (asws) due to their leaving the fold of Islam...”, and Imam Nawawi, Imam Qurtubi, Qadi ‘Iyad, and others combined between the two hadiths in the same way, so there is no contradiction in reality. What supports this is that the hadith mentions asking forgiveness for them, and he (asws) is not allowed to ask forgiveness for the hypocrites and apostates (see Q9:113 etc). See also hadith #5 above and its note.

12) The Prophet (asws) 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, do not let them die before You guide them as you have guided us.’”¹³⁸ Imam Suyuti in his book Sharh as-Sudur (Ch. 41) has an entire chapter devoted to this topic called, “the exhibition of the deeds of the living to the dead,” in which he lists 15 hadiths and sayings of the Companions, this being one of them. Qurtubi in his Tadhkira also wrote a chapter on this, and cited Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Wahb ibn Munabbah, Sa’id ibn Jubayr, Abu Darda’, and other statements of the Salaf to this effect.

13) Abu Sa’id al-Khudri reported that the Prophet (asws) said: “When the body (of the deceased) is laid out and the men carry it on their shoulders, if it was righteous, it says, “take me forward,” and if it was not righteous, it says to its people, “woe to me, where are you taking me?” Everything except man hears its voice. If he were to hear it, he would faint.”¹³⁹

14) Anas reported that the Prophet (asws) said: “When someone is placed in his grave, and his companions turn and go, and he can hear the tread of their sandals, two angels come to him...”

Majid, who was chosen by Muslim as a narrator, regardless of those who weakened and spoke negatively about him, and this is why this hadith here is concluded to be Sahih, and strengthened by its other chains.

¹³⁸ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:165 #12222), Hakim at-Tirmidhi in his Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #167, Jami’ Saghir #3316: “Hasan”), and others. Similar versions of this hadith were recorded by Nasa’i (4:8-9 #1810), Hakim (1:352-53, 2:533, 4:307 Sahih), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 7:261 #10242), Abu Dawud at-Tayalisi (Musnad, #1903), Ibn Hibban (7:284 #3014), Ibn al-Mubarak in Kitab az-Zuhd (p. 42 #165, p. 149 #443, Sahih chains), Abu Dawud in K. Zuhd (#211 Sahih), Tabarani in his Kabir (4:129-130) and Awsat (1:53-54 #148) and Musnad Shamiyyin (#1544), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:314), Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 4:59-60), Bazzar (see Majma’ Zawa’id 3:52-53), Daylami (#7533), Tafsir Ibn Kathir (4:147), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. al-Manamat #1-5, K. Awliya #40, K. al-Qubur, p. 206-07). Hadith Sahih. See also Ibn Rajab’s Ahwal al-Qubur (Ch. 3, 8) and Ibn Qayyim’s Kitab ar-Ruh (Ch. 1) for more narrations from the Salaf, showing that it was something well-known in their time.

¹³⁹ Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab al-Jana’iz, #1232, 1291), Nasa’i (#1883), Ibn Hibban (7:311-12 #3038-39), Bayhaqi (4:21), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:254), Abdur-Razzaq (#6250), and others.

¹⁴⁰ Related to this is the hadith related by Abu Umama wherein the Prophet (asws) instructs us how, after we bury someone who has died, we should stand at his grave and call his name 3 times, at which the deceased hears the call, sits up, and asks for counsel. Then we should remind the deceased of the principles of the Din, so that they can complete the questioning of the two angels successfully. ¹⁴¹

15) Jabir ibn Abdullah related that when the battle of Uhud was near, his father said, “I think I will be among the first of the companions to be slain in the battle...” In the morning, he was the first to be killed and was buried together with someone else in a grave. “I was not happy to leave him with the other person, so six months later I took him out and he was as he had been on the day I put him in, except for a small place on his ear.” ¹⁴² Similar to this is the hadith is the one related from the father of Hisham ibn ‘Urwa, who said that when the wall (of the blessed grave) fell down in the time of al-Walid ibn Abdil-Malik, they began to rebuild it, and a foot appeared. The people were alarmed and thought it was the foot of the Prophet (asws), until ‘Urwa said to them, “no, it is only the foot of Sayyidina ‘Umar;”... meaning it hadn’t decomposed. ¹⁴³ Also, Abu Talha’s body remained unburied for seven days and during that time did not decompose but remained as it was. ¹⁴⁴

Hafiz Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali wrote in his *Ahwal al-Qubur*: “As for those (other than the Prophets) whose bodies were found fresh and sound, and their shrouds unchanged, after a long period of time, they are numerous indeed, and we will mention a few of them...” Then he proceeded to mention some examples – in addition to the above – such as the body of Hamza ibn Abdul-Muttalib (Bayhaqi in *Dala’il* 3:307-08, and Baghawi), ‘Amr ibn Jamuh and Abdullah ibn ‘Amr al-Ansari (both after 46 years, their wounds were fresh – Malik #893), Talha ibn ‘Ubaydullah (after over 80 years), Ishaq ibn Abi Nabata (after 30 years), Imam Ahmad (after 200 years), and others. For more, see Qurtubi’s *Tadhkira*, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr’s *Isti’ab*, Suyuti’s *Sharh as-Sudur* (Ch. 54), Ibn Abi Dunya’s *Kitab al-Qubur* and *Awliya*, and other books. In fact, Hafiz Ibn Abi Dunya has a whole book on this subject, called *Man ‘asha ba’d al-mawt* (“Those who lived after death”), published in 1986, in 150 pages.

¹⁴⁰ Bukhari (*Kitab al-Jana’iz*, #1252, 1285), Muslim (#5115-16), Nasa’i (#2022-24), Hakim (1:379-81), Ibn Hibban (7:380-82 #3113, also: #3118, #3120), Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Awsat* (3:106, 5:44, 7:118) and *al-Kabir* (11:87 #11135, *Sahih - Majma’* 3:54), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 1:413), Abdur-Razzaq (3:567 #6703), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:254), Bayhaqi in *Kitab al-I’tiqad* (p. 220-222) and *Sunan al-Kubra* (4:80), and many others.

¹⁴¹ Recorded by Tabarani in *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (8:298 #7979) and *Kitab ad-Du’a* (#1214), Ibn Mandah, Sa’id ibn Mansur (Suyuti’s *Sharh as-Sudur* Ch. 21), Ibn Shahin and others (Sakhawi’s *Maqasid* #346), and also Dhahabi in his *Siyar* (1:47). See also Qurtubi’s *Tadhkira* (1:192-94) and ‘Ajluni’s *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#1016). Though this hadith is *Da’if*, Ibn Qayyim in the first chapter of his *Kitab ar-Ruh* mentions the unanimous agreement the scholars have for it, and its wide application by consensus from the time of the Salaf onward. Hafiz Ibn Hajar (in *Talkhis al-Habir* 2:135) stated that its chain is acceptable (*Salih*), and quoted a hadith from Sa’id ibn Mansur as a corroborative narration. Imam Ahmad (3:489 #15424), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 1:408), Hakim (3:55-56 *Sahih*), Tabarani (22:346), Ruyani (#1508), Ibn Abi ‘Asim in *Ahad wa Mathani* (1:343-44), and others also recorded – which is *Sahih* according to Haythami (9:24) – that the Prophet (asws) went to the graves of Baqi’ and spoke to their inhabitants, reminding them and advising them (just as in this hadith here), which goes to support this hadith of Abu Umama. Cf. Nawawi’s *Adhkar* (p. 219).

¹⁴² Recorded by Bukhari (*Kitab al-Jana’iz*, #1264), Nasa’i (#1994), Abu Dawud (*K. al-Jana’iz*, #2813), Bayhaqi (*Sunan al-Kubra*, 4:58 #6869), Ibn Sa’d in his *Tabaqat* (3:563), and others. See also Abu Nu’aym in his *Dala’il an-Nubuwwa* (p. 207). For a similar incidence involving other martyrs, see Ibn Abi Shayba’s *Musannaf* (4:580).

¹⁴³ Recorded by Bukhari in his *Sahih* (*Kitab al-Jana’iz*, #1303), and Bayhaqi in his *Shu’ab* (#4173).

¹⁴⁴ Recorded by Ibn Hibban (#7184 *Sahih*), Hakim (3:353), Abu Ya’la (#3413), Harith (*Zawa’id*, #1027), Ibn ‘Asakir (25:124), and al-‘Adani (see *Matalib*, 4:285), and it is *Sahih* (*Majma’*, 9:312). See Busiri’s *Ithaf* (#7784).

16) Ibn ‘Umar reported that the Prophet (asws) looked at the unbelievers killed in the battle of Badr, and he said to them, “I have found what my Lord has promised to be true, have you found what your Lord promised you to be true?” and someone said to him, “Are you talking to the dead?” He replied, “You hear no better than they do. However, they cannot answer.” In another narration, A’isha objected that the Prophet (asws) said, “Now they know that what I said was the truth. Allah said, “You cannot make the dead to hear” (Q27:80),” meaning in this case, to understand and accept the guidance, as we have seen above.¹⁴⁵ However, the objection of A’isha (denying their literal hearing) is not considered, because 1) she was not a witness to the events, whereas Ibn ‘Umar was, and so his testimony supercedes her words; 2) Ibn ‘Umar wasn’t the only one who related this incident, but also his father ‘Umar, Ibn Mas’ud, Abu Talha, and others, and they all heard and narrated the same thing; 3) there is also an indication that she recanted her position and agreed with the others – as Ibn Hajar mentioned – for Ibn Ishaq recorded in his *Maghazi* with a strong (jayyid) chain that A’isha related this hadith and said “they hear” instead of “they know.”

17) The Messenger (asws) said: “No one visits the grave of his brother believer and greets him except that the inhabitant of the grave finds joy in that and knows who visits him, and returns his greeting.”¹⁴⁶ Also, it is recorded that ‘Amr ibn al-‘As in his last moments requested that those who bury him remain around his grave for a period of time so that he may find comfort and joy through that.¹⁴⁷

18) He (asws) also said: “Indeed, the deceased person is aware of and knows who washes him, carries him, and lowers him into his grave.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Recorded by Bukhari (*Kitab al-Jana’iz*, #1281 and *Kitab al-Maghazi* #3679, 3681-82), and by Muslim (#1547, 5121), Nasa’i (#2047-49), Tabarani (M. Kabir 5:98-99, 10:198 and M. Awsat #8453 and M. Saghir 2:113), Imam Ahmad (#4632, 5870, 11582, 12014), Bayhaqi (*Dala’il*, 3:117), Abu Ya’la (1:130-31 #140, 6:72 #3326, 6:433 #3808), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 2:316), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (p. 425-28 #878-84), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#760, 1209, 1403), Tayalisi (*Musnad*, #40), Humaydi (#226), Ruyani (#979), and others.

¹⁴⁶ Recorded by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in his *Tamhid* and *Istidhkar* (1:185=2:165) from Ibn ‘Abbas, Ibn ‘Asakir in *Tarikh Dimashq* (10:379-80), al-Khatib in *Tarikh Baghdad* (6:137) from Abu Hurayra, Tammam al-Razi (*Fawa’id* #139), Ibn Abi Dunya in his *Kitab al-Qubur* (p. 201-02) on the authority of A’isha, and Imam Suyuti mentioned its authenticity in *Hawi lil Fatawi* (2:170), and others who authenticated it include: Hafiz al-Iraqi (see Munawi’s *Fayd al-Qadir* 5:487), ‘Abd al-Haqq al-Ishbili (*Ahkam* 2:564), al-‘Ayni (*‘Umdat al-Qari*, hadith #1174), and others. Abdur-Razzaq (3:576 #6723) and Ibn Abi Shayba (3:221) also record a similar hadith on the authority of Abu Hurayra, wherein if a person greets someone in the grave whom he doesn’t know, he nonetheless responds to his greeting and returns it. See also Bayhaqi’s *Shu’ab al-Iman* (7:17-19) for statements of the Salaf to the effect that the inhabitants of the graves are aware of who visits them on certain days of the week, and that the Salaf used to do so. See also Ibn Abi Dunya’s *Kitab al-Manamat* (#17-21) and *Kitab al-Qubur* (p. 202-05). In another hadith, the Prophet (asws) said about the martyrs: “I testify that you are alive with Allah... So visit them and greet them, for I swear that no one greets them except that they return his greeting, until Qiyama” (Tabarani in *Kabir* 20:364 and *Awsat* 4:97-98, *Abu Nu’aym* 1:108, *Hakim* 3:29, Bayhaqi’s *Dala’il* 3:307). Imam Suyuti in his *Sharh as-Sudur* (Ch. 38) lists over 80 examples of Salaf who would visit the deceased and communicate with them and hear their replies, with the deceased perceiving their visitors and what they say and do.

¹⁴⁷ Recorded by Muslim (*Kitab al-Iman* #173), Imam Ahmad (#17112, 17145), Bayhaqi (*Sunan*, #7165), and Ibn ‘Asakir (46:193-95). Related to this, Imam Ahmad said, “the Prophets are alive in their graves praying, and the grave-dweller recognizes his visitors the day of Jum’a” (*al-‘Aqida lil Imam Ahmad bi Riwayat al-Khallal*, p. 121).

¹⁴⁸ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:3, 62) from Abu Sa’id al-Khudri, Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Awsat* (7:257 #7438), Ibn Abi Dunya (*Kitab al-Qubur* p. 214-15, *Kitab al-Manamat* #6), Hafiz al-Khatib in *Tarikh Baghdad* (12:211), *Abu Nu’aym* (3:349), *Daylami* (*Firdaws*, 4:514 #6989), and others, and it is *Da’if*.

19) The great Tabi'i Thabit al-Bunani used to pray, "O Allah! If You would give anyone the honor of making salat in his grave, then give me that honor." Later, on the day of his death, Jubair (another Tabi'i) said: "I swear by Allah Who created me, I put Thabit al-Bunani in his grave that day when we buried him and with me was a person named Humaid at-Taweel, and when we had finished putting the stones on the grave one of them fell down and I saw Thabit making salat in his grave."¹⁴⁹

20) One of the Sahaba pitched his tent over a grave (without knowing it was a grave) and when he was inside the tent, he heard someone reciting from surat al-Mulk. He later went to the Prophet Muhammad (asws) and told him what he heard, and the Prophet informed him that surat al-Mulk is a protection against the punishment of the grave, and that it is protecting him. This hadith also demonstrates how pious slaves in the graves have awareness, and the living can in some cases hear them as a Karama.¹⁵⁰

21) al-'Attaf said: My aunt told me that she visited the graves of the martyrs and greeted them, and she physically heard the reply, telling her, "We recognize you just as we know ourselves." She also said: "I visited the grave of Hamza and prayed next to him, and there was no one else in the area, and when I went to greet him, I heard the reply coming from below the earth without doubt, just as I have no doubt that Allah created me, and that there is night and day, and every hair of my body shook."¹⁵¹

22) Before Sayyidina Umar was buried in her room, Sayyida A'isha would go in there without her hijab, as those who were buried there were only her husband and her father. But after Umar was buried there too, she would only go in the room with hijab.¹⁵² This action clearly shows that according to her, the dead can feel and see their visitors and are aware of those who come to them and how they come to them.

23) Finally, Ibn Qayyim in his Kitab ar-Ruh (p. 108) recorded that Salman al-Farisi said: "The (deceased) souls of the believers are on an isthmus (barzakh) of land, and they move wherever they wish."¹⁵³ He also wrote (p. 102-03): "What should also be known about the

¹⁴⁹ Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (8:317), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, 3:155 #3189), Abu Nu'aym (Hilya, 2:319, 322), Ibn Sa'd (Tabaqat, 7:233), Imam Ahmad (K. Zuhd), and Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Qubur #132, K. Tahajjud #154-56, 414 Hasan). Hadith Sahih. See also Suyuti's Sharh as-Sudur (Ch. 36) and Dhahabi's Siyar (5:222).

¹⁵⁰ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#2815, hasan gharib) from Ibn 'Abbas, Tabarani in Mu'jam al-Kabir (12:175 #12801), Bayhaqi (Dala'il, 7:41), and Ibn 'Adiyy (Kamil, 7:2662). Suyuti said it is Hasan. It has a Sahih corroborative narration from Ibn Mas'ud, in which he heard someone reciting Tabarak from the grave, and other supporting narrations (from Abu Nu'aym, Ibn Mandah, Ibn Jarir in Tahdhib al-Athar, and others) cited by Hafiz Suyuti in his Sharh as-Sudur (Ch. 36), which show that the Salihin in their graves pray and recite Qur'an. Hafiz Ibn Rajab wrote in his Ahwal al-Qubur: "Allah might honor some of the inhabitants of Barzakh with the ability to perform righteous acts, even if no reward is gained from that due to actions being cut-off at death. However, He allows him to continue in these acts so that he may find pleasure in the remembrance and obedience of Allah, just as the angels and inhabitants of the Garden perform righteous acts without there being any reward for them in that." Then he proceeded to cite numerous narrations and examples.

¹⁵¹ Hakim (3:29), Bayhaqi (Dala'il, 3:307-08), Ibn Jarir in Tahdhib al-Athar, Ibn Abi Dunya in K. Sabr and K. Man 'Asha ba'd al-Mawt, and others. There are many examples of visitors to Hamza hearing his reply.

¹⁵² Recorded by Ahmad (6:202 #24480), Hakim (Mustadrak, 3:61 and 4:7), and Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqat (3:364), and it is Sahih according to Dhahabi and Haythami (Majma' az-Zawa'id, #12704).

¹⁵³ Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #1355), Ibn Mubarak (#429), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Tawakkul #12, K. Manamat #21, 58) with a strong chain, and Hakim Tirmidhi in his Nawadir (Asl #167, and #128: "On the spirits meeting each other in

Ruh and its qualities we discussed is that it differs from one to the other in accordance with its strength or weakness, and vastness or smallness. So, for example, the large vast Ruh has qualities which those lesser than it don't, and you behold the great variety which the spirits have in this world in such things as their modalities, strengths, speeds, the support extended to them, etc. As for the Ruh free of the cage of its body and its shackles and attachments, it has such influence (on others), strength, penetration, concentration (himma), speed in ascending to Allah, and attachment to Him Most High that the other Ruh controlled and caged in the body and its attachments does not have. If its state is such when it is confined in its body, then how would it be when it divests and releases itself from it and gathers its strength, especially considering that in origin it is pure, lofty, vast, and has high himma... And numerous reports have been mass-transmitted from all types of people seeing the action of the Ruh after the death (of its body) – which it could not do when connected to its living body – such as conquering whole armies by one or two of them... How often were the Prophet (asws) and Abu Bakr and Umar seen in dreams defeating large armies of the Kuffar, and such a thing later happened in real life, even though the armies of the believers were weak and few in number?" Abdullah ibn 'Amr related: "The spirits of the believers meet each other (in this life) over a distance of a day's travel for bodies, and they never met before physically" (Imam Ahmad in his Musnad 2:175, 220).

Imam Bayhaqi also wrote a whole booklet about the lives of the Prophets in their graves, from which we have quoted above. He also said, "There are a number of proofs which demonstrate the life of the Prophets after their earthly passing." And about the hadith, "All the people will be thunderstruck (sa'aq), and then I will be the first one to wake up,"¹⁵⁴ he said: "This can be correctly understood when we know that Allah has returned to the Prophets their spirits, so that they are alive in their graves like the martyrs. So when the first blow of the Trumpet is sounded, they will be thunderstruck out of consciousness, and this does not mean death in its full meaning, but rather that they will lose their ability to perceive and sense;" which is why he said, "and I will be the first to regain my senses (yafiq)" instead of saying "the first to be revived to life," thereby using the same wording as Allah used in Q7:143, when Musa (alayhi salam) fell thunderstruck out of consciousness (sa'aq) and then came back to his senses (afaq).¹⁵⁵

Imam Qurtubi also wrote about this hadith in his Tadhkira and said: "Death does not mean total non-existence, but rather means moving from one state to another. And this is indicated by the fact that the martyrs - after their martyrdom and death - are alive in their graves, sustained with provision, happy, and joyous, and these are characteristics of the living in this world. And if this is the case with the martyrs, then the Prophets are more worthy of this special distinction. Furthermore, it is authentically narrated that the earth does not consume/decompose the bodies of the Prophets, and that the Prophet Muhammad (asws) met with all of the other Prophets during the Night Ascension (and how could this be if they are dead (in the atheistic sense)?), and that he saw Sayyidina Musa (alayhi salam) standing and praying in his grave, and that he informed us that he returns the greetings of whoever greets him...and other proofs, all of which indicate to us with full certainty that the "death" of the

the world"). See Haythami's Majma' (10:274). Imam Malik said the same thing, as mentioned by Imam al-Ghazali in his Ihya' Ulum ad-Din (Volume 4: Book on the Reality of Death and the Afterlife).

¹⁵⁴ Recorded by Bukhari (#2235, 3156), Muslim (#4376-77), and many others.

¹⁵⁵ See Hawi lil Fatawi 2:149. The quote is from the end of Imam Bayhaqi's Hayat al-Anbiya fi Quburihim.

Prophets consists of their becoming absent from us in a way we cannot comprehend, even though they are alive and existent. And this is similar to the state of the angels, for they exist and are living, but none of our species can perceive them, except those among the Awliya whom Allah blesses with their vision as a Karama” (Hawi lil Fatawi, 2:149).

Imam Suyuti also quotes other scholars who wrote similar things, such as Shaykh al-Islam Tajuddin as-Subki, Shaykh Abu Mansur Abdal-Qahir al-Baghdadi and Shaykh ‘Afif ad-Din al Yafi’i, who wrote: “The Awliya receive certain spiritual states (ahwal) in which they witness the spiritual domains (malakut) of the heavens and the earth, and see the Prophets (asws) in their visions as alive, not dead, just as the Prophet Muhammad (asws) saw the Prophet Musa (asws) alive in his grave. And it is established that whatever is possible for the Prophet as a miracle, is similarly possible for the Wali as a Karama, on the condition that it not be a challenge against the Prophet (since the Awliya inherit from the Anbiya). And no one denies this fact except an ignorant one. And the proof-texts that support the lives of the Prophets are numerous...” (Hawi lil Fatawi, 2:150).

Ibn Qayyim, in his masterpiece Kitab ar-Ruh, mentioned in the first section of that book that the dead can hear the greeting of those who greet them, which he corroborated with many authentic hadiths like the ones above. Then he wrote: “Greeting someone who does not have the ability to sense or comprehend is logically impossible, and the Prophet (asws) taught his community that when they visit graves they should greet their inhabitants and say, “Peace be upon you, O people of this place among the believing Muslims, and we will God-willing follow after you...”¹⁵⁶ As for the inhabitant of the grave, he hears this greeting and understands it and returns it, even if the greeter cannot hear the dead returning the greeting. And if they pray in the vicinity of the grave, then the grave’s inhabitant sees this and knows they are praying...”

Even Ibn Taymiyya, when asked whether the dead could perceive the living acquaintances that visit them, answered, “There is no doubt that they can.” And in another place, he related the authentic hadith mentioned above (#17) in support of his position.¹⁵⁷

Now considering the overwhelming evidence above, what can the reader make of the words of Nasir al-Albani, who wrote in the introduction to the third edition of his commentary on the book by Nu‘man al-Alusi called The Clear Proofs that the Dead Cannot Hear the following: “This edition was published... due to the public’s need to study it, especially those of them who still live in the mud holes of the first Jahiliyya, who seek aid and help from other than Allah, through the dead Prophets and Awliya’, imagining that they could hear them when they call to them...” This is a gross error of ignorance on the part of al-Albani, and this is not excusable from one who portrays himself as the master of hadith scholars of his time!

¹⁵⁶ Recorded by Muslim (#367, 1618-20), Abu Dawud (#2818), Nasa’i (Sunan #150, 2010, 2012 and Sunan Kubra #10931), Tirmidhi (#973), Ibn Majah (#1535, 4296), Darimi (#78), Imam Ahmad (#7652, 8523, 15425, 23288), Imam Malik (#53), Ibn as-Sunni (#588-93) and Nasa’i (#1091) in their ‘Amal al-Yowm wa’l Layla, Abu Ya’la (8:69, 86-87, 199, 249-250, and 11:387 #6502), Tayalisi (#1532), Ibn Khuzayma (K. Wudu’, #6), Ibn Hibban (3:321 #1046, 7:443-46 #3171-73), Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (4:78-79, 5:249) and Dala’il (6:537), Diya’ al-Maqdisi in his Mukhtara (9:541), Abdur-Razzaq (3:570-72 #6712, 3:574-76 #6718-22), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:220-21), Baghawi (#1556), Tabarani (Mu’jam al-Kabir 2:45-46, 12:108, al-Awsat 3:177, 6:142 and as-Saghir 1:244-45), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 1:409), Ruyani (Musnad, #2, 15), and Ibn Sa’d (Tabaqat, 2:204).

¹⁵⁷ See Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya 24:362 and 24:331.

Visiting Graves to Obtain the Blessings of their Inhabitants

To begin, it must be understood that the act of visiting graves is permissible in Islam, and therefore anyone who blames or censures one who visits graves is himself committing wrong and should be corrected. Imam Muslim records in his Sahih from Burayda that the Prophet (asws) said, “Previously I had forbidden you to visit graves, but now visit them...”¹⁵⁸ The wording is obvious that it should at least be considered recommended, and Imam Nawawi comments on this hadith and says: “It explicitly states that the prohibition of men visiting graves has been lifted, and scholars unanimously concur that visiting them is sunna for men. As for women, there is disagreement...” (Sharh Sahih Muslim, 7:46-47).

Imam Nawawi also wrote (Kitab al-Adhkar, p. 226): “It is recommended for the one who visits (the grave) to recite much Qur’an and dhikr and du’a on behalf of the inhabitants of that graveyard, and also for the rest of the deceased and the entirety of the Muslims. In addition, it is recommended to make numerous visits (to the graves) and especially to frequent the graves of the people of righteousness and blessing” And he wrote (p. 264): “Know that all who go for the pilgrimage should also direct themselves to visiting the Messenger of Allah (saws), whether that be on his way (back home) or not...”

Secondly, we have already seen in another chapter that he (asws) taught A’isha the proper procedure for visiting graves and what to say in that occasion. He would not have taught us the procedure to visit graves if it was forbidden to visit graves!

What about visiting them to obtain blessings from their inhabitants, especially if they are Prophets or Awliya’? Visiting graves with the intention of gaining blessings (tabarruk) is also allowed in Islam, and we have already seen some examples of authentic narrations wherein the Salaf used to visit the Prophet’s (asws) grave for blessings.

On Visiting the Prophet (asws) in his Grave (Ziyara)

Allah says: “...And had (idh) they – when they oppressed their souls – come to you (jaa’uk) and asked forgiveness of Allah, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, surely they would have found that Allah is Accepting of repentance (and) Merciful” (Q4:64). This verse covers both the time of the Prophet’s (asws) earthly life and the time after his passing, up until the Day of Judgment, and this is for a number of reasons. Firstly, this is Qur’anic revelation, and therefore it holds its force until the Day of Judgment, and there is no other verse that abrogates it. Secondly, according to the rules of Arabic grammar, when a verb

¹⁵⁸ Recorded by Muslim (#1623, 3651), Tirmidhi (#974), Abu Dawud (#2816), Nasa’i (#2005, 5558-59), Abdur-Razzaq (3:569 #6708), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:223-24), Ibn Majah (#1560), Imam Ahmad (#4092, 21880, 21939, 21974; Sahih according to Haythami in Majma’ az-Zawa’id, 3:57), Imam Malik (#919), Abu Ya’la (Musnad, 6:372-74 #3705-07, 9:202 #5299), Hakim in his Mustadrak (1:374-76) who said it was Sahih, Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (4:76-77 #6983-84), Tayalisi (#844), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 1:407), Daraqutni (Sunan, 4:259), Ibn Hibban (3:261 #981, 7:440 #3169), Tabarani in his Mu’jam as-Saghir (2:42, 43), Awsat (1:82-83, 3:133, 4:69, 5:147), and Kabir (#1152, 1419, 4648), Ruyani (Musnad, 1:62 #3), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (Musnad, #983), Harith (Zawa’id, #279), Hakim Tirmidhi in Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #15), Baghawi in Sharh as-Sunna (#1553), Daylami in Firdaws (2:420-21 #3159-60, 5:32 #7084), and Ahmad ibn Mani’ in his Musnad with a Sahih chain according to Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani. Cf. Haythami’s Majma’ az-Zawa’id (3:57-58 #4301-02: Sahih).

comes in the form of a condition (shart), then the application of that verb is general and unrestricted (mutlaq). Therefore, it includes in its general scope all moments of time from the moment of its revelation until the Last Day, just as it includes all places from which one travels to him, whether near or far. Thirdly, according to the principles (Usul) of Fiqh, general and unrestricted texts can only be qualified and restricted with another primary proof-text (dalil) of equal status, and in this case, there is no such primary text which exists. Fourthly, the particle of the condition – “idh” – is applicable to the future just as it can apply to the past, and there are many examples in the Qur’an itself where it is used in the future tense.¹⁵⁹ Fifthly, the scholars of Tafsir, such as Ibn Kathir, Qurtubi, Tha’alibi, and others, understood the verse in this way, and this is why they mentioned in their commentaries the famous story of al-‘Utbi, wherein a beduin Arab came to the noble grave and requested the Prophet (asws) to ask forgiveness for him. Also, Ibn Mas’ud also understood that this verse is applicable for all times.¹⁶⁰ And we have already seen in a previous section the Sahih hadith which states, “...and my death is a great good for you, for your actions will be presented to me, and if I see good I will praise Allah, and if I see other than that I will ask forgiveness from Him for you,” just as this verse states. Therefore, we see that this noble verse calls for the believers to come visit the Prophet (asws) and request him to intercede to our Lord and ask forgiveness for us, using him as a means (wasila) to our Lord’s forgiveness and mercy... and this is nothing other than visiting the Prophet (asws) and coming to his noble grave. Otherwise, the other verse would apply: “And if you say to them, ‘Come, so that the Messenger may ask forgiveness on your behalf,’ they turn their heads in defiance” (Q63:5).

We have seen above the Sahih hadith in which the Prophet (asws) says “visit the graves”, without any restriction or qualification to the generality in the wording. He did not say, “visit the graves except my grave,” or “visit only those graves near you.” Therefore, this is one of the strongest proof-texts for ziyara.

1) ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab related that the Prophet (asws) said, “Whoever visits my grave, my intercession (shafa’a) will be guaranteed for him.”¹⁶¹ This hadith is considered

¹⁵⁹ Such as in: Q6:27, 30, 93 and Q32:12 and Q34:51, all of which refer to the (future) Judgment Day. I mention this point here because certain people who are not strong in their knowledge of Arabic claim that the particle “idh” can only be applied in the past tense, and therefore – according to this faulty argument – this verse and what it calls for (coming to the Prophet asws and seeking forgiveness) no longer holds.

¹⁶⁰ Recorded by Bayhaqi (Shu’ab al-Iman, 2:376), Tabarani (M. al-Kabir, 9:220), Hakim (2:305), and others. It is Sahih according to Haythami (Majma’, 7:11-12), Hakim, and Dhahabi. See also Suyuti’s Durr al-Manthur (2:498).

¹⁶¹ Recorded by Daraqutni in his Sunan (2:278), Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab al-Iman (3:490 #4159), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 2:57 #1198 – Haythami’s Majma’ 4:2 “Da’if”), Dulabi in his Kuna (#1483), Ibn Abi Dunya, Hakim Tirmidhi (Nawadir, Asl #112), Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn ‘Asakir (Mukhtasar, 2:406), Dinawari in his Mujalasa (1:73 #129), ‘Uqayli (4:170), Asbahani in his Targhib (1:447), al-Khatib in his Talkhis al-Mutashabih (1:581), and many others. Imam Taqiy as-Subki (Shifa’ as-Siqam, p. 12-14), Hafiz Abdul-Haqq al-Ishbili in his Ahkam (1:467), and Ibn as-Sakan, consider it Sahih, while Dhahabi (in Mizan al-‘itidal 4:226), Ibn Hajar (Talkhis al-Habir 2:266-7), Samhudi (Wafa’ al-Wafa’, 4:1337-71), Sakhawi (Qawl al-Badi’, p. 160), ‘Ajiluni (Kashf al-Khafa’, 2:328-29 #2489), and al-Lacknawi (Dhafar al-Amani, p. 422) declare it Hasan. Some, like Ibn Taymiya and his student Ibn ‘Abd al-Hadi, try to weaken it because they say Musa ibn Hilal – one of the narrators – is “unknown” (majhul), but this is incorrect because Imam Ahmad narrated directly from him in his Musnad (#11590, #12400) – and Ahmad is known as one of those who narrate hadiths only from the trustworthy (thiqa), as did 15 other trustworthy hadith masters, which would remove his unknown status. Also, Ibn ‘Adiyy in his Kamil (6:2350) and Dhahabi in his Mizan declared his status acceptable, so his hadith are Hasan if not Sahih. Also, it is established that Musa ibn Hilal relates this hadith from two brothers: ‘Ubayd Allah ibn Umar al-‘Umari (one of the narrators of Bukhari and Muslim, whose trustworthiness is unanimously accepted) and his brother Abdullah. The majority

a true authentic hadith by the scholars, and is furthermore the basis, along with other hadiths, of the strongly established practice of visiting the Prophet (asws) in his grave after the rights of Hajj, as detailed by Shaykh al-Islam as-Subki in *Shifa as-Siqam*, Imam Nawawi in his *Kitab al-Adhkar* (p. 264-66) and his *Majmu'* (8:199-204) and his *Sharh Muslim* (2:177), Qurtubi in his *Tafsir* (Q16:122), Zurqani's *Sharh al-Mawahib* (8:314-15), Ibn Juzayy al-Maliki in his *Qawanin Fiqhiyya* (1:95), 'Izz ibn Abdus-Salam in his *Qawa'id al-Ahkam* (1:39), Imam Dhahabi in *Siyar an-Nubala'* (4:484-485), Ibn Qudama al-Hanbali in his *Mughni* (3:297-99), Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali in his *Furu'* (3:385) and his *Mubdi'* (1:192-93, 3:258), Qadi 'Iyad in his *Shifa'* (2:54-55) and its commentators Mulla Ali Qari (3:842) and Shihab al-Khafaji, Shawkani in his *Nayl al-Awtar* (5:178-80), Ibn 'Abidin al-Hanafi in his *Hashiya* (2:257), Ibn Humam al-Hanafi in *Sharh Fath al-Qadir* (3:179-81), and many others.

This hadith is furthermore strengthened by the following narrations: 2) "Whoever visits me without any intended purpose other than my visit, it is incumbent upon me to be his intercessor on the Day of Rising."¹⁶² 3) "Whoever (makes pilgrimage then) visits me after my death, it is as if he visited me during my (earthly) life,"¹⁶³ because he is alive in his grave. 4) Anas ibn

of the chains of this hadith converge and agree upon 'Ubayd Allah, so his chain takes precedence. As for Abdullah, he was weakened by Nasa'i, Ibn Madini, al-Qattan, Ibn Hibban, and others, but declared reliable by Imam Ahmad (Jarh wa Ta'dil, 5:109-110), Ahmad ibn Salih (Thiqat Ibn Shahin, p. 151), Ibn as-Sakan, Tirmidhi (#782), Yahya ibn Ma'in, Ibn 'Adiyy (Kamil, 4:1459-61), al-'Ijli (Thiqat, p. 239), Ya'qub ibn Shayba (Tarikh Baghdad, 10:20), Sakhawi, Dhahabi (Mughni, 1:348), and he is retained by Muslim in conjunction with another chain (#3194, 3975). Ibn Ma'in said especially that his chain from Nafi' (as in this case) is strong, and Ibn Hibban said the reason for his mistakes is because he spent his time in worship instead of study of hadith. But this criticism does not hold in this case, because the hadith is from Nafi' (and thus strong), and because the wording is short and easy for anyone to memorize after hearing it once. So both chains are strong and the hadith is Hasan.

¹⁶² Recorded by Tabarani (M. al-Kabir 12:291 #13149, al-Awsat 5:16 #4546), Ibn Muqri' in his *Mu'jam* (p. 80 #158), Daraqutni in his *Amali*, Abu Nu'aym (Tarikh Asbahani 2:189-90), and Hafiz Ibn as-Sakan in his *Sunan as-Sihah*, and he said it is Sahih. However, Haythami (4:2 #5842) said that one of the narrators (Maslama ibn Salim) is Da'if, but his weakness is light. Therefore, it is acceptable as a corroborative narration (shahid). See also Dhahabi's *Mizan al-'Itdal* (6:415).

¹⁶³ Recorded – with different chains – by Tabarani in his *Mu'jam al-Kabir* (12:406-07 #13496-97) and *Awsat* (1:94-95, 3:351), Daraqutni (2:278 #193), Bayhaqi in his *Sunan* (5:246 #10409-10) and *Shu'ab* (3:488 #4151, 4154), Ibn 'Asakir (Mukhtasar Tarikh, 2:407), Fakihi in *Akhbar Makka* (1:437), Janadi in *Fada'il Madina* (p. 39 #52), Asbahani (Targhib 1:446), 'Uqayli (3:457), Ibn 'Adiyy (2:790), and Ibn Najjar (Akhbar Madina p. 219). 1) Sakhawi (Maqasid, #1125) quotes Dhahabi as saying that the chain of Hatib (recorded by Daraqutni, al-Maqdisi and others) is one of the best chains of this hadith, which is thru Waki' from Abdullah ibn 'Awn from al-Sha'bi (all of whom are narrators of Bukhari and Muslim), from Harun ibn Qaz'a from someone of the family of Hatib, from Hatib. Harun is Da'if according to Ya'qub ibn Shayba, 'Uqayli and others, but Ibn Hibban (Thiqat 7:580) said he is thiqqa, and Yahya ibn Ma'in said (Tahdhib 5:67): "if al-Sha'bi narrates from a person and names him, then he is thiqqa and his narrations are considered and used as proof." The only remaining defect then is the unnamed narrator from the family of Hatib the Companion. Therefore, its weakness is light, and it can be used as a corroborative narration. Also, Ibn 'Asakir's chain is: Harun from Hatib. 2) As for 'Uqayli's chain, it is thru Fudala al-Ma'ribi from Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Ma'ribi from Ibn Jurayj from 'Ata', from Ibn 'Abbas. As for Ibn Yahya al-Ma'ribi, he is thiqqa according to Daraqutni, Dhahabi (Kashif 3:95), Ibn Hibban (Thiqat 9:45), and Ibn Abi Hatim remained silent about him (Jarh wa Ta'dil 8:123). However, Ibn 'Adiyy said his hadith are disclaimed (munkar), but he only provided two examples, the first of which is not the fault of al-Ma'ribi but al-Hamadani who narrated from him (see 'Uqayli's Du'afa 2:25), and the second of which is found in the *Sunan* of Abu Dawud (#2663), Tirmidhi (#1301), Ibn Majah (#2466), and Darimi (#2494), and Ibn Hibban said this hadith is Sahih (10:351), which shows that Ibn 'Adiyy's claim is unfounded. As for Ibn Jurayj being a concealer of sources (tadlis), in this chain he is narrating from 'Ata, and he specifically said: "when I say 'Ata said', then I heard it directly from him, even if I don't mention that explicitly" (Tahdhib 6:406). Therefore, any weakness in this chain would come mainly from Fudala. 'Uqayli said that his chain is "soft" (layyin), which is the highest and

Malik related that the Prophet (asws) said: “He who comes to Madina with the intention of visiting me, I shall be his witness (on his behalf) and intercessor on the Day of Judgment.”¹⁶⁴ 5) The Prophet (asws) also said: “Whoever sends benedictions (salawat) upon me *at my grave*, I hear him, and whoever sends benediction upon me from far away, then I am informed of that (by an angel).”¹⁶⁵ His emphasizing the salawat “at his grave” implies his recommendation of visiting his grave.

Qatada related that Sayyidina ‘Umar asked Ka’b al-Ahbar, “Why don’t you move to Madina, the location of the migration (hijra) and grave of the Messenger (asws)?” Ka’b replied, “Yes Oh commander of the believers, I will do so.”¹⁶⁶ In addition, when the Prophet (asws) in the last year of his earthly life was sending Mu’adh ibn Jabal to Yemen, he said: “O Mu’adh...you shall not meet me again after this year in which I find myself. Perhaps you will pass by my mosque here, and my grave (i.e. to visit me)?” and Mu’adh wept profusely at the thought of parting with him (asws)...”¹⁶⁷ In other words, the Prophet (asws) was encouraging his beloved companion Mu’adh to pay him a visit at his grave after his (asws) passing away, as did ‘Umar with Ka’b. The Prophet (asws) also made statements of

strongest form of Da’if hadith, closest to being Hasan. So it is acceptable as a corroborative narration. 3) There is another weak chain for this hadith containing Hafs (the Imam and famous Qari), who is Da’if in hadith because many errors crept in his narrations, and he was declared passable only by Imam Ahmad and Waki’. As for Ibn Kharrash saying he is a liar and forger, it is very strange, for how could he be trustworthy and unanimously accepted when it comes to Qur’an, but rejected as a lying forger when it comes to hadith? Also, Hafs is not alone in this, but there is a corollary chain (mutaba’a) for it in Tabarani’s Kabir: A’isha bint Yunus (instead of Hafs) from Layth from Mujahid from Ibn ‘Umar, which is a Da’if chain according to Haythami (4:2). In any case, all of these different chains (from at least three Sahaba) corroborate each other and make the hadith “Hasan”, and strengthen the first hadith even further.

¹⁶⁴ Recorded by Bayhaqi in *Shu’ab* (3:488-90, 492) and *Sunan* (5:245 #10408), Hamza as-Sahmi in *Tarikh Jurjan* (p. 220, 433), Ibn Abi Dunya, Ibn ‘Asakir, ‘Uqayli (4:362), and others. Suyuti said it was Hasan, in his *Jami’ as-Saghir* (#8716), while others said it is Da’if. Also narrated by Ishaq ibn Rahawayh in his *Musnad* thru another chain of strong trustworthy (thiqa) narrators, except that the one who narrates from Anas is unnamed. Nonetheless, it strengthens the first chain. Tayalisi (*Musnad*, #65) also narrated this hadith with very similar wording with another Da’if chain according to Hafiz Busiri (*Ithaf as-Sada*, 4:392 #3210), who said it has a supporting narration in Abu Ya’la (#5790) and Tabarani’s *Kabir* (24:294), with a Sahih chain. It also has another supporting narration – with different wording – in Abdur-Razzaq’s *Musannaf* (9:267 #17166).

¹⁶⁵ Recorded by Abu’l Shaykh in his *Kitab al-Thawab* from Abu Hurayra with a strong (jayyid) chain according to Ibn Hajar (*Fath al-Bari*, 6:488). All of its narrators are of Bukhari’s and Muslim’s *Sahih* (see B: #457, 3915 and M: #79, 115), except Abdur-Rahman ibn al-A’raj (d. 300H). Abu’l Shaykh (*Tabaqat al-Muhaddithin* 3:541) and Abu Nu’aym (*Akhbar Asbahan* 2:113) both mentioned him, giving neither commendation nor discreditation. Therefore, because no one has weakened him, and the one who narrates from him is a trustworthy (thiqa) Hafiz (Abu’l Shaykh) – which constitutes an implicit authentication, and it does not contradict another authentic hadith; this makes the hadith Sahih according to the rules of hadith science (see on this, for example, Hafiz Dhahabi’s *Mizan al-I’tidal* 1:556, 2:40, 93, 3:426, Ibn Salah’s *Muqaddima* p. 145, and Sakhawi’s *Fath al-Mughith* 1:298). Hafiz Sakhawi said (*al-Qawl al-Badi*, p. 154) that its chain is strong as stated by Ibn Hajar. It is Hasan or Sahih according to Suyuti (*Jami’ Saghir* #8812, *Khasa’is Kubra* 2:489, *Sharh Sunan Nasa’i* 4:110, *La’ali Masnu’a* 1:283), *Shawkani* (*Fawa’id*, p. 325), and others. There is another chain for this hadith recorded by Bayhaqi, al-Khatib, ‘Uqayli, Abu Nu’aym, and others, which contains a narrator who is a liar and fabricator...but that does not affect the strength and authenticity of this chain of the hadith, which is Sahih.

¹⁶⁶ Recorded by Ibn ‘Asakir in his *Tarikh* (1:121), and Tabari (17:46) and Baghawi (3:251) in their *Tafsirs*.

¹⁶⁷ Imam Ahmad (5:235 #21040-42; *Sahih* - Haythami 3:16, 9:22), Bazzar (*Musnad* 7:91, *Zawa’id* #804), Tabarani (*M. al-Kabir*, 20:89-90, 121 and *Musnad Shamiyyin*, #991), Bayhaqi (*Sunan*, 10:86 and *Dala’il*, 5:404-05), Ibn Hibban (2:414-15 #647), Ibn Abi ‘Asim in *K. Sunna* (p. 486) and *Ahad wa Mathani* (#1640), and others. This hadith also proves that he (asws) knew his grave would be in his Mosque.

encouragement in knowing and visiting the blessed graves of other Prophets ¹⁶⁸, based on which we can derive (qiyas) the recommendation to visit his (asws) grave. Hafiz Ibn Hajar wrote, “The believers are attached and attracted to Madina specifically because of visiting the Prophet (asws) and praying in his Masjid and seeking blessings from his relics.” ¹⁶⁹ For other examples of Sahaba and Salaf visiting his grave and seeking blessings and help, see Bayhaqi’s Shu’ab (#4161-64, 4177), Ibn Abi ‘Asim’s Ahad wa Mathani (1:163) and Kitab az-Zuhd (1:369), Ibn ‘Asakir’s Tarikh Dimashq (36:178), Ibn Jawzi’s Sifat as-Safwa (2:205), Dhahabi’s Siyar A’lam an-Nubala (6:273), and many others. Imam Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 2:203) quoted al-Halimi who said, “As for today, showing him (alayhi salat wa salam) reverence (ta’dhim) means visiting him...”, and showing him (asws) reverence is something we are ordered to do by Allah (see Q48:9).

Imam Suyuti in his Durar al-Muntathara (#173), Dhahabi, Munawi, ‘Ajuni in Kashf al-Khafa (2:328 #2489), and others said that these narrations strengthen each other as none contains any liar or forger (in their chains of transmission). This disproves Ibn Taymiya’s repeated claims in many of his Fatawa that “all the hadiths on visiting the grave of the Prophet (asws) are weak, rather, they are forged.” Hafiz Sakhawi wrote (al-Qawl al-Badi’ p. 160): “The emphasis on and encouragement towards 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 Prophet (asws) promises that his intercession among other things becomes guaranteed for whoever visits him, and the Imams are in complete agreement from the time directly after his passing to our own time that visiting him is among the best acts of drawing near to Allah.” When the totality of the Fuqaha say, “after completing the rites of Hajj in Makka, it is strongly recommended (or mandatory according to the Dhahiris and some of the Malikis) to visit the grave of the Prophet (asws) in Madina...,” it is obvious that traveling to visit his grave is included as a necessary part of this act, which is the sole purpose behind the Umma traveling to Madina after Hajj, as detailed by Shawkani (Nayl Awtar 3:94-97) and others.

In complete defiance of this established unanimous consensus of the Imams and scholars, Ibn Taymiya prohibits traveling to visit the Prophet’s grave (asws), while allowing the visit to his mosque...and claims in his Fatwas (27:139, 184, 226, 416) that it is also forbidden to shorten the prayers when someone intends to visit his grave (since that is a sin to him), but allows shortening the prayers when traveling to do something haram (Fatawa, 24:109)! He uses as ‘proof’ the hadith (“Traveling shall not be undertaken except to the three mosques...”), which is really no proof at all for what he states, for that is not what it means. This hadith is among those which are “general in wording, specific in meaning” as demonstrated by the scholars. The scholars have explained it to mean that vows to pray in a certain masjid are mandatory to fulfill only if it is to one of those three masjid; whereas if for example one makes a vow to pray specifically in the Masjid al-Amawi in Damascus, then that vow does not have to be fulfilled there, but (the vow of prayer) can be made in any other masjid. It has nothing to do with visiting the one who is buried within the Masjid, and

¹⁶⁸ For example: the grave of Musa asws (Bukhari #1253, 3155); the old lady who entered Paradise because of knowing the location of Yusuf’s grave asws (Tabarani’s Awsat 7:374-75, Ibn Hibban 2:500-01, Abu Ya’la 13:236 – Sahih: Majma’ 10:170-71); the well of Prophet Salih’s camel (Bukhari #3128, Fath Bari 6:380); the large tree under which 70 Prophets were born (Malik 1:423 #844, Nasa’i #2945, Ahmad 2:138); and other examples.

¹⁶⁹ See his Fath al-Bari (4:93-94). The only reason Madina is special and blessed is because it is where the Prophet (asws) migrated, and where his blessed body lays to this day, as explained by Nawawi in his Majmu’ (7:389), Ibn Abd al-Barr in his Tamhid (12:229), Qadi ‘Iyad (Shifa’, many places), and many others.

thus there is no prohibition against such a thing in that hadith. This is strengthened by the fact that another narration ¹⁷⁰ states, “Traveling should not be undertaken to a specific mosque in which prayers are desired except the Masjid al-Haram...” In other words, it contains explicit mention that the intent is to perform prayers in a certain mosque as a vow, with no mention of any intent to visit someone. This hadith then speaks only about places, and not the people living or buried in those places. Imam Nawawi wrote (Sharh Muslim, 9:106): “The scholars have differed about traveling to other than the three mosques, such as to the graves of the righteous and blessed places and so on... The correct understanding according to us – which was chosen by Imam al-Haramayn (al-Juwayni) and the other verifying scholars – is that this is neither forbidden nor disliked.” So where in this hadith is there any prohibition against visiting a person?

We have also seen above how the wording of the hadiths (and the Qur’anic verse) is general and can be applied to coming from near or far, with or without traveling, especially how the wording of the hadith declared Sahih by Hafiz Ibn as-Sakan (#2 above) is specific in forming the intention solely around coming to visit him. He (asws) also referred to traveling from one city to another as “ziyara” (Muslim #4656), the same word used in these hadiths. It was also his yearly practice to travel outside Madina to visit the graves of the martyrs. This is all to show the incorrect claim of Ibn Taymiya and his followers who forbid traveling from another city to visit him (asws) or the other righteous servants in their graves. If visiting him is one of the greatest acts of drawing near to Allah, then any means taken to that end – including traveling – is also included in that recommendation and is likewise rewarded.

A further indication that it is incorrect to interpret this hadith in its literal ostensive sense is that the Prophet (asws) stated: “Whoever leaves (i.e. travels) until he comes to this mosque – the mosque of Quba’ – and prays in it, he obtains rewards equivalent to an ‘Umrah.” ¹⁷¹ And in the narration of Tabarani: “Whoever makes wudu’ with fullness and care, and then directs himself to the mosque of Quba’, without desiring other than it, and with nothing taking him to it other than his intention to pray in it, and then prays in it four cycles (rak’at)... then he has the reward equivalent of the one who performed the ‘Umrah for Allah.” In addition, Imam Bukhari (#1118) and Imam Malik (Muwatta’, #362) recorded that the Prophet (asws) used to visit the mosque of Quba’ every Saturday, whether on foot or riding, and that Ibn ‘Umar (the narrator) used to do the same. Therefore, the previous hadith cannot be taken according to its ostensive sense (otherwise it would contradict these hadiths), and we can see this in the understanding that the Salaf had of this hadith. For it is reported that Sa’d ibn abi Waqqas said, “That I pray two rak’as in the mosque of Quba’ is more beloved to me than going to Bayt al-Maqdis two times, and had the people known what (reward) is in Quba’, they would have come to it goading their camels’ sides (to urge them on).” ¹⁷² Similarly, all

¹⁷⁰ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:64 #11181) and Abu Ya’la (2:489), from Hashim al-Khurasani (whose trustworthiness is unanimously accepted), from Abdul-Hamid ibn Bahram, from Shahr ibn Hawshab, from Abu Sa’id. Ibn Hajar (Fath 3:65), Shawkani (Nayl, 5:180), and Haythami (Majma’ #5850) stated it is Hasan, and Imam Ahmad, Abu Hatim ar-Razi, and Ahmad ibn Salih all say that “Abdul-Hamid from Shahr is Sahih.”

¹⁷¹ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#298), Nasa’i (#692), Ibn Majah (#1401-02), Ahmad (#15414), Hakim (1:487, 3:12 Sahih), Ibn Abi Shayba (2:267, 7:565), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 1:210, 6:90-91, 19:146), Bayhaqi (Sunan Kubra, 5:248 and Shu’ab al-Iman, 3:499 #4190), Abu Ya’la (#7172), Diya’ (Mukhtara, 4:281), Ibn Sa’d (1:246), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (Ahad wa Mathani, #1989), and others. Hadith Sahih: Mundhiri’s Targhib wa Tarhib (2:217).

¹⁷² Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (2:267) and Umar ibn Shabbah in his Tarikh al-Madina (1:42), and it is Sahih according to Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari, 3:69). Also, Abdur-Razzaq (5:133 #9163) and Ibn Shabbah (1:49) recorded

Muslims agree that it is a mandatory part of Hajj to travel to mount 'Arafah, which is not one of the three mosques. Yahya ibn Mu'adh ar-Razi (d. 258H) said: "My fervent wish which I pray for: that I come (i.e. travel) to Madina and visit the grave of the Prophet (asws), and pray in his mosque and the mosque of Quba'" (Bayhaqi in Shu'ab 3:484 #4137). Also, even though Abu Hurayra heard and narrated this hadith (about the three masajid), that did not stop him from traveling to the Mount of Tur (where Allah spoke to Musa asws) to pray at that blessed place,¹⁷³ even if Abu Basra reminded him of this hadith...again, showing that the Sahaba understood it differently than Ibn Taymiya and his supporters.

From a grammatical standpoint, Islamic rulings derived from primary texts cannot be valid if they are not supported by the sound linguistic understanding of the grammar of that text. In this case here, an exception can only be grammatically sound if it applies to its own type. For example, it would be meaningless to say, "I visited all the countries except Abdullah," because Abdullah is not a country but a human. Therefore, the exception in this hadith can only be applied to traveling to mosques, not to other places or people.¹⁷⁴ Otherwise, how could we explain the traveling of scholars to distant lands for the purpose of gaining knowledge? Or shall we forbid someone to visit his mother who lives across the world, because this hadith states that you should only travel to visit three specific mosques?

If one objects and says, "Our greetings reach him from wherever we are, so the goal of visiting him can be actualized from far away, so going to visit him is superfluous," then this attitude is poor manners with him (asws), revealing a total lack of love and yearning – the mark of belief. Firstly, numerous hadiths mention that the angel Jibril (alayhi salam) would come to the Prophet (asws) and say, "Allah commands you to go to the graves of Baqi' and ask forgiveness for their inhabitants," instead of simply staying at home and praying for them. Secondly, the Prophet (asws) is to be treated after his passing just as he is to be treated before his passing. For example, Abu Bakr said, "It is not appropriate to raise one's voice in the presence of a Prophet, whether he is living or dead" (Ajurri's Shari'a). A'isha heard people working with hammers and chisels in one of the houses surrounding the Prophet's (asws) grave, and she told them, "do not bother the Messenger of Allah" (al-Husayni in Akhbar Madina). Someone insulted Imam 'Ali (alayhi salam) in front of Sayyidina 'Umar in the Prophet's mosque, and 'Umar said, "may Allah make your form ugly! You have bothered the Messenger in his grave" (Qurtubi's Tadhkira). 'Umar also said to two men from Ta'if who were raising their voices in the Prophet's (asws) mosque after his passing, and he said, "If you were natives of Madina, I would have beaten you, for you raise your voices in his

with a Hasan chain that Sayyidina Umar – who is one of the narrators of the hadith about the three masjid – said, "Had the mosque of Quba' been in a distant horizon, we would have still goaded our camels along to travel to it." This shows that he didn't understand the hadith as Ibn Taymiya did.

¹⁷³ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (6:397), Tayalisi (#1445), Tabarani (M. Kabir 2:310, M. Awsat 3:158 #2790), and others. Hadith Sahih (see Haythami's Majma' #5848). Some versions say he was going to Tur, and others say he was returning from it. Bazzar (Zawa'id 1:215) also recorded that after Abu Hurayra returned from Mount Tur, a Companion told him that he "heard the Messenger (asws) say, 'Prayer in my mosque is worth 1000 times more than prayer in any other mosque, except the Masjid al-Haram,' so if you prayed in this mosque it would have been better for you," which shows that it was an issue of preference, not of prohibition. In this context, we can point out that the immense mass of Muslims who go to Madina to visit the Prophet (asws) to this day forego the greater reward of praying in Masjid al-Haram (which equals 100,000 prayers in other mosques) only for the sake of visiting their beloved Prophet (asws). Otherwise, why would someone be satisfied with the reward of 1000 prayers when he could easily obtain the reward of 100,000 by going to Makka instead?

¹⁷⁴ Cf. al-Kirmani (7:12) and Badr al-'Ayni (6:276) in their Sharh Sahih Bukhari for more on this point.

mosque...” (Bukhari #450). One of the Sahaba said, “If the Prophet (asws) passes away, I would marry one of his wives,” and Allah revealed the verse, “It is not permitted for you to bother the Messenger of Allah, or to wed his wives after him at all” (Q33:53), because he is alive and their connection to him remained until their death. It is clear then that the Salaf dealt with him (asws) after his passing with the same reverence as they did when he was with them physically. Along the same lines, new converts from all corners of the Peninsula used to travel to Madina to see him (asws), instead of being content with uttering the Shahada in their native cities. There is no doubt that someone who says that now he (asws) is not to be visited, or one should not travel to him, is far from having proper courtesy with him (asws).

Ibn Taymiya also had the audacity to make the unfounded claim that all the Muslims are unanimous that traveling to visit his grave is a forbidden innovation, adding: “Whoever makes visiting his grave permissible like visiting other graves, has contravened the unanimous consensus of all of the Muslims” (Fatawa, 27:243), to which the mujtahid Imam as-Subki responded: “All the people travel to visit him (asws) for the very reason that they believe it is an act of obedience, which it is... Shall the entirety of the Muslims – across all times and places – undertake something which they all agree is forbidden? ... Furthermore, where is this supposed consensus documented?” Ibn Taymiya also said that “there is no benefit whatsoever in coming to his (asws) grave, not for them and not for him” (Fatawa, 27:416), and that the Salaf “found no need or desire in coming to his (asws) grave to greet him” (27:417). To see how these words are not only baseless but dangerous, consider what the Tabi’i Nafi’ ibn Jubayr said to his student Sa’id: “If you come by the grave of the Prophet (asws), then say, ‘Peace be on the Prophet (asws) and the Mercy of Allah,’ for then the Shaytan will say, ‘we have no company (with this person)’.”¹⁷⁵ In other words, it is the Shaytan who avoids greeting the Prophet (asws) and those who do so.

Furthermore, Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani, the Imam of Hadith commentators, censures Ibn Taymiya for his unusual claims, and writes in his commentary (Fath al-Bari, 3:66) of the above hadith: “...The result is that Ibn Taymiya forbade traveling with the specific intention of visiting the grave of the Prophet, and we have refuted this (claim) of his...and it is among the ugliest of what was transmitted from Ibn Taymiya. Among the other things he used to prove his case was what was narrated from Imam Malik that he said it was disliked that someone should say, “I visited the grave of the Prophet.” Whereas, the scholars among Malik’s companions¹⁷⁶ have verified that he disliked the actual saying since he considered it a lack of courtesy (Adab), not that he disliked the actual visiting¹⁷⁷! For it is among the noblest of acts and the most sublime means of drawing near to Allah (Most Exalted), and its permissibility in the Shari’a is established by scholarly consensus without any

¹⁷⁵ Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (Musannaf, 7:131-32) with a Sahih chain of narrators.

¹⁷⁶ Al-Zurqani in his Sharh al-Mawahib (8:314-15) refuted Ibn Taymiyya’s lies and mis-representations concerning Imam Malik’s views on Ziyara, and said, “Should he not be ashamed of lying about that which he has no knowledge of...?” He furthermore authenticated the story of Malik with Abu Ja’far (see Ch. 1 above).

¹⁷⁷ Muhammad Ibn Rushd al-Kabir – the top authority of the Maliki school – explained in his Bayan wa Tahsil (18:118-19) that what Malik meant by his dislike was that he saw the Prophet (asws) as too exalted for someone to say “I visited him” (since the one who visits is superior to the visited), and that no one visits the Prophet (asws) in his grave to benefit him, but rather to fulfill what is requested of him and out of hope for the reward of Allah for that act of Ziyara. Similarly, in the same teaching session, Malik said that he disliked the term Wadaa’, and preferred to use the Qur’anic term Tawaf al-Ifada, not that he disliked the Tawaf itself! If it meant that he disliked the actual visiting, he would not have taught the proper courtesy when visiting (see 18:601-03).

differing therein, and Allah guides to what is right.” Also, Zayn ad-Din al-‘Iraqi (one of Ibn Hajar’s teachers) wrote about Ibn Taymiyya’s words: “a strange and ugly saying” in his *Tarh at-Tathrib* (6:43). And Ibn Taymiyya’s own student, Imam Dhahabi, refuted his words in his *Siyar A’lam an-Nubala’* (4:484-85). So did the hadith master Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari in his *Sharh al-Shifa’* (2:514). Qadi Yusuf an-Nabhani (in *Shawahid al-Haqq*, p. 185) quoted Imam Shihab al-Khafaji, who said: “He (Ibn Taymiya) imagined that he was defending tawhid with all kinds of nonsense which do not deserve mention, for they do not originate from the mind of a rational person, let alone an eminent one – may Allah forgive him!” Indeed, it is a reprehensible innovation (*bid’a*) in every sense of the word, for no one at all prior to Ibn Taymiyya ever forbade *ziyara* to the Prophet’s (asws) grave, or traveling to him.

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Just to give a few other examples from the Salaf: 1) ‘Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz – known as the fifth rightly-guided khalifa – used to regularly send an envoy from Syria to Madina for the sole purpose of conveying his salaam to the Prophet (asws). This was during the time of the *Tabi’in*, and no one since has ever censured him.¹⁷⁸ 2) Hafiz Ibn Jawzi (*Kitab al-Wafa’*, p. 818 #1536) records¹⁷⁹ that three scholars (including Tabarani and Abu’l Shaykh) went to the grave of the Prophet (asws) and stayed there for a few days. They did not have food, so one of them went up directly to the grave and said, “O Messenger of Allah! Hunger! Hunger!” A short while later, one of the descendents of Imam ‘Ali came to them with food, after seeing the Prophet (asws) in a dream telling him to do so. 3) Ibn Abi Fudayk (one of the early scholars of Madina who was also one of the teachers of Imam Shafi’i) said: “I heard one of the authorities whom I have met say: “It has reached us that whoever stands at the Prophet’s (asws) grave and recites, ‘Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet...’ (Q33:56) and then says, ‘may Allah bless you, O 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.’”¹⁸⁰

On Visiting the Graves of the Righteous Prophets and Awliya’ for Blessing

It is known that the Prophet Muhammad (asws) himself used to visit the graves of his companions who had passed away at that time. He used to regularly visit the graveyard of *Baqi’* in Madina and make supplications there. He also used to visit the graveyard of the martyrs of Uhud annually at the same time.¹⁸¹ He also would visit his mother’s grave, between Makka and Madina, and weep there.¹⁸² He also would visit the *Jannat al-Ma’la*

¹⁷⁸ Recorded by Ibn ‘Asakir with multiple chains (65:203-05), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab*, 3:491-92), and mentioned by a number of historians.

¹⁷⁹ Also recorded by Dhahabi in his *Siyar* (16:400-401) and Qaysarani in *Tadhkirat al-Huffaz* (3:973-74).

¹⁸⁰ Recorded by Ibn Jawzi in *Muthir al-Gharam* (p. 487), Ibn Jama’a in *Hidayat as-Salik* (3:1382-83), Qadi ‘Iyad in his *Shifa’* (2:55), Imam Bayhaqi in his *Shu’ab al-Iman* (3:492 #4169 Hasan), Hamza as-Sahmi in *Tarikh Jurjan* (p. 220), Suyuti in *Durr al-Manthur* (1:570), Ibn Abi Dunya, and Ibn Bashkuwal.

¹⁸¹ Recorded by Abu Dawud (#1747 Sahih), Bayhaqi (*Sunan* 5:249, *Dala’il* 3:306, 308), Abdur-Razzaq (3:573-34 #6716, who also recorded Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman doing the same), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (*Tamhid*, 20:245-46), Badr al-‘Ayni’s *Umdat al-Qari* (hadith #1174), and in the *Tafsirs* of Tabari (13:142) and Ibn Kathir (2:512).

¹⁸² Muslim (#1622), Tirmidhi (#974), Ibn Majah (#1561), Nasa’i (#2007), Abu Dawud (#2815), Ahmad (#21939, 21960), Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (1:375, 2:336), Abdur-Razzaq (3:572 #6714), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:223-24), Bayhaqi (*Sunan*, 4:77 and *Dala’il*, 1:189), Ibn Hibban (3:261 #981, 7:440 #3169), Ibn Sa’d in his *Tabaqat* (1:117), and Tabarani in *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (5:82). See Haythami’s *Majma’ Zawa’id* (3:58).

graveyard in Makka, where his first wife Khadija is buried, and say “this is a blessed graveyard.”¹⁸³

The Prophet (asws) encouraged the Muslims to visit graves regularly and considered it a cause for forgiveness. It is narrated in *Sharh as-Sudur* (Ch. 51) by Imam al-Suyuti that the Prophet Muhammad (asws) said that when one visits the graves, he should read Surat al-Ikhlās, Surat at-Takathur and Surat al-Fatiha, and present the reward of the recitations as a gift to the inhabitants of the graves. He also explained that these souls then ask forgiveness for him, asking Allah to forgive and bless him. This shows that the souls of the departed have the ability to make Du‘a for the living, asking Allah to help those who visit them. This, then, is the source of the blessings gained by visiting the graves of the righteous.

A‘isha related that when Najashi (the pious king of Abyssinia) passed away, the Sahaba reported that there was a light shining from his grave.¹⁸⁴ He was not even a Companion, but it was believed that he was a Wali. This shows that the Sahaba believed that the Awliya can have light and blessings at their graves, showing that the graves of the righteous are a place of blessing. Another hadith which demonstrates the existence of blessing at the graves of the righteous is the one wherein the Prophet (asws) says that every person’s grave would either be a garden from the gardens of Paradise, or a pit from the pits of Hell.¹⁸⁵ Abu Hurayra also reported that he (asws) said, “Bury your deceased in the midst of the (graves of the) righteous, for the deceased is harmed by the evil neighbor...”¹⁸⁶ Therefore, the graves of the Prophets and the elect Awliya of Allah are sublime gardens filled with blessings. This is why Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbi al-Maliki wrote in his *Qawanin al-Fiqhiyya* (1:96): “Among the places that one should visit to gain blessings is the grave of Sayyidina Isma‘il (asws) and his mother, the grave of Sayyidina Adam (asws)...the cave of Hira...and whatever graves of the Sahaba, Tabi‘in, and Imams there are in Makka and Madina.”

¹⁸³ Recorded from Ibn ‘Abbas by Imam Ahmad (1:367 #3293 Sahih), Bukhari in his *Tarikh* (1:284), Abdur-Razzaq (3:579), Tabarani (*Mu‘jam al-Kabir*, 11:137), and Bazzar (*Zawa‘id*, 2:49), with a strong chain according to Haythami in *Majma‘ az-Zawa‘id* (3:297-98) and others.

¹⁸⁴ Recorded by Abu Dawud (*Kitab al-Jana‘iz*, #2161) and Bayhaqi (*Dala‘il*, 4:412). Hadith Hasan. See also Ibn Abi Shayba (8:219) for another example.

¹⁸⁵ Tirmidhi (*Kitab Sifat al-Qiyama*, #2384) with a Da‘if chain, Bayhaqi in his *Shu‘ab* (1:360) and ‘Adhab al-Qabr, Tabarani in his *Kabir* (from Abu Sa‘id) and *Awsat* (8:273 #8613), Abu Nu‘aym (8:87), Ibn ‘Asakir (42:497), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. *Qubur*, #122), Ibn Mandah, and Daylami (*Firdaws*, 1:438 #1445, 3:283 #4717, 4:471 #6861). Cf. Sakhawi’s *Maqasid* (#758), where he says it is Da‘if. However, there are numerous supporting narrations that strengthen the meaning of this hadith (such as Abu Ya‘la #6644, Ibn Hibban #3122, Muslim #5110).

¹⁸⁶ Hafiz Sakhawi (*Maqasid*, p. 31 #47) and ‘Ajluni (*Kashf*, #169) state that Hafiz Abu Nu‘aym (Hilya, 6:354) recorded it. Also recorded by Daylami in his *Firdaws* (1:139 #337), and it has corroborating narrations in the hadith collections of Ibn ‘Asakir, Hafiz Malini (*Mu‘tala‘ wa Mukhtala‘*, from Ali and Ibn ‘Abbas), and Abu Bakr al-Khara‘iti (from Ali). Sakhawi said, “Recorded by Abu Nu‘aym...from Sulayman ibn ‘Isa, who is abandoned as a narrator, rather he is accused of lying and forgery. Regardless, the Salaf and Khalaf continue to apply (this hadith).” Imam Qurtubi wrote a chapter on it in his *Tadhkira* and said: “Based on this, the Ulama have stated it is recommended for the person to seek out the graves of the righteous to be buried next to them, to obtain blessings from them, and as a way of Tawassul to Allah thru their proximity.” See also Ibn Abi Dunya’s K. *Qubur* (#139). Finally, there is another strongly authenticated hadith that supports the meaning of this one, in which the Prophet (asws) says, “Seek the protection of Allah from the evil neighbor in the abode of permanence,” which is recorded by Nasa‘i (K. *Isti‘adha* #5407), Ahmad (2:345), Hakim (1:532 Sahih), and others. Since this world is not what is referred to, and since in Paradise there will be no “evil neighbor” anyway, it can also refer to the abode of the grave, and in this way supports the meaning of this hadith of Abu Nu‘aym.

Shaykh Ali ibn Maymun, one of the students of Imam Shafi'i, stated that he heard his teacher the Imam say: "I swear that I seek the blessing of Abu Hanifa and come to his grave every day (as a visitor). Whenever I have a certain need, I pray two rak'as (according to the Hanafi madhhab), then come to his grave and ask Allah for my need at his grave, and little time passes until it is fulfilled."¹⁸⁷ Does it need to be made more obvious than this?

Imam Subki in his *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyya* (2:234) records how the people of Samarqand had a drought in the year 464H., and they came to the grave of Imam Bukhari to pray *salat al-istisqa'* there, and they were then blessed with rain by Allah. Ibn Jawzi in his biographies of the *Awliya'* entitled *Sifat as-Safwa* lists many of those at whose graves *tabarruk* (seeking blessings) and *tawassul* is *recommended*. Among them: Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (1:243), Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (2:214), Ibrahim al-Harbi (2:410), Abu'l Fath al-Qawasi (2:471), Abu'l Qasim al-Wa'iz (2:482), and others. And Hafiz al-Dhahabi (in *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'* 10:107) wrote about Sayyida Nafisa: "and du'a made at her grave is answered, (just like) du'a at the graves of the Prophets and Righteous are answered..." And about Ibrahim al-Harbi he said (*Siyar* 9:343): "du'a at his grave is answered and this is tried and tested, because in general du'a at places of blessing (*baraka*) is answered..."

Hafiz Ibn Khuzayma, Abu 'Ali al-Thaqafi, and other Shuyukh used to visit the grave of Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida (alayhi salam) in Tus and venerate (*ta'dhim*) it.¹⁸⁸ Hafiz Ibn Hibban (*Thiqat*, 8:457) used to also visit his grave frequently and seek his help with difficulties. Abu 'Ali al-Khallal said, "A difficult matter did not present itself to me after which I set forth toward the grave of Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kadhim (alayhi salam) and did *tawassul* thru him, except that Allah facilitated my affair and relieved my needs."¹⁸⁹ Hafiz Ibn Abi 'Asim said that he saw a number of "the people of knowledge and virtue" come to the grave of Talha ibn 'Ubaydullah if they faced any difficulty, and greet him and make du'a there, and their du'a would be answered.¹⁹⁰ Hakim an-Nisaburi (author of the *Mustadrak*) stated that he heard the Hafiz Abu 'Ali an-Nisaburi say: "I was in a great difficulty, and I saw the Prophet (asws) in my sleep, and he told me, 'go to the grave of Yahya ibn Yahya (ibn Bukayr at-Tamimi) and ask forgiveness (from Allah there) and request your need, and your need will be granted'. So I awoke and did such, and my need was fulfilled" (Ibn Hajar's *Tahdhib at-Tahdhib* 11:261, cf. Dhahabi's *Siyar* 16:162). Such examples of the scholars of Islam visiting and going to the graves of the righteous and asking their needs there are numerous and easy to find. If du'a amongst graves for the deceased is sunna, then how can du'a amongst graves for yourself be shirk? For other examples of righteous *Awliya'* whom people sought rain thru at their graves from Allah, see Imam Dhahabi's *Siyar* (12:469, 17:215, 21:251-53), Ibn 'Imad al-Hanbali's *Shadharat* (1:360), Yaqut al-Hamawi's *Mu'jam al-Buldan* (2:139), and many others.

Graveyards become more blessed when pious people are buried there. This in turn strengthens the motive to visit such a graveyard to participate in and obtain some of those blessings and Divine mercy. Why for example did Umar request to be buried next to the

¹⁸⁷ Narrated by Hafiz al-Khatib in his *Tarikh Baghdad* (1:123), and also by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami in his book on Imam Abu Hanifa entitled *al-Khayrat al-Hisan* (Ch. 35, p. 129, with a *Sahih* chain), and by Ibn Abi'l Wafa in his *Tabaqat al-Hanafiyya* (p. 519) through another chain of narrators.

¹⁸⁸ See Hafiz Ibn Hajar's *Tahdhib at-Tahdhib* 7:339.

¹⁸⁹ See Hafiz al-Khatib's *Tarikh Baghdad* (1:120) and Ibn Jawzi's *Muntadham* (9:89).

¹⁹⁰ Ibn Abi 'Asim's *Ahad wa Mathani* (1:163), and also Abu Nu'aym's *Mu'jam as-Sahaba* (1:334).

Prophet (asws) and Abu Bakr? Because he knew that there was great blessing at their graves and he wanted it. When he finally got his confirmation of his burial next to the Prophet's (asws) blessed grave, he said, "*there was nothing more important to me than that.*"¹⁹¹

Objection: Praying Towards Tombs

Shaykh Ibn Hajar al-Haytami writes: "Bukhari, Muslim, Nasa'i, and Imam Ahmad record that the Prophet (asws) said, 'May Allah curse the Jews and Christians, for they have taken the tombs of their Prophets as masjid.' And they also record the hadith, 'They are the ones who, when a righteous man among them died, would build a place of worship upon his grave and paint icons in it. They will be the most wicked of creation in the sight of Allah.' ... Taking a grave as a masjid means to pray on the grave or directly towards it. The prohibition, moreover, applies only to the grave of someone venerated, whether a Prophet or a Wali; for which reason our colleagues say that it is unlawful to perform the salat towards the graves of the Prophets or Awliya for the blessing of it or out of reverence for it, that is, under two conditions, 1) that the grave is of someone who is honored and venerated, and 2) that the prayer is performed towards or on the grave with the intention of gaining the blessing of it, or out of reverence for it. That such an action is an enormity is clear from the above hadiths (though if either condition is lacking, performing the prayer near a grave is unobjectionable)."¹⁹²

Hafiz Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari, 1:525) explained this hadith by quoting the words of Imam al-Baydawi, who said: "Because the Jews and Christians would prostrate towards the graves of the Prophets out of veneration of them, and make them (their graves) a Qibla towards which they face in their salat, and took them as idols, he (asws) cursed them and forbade the Muslims from such acts. As for the one who takes a place of worship in the vicinity (jiwar) of a righteous servant, and by that intends to gain blessings (tabarruk) from proximity to him, and not veneration of him, nor directly facing him, then this does not enter under the warning and curse in this hadith."

In other words, these hadiths according to the scholars only prohibit salat directly facing or on top of a grave of someone venerated for the intention of gaining blessings, but it does not prohibit at all simply visiting the grave to gain its blessings (being the grave of someone blessed) and sitting next to it and performing 'ibadat in its vicinity such as recitation of Qur'an, dhikr, du'a, salat, etc. This is confirmed by the hadith in which the Prophet (asws) prays, "O Allah! Do not make my grave an idol towards which people pray."¹⁹³ Also, Ibn Jurayj (one of the Tabi'in, and one of the narrators of Bukhari and Muslim) related that he asked Nafi', "did Ibn 'Umar dislike praying in the midst of graves?" Nafi' answered, "We

¹⁹¹ Recorded by Imam Bukhari in his Sahih (Kitab al-Jana'iz, #1305, also 3424). Ibn Hajar said in commentary on this hadith (Fath 3:258, see also: 3:207), "From it we gain (the praiseworthiness) of having the desire for the proximity of the righteous in their graves, out of one's aspiration and hope for receiving the Divine mercy when it descends upon them, and (receiving) the Du'a of those who visit them among the pious living." Then he said this hadith was also recorded by: Muslim (#879), Ibn Sa'd (Tabaqat, 3:363), Hakim (3:93), Tabarani in Mu'jam al-Awsat (from Ibn 'Umar, Sahih), Harith ibn abi Usama and Ibn abi Umar al-'Adani in their Musnads, Abu Ya'la, Ibn Hibban, Abdur-Razzaq (5:474-80 #9775), and Ibn Abi Shayba (8:576-82).

¹⁹² See Imam Haytami's Zawajir (1:148-149). Along the same lines, Muslim (K Jana'iz #1613-14) and others recorded that the Prophet (asws) said, "don't sit on graves (to relieve yourselves) or pray towards them." Tabarani (#12051, 12168) and Diya' (12:124 Hasan) also recorded: "Don't pray towards or on top of graves."

¹⁹³ Recorded by Abdur-Razzaq in his Musannaf (1:406 #1587) on the authority of Zayd ibn Aslam.

prayed over A'isha and Umm Salama in the Baqi' cemetery, and Abu Hurayra was the Imam over A'isha's funeral, and Ibn 'Umar was present with us." ¹⁹⁴ Also, Imam Bukhari related in one of the chapter titles (Ch. #48) of Kitab as-Salat that Sayyidina Umar saw Anas praying near a grave at night, but Anas did not repeat it, nor did Umar tell him repeat it. Sahnun at-Tanukhi in his Mudawwana (1:90) recorded that Imam Malik saw no problem in praying in a graveyard, with graves surrounding one on all four sides, and that Malik said: "It has reached me that some of the Sahaba used to pray in graveyards (maqbara)." The Sahabi Usama ibn Zayd was known to pray next to the noble grave of the Prophet (asws). ¹⁹⁵ Sayyida A'isha used to pray regularly in her room, which used to contain the Prophet's (asws) blessed grave, ¹⁹⁶ and people used to request her to enter her room and pray there too, such as the lady who came in to pray there and passed away in prostration. ¹⁹⁷

What strengthens this is that Allah (Most High) tells us (in Q2:125) to "take the maqam of Ibrahim as a place of salat". As is well-known, "maqam Ibrahim" is merely a slab of stone containing the footprints of Sayyidina Ibrahim (asws), and is not a grave nor his physical feet. Allah would not tell us to do something that would constitute shirk or kufr. But we see clearly in this verse that we are advised to pray in a place of blessing, which derives its blessing from the traces of one of the messengers. ¹⁹⁸ Similarly, the graves of the righteous are places of blessing because they are connected to them, and so praying at tombs is acceptable according to this principle. This therefore differentiates us from the mushrikin, who would have prayed directly to the tomb to venerate it and gain blessings, instead of at the tomb (of a righteous person), which is an area of blessings and mercy. And Allah says, "Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near the muhsineen" (Q7:56).

Furthermore, anyone can see that in the Prophet's (asws) masjid in Madina, people have been praying around the four sides of his honorable and blessed tomb for over 1400 years. Was that all shirk? In addition, Shaykh Ibn Kathir writes in Qisas al-Anbiya', in the chapter on Sayyidina Isma'il (asws), that in Makka it is recommended to pray in Hijr Isma'il (also known

¹⁹⁴ Sahih hadith recorded by Abdur-Razzaq (#1593, 6570) and Bayhaqi (Sunan, 2:435). Salat in graveyards: (Hanafi): Makruh if there is ritual filth (najasa) in the area, or a grave directly in front of one, otherwise it is fine; (Maliki): Makruh if there is najasa, otherwise it is fine; (Shafi'i): Invalid if the graves are exposed, Makruh otherwise, except for graves of Prophets/martyrs – which is fine as long as there is no intention to venerate them; (Hanbali): Invalid if there are three or more graves, otherwise Makruh if directly facing grave, otherwise it is fine. Source: Jaziri's Fiqh ala-l Madhahib al-Arba'a (1:299; Beirut ed. 1999).

¹⁹⁵ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (5:202 #20769), Ibn Hibban (12:506 #5694), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 1:166 #405), Diya' al-Maqdisi (Mukhtara, 4:106-07 #1317-18), Ruyani (Musnad, 3:42), Ibn 'Asakir (Tarikh, 57:248-49), and Ibn Abd al-Barr in his Isti'ab (1:76-77). It is Sahih according to Ibn Hibban, Hafiz Diya', Haythami (Majma' 8:64-65), and Munawi (Fayd Qadir 2:285).

¹⁹⁶ Recorded by Bukhari (#3303), Muslim (#5325), Abu Dawud (3:320 #3169), Imam Ahmad (#23720, 24081), Abu Ya'la (#4393, 4677), Ibn Hibban (#100, 7153), Humaydi (#249), and others.

¹⁹⁷ Recorded by Hakim (3:476 Sahih) and Bayhaqi in his Shu'ab al-Iman (7:256 #10222).

¹⁹⁸ Sayyidina 'Umar asked the Prophet (asws): "This is the place whereon Ibrahim (asws) prayed, so should we not take it as a place of prayer too?" and Allah – confirming his wish – revealed this verse. Suyuti in his Durr Manthur said this was recorded by: Bukhari (#4123), Tirmidhi (#2884-85), Ahmad (1:23, 36, also Fada'il, #493-94), Nasa'i (Kubra, 6:289), Ibn Majah (#999), Abu Nu'aym (3:377, 4:145), Darimi (#1777), Ibn Hibban (#6896), Bayhaqi (Sunan, 7:87), Tabarani (Kabir 12:400, Awsat 6:207, Saghir 2:110), Bazzar (Musnad, #220), and others.

as Hateem) as it contains the tomb of Isma'il (asws).¹⁹⁹ Similarly, the Prophet (asws) said, "In the mosque of al-Khayf is the grave of seventy Prophets."²⁰⁰

Ibn Abi Mulayka said: "A'isha's brother (Abdur-Rahman) died a few miles away from Makka, so we carried him until we reached Makka and buried him there. A'isha then came to us a month after that and reproached us for doing so. Then she said, 'where is the grave of my brother?' We showed it to her and she alighted from her howdaj and prayed at his grave."²⁰¹ Also, Fatima (radiyallahu anha) used to visit the grave of Hamza every Friday and she used to pray and weep there; another version adds she had marked the grave with a rock in order to recognize it.²⁰² How is it that regardless of these examples from the pious Salaf, people are still forbidding these actions in the strongest terms?

Objection: Building domes or other structures around tombs

The Prophet (asws) put a large stone (it took two people to move it) to mark the grave of his companion Uthman ibn Madh'un, and said, "so that I can recognize the grave of my brother."²⁰³ This hadith is the legal origin for marking graves, especially those of special people so that they may be known and recognized. If graves were completely unmarked or had no identifying structures, then one would not be able to visit them and know who is in them, and it would be impossible to fulfill the Prophetic order to "visit the graves." The rule in Usul al-Fiqh states that means take the judgment of their ends, and if we consider that the Shari'a demands respect of the dead, such as not walking on top of the grave, not relieving oneself over it, not interring it or breaking the dead bones, and so on, then having some structure around it to mark its location is a necessary means to the preservation of the grave and a guarantee for the respect due to it.

Another hadith often misinterpreted and quoted out of context is where Prophet Muhammad (asws) ordered Imam 'Ali to level all the high graves. In the beginning, there were no graves of Muslims, only graves of kuffar, which were erected high. The Sahaba were thus ordered to level the high structures on the graves of the kuffar, not of the Prophets or Awliya. A significant evidence to support this is that when Sayyidina Umar conquered Syria

¹⁹⁹ Al-Mubarakfuri (Tuhfat, 2:226) quotes the author of Majma' al-Bihar (Muhammad Tahir as-Siddiqi al-Hanafi, d. 981H) as saying: "Is it not plain to see that the resting place of Sayyidina Isma'il (asws) in al-Hijr in the Masjid Haram (in Makka), and prayer in it, is superior?" For more, see Abdur-Razzaq's Musannaf (#9128-30).

²⁰⁰ Haythami in his Majma' az-Zawa'id (3:297 #5769) said, "narrated from Ibn Umar with authentic chains by Tabarani in his Mu'jam al-Kabir (12:414) and Bazzar (Zawa'id, 2:48)." Hafiz Busiri said it is Sahih (Ithaf as-Sada, 2:347 #1093). Also recorded by al-Fakihi in Akhbar Makka (4:266 #2594) and Daylami (Firdaws, 2:38 #1998). See also Diya's Mukhtara (2:249).

²⁰¹ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#975), Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (4:49, 4:78), Abdur-Razzaq (3:518 #6539, 3:570 #6711), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:239), Ibn Abdul-Barr in his Tamhid (3:233-34 and 6:261), Abu Ya'la in his Musnad (8:284 #4871) with a Sahih chain, and Hakim in his Mustadrak (1:376 Sahih). Hadith Sahih.

²⁰² Recorded by Hakim in his Mustadrak (1:377, 3:28), Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (4:78) and Dala'il (3:309), Abdur-Razzaq in his Musannaf (3:572 #6713, also #6717), Ibn Abdul-Barr in his Tamhid (3:234), Musaddad, and Hakim Tirmidhi (Nawadir, Asl #15). Also narrated by Qurtubi in his Tafsir (10:381).

²⁰³ Recorded by Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jana'iz, #2791), Ibn Majah (#1550), Bayhaqi (3:412), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:215-16), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 4:169 #3886), and Ibn Sa'd (3:399-400). Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani said it was hadith hasan in his Talkhis al-Habir (2:133-34). He also said in Fath al-Bari (3:256, chapter "On placing a stalk on top of the grave"): "It contains a proof for the licitness of raising high the grave and elevating it above the surface of the earth." Also, Abdur-Razzaq in his Musannaf (3:574 #6717), Hakim (Mustadrak, 3:93), and Ibn Sa'd (Tabaqat, 2:307) recorded that the Prophet (asws), Abu Bakr, and Umar used to have small stone markers on their graves.

and Palestine, both lands abounded with great tombs of the honoured Prophets of Allah, e.g. the shrines of Ibrahim (asws), Yusuf (asws), Ya'qub (asws), Dawud (asws), Sulayman (asws), etc. Sayyidina Umar destroyed the idols in Syria and Palestine, but he did not touch the shrines of the beloved Prophets (upon them be peace). Ibn Abi Shayba (2:270) recorded that the Salaf disliked changing the remains and traces (athar) of the Prophets. Also, Ibn 'Umar related that the Prophet (asws) said: "Do not demolish the buildings of the past, for they are the adornment of Madina." ²⁰⁴ Bukhari in his Sahih (1:457) recorded that Kharija ibn Zayd said, "When we were youths in the era of Uthman's Khilafa, the strongest one among us would be the one who could jump over the grave of Uthman ibn Madh'un." This shows that 1) there was a solid structure above (or around) his grave, and not a mere pile of dirt and stones (which could not have remained gathered and collected for over 2 decades), and 2) that it was massive enough so that only the strongest youths could jump over it. Ibn Abi Shayba recorded (Musannaf 3:216) that Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr said, "I saw the grave of Uthman ibn Madh'un raised high", which means that the youths were doing a high jump and not long jump. He also recorded (Musannaf 3:215) that al-Sha'bi (a Tabi'i) said: "I saw the graves of the martyrs of Uhud elevated above the ground." Thus, the above hadith of 'Ali refers to the high extravagant graves of the kuffar, and not the graves of the Muslims. Note that when Imam 'Ali was Khalif in Madina, he did not level the elevated graves of the Sahaba and martyrs. In addition, it is important to point out that what is spoken of in those hadiths (forbidding structures over graves) is erecting or raising the actual structure directly above the grave, not building structures in the area surrounding the grave. Finally, the reality around the Muslim world is that the vast majority of masajid with graves inside them never have the grave in the direction of the Qibla anyway, so it is meaningless to worry about people praying to them.

The most common objection against building structures (masajid, domes, schools, etc) around graves is that it leads to kufr and shirk and over-exaggeration in veneration of the deceased righteous servant. Once this cause for the prohibition vanishes, then the prohibition which is based on it vanishes also. This is like the change seen in visiting graves. When the Sahaba were still recent converts from Jahiliya, the Prophet (asws) forbade visiting the graves. After faith in tawhid was firmly established in them, and it was impossible that they return to shirk, he (asws) allowed – rather encouraged – them to visit the graves. Those who built mosques around the graves of the righteous did not do so for the reason of worshipping them or prostrating to them aside from Allah (nor did they fashion any images or icons as the hadith mentioned), but rather to respect and revere their inhabitants, and to maintain and preserve the graves so that the benefits of visiting them and gaining blessings from them would continue. Even though the people from Najd have demolished the structures of the Ahl al-Bayt and martyrs in Makka and Madina, we still see countless Muslims visiting them to show love and respect and gain blessings.

As for the very few ignorant ones who exaggerate to the point of worshipping the righteous servant, that does not initiate from the structure itself, but rather from their being ignorant of the proper ways of respecting and revering the servant. If the structure itself were the cause, then you would see this with every Muslim who visits the graves of the righteous that have structures around them, and the vast majority of Muslims are far from this behavior.

²⁰⁴ Recorded by Tahawi (Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar, 4:193-94), Bazzar (see Haythami's Majma' 3:301), and Hafiz al-'Ayni said its chain is Sahih ('Umdat al-Qari, 10:327).

And yet, there are many graves that have great structures around them but receive no visitors, and there are graves that have no structure around them which some ignorant ones worship, just as they do with living Awliya'. So it has nothing to do with the structure itself, but rather with the ignorance in the heart of the person. Therefore, to still hold on to this unfounded fear of shirk as a reason for prohibition of building structures around graves after that risk has vanished is incorrect. The Prophet (asws) cursed those Jews and Christians who erected the graves of their Prophets for the intention of worshipping them, not for the mere fact of building structures, or doing so with the intention of preserving them, or to visit and derive blessings from them. Otherwise, we should conclude that the whole Ummah has become Kafir, for agreeing to build structures around the Prophet's (asws) grave for example, or the graves of his righteous followers.

The Prophet (asws) said: "The area between my grave and my minbar is a garden from the gardens of paradise."²⁰⁵ From this hadith we gain a number of valuable lessons. 1) The area of his grave is a garden of blessings. Therefore, it is desirable to go visit his grave and spend time there performing acts of worship, which will lead one to the Garden (see Ibn Athir's Nihaya 1:187 and Suyuti's Tanwir al-Hawalik 1:208). 2) Imam Tahawi wrote: "His grave (asws) itself could be another garden even greater and loftier than the garden between his grave and minbar; because when his minbar achieved this special distinction just by his standing and sitting there, then the fact that his grave contains his noble body causes it to have an even loftier distinction. And Paradise has multiple gardens (Q42:22), so it is possible that his grave would be a garden greater than (the other)... And in this hadith we must pause at the meaning of its different wordings, namely, "between my grave and minbar," which is the wording of the majority of its chains, and "my house and minbar." This must mean – because they are both Sahih – that his house is identified with his grave, and this would be one of the immense proofs (dala'il) of his prophethood (asws). For Allah kept hidden from others where they would die (Q31:34), but informed him (asws) of the place he would pass away in and the place of his grave... and this is a distinguished station above which there is none, may Allah ever increase him in honor and dignity!" This is the language of Ahl as-Sunna. 3) That in saying this he (asws) predicted that his grave would be inside his masjid (cf. Ibn Hazm's Muhalla 5:133). For his saying that there is a garden between his grave and minbar indicates the desirability of praying in that area (and the masjid is an area of prayer). He (asws) said, "If you pass by the gardens of paradise, then graze," and then explained that the "gardens" were "the circles of dhikr in the masjid." So in this hadith too, he (asws) is encouraging his followers to take that area between his grave/house and his minbar (another garden) as a place of prayer and worship, and this encouragement would naturally lend itself to including that area within the masjid. It is also established that the righteous Khalifa Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz raised the grave of the Prophet (asws) even more (Fath al-Bari 3:357).

²⁰⁵ Recorded by Bukhari (Tarikh Kabir, 1:392), Imam Ahmad (3:64), Abu Ya'la (2:496 #1341), Nasa'i (Sunan Kubra, 2:489), Bayhaqi (Sunan 5:246, Shu'ab #4163), Tahawi in Mushkil Athar (4:68-70), Tabarani (Kabir 12:294, Awsat 1:192), Bazzar (Musnad, 4:44 #1206), Abu Nu'aym (Hilya 7:248, 9:324), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:413), Harith (Zawa'id, #396), Khatib (11:228), Ibn 'Asakir (22:177, 40:37, 49:118, 62:44), Ibn 'Adiyy (3:1182), Dulabi (2:64), Abu'l Shaykh (Tabaqat al-Muhaddithin, 2:361), Sa'id ibn Mansur (Kanz, #34947), Musaddad (Busiri's Ithaf #3218), and many others. It is also in the chapter titles in the two Sahihis (B: Fath 3:70 and M: 2:1009 Ch 92). This hadith (with the wording "grave") is narrated thru over 15 Sahaba, as detailed by Ibn Hajar in his Talkhis al-Habir, all of its chains making it Sahih. It is also narrated with "house" instead of "grave," but there is no contradiction because his grave was inside his house (of A'isha), which was directly adjacent to the masjid.

As for what the four madhhabs state ²⁰⁶, it can be summarized as follows: Building structures around tombs is in itself something permissible. It becomes disliked (makruh) if the structure is directly above the tomb (in every case), or if the structure is around it and it takes up space and creates less room for burial of other Muslims (if this is in a public graveyard, without it being disliked if in privately owned land). It becomes extremely disliked or forbidden if the intention behind the structure is to show-off or compete with others or if it involves wasting of money and resources; but if the intention is to simply distinguish it from other graves, then it is permissible. One can also find in each of the madhahib an exception (from the general dislike) made for the righteous and the scholars, around whose tombs structures become permissible, as also proven by the historical fact of every generation of Islam seeing such structures being constructed and not later removed (such as the structure of Imam Shafi'i's tomb in the Qarafa cemetery of Cairo). They also stated that any structure already built around a tomb should only be brought down if it is in publicly-owned graveyards. Not a single one of the scholars in any of the madhhabs mentioned that the dislike (or prohibition if building on publicly owned land) is due to it being shirk or a means to shirk. If it was shirk, they would not have confined themselves to saying it was (only) disliked, nor would they have differentiated between public or private lands!

Finally, Musa ibn 'Uqba (d. 141H) recorded – in his *Maghazi* with a Sahih chain ²⁰⁷ – that when one of the Sahaba (Abu Basir) died, a masjid was built over his grave in the presence of 300 Companions, and the Prophet (asws) accepted this and did not command them to remove the grave from the newly built masjid. This was towards the end of the Prophet's (asws) earthly life, when the Sahaba were far away from the risk of shirk. So if the Sahaba and Tabi'in (the “best generations”) built mosques around tombs, it should tell us something about how they understood the hadith often used by the objectors (“Allah curse the Jews and the Christians, for they erected houses of worship upon the graves of their Prophets”). It would be impossible for them to all come together on the consensus of including his grave (asws) in the masjid when that would have caused them to be accursed. Otherwise, we would like the objectors to name a single one among the Salaf who objected to this act.

Objection: Concerning visiting the grave of the Prophet (asws)

Some today bring up the following hadith as a “proof” against the visitation of the Prophet (asws), but we will see how that is an incorrect understanding. The Prophet (asws) stated: “Do not turn your houses into graves, and do not make (the visit to) my grave as an 'Eid (anniversary), and send salawat upon me, for indeed your salawat reach me wherever you

²⁰⁶ See: (Hanafi): Ibn 'Abidin's *Hashiya* 1:601-02, Tahtawi's *Hashiya* p. 405; (Maliki): Hattab's *Mawahib al-Jalil* 2:245-46, Ibn Rushd's *Bayan wa Tahsil* 2:219-21, Dasuqi's *Hashiya* 1:673; (Shafi'i): Ramli's *Nihayat al-Muhtaj* 3:33-35, Haytami's *Fatawa Kubra* 2:16; (Hanbali): Mardawi's *Insaf* 2:549-50, Ibn Muflih's *Mubdi'* 2:273.

²⁰⁷ Also recorded by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in his *Isti'ab*, Ibn Ishaq in his *Sira*, and others. Also, Ibn Abi Shayba (3:217) recorded that 'Umar built a large structure (fustat) over the tomb of Zaynab. Fatima bint Husayn built a large tent over the grave of her husband Hasan ibn Hasan ibn 'Ali and kept it for a year, then removed it (*Fath Bari* 3:200, Ibn 'Asakir 70:19-20, Ibn Abi Dunya's *Hawatif* p. 92 #131). Muhammad ibn Hanafiya built a fustat over the grave of Ibn 'Abbas (Khalili's *Irshad* 1:185, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's *Isti'ab*). Hakim (*Mustadrak* 1:370) wrote: “These hadiths (about building and writing over graves) are Sahih, but are not acted upon, for the Imams – east and west – have their graves written upon, and this is something that the later generations took from the former.” al-Burzuli (al-Maliki) said, ‘It has therefore become consensus’.”

might be.”²⁰⁸ Imam al-Khafaji al-Hanafi wrote (Nasim ar-Riyad, 3:502) that Hafiz Ibn Hajar and Qadi ‘Iyad stated that these hadiths mean: “Do not take it (his grave) as an ‘Eid, that is, to be celebrated once in a year, but rather increase your visits to his grave.” So he (asws) did not specify a certain day or time of the year to visit him as an ‘Eid, but rather asked that he be visited continuously throughout the year. Hafiz as-Sakhawi in his *Qawl al-Badi’* (p. 159-160) also mentioned the sayings of the scholars to this effect, one of whom said: “Do not make my grave an ‘Eid is emphasis and encouragement on the frequency of visiting him and not treating his visit like an anniversary festival (Eid) which does not occur in the year other than at two times”. Imam Shawkani repeated the same in his *Nayl al-Awtar*.

Indeed, we must know that his blessings (asws) exist around us throughout the year everywhere on earth. That is why we are encouraged by this hadith to visit him (his grave) at any time of the year, so that we realize that his blessings fill the earth completely, and this is supported by the fact that in the same context he mentioned “and do not turn your houses into graves” (i.e., dead places lacking life), for his blessings exist in our houses also. Consider the words of Allah: “and know that the Messenger of Allah is within/among you...” (Q49:7). If we do not constantly remember and send salawat upon the Prophet (asws) in our selves and our houses, then our selves become “dead” and our houses become like “graveyards.” This is indicated by the following authentic narrations:

Qadi ‘Iyad in his *Shifa’* (section concerning the places where it is desirable to invoke salawat upon the Prophet (asws)) cited from ‘Amr ibn Dinar al-Athram’s (d. 126H) explanation of the verse (Q24:61 “but when you enter houses, give greetings of peace to each other, a greeting from Allah, blessed and sweet...”): “If there is no one in the house then say, ‘Peace be upon the Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings’.” Mulla ‘Ali Qari wrote in his commentary on the *Shifa’* (2:117): “Meaning, because his spirit (Ruh) is present in the houses of the Muslims.” This narration cited by Qadi ‘Iyad is recorded in the *Tafsir of Ibn Jarir at-Tabari* (18:173) from ‘Ata al-Khurasani (d. 135H), a trustworthy (thiqa) narrator.

Imam Muslim recorded in his *Sahih* that the Prophet (asws) said: “The likeness of the house in which Allah is invoked and the house in which Allah is not invoked is as the likeness of the living and the dead.”²⁰⁹ And the Prophet (asws) said, “Pray in your houses and do not turn them into graves.”²¹⁰ And he said (asws): “No group sits together without invoking Allah in it or sending salawat upon the Prophet except that (this gathering) becomes a source of torment/regret for them on the Day of Rising, even if they enter Paradise thru the rewards of their works.”²¹¹ And Abu Nu’aym (7:285) recorded that Sufyan ibn ‘Uyayna said,

²⁰⁸ Recorded by Bukhari (*Tarikh Kabir*, 2:189), Abu Dawud (#1746), Nasa’i (*Sunan Kubra*, 1:408), Imam Ahmad (2:367 #8449), Tabarani (*M. Awsat*, 8:81 #8030), Abu Ya’la (#469), Diya’ (*Mukhtara*, 2:49), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab* 3:491 #4162, *Hayat Anbiya’* #14), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:226), Abdur-Razzaq (3:577 #6726), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 1:340), Qadi Isma’il (*Fadl as-Salat ‘ala-n Nabi*, #20), Daylami in *Firdaws* (5:165 #7493), and others, and it is *Sahih* according to Nawawi (*Adhkar*, p. 163), Diya’, Suyuti (*Jami’ Saghir*, #3768) and others.

²⁰⁹ Recorded by Muslim (#1299), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab* #536, also #565-67), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 3:93), and others. Another version has the wording, “the one who invokes Allah and the one who does not is like the living and the dead,” and is recorded by Bukhari (#5928) and Ibn Hibban (3:135 #854). See also *Fath al-Bari* (11:208-211).

²¹⁰ Recorded by Bukhari (#414, #1114) and Muslim (#1297), and numerous others.

²¹¹ Recorded by Ibn Hibban (2:351-53, 3:133 *Sahih*), Hakim (1:492, 496, 550 *Sahih*), Tirmidhi (*Kitab ad-Da’awat* #3302), Abu Dawud (#4214-15, 4400), Imam Ahmad (*Musnad* #9213, 9388, 9888 and *Kitab az-Zuhd*, p. 27), Nasa’i in *‘Amal al-Yowm wa’l Layla* (#404-07), Abu Nu’aym (*Hilya* 7:207, 8:130), Tabarani (*M. Kabir* 8:213, *M. Awsat* #3744, 4834, 8316, and *K. Du’a* #1920-28), Bayhaqi (*Sunan* 3:210, *Shu’ab* #541-46, 1569-71), Humaydi

“At the mention of the righteous, the Divine mercy descends.”

As for the hadith ²¹² which states, “O Allah! Do not allow my grave to become an idol (wathan) that is prayed to,” or “worshipped,” then this is not a contradiction of what was said above, for this du’a of his was answered. For no Muslim, past or present, worships the Prophet (asws) or his grave. Rather, it is honoring and venerating him and the things connected to him that we are speaking of, as Allah Himself asks us to do in Q48:9. Muslims from the time of the Companions to this day have visited his grave throughout all times of the year to pay their respects and satisfy their longings to visit their beloved (asws). These Sahaba and their followers – who used to visit his grave regularly – were “the best generations.”

There is no risk or worry of them worshipping him (asws), for the Prophet (asws) said: “I do not fear that my community will embrace shirk after me, but rather I fear that the world (dunya) will enter their hearts and they will end up fighting each other over it.” ²¹³ And he (asws) also said: “I fear for my Ummah shirk,” and the narrator asked him, “will your Ummah embrace shirk after you?” and he replied, “Yes. But they will not worship the sun or the moon or an idol (wathan), but will (embrace shirk by) showing off in their actions.” ²¹⁴ About this hadith, the scholar Sulayman (the older brother of Muhammad ibn Abdul-Wahhab an-Najdi) said that all of the hadiths similar to this one in which the Prophet (asws) warns of Shirk in his community refer to the minor shirk of showing off and ostentation, not the major shirk of associating with Allah. And he (asws) said: “Indeed, the Shaytan has given up all expectation or hope that idols will be worshipped in the land of the Arabs (in Bazzar’s narration, Madina specifically), so he has instead agreed to lesser evils.” ²¹⁵ So to claim that Muslims in later generations have committed shirk by visiting his grave and honoring him is to contradict the Prophet (asws) and distrust his promise.

The Prophet (asws) said, “One of the things that concerns me about my nation is a man who studied the Qur’an, and when its grace began to show on him and he had the appearance of

(Musnad, #1192), Tayalisi (#2430), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:189), and others. Hadith Sahih: Ibn Hibban, Hakim, Sakhawi, Dhahabi, Suyuti (Jami’ Saghir, #7778-80, 7886, 8086), Haythami (Majma’, 10:79-80), Mundhiri (2:410), Busiri (Ithaf as-Sada, 8:498 #6801), and others. A related hadith, which is Da’if according to Sakhawi (Maqasid, #548), states, “Beautify your gatherings with salawat upon me, for your salawat upon me is a light for you on the Day of Rising” (Daylami in Firdaws 2:417 from Ibn Umar). However, it has corroborating narrations which strengthen it, such as the one quoted by Hafiz Suyuti (Jami’ Saghir, #5191 – “Salawat upon me is a light for you on the Bridge”) and recorded by Ibn Shahin (Targhib, #22), Ibn Bashkuwal, Daraqutni in his Afrad from Abu Hurayra and others, which Suyuti and others said is Hasan, while Ibn Hajar classified it as Da’if.

²¹² Recorded by Imam Malik (#376), Imam Ahmad (#7054), Abdur-Razzaq (#1587, also: 8:464 #15916 “...and my minbar an ‘Eid”), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:226), Ibn Sa’d (Tabaqat, 2:241-42), Abu Ya’la (#6681 Sahih), Bazzar (Zawa’id 1:220), Abu Nu’aym (7:317), and others. See Haythami’s Majma’ (2:28, 4:302).

²¹³ Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab al-Maghazi, #3329, and Kitab ar-Riqaq, #5946, 6102) and Muslim from ‘Uqba ibn ‘Amir (#4249), Imam Ahmad (#16705, 16756), Abu Ya’la (3:286-87), Ibn Hibban (#3198), and others.

²¹⁴ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (4:123, also: 5:428), Hakim (4:330), Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab (5:333), Tabarani (M. Kabir 7:284, M. Awsat 4:284), Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 1:268), and Ibn Majah (#4195), from Shaddad ibn Aws. See also Haythami’s Majma’ (3:201-02, 10:222).

²¹⁵ Recorded by Hakim (1:93, 2:27 Sahih), Abu Ya’la (9:57-58 #5122, also: #2095, 2154, 2294, 6709), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab 5:455 #7263 and Dala’il, 6:363), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 2:34, 50 and 3:322), Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (2:304 #2267), Humaydi (#98), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#856), Imam Ahmad (2:368 #13847 and #14288), Tirmidhi (#1860), Nasa’i (Sunan al-Kubra 6:353 #11213), Ibn Majah (2:1015 #3046), and by Muslim in his Sahih (Kitab Sifat al-Qiyama, #5030). It forms part of the “Farewell Speech.” See Haythami’s Majma’ (10:54, 189).

a Muslim, he detached himself from it and threw it behind his back, and went after his neighbor with a sword and accused him of associating partners with Allah.” Hudhayfa – his Companion who narrated this hadith – then asked him, “Oh Prophet of Allah! Which one is more guilty of associating partners with Allah, the accuser or the accused?” to which the Prophet (asws) replied, “*It is the accuser.*”²¹⁶

The Fitna from Najd

We also see from these authentic hadiths the falsity of the claims of Ibn Abdul-Wahhab an-Najdi and his followers, who claimed that the Muslims for the seven centuries before him were actually idol-worshippers because they visited the tombs of the Prophets and Awliya’ to gain blessings (were there no upright scholars who existed in those 700 years?). It is as if he (asws) was speaking about them when he said: “What I fear most for my Ummah are the misguiding leaders. If they obey them, they are tried (fitna) by them, and if they disobey them, they are killed by them.”²¹⁷ Indeed, in numerous authentic hadiths, the Prophet (asws) prophesied that earthquakes and major fitnas would arise from the area of Najd (where Ibn Abdul-Wahhab came from), and that the “horn of Shaytan” would appear from it, and that 9/10th of Kufr is in it, and he refused to bless it while blessing other lands.²¹⁸ Also, ‘Amr ibn ‘Abasa as-Sulami related that a man praised Najd in front of the Prophet (asws), and the Prophet replied, “you lied!”²¹⁹ Hadiths in praise of Najd and its people are completely non-existent, while praise of surrounding areas, such as Yemen, Hijaz, Syria, Egypt, Maghrib, Persia, etc. abound (which are the areas in which Tasawwuf flourished). In addition to this, Imam Ibn ‘Abidin, the supreme authority of the late Hanafi school, wrote (Hashiya 4:262): “The name of Khawarij is applied to those who part ways with Muslims and declare them disbelievers, as took place in our time with the followers of Ibn Abdul-Wahhab who came out of Najd and attacked the Two Sacred Sanctuaries (haramayn).”

Some might argue that “Najd” in these hadiths really refers to modern-day Iraq, but this is silly, for the Prophet Muhammad (asws) established two different miqat’s of Hajj for Iraq (Dhat ‘Irq) and for Najd (Qarn al-Manazil),²²⁰ which is unarguable proof that the Prophet (asws) distinguished between Najd and Iraq. Also, the word “Najd” itself means “high

²¹⁶ Recorded by Abu Ya’la in his Musnad (Sahih – Ibn Kathir’s Tafsir 2:353 of Q7:175) from Hudhayfa, and Ibn Hibban in his Sahih (1:282 #81), Tabarani (M. Kabir 20:88-89 and Musnad Shamiyyin #1291), and Bazzar (Zawa’id, 1:99 #175). Haythami said it was Hasan in his Majma’ az-Zawa’id (1:187-88).

²¹⁷ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (Musnad, #20334-35, 21359, 21415, 26213), Darimi (#213, 2634), Tayalisi (#1068), Quda’i (2:193 #1166 Sahih), Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (8:149 #7653), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (p. 47 #100). Hadith Sahih. Similar versions were also recorded by Tirmidhi (#2155), Abu Dawud (#3710), Bayhaqi (Dala’il, 6:527), Ibn Majah (#3942), Abu Ya’la (13:436 #7440), and Bazzar (Zawa’id, 4:101).

²¹⁸ Such as the hadiths recorded by Bukhari in his Sahih (#979, 3341, 4004, 4670, 5697, 6419, 6421, 6563-65, 7007), Muslim (Kitab az-Zakat, #1762-70 and Kitab al-Fitan, #5167-72), Tirmidhi (#2194, 3888), Abu Dawud (#4136-39), Abu Ya’la (#261, #1193, #2354, #2963, #5449, #5511 Sahih), Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (#4450, 5384, 10585, 10695, 10855, 11112) and his Fada’il as-Sahaba (#1661, 1724), Imam Malik (#428, 1544), Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (8:171), Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 6:133), Tabarani (M. Kabir #12553, M. Awsat #387, 1738, 1889, 1910, 8003, M. Saghir 2:36, 100), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (p. 440-461 #908-45), Tayalisi (#449, 452, 965), Ibn Hibban (16:288 #7299, 16:290 #7301), Abdur-Razzaq (11:463 #21016), Baghawi in his Sharh as-Sunna (#4006), Bazzar (Musnad #3846; Zawa’id 2:360-64), and many others.

²¹⁹ Imam Ahmad (#18628, 18631), Hakim (4:81), and Tabarani (M. Awsat, 5:57 #4661; Kabir 20:98-99). It is Sahih according to Hakim, Dhahabi, and Haythami (Majma’, 10:43).

²²⁰ As recorded on the authority of A’isha by Imam Muslim (Kitab al-Hajj, #2028) in his Sahih, and Ibn Majah (#2906), Nasa’i (Kitab Manasik al-Hajj, #2608), and Daraqutni (2:237) in their Sunan.

ground,” which is geographically characteristic of the Najd area in central and eastern Saudi Arabia, and not Iraq, which is mostly low marshland or flat desert land.

The Permissibility of Reciting the Qur'an at the graves of the dead and donating the rewards of its recitation to the deceased

Allah says: “Those who come after them say, ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who came before us in faith...’” (Q59:10), meaning those who have passed away, who benefit from the supplications of the living, as is clearly seen here. Also: “And ask forgiveness for your faults, and for the believing men and women” (Q47:19), with no specification here of it only applying to the currently living believers and excluding the dead ones.

The Prophet (asws) said, “Read Ya Siin over your deceased.”²²¹

The Prophet (asws) sacrificed two white rams, one for himself and family and the other for his community.²²² The evidence here is that the Prophet (asws) offered sacrificial animals and donated the reward to his community, which includes both the living and the dead, whether for those existing at his time or for those coming after.

A person asked the Prophet (asws), “My mother has passed away, will she benefit if I give charity on her behalf?” and the Prophet (asws) answered: “Yes.”²²³ Someone else asked him, “My mother has passed away, and yet she did not make up a month’s worth of fasting, so should I fast on her behalf?” and he said, “Yes.”²²⁴ Similarly, the Prophet (asws) said: “Whoever dies without making up an obligatory fast that he had missed, let his/her patron (wali) fast on his/her behalf.”²²⁵ And as for Hajj, there are also many such hadiths.²²⁶

‘Ata’ ibn Abi Rabah said: I heard Ibn ‘Umar say: I heard the Prophet say: “When one of you dies do not tarry, but make haste and take him to his grave, and let someone read at his head

²²¹ Recorded by Abu Dawud (#2714), Ibn Majah (1:466 #1438), Hakim (1:565 Sahih), Ibn Hibban (7:269 #3002 Sahih), Imam Ahmad (5:26), Nasa’i (‘Amal Yowm... #1074-75, Sunan Kubra 6:265), Baghawi in Sharh as-Sunna (#1464), Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (3:383) and Shu’ab (#2457-58), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:124), Tayalisi (#973), Tabarani (20:219-20, 231). Suyuti said it is Sahih (Jami’ Saghir, #8937), while Daraqutni and Nawawi (Adhkar, p. 198) said it is Da’if. Cf. ‘Ajluni’s Kashf al-Khafa’ (#709). Also, Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (4:105 #16355) stated that, “The Shaykhs used to say that if Ya Siin is recited for the dead person, then the torment of the grave is lightened for him by it,” and Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani declared this narration (also in Daylami’s Firdaws 4:108 #5834) Hasan in his Isaba (3:184). See also his Talkhis al-Habir (2:104) and Ibn Kathir’s Tafsir (3:563). Imam Shawkani (Nayl al-Awtar, 3:25) and others stated that the primary and preferred meaning is the literal one, namely, the already deceased, and that taking it to mean those in the last moments of their life is a metaphorical extension that is unwarranted but acceptable.

²²² Recorded by Ibn Sa’d (Tabaqat, 1:249), Ibn Majah (#3112), Darimi (#1864), Abu Ya’la (#1792, 2806, 3076, 3118, 3136, 3247-48 Sahih), Daraqutni (Sunan, 4:278, 284-85), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#1144), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 2:62), Tabarani in Kabir (1:312, 5:111) and Awsat (2:250, 3:319, 6:300), and Ruyani (Musnad, #991).

²²³ Bukhari (#1299, 2554), Muslim (Kitab al-Wasiyya, chapter “on the rewards of charity reaching the dead” #3082-83), Nasa’i (#3589), Imam Malik (#1255), Imam Ahmad (6:51 #23117), and others.

²²⁴ Bukhari (#1817), Muslim (#1936-38), Imam Ahmad (1:216, 227, 2:181, 4:405, 5:359), and others.

²²⁵ Bukhari (#1816), Muslim (#1935), and many others.

²²⁶ See for example: Bukhari (#6204-05), Muslim (2:805 #1939), Nasa’i (#2585-87), Abu Dawud (2:162 #1545-46), Tirmidhi (Kitab al-Hajj, #852), Ahmad (5:359), Daraqutni (Sunan, 2:260), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 2:36), Tabarani (M. al-Kabir 1:258 #748, Hasan according to Haythami in Majma’ 3:282; M. Awsat 8:11), etc.

the opening of Surat al-Baqara, and at his feet its closure when he lies in the grave.”²²⁷ This is supported by the fact that Ibn Abi Shayba (Musannaf 3:123), Shawkani (Nayl al-Awtar 3:25) and others recorded that the Ansar saw it as desirable to recite al-Baqara and al-Ra’d to the dead. ‘Ala’ ibn al-Lajlaj said to his children: “When you bury me, say as you place me in the side-opening (lahd) of the grave: Bismillah wa ‘ala millati rasulillah – (In the name of Allah and according to the way of Allah’s Messenger) -- then flatten the earth over me, and read at the head of my grave the beginning of Surat al-Baqara and its end, for I have heard Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar recommend the same”²²⁸, and in other narrations “the Messenger of Allah recommend it.” It was also related (thru Abu Bakr and Abu Hurayra) that he (asws) said: “Whoever visits the grave of his parents or the grave of one of them every Friday (and recites Ya Siin), he will be forgiven and his name will be written among the pious.”²²⁹ Also, we know that the deceased are affected by the actions of their living relatives in a negative sense,²³⁰ so there is no reason they would not be affected by the positive actions of their living relatives, such as reciting Qur’an for them, paying off their debts,²³¹ etc.

Shaykh Muwaffaq Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi, the leading scholar of the Hanbali Madhhab during his time, wrote (Mughni 2:426-27) the following: “There is no harm in reciting Qur’an at the graves (of the dead), and it was narrated that Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said, ‘If you enter a graveyard, then recite Ayat ul-Kursi and surat al-Ikhlās 3 times, then say “O Allah, this is on behalf of the occupants of these graves”.’ And Imam Ahmad used to say that reciting Qur’an at the graves is a bid’a (innovation), but later recanted this view and agreed it was permissible, and did it himself.”²³² ... It was also narrated that the Prophet (asws) said, ‘Whoever enters a graveyard and recites surat Ya Siin then their punishment is lightened for them on that day, and he receives rewards equal to the number of people in the grave, and also, ‘whoever visits the grave of his parents and reads Ya Siin for them, then he is forgiven.’” He also wrote: “Any voluntary act of devotion which the Muslim performs, and then gifts its reward to the deceased Muslim, then that deceased Muslim will benefit from it...” And he said (Mughni 2:429): “And it is the consensus of the Muslims, in every time and

²²⁷ Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab al-Iman (7:16 #9294), Daylami (Firdaws, 1:350 #1124), and Tabarani in al-Mu’jam al-Kabir (12:444 #13613). Haythami said in Majma’ al-Zawa’id (3:44) that the latter’s chain contains Yahya ibn ‘Abd Allah al-Dahhak, who is weak. However, Ibn Hajar said it was Hasan in Fath al-Bari (1959 ed. 3:184).

²²⁸ Recorded by Bayhaqi in his Sunan (4:56, Hasan – Nawawi’s Adhkar p. 219), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 19:220 – Haythami said its narrators were declared trustworthy, in Majma’ 3:44 #4243), Ibn ‘Asakir (Tarikh, 47:230), Abu Bakr al-Khallal’s Amr bi’l Ma’ruf (#237) and his “Recitation at the graves”, and Dinawari’s Mujalasa (#757 Da’if). See also Ibn Hajar’s Talkhis al-Habir (2:129-130) and Shawkani’s Tuhfat al-Dhakhirin (p. 229).

²²⁹ Recorded by Bayhaqi (Shu’ab al-Iman, 6:201 #7901), Tabarani (M Awsat 6:175, M Saghir 2:69 – Da’if: Haythami’s Majma’ 3:60), Daylami (Firdaws, 4:140 #5945), Hakim Tirmidhi (Asl #15), Ibn Abi Dunya in Makarim al-Akhlaq (#249), Ibn ‘Adiyy (Kamil, 5:1801), Ibn Najjar, and others. Hadith Da’if.

²³⁰ The Prophet (asws) said: “The deceased is bothered in his grave by that which bothers him in his house” (Daylami from A’isha), and “The deceased is bothered by the grieving and wailing of his relatives over him” (Bukhari #1208-10, Muslim #1539-40, Tabarani 25:10), and he (asws) saw someone sitting on a grave (to relieve himself) and told him, “Get off this grave, do not harm the inhabitant of this grave, so he will not harm you” (Ahmad 5:223, Tabarani – Majma’ 3:61, Hakim 3:590, Tahawi 1:515, Abu Nu’aym in Ma’rifat Sahaba #1981). For more, see Suyuti’s Sharh as-Sudur (Ch. 46-48) and ‘Ajluni’s Kashf (#789).

²³¹ Suyuti (Sharh, Ch. 42) cited 8 narrations to the effect that the souls of the departed are trapped and prevented from reaching their ultimate stations of honor because of unpaid debts, and when payed they are freed; from Tirmidhi (#998-99), Ibn Majah (#2404), Ahmad (2:440, 475, 5:20), Bayhaqi (Sunan 4:61, 6:49, 76, Shu’ab 4:401), Tabarani (Kabir 7:178, Awsat 5:258), Ibn Hibban (7:331 #3061), Abu Ya’la (#6026), and others.

²³² This was recorded by Abu Bakr al-Khallal al-Hanbali in his Amr bi’l Ma’ruf (p. 122 #240-41), who also recorded that Ishaq ibn Rahawayh saw no problem in reciting Qur’an at graves (p. 123 #245).

place, that they meet together to recite the Qur'an and donate its rewards to their deceased, without any objection, and because it is authentically narrated that the Prophet (asws) said, 'the dead is bothered by the wailing of the living over him,' and Allah is too generous to deliver punishment to them and not deliver reward."

Similarly, Imam Nawawi commented on the famous hadith wherein the Prophet (asws) and some Companions passed by two graves, and he said, "they are being punished, but for something minor; as for one of them, he used to carry false tales, and as for the other, he did not used to purify himself from traces of urine," then he called for a green date-palm stalk and split it in two, and placed one part over one grave and another over the other grave, and said, "Their punishments will be lightened as long as these remain green and do not wither up, in sha'allah."²³³ Then Imam Nawawi said (Sharh Sahih Muslim 3:202): "Due to this hadith, the 'Ulama have declared it recommended (mustahabb) to recite Qur'an at the graves, because if the lessening of punishment could be hoped for from the glorification of a palm stalk, then the recitation of Qur'an is more worthy of this special distinction...and Allah knows best." Imam Suyuti in his book Sharh as-Sudur (p. 312-313) also stated that it is authentically established that among the Companions, Abu Barza al-Aslami (as narrated by Ibn 'Asakir 62:100) and Burayda (as narrated by Bukhari in his Sahih – K Jana'iz) asked to be buried together with two fresh stalks! Imam Nawawi also advised in his book Minhaj at-Talibin (chapter on funerals): "Whoever visits a grave, let him greet its dweller, recite some Qur'an, and make an invocation for the deceased." He also said (Adhkar, p. 218), "It is desirable (yustahabb) that one who is visiting the graves recite from the Qur'an what is easy for him to recite, after which, that he invoke Allah on their behalf. Shafi'i stipulated it and his companions all agreed with him."

Imam Suyuti also records Imam al-Qurtubi, the Maliki scholar and mufassir, as saying that, "As for reciting over the grave, then our companions (Malikis) are categorical that it is lawful, and others say the same." And Qurtubi wrote in his Tadhkira: "The legal basis for this is the permissibility of sadaqa on behalf of the dead, which no one disagrees about. And just as its rewards reach the dead, so do the rewards of Qur'an recitation and du'a, for all of that is sadaqa, and sadaqa does not only refer to money." Nafrawi al-Maliki states (Fawakih Dawani 1:284): "al-Qarafi said that that which is apparent is the obtainment of the blessing of the Qur'an-recital for the dead, just as blessing is obtained by being buried next to the righteous. Therefore, it is not appropriate to abandon the Qur'an-recital and invocations (tahlil) performed on their behalf, and in all of that one relies on Allah and His bountiful mercy. The author of the Madkhal (Ibn al-Haj) stated that whoever desires to actualize the blessing and reward of Qur'an-recital for the dead in a way which avoids any difference of opinion between the scholars (satisfying all of their conditions), then he should make it a supplication and say, 'O Allah! Cause the reward of what we recite to reach so-and-so', and in this way the dead gets the reward of the recital, and he gets the reward of du'a".

Ibn 'Abidin al-Hanafi (Hashiya 2:243) said: "In visiting graves one may recite Fatiha, Baqara, Ya Siin, Mulk, Takathur, and Ikhlas 12, 11, 7, or 3 times, and then say, 'O Allah, convey the reward of what I have recited to so-and-so (one or many)'"²³⁴. He (Hashiya 2:595-96), along

²³³ Recorded by Imam Bukhari (#209, 1273, 1289), Muslim (#439), Nasa'i (#31, 2041), and others.

²³⁴ Perhaps this is from the hadith which states, "Whoever passes by some graves and recites surat Ikhlas 11 (or 21) times then gifts the reward of that to the inhabitants of the graveyard, then he will receive a reward

with Kamal ibn al-Humam al-Hanafi in *Sharh Fath al-qadir*, also stated that every single act of worship, including Qur'an-recital, could be donated to the deceased. The Hanafi faqih 'Uthman al-Zayla'i said: "There is nothing rationally far-fetched in the reaching of someone else's reward to the dead because it is nothing more than the placing of what he possesses of reward at someone else's disposal, and it is Allah Who is the One Who conveys it, and He is able to do that." So we see the major scholars of all four madhahib agreeing²³⁵ that it is recommended to recite the Qur'an at the graves and donate its reward to the deceased.

As for the hadith that states that "all of the actions of the son of Adam after he dies are cut off except for three..."²³⁶, then there is no proof in this against what we are saying, for this refers to his own actions being cut off, not the actions of the living, nor their rewards reaching him, as the rewards continue to reach the dead even though their own actions are finished. And as for the verse that states, "man can have nothing but what he strives for" (Q53:39), then this also does not constitute a proof against what we are saying here. Firstly, Ibn 'Abbas stated it is abrogated by Q52:21, and 'Ikrima stated it only applies to the people (Qawm) of Ibrahim (asws) and Musa (asws). Also, Ibn Qayyim said (*Kitab ar-Ruh*, Ch. 16), "the Qur'an did not deny the person's benefiting from the striving of someone else, but rather it denied his possession and ownership of other than his own striving; and between the two the difference is clear." He also wrote in the same book, "As for one who says, 'None of the Salaf have done this,' then these are the words of someone who has no knowledge." Consider these words of Ibn Qayyim, for we see today some people falsely thinking that if the Salaf did not do something, then that constitutes a proof of the prohibition of that thing.

To conclude, it is not only permissible but recommended to recite Qur'an at the graves of deceased Muslims, and donate the rewards of the recitation to the deceased, and also the rewards of other acts of worship, such as charity, fasting, pilgrimage, etc...

according to the number of the dead in the graves." Recorded by Daylami (*Firdaws*, 4:38), Imam Rafi'i in his *Tarikh Qazwin* (2:297), Abu Bakr Najjar, and Abu Muhammad Samarqandi (*Suyuti's Sharh as-Sudur* Ch. 51). And the hadith: "The dead in his grave is like the drowning man calling for help, waiting for a du'a from a father or mother or son or trustworthy friend..." (Bayhaqi's *Shu'ab* 6:203, 7:16, Daylami's *Firdaws*, 4:391).

²³⁵ For more, see: (Hanafi): Zayla'i in *Tabyin al-Haqa'iq* 2:83 ("Hajj on behalf of another person"), Tahtawi's *Hashiyat Maraqqi al-Falah* p. 413; (Maliki): *Mawahib al-Jalil* 2:237-38, Dusuqi's *Hashiya* 1:423, Ibn Rushd's *Nawazil*; (Shafi'i): Nawawi's *Majmu'* 5:294, *Rawdat at-Talibin* 5:191, and *Sharh Muslim* 1:89-90, Ibn Hajar's *Jawab al-Kafi*, Ibn Daqiq al-'Eid's *Ihkam al-Ahkam* 1:106; (Hanbali): Ibn Muflih's *Mubdi'* 2:281, Mardawi's *Insaf* 2:557, and *Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya* (24:306-15, 324, 366-67). Also: al-Jaziri's *Fiqh 'ala al-Madhahib al-Arba'a* (1:551-52).

²³⁶ Recorded by Muslim (#3084), Ibn Majah (#238), Ibn Khuzayma (#2490, 2494-95), and many others.

TOPIC:
The Understanding of “Innovation” (*Bid'a*) in Islam

In this chapter we discuss probably the most common misunderstanding that many Muslims today have, especially those in the West who lack the traditional Islamic upbringing of a student of knowledge...and that is the topic of “innovation”. These Muslims believe that literally every innovation (relating to the religion) is a reprehensible innovation leading one straight to Hellfire. In fact, as we will see below, the true scholars throughout the centuries have classified innovation into multiple categories, which can be summarized into “good” innovation and “bad” innovation.

A well known and authentic hadith (recorded by Imam Muslim and others) states: “Beware of matters newly begun (*muhdathat*), for every matter newly begun is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance.” The Islamic scholars are more or less in agreement that this hadith does not refer literally to all new things without restriction, but only to those things which nothing in the sources of the Shari’a attest to the validity of. Someone lacking traditional Islamic education would be ignorant concerning the methods that scholars use to derive rulings from the primary sources (*nusus*), and how scholars (and ONLY scholars) are specifically trained in the science and methodology of how to categorize “new things” into one of the five classifications of actions in Islam: mandatory, recommended, neutral, disliked, and forbidden. The mistake that these people make then is to take this hadith literally when it should not, and believe that indeed every new thing is a blameworthy misguiding innovation in an absolute sense, when such is clearly not the case. Rather, the Sunna - or the method - of the Prophet (asws) was to accept new acts initiated in Islam that were of the good and did not conflict with established principles of the Shari’a, and to reject those that were otherwise. Similarly, the scholars after him who inherited from him - for the people of knowledge are the inheritors of the Prophets - when encountering a “newly invented matter” would examine it and compare it with what the sources of the Law, and then categorize it accordingly and either accept it or reject it. Never did the scholars reject things outright merely because they were not performed or did not exist in the first century of Islam. As such, the Shari’a was kept wide, vast, flexible, alive, and able to continue through the centuries intact.

The first misunderstanding we notice in this hadith is that the word “every” (*kull*) in the phrase “every innovation is misguidance” is understood as an absolute generalization, when in reality it is restricted by other principles of the Shari’a and qualified by them. Imam Nawawi says about this hadith in his commentary on the collection of Muslim (3:423): “This generality concerns a specific division, for the intended meaning is the majority (not the totality) of innovation, for not all innovation is blameworthy.” And this is not a unique instance, for there are numerous examples in both the Qur’an and the Sunna of statements of general wording and restricted meaning, such as the following:

- Allah said (Q21:98): “Verily you and whatever you worship apart from Allah are the fuel of Hell.” Again, the phrase here “whatever you worship” is an absolute statement when taken according to its literal sense in Arabic, and yet this apparently absolute statement is qualified by numerous restrictions; for many people worship the Prophet Jesus (*alayhi salam*), his mother, and the angels, apart from Allah, but neither ‘Isa (*alayhi salam*), his mother, nor the angels are “the fuel of Hell.”

- Allah said (Q6:44): “But when they forgot what they had been reminded of, We opened unto them the doors of everything (kull shay’)...” Notice that the same word in the above hadith “kull” (meaning ‘every’), is also used here. Like the hadith above, it might seem to be an absolute statement to the uneducated eye, but notice that this is also restricted, for the doors of mercy and guidance and blessing and salvation were not opened to them.

- Allah said (Q46:25): “(A wind) destroying everything (kull shay’) by command of its Lord...” However, it did not destroy their dwellings, or the mountains or the earth.

- In the Sahih of Muslim (#1003), the Prophet (asws) is recorded as saying, “No one who prays before sunrise and sunset will enter Hell.” The same principle applies, for although the language is an absolute statement when taken literally, it is obvious - when compared with other statements made by the Prophet (asws) - that it is restricted and non-universal. Someone who understands this hadith to mean that if so-and-so prays only the subh and ‘asr prayers they will not enter Hell is guilty of the same ignorance and lack of understanding as someone who understands the first hadith above to mean that every single innovation (in a literal absolute sense) is reprehensible and leads one to the Fire... and in both cases, they are guilty of being ignorant of many other additional principles of the Shari’a (see below).

- Another hadith whose structure is the exact same grammatically as the one above is, “Every eye is adulterous,”²³⁷ by which he (asws) means, “every eye that looks to a woman (and vice versa) with lust and passion,” not in the literal sense of every single eye!

Imam Muslim in his Sahih (#1691) also records another authentic hadith wherein the Prophet (asws) tells us: “He who introduces a good (hasana) sunna in Islam earns the rewards of it and of all who perform it after him without diminishing their own rewards in the least, and he who introduces a bad (sayyi’a) sunna in Islam earns the punishment of it and of all who perform it after him without diminishing their own punishment in the least” (also recorded by Imam Ahmad (5:387), Tirmidhi (#2599), Nasa’i (#2507), Ibn Majah (#199), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 1:89) and many others, from Jarir ibn Abdullah al-Bajali, Abu Hurayra, Abu Juhayfa, Hudhayfa ibn Yaman, A’isha, and other companions).

So in this hadith, the Prophet (asws) made those newly invented things that conform to the Shari’a acceptable, while those that oppose or nullify the Shari’a unacceptable. For the meaning of “whoever introduces a good sunna” is “whoever invents a way (tariqa, which is what “sunna” literally means) or affair in the religion which is in conformity with the principles of the Shari’a.” If it meant “whoever revives a good sunna,” then we would have to also apply this meaning to the second phrase and say, “whoever revives a bad sunna in Islam,” which is obviously incorrect. In another hadith, he further defines and qualifies what is meant by “introducing a bad sunna in the Din” when he (asws) clarifies it as being “an innovation of misguidance which does not please Allah and His Messenger” (Tirmidhi #260, Ibn Majah #206). Meaning that there also are those good sunnas which are introduced that are pleasing to Allah, as confirmed by Qur’an 57:27 (see below).

²³⁷ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#2710), Nasa’i (Sunan Kubra, 5:430), Darimi (#2532), Imam Ahmad (4:394, 407, 418), Ibn Khuzayma (3:91 #1681), Hakim (2:396), Ibn Hibban (6:301 #1474), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 6:171), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 2:216), and others. Hadith Sahih: Haythami’s Majma’ (6:256) and Suyuti’s Jami’ Saghir (#2971).

For this reason, the Prophet (asws) described that which the Companions invented and introduced as a “sunna” when he said in his famous hadith, “You must follow my sunna, and the sunna of the rightly-guided successors after me...”, the “and” indicating that he is speaking of two separate but similar things. Look at how he authorized in this hadith the Sahaba to introduce things in accordance with the Shari’a, even if those things were not around specifically in his (asws) time or commanded specifically by him (otherwise they would apply under his own sunna mentioned in the first part of this hadith). So whatever the Sahaba introduced is an invention in the religion, and it is praiseworthy (hasan) so long as it conforms to the Shari’a and its general principles. The Prophet (asws) here named it a “sunna”, and it can also be named a “good bid’a” as Sayyidina ‘Umar did in the context of collective taraweeh (see below). Whoever interprets the words of Sayyidina ‘Umar to mean “innovation” in its literal sense (something that did not exist before) is mistaken, for when he or other Sahaba say that such and such is an “innovation,” they mean only the legal technical sense in the Shari’a...and he is speaking here in the context of the Taraweeh, which is an act of the Shari’a. This is one foundation of none other than the principle of Qiyas (inferring specific rules by analogy to general primary texts), which is no more than the correct method of innovating new things in accordance to the principles of the Shari’a.

Does “introducing a good sunna in Islam” mean then that anyone can make new provisions in the Shari’a? No. What it means is that whatever one initiates as a sunna must be subject to Islam’s rules and primary textual evidence. In other words, practices that are newly begun must be examined in the light of the sunna and the Prophet’s way of acceptance and rejection.²³⁸ We will see an example of this more clearly and in more detail in the chapter on the Mawlid.

Many of the companions performed various acts through their own personal reasoning (ijtihad/qiyas), and that the sunna or way of the Prophet (asws) was to accept those that were acts of worship and good deeds conformable with what the Shari’a (Usul ad-Din) had established and not in conflict with it; and to reject those that were otherwise. It is in conformity to the Shari’a that an act is judged to be permissible or not, not whether it was done or not by the Prophet or Companions. From this method of the Prophet (asws) in examining and judging the “invented” acts of his companions, the scholars of Shari’a have established the rule that: “Any new matter must be judged according to the principles and primary texts (Usul) of the Shari’a, and if it is attested to by the Shari’a as being good then it is accepted as a good innovation (bid’a hasana), and if it is attested to by the Shari’a as being a contravention and bad then it is rejected as a blameworthy innovation (bid’a sayyi’a).” That is because although such an action is “newly invented” and thus literally speaking an innovation (bid’a), it is rather an “inferable sunna” (sunna mustanbata) as long as the primary texts of the Shari’a can attest to its being acceptable. Therefore, innovation is of two broad types in the Shari’a: praiseworthy and blameworthy.

Let us look at a few examples of the companions inventing new acts that were not taught to them by the Prophet (asws), and the Prophet (asws) examining those acts and accepting them as inferable sunnas or praiseworthy innovations. At this point one might object, “This

²³⁸ For more on this, see Shaykh Nuh Keller’s translation of the *Reliance of the Traveler*, Chapter on Bid’a in the Appendices, from which some information is reproduced here.

was the Prophet (asws) himself who was accepting these innovations, so it does not apply to our times because he is not around to accept our innovations and say whether they are praiseworthy or blameworthy, so none of your claims constitute any evidence.” This is a hollow argument, because what the Prophet (asws) was doing was training future generations of scholars - his inheritors - in how to analyze and judge new actions and compare them to the primary principles of the Shari’a.

1) Imam Bukhari in his Sahih (Kitab at-Tarawih #1871) and Imam Malik in his Muwatta’ (#231) related the famous innovation of Sayyidina ‘Umar (radiyallahu anhu), who gathered the individual tarawih prayers collectively behind one Imam (Ubayy ibn Ka’b) in a group tarawih prayer (of twenty rak’as), and later exclaimed:

Ni’ma-l Bid’atu Hadhihi
What an excellent bid’a this is!

Notice the word usage of Sayyidina ‘Umar, and notice how the Companions themselves had an understanding that innovations can be praiseworthy or blameworthy... And what would the detractors say about Sayyidina ‘Umar increasing the number from eight to twenty?²³⁹ Is he introducing an innovation of misguidance in the religion? Did the Prophet (asws) lie then when he named him one of the rightly-guided successors, whose inventions in the religion we are commanded to also follow?

In his commentary on Sahih Bukhari (Fath al-Bari, ??), Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani wrote about this hadith: “The root lexical meaning of ‘innovation’ is what is produced without precedent. It is applied in the Shari’a in opposition to the Sunna and is therefore blameworthy. In reality, if it is part of what is generally classifiable as commendable by the Law then it is a good innovation, while if it is part of what is classified as blameworthy by the law then it is blameworthy, otherwise it falls in the category of what is permitted indifferently (mubah). It (innovation) can be divided into the known five categories.”

2) Ibn ‘Umar was asked about the salat ad-duha (prayed regularly and in congregation), and he said, “It is an innovation (bid’a), and how fine an innovation it is!” and in another narration he said, “The people have invented nothing more beloved to me than it.” Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (2:296, 299) and Abdur-Razzaq (3:78 #4868) in their Musannaf collections, and Tabarani (Kabir 12:424, Awsat 3:131), and it is Sahih as stated by Hafiz Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari 3:25). And Imam Shafi’i used this example and the one above it to demonstrate that innovations can be categorized as praiseworthy or blameworthy.

Similarly, Bukhari records in his Sahih that Ibn ‘Umar was asked whether he, or his father, or Abu Bakr, or the Prophet (asws) prayed the Duha prayer, and he replied in the negative. And he also recorded that A’isha said, “I never saw the Prophet (asws) pray the Duha prayer, but I myself always pray it.”²⁴⁰ Ponder over that...

²³⁹ Tirmidhi (#734) records that the Salaf of Madina prayed Taraweeh as 41 rak’as (including Witr), something which the Prophet (asws) and his four successors never did.

²⁴⁰ Recorded by Bukhari in his Sahih (hadiths #1104, 1106), Muslim (#1174), Imam Malik (#324), Imam Ahmad (#23412, 23420, 24272), Abu Dawud (#1101), Darimi (#1419), Abdur-Razzaq (#4867), Bayhaqi (3:49, 6:349), and Tayalisi (#1539, 1658). Similar statements were related from Abu Bakra (Tabarani’s Awsat 5:301).

3) We are all familiar with the story of the compilation of the Qur'an into one Mushaf, and how when many of the huffaz died in battle, Sayyidina 'Umar went to Sayyidina Abu Bakr - the Khalif at the time - and introduced to him the idea of gathering all the separate pieces of the Qur'an and putting them together in one volume; and how Sayyidina Abu Bakr at first asked, "how could I do something the Prophet (asws) never did or asked to do?" - no doubt the same question that many modern-day uneducated Muslims would ask, but without the wisdom of Abu Bakr. After Sayyidina 'Umar explained to him how this "innovation" was in accordance with the principles of the Shari'a and how it was necessary, Sayyidina Abu Bakr agreed to the idea and said "his chest was expanded and relaxed into agreeing to it," because he saw how it was a praiseworthy innovation!²⁴¹ Again, would that one of our local self-elected Muslim "scholars" were around at that time to warn Abu Bakr against the temptation to do something the Prophet (asws) didn't do, and to save him from a misguidance leading to Hell, for would we not be better off indeed without the innovation of a Mushaf?

4) Bukhari (see: Fath al-Bari, 3:376), Muslim (#4497), Ibn Khuzayma (#1208), Tirmidhi (#3622), and Imam Ahmad (2:333, 439) recorded that Sayyidina Bilal - from his own personal reasoning and inference from the primary sources of the Shari'a (his own ijihad) - came up with the "innovation" of performing two rak'as of salat after every ablution he made; and how when the Prophet (asws) later found out about it, instead of censuring him for introducing his own innovations into the religion, praised him and accepted this act of his. Hafiz Ibn Hajar said that it constitutes proof of the validity of inferring and introducing specific times and occasions for acts of worship, because Bilal arrived at this from his own ijihad. Similarly, the Companion Khubayb "innovated" a two-rak'a prayer for those about to be executed.²⁴² This Din is vast, and as long as these new inventions and innovations did not depart from the general form defined by the Prophet (asws), they were accepted. It is indeed a most blameworthy innovation to declare something prohibited that was not explicitly declared prohibited by Allah or His Messenger (asws)!

5) Bukhari (#757) and Muslim (#942) and others recorded on the authority of Rifa'a ibn Rafi' that a man was praying behind the Prophet (asws) and when they stood up from ruku', he innovated a new expression of dhikr not taught by the Prophet, and exclaimed "Our Lord, Yours is the praise, abundantly, wholesomely, and blessedly therein." Instead of the Prophet (asws) becoming angry and decrying this as an evil innovation destining him for Hell, he became very pleased and praised the companion and informed him that angels were competing to be the first to record his reward... the reward of his innovation!

These statements of A'isha and Ibn 'Umar must be placed in proper context, for the salat ad-Duha is a firmly established Sunnah of the Prophet (asws). What these two narrations mean is that they did not see the Prophet (asws) pray the Duha prayer in the masjid on a regular basis in congregation, so that it would not become an obligation. And there are dozens of other authentic narrations which state that he (asws) used to pray it, related on the authority of Abu Hurayra, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ud, al-Hasan ibn 'Ali, Abu Umama, Zayd ibn Arqam, Anas ibn Malik, Abu Dharr, Abu Darda', and others, in addition to A'isha herself. So the reader should take note of this important point. Finally, Ibn Hibban recorded in his Sahih (#312-313) from A'isha - in the context of Salat ad-Duha - that she said, "The Prophet (asws) used to leave a lot of actions, even if he loved to do them, out of fear that the people might take them to be obligatory."

²⁴¹ Recorded by Bukhari (#4311, 4603, 6654), Tirmidhi (#3028), Imam Ahmad (#20657), Bayhaqi (Sunan, 2:40-42), Tabarani (M. Kabir, #4901-03), and others.

²⁴² Recorded by Bukhari in his Sahih (K. Jihad, #2818), Imam Ahmad (2:294-95), and others.

6) There is also the hadith recorded by Bukhari (Kitab at-Tibb, #5295, 5308) and others related through Abu Sa'id al-Khudri wherein a group of companions were on a journey and they were asked to treat a person stung by a scorpion, and one of them came up and started reciting Fatiha over him until he got up as if nothing had happened. When they returned and told this to the Prophet (asws), he said, "How did you know it was of the words which heal?" ... meaning, the Prophet (asws) never told him so. But that did not stop him from delving into his knowledge of the Sunna and the religion, and through his own personal reasoning derive this innovation, which the Prophet (asws) later declared praiseworthy. Again, since it did not contravene anything that had been legislated (i.e., there was nothing by the Prophet to indicate that Qur'an cannot be used for healing), the Prophet (asws) confirmed his innovation, because it was of his sunna or method/way to accept what contained good and did not entail harm, even if it did not proceed from the acts of the Prophet (asws) himself as a definitive precedent.

7) Bukhari (#865), Tirmidhi (#474), Nasa'i (#1375-76), Abu Dawud (#919), Imam Ahmad (#15158, 15169), Ibn Khuzayma (#1773), and others recorded that Sayyidina Uthman introduced another adhan given on Friday at the beginning of the time of dhuhr, something which did not exist during the time of the Prophet (asws) or the Khilafa of Abu Bakr and Umar...in other words, a "bid'a." However, this is another example of a "good bid'a," which can be derived from a basis in the Sunna although it did not exist during the time of the Prophet (asws), nor did he establish it. Imam Nawawi, in his introduction to his commentary on the Sahih collection of Muslim (1:31), recorded that Islamic scholars and specialists in the fundamentals of Shari'a state that the opinion and position of a Companion, when it becomes widely acted upon and no one is known to object to it, is considered to have become a scholarly consensus (ijma') and is thus a decisive proof. Therefore, this is a fine example of how an "innovation" can become part of common Islamic practice.

8) Ibn Hajar wrote (Fath al-Bari, 8:169) that A'isha said: "The Maqam (of Ibrahim) used to be attached to the Ka'ba during the life of the Prophet (asws) and Abu Bakr, then 'Umar separated it from the Ka'ba during his Khilafa." Ibn Hajar continued: "None of the Sahaba disagreed with 'Umar in what he did, nor did those after them, and so it became a silent consensus... and he is also the first one who built a structure (maqsurah) around it."

9) Abu Dawud (Kitab as-Salat, #826) and Imam Malik (#190) recorded that Abdullah Ibn 'Umar said about the Tashahhud in the prayer: "at-Tahiyatu lillaah, as-Salawat at-Tayyibat, as-Salamu 'alayka ayyuha-n Nabiyy, wa rahmatullahi" – and I (Ibn Umar) added wa barakatuh – "as-Salamu 'alayna wa 'ala 'Ibadillaah is-Salihin, ashhadu al-la ilaha illa-llaah" – and I added wahdahu la sharika lahu – "wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasuluh." Tabarani (M Kabir – Sahih: Majma' Zawa'id #2863), Sarraj (Musnad, #826), and others also recorded some additions and changes of Ibn Mas'ud to the Tashahhud.

Similarly, a number of Sahaba (such as Anas, Sayyidina Umar, his son Abdullah, and others) innovated additions to the Talbiya of Hajj, above what the Prophet (asws) taught them to

say.²⁴³ None of them saw that as blameworthy.

10) It is known that the Prophet (asws) used to greet the two Yemeni sides of the Ka'ba when circumambulating around it, and never greeted the other two sides. However, a number of the Salaf (Jabir, Anas, Hasan, Husayn, Abdullah Ibn Zubayr, 'Urwa ibn Zubayr, Mu'awiya) used to greet all four sides of the Ka'ba, as documented by Hafiz Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari, 3:473-74).

11) Ali ibn abi Talib introduced a second 'Eid prayer in the mosque, for the well-known Sunna at the time of the Prophet (asws) and the first three Khalifas was that there was only one 'Eid prayer in the two Eid days prayed in a locality. So during his reign, it was said to him, "there are infirm people in the town, who find it difficult to come to the mosque when you pray the 'Eid," so he appointed another Imam to pray a second Eid prayer for those people. This is recorded by Bazzar (Zawa'id, 1:313) and others.

12) Ibn Qudama al-Hanbali stated (Mughni, 1:802) that Imam Ahmad authorized the du'a of the completion (khatm) of the Qur'an in Taraweeh, and he said, "if you finish reading surat an-Nas, then lift your hands up before making ruku' and recite a du'a." And he was asked what his source for this was, and he replied that Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna used to do it in Makka when he led taraweeh; namely, it is his invention (bid'a). So because of this Imam Ahmad gave the fatwa for this du'a, without there being any specific daleel for it in the Qur'an or Sunna, but rather from general principles in these two which imply numerous specific cases without explicit mention of them. So why do we not demand from Imam Ahmad and Sufyan a specific daleel for this, and take them to task for their innovation? And if we can agree that they are correct in this, then why do we reject those who commemorate the Prophet's birthday, or perform extra worship in mid-Sha'ban, or make collective supplication after the prayer, when these acts fall under general principles in the Shari'a, just like this du'a in Taraweeh at the completion of the Qur'an?

Those who cry "innovation, innovation" at actions such as these usually follow Ibn Taymiyya, but I wonder if they are aware that Ibn Taymiyya himself "innovated" in the religion. The Hanbali hadith scholar Umar ibn Ali al-Bazzar (d. 749H.) wrote in his al-'Alam al-'Aliyya fi Manaqib Ibn Taymiyya (3rd edition, Beirut, p. 38) that he would sit next to him after Fajr, and see him repeating the recitation of surat al-Fatiha over and over again from Fajr until sunrise. There is no mention whatsoever of the Prophet (asws) specifying the repetition of Fatiha from Fajr prayer until sunrise, or of the Salaf doing such. So at this point we ask: why is it that Ibn Taymiyya is praised for this innovation of his, when the Sufis are blamed and censured for the exact same action (introducing certain dhikrs at certain times)? Or is innovation accepted from certain people only and rejected from others?

The statements of some of the major scholars on innovation:

- Harmala ibn Yahya said: I heard Imam al-Shafi'i saying, "Innovation is of two kinds: the praiseworthy innovation and the blameworthy innovation. Whatever conforms to the Sunna

²⁴³ See for example: Muslim (#2029-31), Imam Malik (#643), Imam Ahmad (3:320 #13918), Abu Dawud (#1547), Ibn Majah (#3065) and its Sharh, Abu Ya'la (#5692), Ibn Abi Shayba (4:282-83), Humaydi (#675), Tayalisi (#1933), Ibn Khuzayma (#2626), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 2:15), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#724).

is praiseworthy, and whatever conflicts with the Sunna is blameworthy.” Recorded by Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 9:113); Hafiz Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari, 13:253); and others. Imam al-Bayhaqi in his book *Manaqib al-Shafi’i* (1:469) also quoted Imam Shafi’i: “Innovated matters are of two kinds, one is an innovation which contravenes something in the Qur’an, Sunna, report of a Companion or consensus of scholars, and this is the innovation of misguidance (*bid’a dalala*); the other kind is whatever good has been innovated which contravenes none of the above, and this is an innovation that is not blameworthy.”

- Imam Abu Shama, one of the teachers of Imam Nawawi, wrote a book called *al-Ba’ith ‘ala Inkar al-bida’ wal hawadith* (the stimulus to reject the innovations and newly invented matters), in which he divides innovation into three types: good (*hasana*) innovation, disliked (*makruh*) innovation, and prohibited (*haram*) innovation. We also have seen what Imam Nawawi said above in his commentary on *Sahih Muslim*, and also what Imam Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani said in his commentary on *Sahih Bukhari*.

- Sultan al-‘Ulama Izz ibn Abdus-Salam, in the end of his *al-Qawa'id al-Kubra* (2:172), classified innovations into the five categories of the Shari’a (mandatory, recommended, permitted, disliked, and prohibited), and gave examples of innovations that fall under each category and mentioning the principles of Shari’a that verify this classification. This classification was confirmed by Imam Nawawi, Imam Suyuti, Imam Ibn Hajar, Ibn al-Haj al-Maliki, and the vast majority of Islamic scholars who came after him, and they all viewed it as obligatory to apply this classification system to any new events that might occur.

- The Mujaddid Imam Ibn Daqiq al-‘Eid, in his *Ihkam al-Ahkam* (1:211), wrote: “The (Prophet’s) not doing a certain action *is not a proof* of that act being unlawful.”

Other scholars who similarly defined innovations as either good or bad, depending on whether or not they have an inferable basis in the Qur’an or Sunna, include: Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (*Ihya’* 1:276, 2:3), Hafiz Sakhawi (in *Fath al-Mughith* 2:229), Imam Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari, 13:254), Nawawi (in *Tahdhib al-Asma’* 3:22-23), Qarafi (*Dhakhira* 13:234-35, *Furuq* 4:345-50), Qurtubi (*Tafsir Q2:117, Q57:27*), Hafiz Ibn al-Jawzi (*Talbis Iblis* p. 25), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (*Istidhkar* 2:67), Imam Shawkani (in his *Nayl al-Awtar*), Imam Ibn al-Athir al-Jazri (in his *Nihaya fi Gharib al-Hadith* 1:267 – entry on “*bid’a*”), Hafiz Badr ad-Din al-‘Ayni (in his *Umdat al-Qari* 11:136), Imam as-Subki (quoted in *Zabidi’s Ithaf as-Sada al-Muttaqin*), Amir San’ani (*Subul as-Salam* 2:77), Imam Kirmani (in his *Sharh al-Bukhari* 9:154), Mulla Ali Qari (*Mirqat* 1:489-90), Imam Zurqani (*Sharh Muwatta’* 1:340), Ibn ‘Abidin (*Hashiya* 1:560-61), Ibn Hazm (in *Ihkam fi Usul al-Ahkam* 1:47), the late hadith scholar Abdullah ibn as-Siddiq al-Ghumari, and others. In addition, it must be pointed out that the opinions of Imam Shatibi in his *Kitab al-I’tisam* are the minority opinion, and that a good number of the hadiths he used in commentary of the verse “those who have divided their religion...” (Q6:159) have been declared weak (*Da’if*) by Shawkani in his *Tafsir* of that verse (*Fath al-Qadir*).²⁴⁴ Also, Imam Shatibi only took issue with the phrase “*bid’a hasana*” (good *bid’a*), and instead called those

²⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that Imam Shatibi in his *Kitab al-I’tisam* (1995 ed. Beirut, p. 150-59), which deals with his theory on innovations, rejected the classification of *Tasawwuf* as an innovation (*bid’a*) in Islam, and confirmed that *Tasawwuf* has always been an integral part in the religion. He wrote: “Many of the ignorant think that the Sufis are lax in conforming to Shari’a. Far be it from them to be attributed such a belief! The primary foundation of their Path is the Sunna and the avoidance of what contravenes it.”

“newly invented matters” which were necessary “masalih mursala.” Meaning, it is only a matter of semantics and technical vocabulary, and not principle.

This should be enough to make it clear to any sincere Muslim who seeks true knowledge of his or her Din, that they should tread the recognized and accepted path of traditional Islam and the method of its scholars, the true inheritors of the Prophets. Were we to rule that every new act that has come into being is an innovation of misguidance without considering whether it entails benefit or harm, and what its judgment is according to the primary principles of the Shari’a, then we would risk transforming the vast road of the living Shari’a into a narrow corridor of dead and static rules and regulations. Those who still object after this and repeat statements like: “the Prophet (asws) and his companions never did such and such, so we are not permitted to do that for it is a bid’a,” then this is an objection of someone who is ignorant of the very basic principles of Usul al-Fiqh, and in what follows²⁴⁵ we will correct this misunderstanding in sha’llah.

Know that the scholars of Islam in all four madhhabs, past and present, have unanimously agreed that the four common sources of Islamic rulings are: Qur’an, Sunna, Ijma’ (scholarly consensus), and Qiyas/Ijtihad (analogical derivation of rulings based upon general principles in the primary texts – Qur’an and Sunna – relating to an issue not explicitly mentioned in the previous sources, which can only be performed by one who has reached the rank of scholarly Ijtihad). And Allah says: “O you who believe! “Obey Allah” (Qur’an) “and obey the Messenger” (Sunna) “and those in authority among you” (Ijma’ of scholars), “and if you differ in a certain matter, then refer it back to Allah and His Messenger (Qiyas) if you believe in Allah and the Last Day...” (Q4:59).

And the scholars of Tafsir say that this last clause relates to Qiyas, because if it only related to Qur’an and Sunna, then it would already be mentioned in the first two clauses above, and there would be no meaning to its repetition. Furthermore, that in itself is what constitutes Qiyas, which is analyzing a new issue by making an analogy with some Ayah or Hadith that does not specifically mention the issue but can apply in some general way to it. It is also alluded to in Allah’s words: “But if they had referred it back to the Messenger and those in authority among them, the ones who could infer/extract (istinbat) conclusions from it would have known about it” (Q4:83), referring to the process of Qiyas and Ijtihad by the scholars (“those in authority”). This is what is meant by the famous hadith of Mu’adh (recorded by Abu Dawud, Tirmidhi, Darimi, Imam Ahmad, Ibn Abi Shayba, Tabarani, Ibn Sa’d, Bayhaqi, Tayalisi, al-Khatib, Ibn Abd al-Barr, Ibn ‘Asakir, and others), wherein the Prophet (asws) sent him to Yemen to invite them to Islam and asks him, “O Mu’adh, if you are asked about the ruling of something, what will you do?” and he says, “I will (first) look for it in the Book of Allah.” The Prophet (asws) replied: “and if you do not find it in His Book?” Mu’adh said: “then I will look for it in your Sunna.” “And if you cannot find it in there?” “Then I will use my intelligence in deriving a ruling for it from the previous two (i.e., Qiyas),” at which the Prophet (asws) expressed pleasure at the correctness of his answer.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁵ Much of the following material is adapted from my translation of Shaykh Abdullah ibn Siddiq al-Ghumari’s letter *Husn at-Tafahum wa’d-Dark fi Mas’alat at-Tark*.

²⁴⁶ In addition to this, some Madhhabs in their own principles (Usul) have other sources, such as: the statement of a Sahabi, the deeds of the people of Madina (in the Maliki madhhab), the Shari’a of earlier prophets, the

For any specific issue (mas'ala), the ruling applied to it can only fall in one of the five categories: 1) obligatory, 2) recommended, 3) forbidden, 4) disliked (makruh), and 5) permissible (mubah), and no mujtahid scholar can apply one of these five rulings to any issue except with a proof (daleel) from one of the sources above. In other words, a thing cannot be declared forbidden unless there is an explicit primary text mentioning its prohibition, for Allah says: "Do not utter lies with your tongues saying, 'this is halaal and this is haraam,' and thus invent lies about what Allah (has or has not said). Surely those who invent lies about Allah will not succeed" (Q16:116). Meaning, do not declare something haraam unless He or His Messenger specifically declares it haraam; otherwise, that would be "inventing lies" and innovations in the Din. And the Prophet (asws) said, "If I forbid you something, then abstain from it, and if I command you to do something, then do as much of it as you can" ²⁴⁷ He did not say, "If I do not do something, then it is forbidden," but explained to us that the prohibition of something has to come from his specific words. As Allah also said: "what the Messenger brings you, then take (in obedience), and what he forbids you, then abstain from it" (Q59:7), meaning, there is no command to abstain from something if Allah or His Messenger (asws) did not call for its prohibition. Some examples of specific types of prohibition include: 1) the command to abstain, as in "do not come near adultery" (Q17:32), 2) the actual usage of the word, as in "prohibited for you are dead meat, blood..." (Q5:3), and 3) the promise of punishment or censure of the act, as in the hadith: "whoever cheats us is not one of us" (Recorded by Muslim in his Sahih (Kitab al-Iman #146-47) and others).

The necessity that a specific explicit prohibition has to be mentioned in the Qur'an or Hadith to forbid a certain act is further illustrated in the following example:

Ibn Rajab (in Jami' al-'Ulum 2:158-59) recorded that: Abdullah ibn Mubarak (one of the great Salaf) narrated that Salam ibn Abi Muti' related from Ibn Abi Dukhayla that his father said: "we were sitting with Abdullah ibn 'Umar and he said: 'the Prophet (asws) commanded against (naha) raisins and dates being mixed,' ²⁴⁸ at which point someone behind me who didn't hear asked me what he said, and I told him, 'the Prophet (asws) forbade (haram) the mixing of raisins and dates.' So Ibn 'Umar said: "you lied!" and I replied, "did you not just say that the Prophet (asws) commanded against (naha) that? So it is therefore haram?" and Ibn 'Umar answered him, "do you testify to this?" and Salam (the narrator) said, "meaning, that his commanding against it (naha) is out of proper courtesy (Adab)." So consider how Ibn 'Umar – who was one of the Fuqaha of the Sahaba – rejected the statement of someone who

common good, and others. Discussion of these can be found in the books of law, such as Imam Subki's Jam' al-Jawami' or 'Izz ibn Abdus-Salam's Qawa'id al-Kubra. The sanad (chain of transmission) of Mu'adh's hadith is weak, but it is accepted unanimously as true by the 'Ulama, and it has a corroborating narration which is Sahih according to Hafiz Busiri (Ithaf as-Sada, 7:135 #5571) recorded by Ibn Abi Umar al-'Adani.

²⁴⁷ Imam Nawawi said in his "forty hadith" (#9) that Bukhari (#6744) and Muslim (#2380, 4348) recorded it from Abu Hurayra. Also recorded by Nasa'i (#2572), Ibn Majah (Muqaddima, #2), Imam Ahmad (#7063, 7188, 7797), Daraqtuni in his Sunan (2:281), Abdur-Razzaq (11:220 #20372-74), Bayhaqi in Sunan al-Kubra (4:326), Ibn Khuzayma (#2508), Abu Ya'la (11:195, 12:28), Humaydi (2:272), Ibn Hibban (1:198-200 #18-21, 5:465-66 #2105-06), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (Tamhid, 1:148), Baghawi (1:199), and others.

²⁴⁸ Recorded by Muslim (#3678), Tirmidhi (#1798), Nasa'i (#5458), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 12:22, 23:372, 25:147 and M. Awsat, #1950, 6057), and Ahmad (#10568, 10643), Humaydi (#359), Tayalisi (#1811), and Abu Ya'la (2:399 #1177) in their Musnads, and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in his Tamhid (5:162).

interpreted “naha” to (by default) mean “haram”; even if the word “naha” implies prohibition, but not explicitly, for it could also imply it being disliked (makruh), as indicated by the narrators explanation: “out of proper courtesy.” In other words, the Salaf were extremely cautious in declaring something forbidden (haram) only if a specific command to that effect was found.

The Prophet (asws) said: “What Allah permitted in His Book is permitted, and what He forbade is forbidden, and what He was silent about is (considered) permission (‘afuw), so accept from Allah His permissions, for Allah does not forget or neglect a single thing,” then he recited: “and your Lord is not forgetful” (Q19:64, 20:52).²⁴⁹ From this the scholars of Usul ad-Din have derived the rule which states: “The original ruling concerning something is permissibility (ibaha), as long as no specific mention of its being prohibited has come to us,” and that is the beautiful vastness and flexibility of this Shari’a. It is not, then, as some have understood it today, where: “The original ruling concerning something is prohibition (tahrim), unless some mention of its being commanded (by Allah and His Messenger) has come to us,” which is nothing but extremism and ignorant rigidity.

It is clear how the mistaken notion above – according to which if the Prophet (asws) did not do something then it is forbidden – is contrary to the principles outlined above. For his leaving something or not doing something – if it is not accompanied with a specific text that mentions that that thing is disliked or forbidden – does not constitute proof that it is forbidden, but only proof that leaving it is permissible, and between these two is a great difference. So his not doing something does not – in itself – prove its prohibition, but can indicate a number of other things, such as in the following examples:

1) That his not doing something is just from a habit. For example, a roasted lizard was served to him and he stretched out his hand to take from it. Then he was told it was a lizard, so he returned his hand and did not take from it. He was asked, “is it then forbidden to eat from it?” and he (asws) said: “No (it is not forbidden), but I only abstained from eating it because it is not native to the land of my people, and I find it unappetizing.” So Maymuna ate it while the Prophet (asws) looked.²⁵⁰ This indicates two things: 1) that his leaving something, even after previously undertaking it, does not constitute the prohibition of that something; and 2) that his not liking something also does not indicate its prohibition, but could also just be from his habit and personal taste.

2) That his not doing something is from oversight. For example, one time he was praying salat al-‘asr and finished it after two rak’as, and one of the Sahaba (Dhu’l Yadayn) asked him, “has a new revelation come concerning prayer?” at which he said, “No, but I am a human who forgets like you forget, so if I forget something, then remind me,” and he completed the remaining two rak’as.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#1648), Ibn Majah (#3358), Hakim (2:375, 4:115 Sahih), Bayhaqi (Sunan, 10:12), Daraqutni (2:137), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:229), Tabarani (Mu’jam as-Saghir, 2:122-23), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 1:78, 3:58, 325), and Daylami in Firdaws (2:255 #2623, from Salman). Cf. Hafiz Haythami (Majma’ az-Zawa’id, 7:55), where he said its narrators are trustworthy (thiqat). Also, Abu Dawud (#3306) and Hakim recorded it with a Sahih chain of trustworthy narrators, so in all it is Sahih.

²⁵⁰ Recorded by Bukhari (#4972), Muslim (#3602-03), Imam Malik (#1527), and others.

²⁵¹ Recorded by Bukhari (#386), Muslim (#889-93), Imam Ahmad (1:379 #3420), and many others.

3) That his not doing something is out of fear that it might become an obligation upon his community if he continued doing it; for example, his praying taraweeh prayer alone after he began praying it in a group with the Sahaba. Cf. Imam Ahmad (#22927).

4) That his not doing something is simply out of it not occurring to his mind. For example (Tirmidhi, #3560), the Prophet (asws) used to give the Khutbas leaning against a certain palm tree, after which someone suggested he give speeches upon a podium-stand (minbar), to which he agreed, because that is more effective in carrying the voice to a longer distance...even though he himself never thought of the idea previously.

5) That his not doing something is because it already has an implied origin in general verses or hadiths, such as his sometimes not praying salat ad-duha or other extra-voluntary acts of worship, because it is already included in the Words of Allah: “and do the good so that you may prosper” (Q22:77), and the examples for that are numerous. Another example of that being communal supplications after the mandatory prayers, which the Prophet (asws) specifically did not do (because the women used to leave right after the salams while the men remained, and if he did that the women would have stayed and then left with the men together), but which Sayyidina ‘Umar, in his knowledge of the principles of our Din, initiated with the Sahaba, when he stood on the minbar in Madina and said to the people, “I will make du’a and you will join with me and say Ameen.”²⁵² He did not prohibit himself from this by saying, “the Prophet (asws) never did communal du’a after prayer so I must not do it,” but took an indication for it in the general and un-restricted command for dhikr and du’a in many places in the Qur’an, and in the hadith which states, “No group assembles, one of them supplicating while others say Ameen, except Allah answers them”²⁵³ On the basis of this authentic hadith, whoever bans or opposes collective supplication is opposing the Sunna and committing a bid’a (innovation). This is an example of a lawful practice which some misguided people have falsely categorized as an evil innovation.

6) That his not doing something is due to his fear of the changing of the hearts of the Sahaba, as when he said to A’isha, “Were it not for the fact that your people have recently previously been in Kufr, I would have brought down the Ka’ba and re-built it on the foundations of Sayyidina Ibrahim (asws), for the Quraysh have fell short from rebuilding it upon his foundations completely.”²⁵⁴ So he did not bring down the Ka’ba and rebuild it, so that he could maintain the attachments of the Sahaba to Islam, into which they only recently came. So his leaving something or not doing something can indicate a variety of things, which becomes apparent to the one who searches through the Sunna. And there has never come any explicit statement or hadith which states that his simply not doing something (without also prohibiting that thing) indicated in itself its prohibition.

²⁵² Narrated by Abu Nu’aym in Hilya (1:53) and Ibn Sa’d in Tabaqat (3:275).

²⁵³ Recorded by Hakim (3:347) – who said it was Sahih, Tabarani in Mu’jam al-Kabir (4:21-22), and Daraqutni. Haythami in his Majma’ (10:170) said that its narrators are the men of Bukhari and Muslim’s Sahih except Ibn Lahi’a, whose hadith are Hasan. However, the hadith masters state that the narrations of Ibn Lahi’a are Sahih if he narrates from certain narrators, such as Abdullah ibn Yazid al-Muqri’, which is the case here (See: Ibn Hajar’s Tahdhib at-Tahdhib 5:378). Hadith Sahih.

²⁵⁴ Recorded by Bukhari (#1480-83), Muslim (#2367-74), Imam Malik (#710), Imam Ahmad (#23162, 23568, 23683), Tayalisi (#1479, 1496), Ibn Hibban (#3815-17), and many others.

7) That his not doing something could be for a unique reason specific to him, which no one else shares with him in it, as for example his not eating garlic or other foods with offensive odors, so that the angels would not be annoyed at the descent of revelation to him (Muslim #3827, Ibn Hibban 5:448 #2094, Tabarani 25:136). While for us, he merely forbade the eating of garlic and onion only before going to the mosque, but not perpetually as was the case for him, since we do not receive revelation from angels like he did. And no scholar has ever prohibited the eating of garlic because the Prophet (asws) never ate it!

8) As another important example, the Prophet (asws) never fasted a whole month in his life except for Ramadan, but that never indicated to the Sahaba that voluntarily fasting other months in their entirety is forbidden or disliked, as many of them used to fast every day of the year except for those days in which fasting is prohibited.²⁵⁵ And it is also recorded that some of the Salaf, such as Imam Abu Hanifa, used to read the Qur'an in a single night, even though the Prophet (asws) discouraged reading the entire Qur'an in less than three days (as Bukhari and others recorded).

So the above examples are clear proofs that his simply not doing something or his leaving something never by itself indicated the prohibition of that thing, but that a variety of intended meanings could result from his not doing something. And because of this the scholars of Usul say:

Ma dakhallahu ihtimal, saqata bihi-l istidlal, meaning:

“If a certain act can have a variety of different intended reasons/causes/interpretations, then its use as a conclusive proof (for prohibition or obligation) is defunct.”

As for the hadith that Imam Bukhari recorded in his Sahih (#6754), in which: “The Prophet (asws) wore a golden ring, and so the people wore golden rings also. Then he said, “I have wore a golden ring, and from now on I will never wear a golden ring again,” and he threw it off, and so the people also threw theirs off. This hadith does not contradict what we are saying but rather supports it, for just as the companions acted like him in wearing the ring, they acted like him in removing the ring (which is a positive action), and this is different than simply not doing something (which is a negative non-action, like fasting is a non-action). Furthermore, we are not denying acting according to everything that came from him, and we see in that our salvation. Rather, what he did not do, like commemorate the night of his ascension (Mi'raj), we cannot say that it is forbidden, for not doing something does not necessitate its prohibition...and that would be considered lying about Allah (see Q16:116 above). And Imam Shafi'i himself alluded to this when he said: “Everything that has a source (mustanad) in the Shari'a is not considered an innovation (bid'a), even if the Salaf did not do it;” for as we said, it could have been for reasons other than its prohibition.

²⁵⁵ See for example Ibn Qudama al-Hanbali in his *Mughni* (3:119), who mentions this was the practice of Sayyidina Umar and his son Abdullah, A'isha, Abu Talha, and others as well as Malik and Ahmad ibn Hanbal. See also the Musannaf collections of Abdur-Razzaq (4:293) and Ibn Abi Shayba (2:425, 492). And A'isha herself states that “the Prophet (asws) never fasted a whole month aside from Ramadan, never stayed up a whole night in prayer, and never recited the whole Qur'an in one night,” as recorded by Tayalisi (#1600), Ibn Khuzayma (#1078, 1127), Muslim (#1233), Abu Dawud (#1144), Tirmidhi (#699), Nasa'i (#1623, 2153), Ibn Majah (#1338), Darimi (#1439), Ibn Hibban (#2642, 2644), Imam Ahmad (#23134, 23495), and others. Yet there are numerous examples of Salaf doing just that.

Muhammad al-Sharif al-Tilimsani wrote in his *Miftah al-Wusul* (p. 93) – one of the texts of *Maliki Usul*: “Just as his (asws) doing something forms a basis for legal rulings, his not doing something can also be a basis for legal rulings. For just as his doing something is proof that this thing is not forbidden, his not doing something is proof that this thing is not mandatory, such as when we state that ablution is not mandatory after eating meat cooked by fire.”

As another example for further clarification of the above, we see that the adhan for *salat al-‘eid* is an innovation. However, the difference here is that it is not an innovation because the Prophet (asws) simply did not do it, but because when he was explaining all of the actions related to *salat al-‘eid*, he did not mention any adhan, and his silence in that indicates that the adhan is not part of *salat al-‘eid*. And this is different from the above examples, because when we are speaking of a certain specific situation or issue, like *salat*, *hajj*, etc., wherein the Prophet (asws) in specific relation to that act explained all that was related to it, then his exposition becomes exclusive and not inclusive, and so nothing else can be added, like a fifth *rak’a* to *salat al-‘asr*. Because in that case, he specified that it can only be four *rak’as*, and so it would be a forbidden innovation to add another or decrease from it, for that would contradict the specific explication of that act of worship. And this is what is alluded to by the rule of *Usul* that states:

As-Sukut fi sa’at al-bayan yufid al-hasr, meaning:

“Silence about (an aspect of) something, during the explication of all that it involves, points to the exclusion from it of everything that isn’t specifically mentioned.”

And this principle is taken from the following verse: “O you who believe, do not ask about things which, if their exposition was given to you, might cause you trouble, for if you ask about them when the Qur’an is being revealed, they might be detailed to you. Allah pardons you in this respect. And Allah is Forgiving, Forbearing” (Q5:101). And the following hadith: “Allah the Almighty has laid down religious duties, so do not neglect them. He has set boundaries, so do not over step them. He has prohibited some things, so do not violate them; about some things He was silent-out of compassion for you, not forgetfulness, so seek not after them.”²⁵⁶

So the one who, ignorant of the principles of *Fiqh*, states that the *Mawlid* (as it is done today), or celebration of the night of the *Mi’raj*, or praying more than eight *rak’as* for *taraweeh*, or other such examples are “forbidden innovations”, only for the reason that the Prophet (asws) and his companions never performed them, is himself inventing a blameworthy innovation in the religion, about which the Prophet (asws) said: “He who innovates something in this matter of ours which is not from it is rejected.”

The innovation of monasticism in Q57:27, and the hadith of A’isha...

Allah said about the followers of Prophet ‘Isa (asws): “And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy, and as for monasticism – they innovated it – We

²⁵⁶ Imam Nawawi mentioned it in his 40 hadiths, hadith #30, and stated that Daraqutni in his *Sunan* (4:183-84, 298) recorded it. Also recorded by Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (4:115, *Sahih* according to Dhahabi), Tabarani in his *Mu’jam Kabir* (22:222), *Mu’jam al-Awsat* (7:265-66 #7461, 8:381 #8938), and *Musnad Shamiyyin* (#3483), and Bayhaqi (*Sunan*, 10:12-13). Haythami said it is *Sahih* (*Majma’ az-Zawa’id*, 1:117).

did not prescribe it for them except as a means to the contentment of Allah, but they did not observe it as it should be observed...” He who reads this verse carefully can see that Allah did not blame them for innovating this monasticism, but rather He blamed them because they did not observe its proper rules. For this monasticism was a vow (nadhr) they placed on themselves, and whoever takes upon himself a vow for the sake of Allah’s pleasure, is responsible for faithfully fulfilling that vow, and if they do not fulfill it, then they are blamed for that lack of fulfillment, not for making the vow in the first place! This can be seen in the continuation of the verse, which states: “and We gave those of them who believed their reward...” In other words, those who fulfilled the conditions of this innovated vow of theirs, have received their rewards from Allah; and Allah would not reward them for faithfully keeping to their innovation if this innovation of theirs was blameworthy.

About this verse, Shaykh at-Tahir ibn ‘Ashur said in his Tafsir at-Tahrir wat-Tanwir: “These phrases were placed together because of their shared meaning, in that the mercy in their hearts and the monasticism they innovated are all virtues by which they sought the pleasure of Allah, and so Allah accepted that from them.” And there is no indication in this verse of Allah blaming them for introducing this bid’a, as the scholars of Tafsir state, such as Imam Fakhruddin Razi, Imam al-Alusi, Imam Tabari, Imam Qurtubi, and others. So this indicates what we said above, that Allah in the Qur’an blamed them because of their not keeping this good innovation (bid’a hasana), and not fulfilling its conditions. And this blame is not directed to the entire totality, for there were some among them who did fulfill its conditions and kept this good innovation, because of which Allah rewarded them. And it is narrated that the famous Companion Abu Umama al-Bahili stated the same thing as above.²⁵⁷

However, Imam Shatibi al-Maliki in his Kitab al-I’tisam disagreed with using this verse to prove the existence of good innovations, with the argument that this verse does not apply to our community, for there is no monasticism in Islam as the Prophet (asws) stated. This argument is incorrect, as Qadi Abu Bakr Ibn al-‘Arabi al-Maliki explained, since the meaning of monasticism in this ayah, as seen by the narrations connected to it, falls into three categories: 1) refusing women, 2) taking shelter in houses of worship for isolation (‘uzla), and 3) roaming the earth. And that which our religion has abolished is only the first type, and as for the second and third types, they are actually recommended at the end of times when trials increase. And the proof of that is the hadith of Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (see the chapter on seclusion below, hadith #4), and this hadith affirms using this verse as it applies to the second and third categories of monasticism, and so it functions as an explanation of the previous revelations, as Allah said: “and We revealed this remembrance to you that you may explain to the people what was revealed to them (before)” (Q16:44). Therefore, this Qur’anic verse is considered as one of the primary proof-texts for the existence of praiseworthy innovations.

²⁵⁷ Haythami in Majma’ az-Zawa’id (3:139) stated that this statement from the Companion Abu Umama was narrated by Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Awsat (7:262 #7450), with a chain containing Zakariyya ibn Abi Maryam, who was declared weak by Nasa’i, but trustworthy by Ibn Hibban and Daraqutni. However, Haythami also said (Majma’ 7:260-61 #12101-02) that Tabarani narrated a similar hadith from Ibn Mas’ud in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (#10357, 10531), and its narrators are all men of the two Sahih’s except one, who was declared “thiqa” by Imam Ahmad and others, although there is slight weakness in him. Therefore, it is authentic.

Finally, A'isha relates that the Prophet (asws) said, "He who introduces something in this matter of ours which is not from it is rejected" (Bukhari and Muslim). He did not say, "he who introduces something in this matter of ours, then it is rejected." Therefore, the meaning of this hadith is: "Whoever introduces something in this matter of ours which is from it, then it is accepted," as Ibn Rajab explained in his commentary (Jami' al-'Ulum wa'l Hikam) on this hadith. Ibn Hajar 'Asqalani says about this hadith: "This hadith is one of the sources of the principles of Usul in Islam, and its meaning: whoever invents something in the religion which is not founded upon any of its principles (usul), then it is (rejected) and not considered." And from this we can derive the following:

It is permissible to introduce a new praiseworthy act if it is founded upon a primary legal text, whether explicitly or implicitly or specifically or generally, and because of this, the introduced innovation is considered a part of this religion ("our matter"). If it can be derived from something in the Din and founded upon it, then it is not outside it, and thus verses such as "this Day I have perfected your religion for you" (Q5:4) are inapplicable because those speak against things not founded upon this Din. And as we have also seen above, it is not necessary that these invented things exist in the time of the Prophet (asws), for his not doing something does not necessarily prove its prohibition. In regards to the verse above of the perfection of the religion, it means He has perfected its foundations and principles. And among these principles is the permissibility of introducing something praiseworthy that did not exist before (which is the linguistic meaning of "bid'a"). So the one who introduces something, in this sense, is not adding to the already-completed religion, or completing a deficiency in the Shari'a, or following his whims, but rather implementing one of the principles of the Shari'a inferred from the Qur'an and Sunna. And in regards to the hadith (in Sahih Bukhari) in which the Prophet (asws) drew one long straight line (which represented the straight path) and a number of lines off of this line (which represented misguided paths of those astray), this is also not a proof against the above, for among the inferred principles of the straight path – exemplified in the straight line – is the permissibility in introducing praiseworthy innovations, and the one who does this is not outside the straight line.

To conclude, the conditions which an innovation must meet for it to be considered praiseworthy and acceptable are as follows: 1) that it be in the context of the religion (for 'innovations' such as cars do not need to be classified as good or bad anyway), 2) that it be inferable from or based upon one of the general principles (Usul) of the Shari'a, and 3) that it not contradict or nullify another specific or general principle of the Shari'a.

TOPIC:
Audible Group Dhikr in Masajid (and elsewhere)

The great mujtahid Imam and scholar Jalaluddin as-Suyuti, recognized by the Muslim world as one of the greatest scholars that ever lived, author of more than one tafsir of the Qur'an, multiple compilations of hadith, and nearly 600 works on virtually every subject of Islamic knowledge, wrote a short booklet called: "The conclusion of reflection upon the act of loud/audible dhikr (al-jahru bi-dhikr)," in which he related his answer to someone who asked him: "I ask you, may Allah ennoble you, about what the Sufis habitually do in gathering together for (loud) dhikr in the mosque and raising their voices in tahlil (saying 'La Ilaha Illa Allah')...is that a reprehensible (makruh) act or not?"

Then he answered: "There is nothing reprehensible about this, for multiple numbers of hadiths have come (to us) which encourage and demonstrate the praiseworthiness and goodness (istihbab) of loud dhikr, just as other hadiths have come which mention the praiseworthiness of silent dhikr. When combining the two the result is that (the choice of whether to perform loud or silent dhikr) depends on the type of person and what his/her personality state inclines towards...just like Imam Nawawi combined the reports which encourage loud recitation of Qur'an or silent recitation of it. And I will now elaborate more on this in detail" (Hawi lil-Fatawi 1:389ff).

The Imam goes on to list 25 sound hadiths that clearly demonstrate that there is a clear and indisputable basis in the Sunna for the act that the questioner asked...which is a question many people today ask, and both those who ask and those being asked unfortunately do not have access to these source texts of the Din (especially in the West). After listing the hadiths one by one, he writes towards the end: "If you reflect upon the hadiths we mentioned, you will come to recognize from their totality that there is absolutely no reprehensibility in gathering together for audible dhikr. Rather, these hadiths clearly demonstrate its desirability, either explicitly or implicitly, as we alluded to above" (Hawi lil-Fatawi 1:393).

To keep this chapter as short as possible, I will only mention a dozen or so of the 25 hadiths which Imam Suyuti mentioned, focusing on the ones which are most authentic (though they are all sound) and most relevant to this discussion, also adding a few he did not mention.

The Hadiths

1) Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari relates: "The Messenger of Allah (asws) came out to his companions and said, "O people, verily Allah has a special group of noble traveling angels that seek out the gatherings of dhikr on the Earth, so graze in the gardens of Paradise." They asked, "and where are the gardens of paradise?" He responded: "(in) the gatherings and sessions of dhikr, so go and come in the remembrance of Allah." ²⁵⁸

2) On the authority of Abu Hurayra: "Verily, Allah has noble angels that travel the Earth,

²⁵⁸ Recorded by Hakim (Mustadrak, 1:494) with a Sahih chain, Abu Ya'la (3:390 #1865), Tabarani (M. Awsat 3:67 #2501, K. Du'a #1891), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab #528), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#1105), Hakim Tirmidhi in his Nawadir (Asl #133), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 4:5 #3064), and others (see Matalib 'Aliya, 4:28). See Haythami's Majma' (10:77) and Mundhiri's Targhib (2:405).

seeking out the gatherings of dhikr, so if they come to one of them, they surround it with their wings until they reach the heaven. So Allah says: ‘From whence did you come?’ They say: “We came from Your servants, who were glorifying You, magnifying You, praising You, declaring Your Oneness, asking You, and seeking Your protection.” ... Then Allah will say: “Bear witness that I have indeed forgiven them, and given to them what they ask of Me, and protected them from what they seek protection with Me.” They will say, ‘but our Lord, there is among them a servant who sins greatly, who sat with them but is not among them.’ He will say: “I have forgiven him also, for no one who sits with them in their sessions becomes wretched or miserable.”²⁵⁹

3) Abu Hurayra and Abu Sa’id al-Khudri related that the Prophet (asws) said: “No group of people come together and sit to invoke Allah except that the angels surround them, mercy covers them, peace descends on them, and Allah mentions them to those with Him.”²⁶⁰ al-Amir as-San’ani in *Subul as-Salam* (2:213) said: “This hadith indicates the merit of the gatherings of dhikr and the invokers, and the immense merit of gathering for the purpose of dhikr.” And Imam Nawawi wrote in the beginning of his *Kitab al-Adhkar* (p. 28): “Know that just as dhikr is highly recommended, sitting in the circles of the people of dhikr is also highly recommended, and the proof-texts for that abound.”

4) The Messenger (asws) once came by a group of people and asked, “What made you sit together?” They responded, “We sat together to invoke Allah and praise Him.” Then he said, “Indeed Jibril came to me and said that Allah boasts of you to His angels.”²⁶¹

5) “If you come across the gardens of Paradise, then graze therein.” They asked, and what are the gardens of Paradise? He said: “the groups of dhikr.”²⁶²

6) “No group gathers together to invoke Allah without desiring anything but His Face except that a celestial caller calls out, ‘Arise forgiven, with your sins changed to good deeds.’”²⁶³

²⁵⁹ Recorded by Bukhari (*Kitab ad-Da’awat*, 8:107-108 #5929), Muslim (*Kitab al-Dhikr*, #4854), Tirmidhi (5:579 #3524), Imam Ahmad (#7117, 8350, 8614), Hakim (1:495), Ibn Hibban (3:137-40 #856-57), Bayhaqi in *Shu’ab al-Iman* (#531), Tabarani (K. Du’a, p. 530-31 #1894-97), and Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 4:4-5 Hasan), with slight differences in the wording. See also Fath al-Bari (11:208, hadith #6408) and *Sharh Sahih Muslim* (17:14-15).

²⁶⁰ Recorded by Muslim (*Kitab al-Dhikr*, #4868), Tirmidhi (#3300), Abu Dawud (#1243), Ibn Majah (#3781), Imam Ahmad (#9396, 11457), Abdur-Razzaq (11:293-94 #20577), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:75), Ibn Hibban (3:136-37 #855), and others.

²⁶¹ Recorded by Muslim (*Kitab al-Dhikr*, #4869), Ibn Hibban (3:96 #813), Tirmidhi (#3301), Nasa’i (#5331), Tabarani (M. Kabir 19:311, K. Du’a #1892-93), Imam Ahmad (4:92 #16232), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:74), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab*, #532), Abu Ya’la (13:381), and Ibn Mubarak (K. Zuhd, #1120), on the authority of Mu’awiya.

²⁶² Recorded by Tirmidhi (5:532 #3432), Imam Ahmad (3:150 #12065), Hakim (1:494 Sahih), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab*, 1:398 #529), Abu Ya’la (6:155 #3432), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 11:95, 20:157 and K. Du’a, p. 528 #1890), and Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 4:5). It is Sahih according to Suyuti (*Jami’ Saghir* #859), Dhahabi, Busiri (*Ithaf as-Sada*, #6813), and Mundhiri. He (asws) also said: “The reward (ghanima) of the group sessions of dhikr is the Garden” (Imam Ahmad 2:177, 190 – Hasan: Mundhiri 2:405 and Haythami 10:78; Tabarani in *Musnad Shamiyyin* 2:273).

²⁶³ Recorded by Imam Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab al-Iman*, 1:454 #694-95), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:75), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 6:260 #6039 and *Awsat* 2:154 #1556), Abu Ya’la (7:167 #4141 Hasan), Diya’ al-Maqdisi (7:234-36 Hasan), Imam Ahmad (3:142 #12000 – with “thiqa” narrators according to Busiri and Mundhiri), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 4:4), and others, from Anas. Cf. *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#2189, #2732), *Targhib wa Tarhib* (2:403), and *Majma’ Zawa’id* (10:76). Hadith Hasan according to Suyuti (*Jami’ as-Saghir*, #7777, #7884-85) and Haythami (#16764, 16767).

7) “Allah will say on the Day of Resurrection: ‘The people of the jama’ (gathering) shall be differentiated from the people of nobility.’” “Who are the people of nobility?” He said, “The people of the gatherings of dhikr in the mosques.”²⁶⁴

8) The authentic hadith qudsi (on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas and others): “Allah says: “O My servant, if you invoke Me alone I will invoke you alone, and if you invoke Me in a group (mala’) I will invoke you in a group better and more numerous.”²⁶⁵

9) Imam Ahmad in his Kitab az-Zuhd narrated on the authority of Thabit that Salman al-Farisi was sitting with a group of Companions doing dhikr together. When the Messenger of Allah (asws) came by them, they lowered their voices, so he asked them, ‘what were you saying?’ and they answered, ‘we were invoking Allah (i.e., doing dhikr).’ And the Messenger then said, “I saw Divine mercy descend on you, so I wanted to join you in it.” Then he prayed, “Praise be to Allah Who made among my Ummah those who I should be patient with (alluding to Q18:28).”²⁶⁶

10) From Anas: “That I invoke Allah with a group of people after the morning prayer until the rising of the sun is more beloved to me than the world and all that is in it. And that I invoke Allah with a group of people after the mid-afternoon prayer until the setting of the sun is more beloved to me than the world and all that it contains.”²⁶⁷

11) Ibn ‘Abbas said “that the raising of the voices in dhikr after the people were done praying occurred during the time of the Prophet... I used to know they were finished with the prayer when I heard their voices (in dhikr).”²⁶⁸

12) “The Prophet (asws) once came to a group of his companions, and asked, ‘is there a stranger (i.e., people of the Book) among you?’ we said, ‘no.’ So he ordered the door locked and said: ‘Raise your hands and say La ilaha illa Allah’, so we raised our hands and did that for an hour (meaning, a while), then he stopped and said: ‘Praise be to Allah, You have sent

²⁶⁴ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:67, 68), Abu Ya’la (2:313, 531), Ibn Hibban (3:98 #816), Abdur-Razzaq (11:293-94 #20578), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab al-Iman, 1:401 #535), Tabarani (K. Du’a, #1888-89), and others, on the authority of Abu Sa’id al-Khudri. See also Mundhiri’s Targhib (2:674), and Haythami’s Majma’ (10:76 #16763 ‘Hasan’).

²⁶⁵ Part of a hadith recorded by Bukhari (#6856), Muslim (#4832, 4849, 4851, 4927), Tirmidhi (#2310, 3527), Ibn Majah (#3812), Imam Ahmad (2:251, 315, 391, 413, 445), Ibn Hibban (3:92-95 #810-12), Hakim (1:497 Sahih), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, #550-51), Abu Ya’la (11:50 #6189), Abdur-Razzaq (11:292-93), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:75, 8:189), Tabarani (M. Awsat 9:82 #9190, M. Kabir 12:64, 20:182 – Hasan: Mundhiri’s Targhib 2:394), Bazzar (Zawa’id 4:6 – Sahih: Haythami’s Majma’ 10:78), Baghawi (#1521), and others. See also Imam Nawawi’s Sharh Sahih Muslim (17:5-6) and Hafiz ‘Ajluni’s Kashf al-Khafa’ (#1894).

²⁶⁶ Hakim also recorded this hadith in his Mustadrak (1:122), and he and Dhahabi said it is Sahih. See the Tafsirs of Ibn Kathir (3:81) and of Ibn Jarir at-Tabari (15:155), and Kanz al-Ummal (1:447 #1932).

²⁶⁷ Recorded by Abu Da’ud (#3182), Bayhaqi (Sunan al-Kubra, 8:79 and Shu’ab, #559-562), Diya’ in his Mukhtara (7:33-34 Hasan), Tabarani in Kitab ad-Du’a (#1878-82) and Mu’jam al-Awsat (6:137-38 #6022), Abu Ya’la (6:119 #3392), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:74), Tayalisi (#2218), Abu Nu’aym (Hilya 3:53), and it is Hasan according to Suyuti in Jami’ Saghir (#7199). For similar narrations, see: Haythami’s Majma’ az-Zawa’id (2:235, 10:104-106), Abdur-Razzaq’s Musannaf (1:530-31 #2027), and Ibn Shahin’s Targhib (#174).

²⁶⁸ Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab Sifat as-Salah 1:213 #796-97), Muslim (1:410 #917-19), Nasa’i (#1318), Abu Dawud (#851), Imam Ahmad (#1832, 3298), Tabarani (M. Kabir #12200, 12212, M. Awsat 2:187 #1669), Ibn Khuzayma (Kitab al-Imamah, #1706-07), Ibn Hibban (5:610 #2232), and many others. See also Fath al-Bari (2:324-325) and Imam Nawawi’s Sharh Sahih Muslim (5:83-84).

me with this word and ordered me with it and promised me paradise with it, and You don't break your promise.' Then he said: 'I give you glad tidings that you have been forgiven.'”²⁶⁹

13) Abu Sa'id related that the Prophet (asws) said, “A group of people will invoke Allah (sitting) upon couches, and Allah will enter them into the lofty degrees.”²⁷⁰ Similarly, Abu Darda' related that he (asws) said: “Allah will resurrect a group of people on Qiyama whose faces will be illuminated, and will seat them on pedestals of pearls, and the people will envy their position, though they are not Prophets nor martyrs... they come from various tribes and love each other for Allah's sake, and they would gather together to invoke Allah.”²⁷¹

Additional Relevant Narrations

1) Imam Ahmad narrated in his Musnad (3:152 #12082 Sahih), on the authority of Anas, that the Habasha (Ethiopians) danced in front of the Prophet (asws) and said: 'Muhammad is a righteous slave,' and the Prophet (asws) did not prevent them from that but rather encouraged and incited them in their practice. Also recorded by Ibn Hibban (#5870), Abu Ya'la (#4829), Humaydi (#256), and Diya' al-Maqdisi (5:156-57) with a Sahih chain of narrators. As we know, when the Prophet (asws) agrees with something, it becomes Sunna.

2) Imam Ahmad narrated (1:108 #815 Sahih)²⁷² on the authority of Imam Ali that he said: “Ja'far, Zayd, and I came to the Holy Prophet, and he said to Zayd, “you are my Patron (Mawla),” whereupon Zayd danced by hopping on one foot then the other (hajjala) around the Prophet. Then he said to Ja'far: “you are like me in looks and character,” whereupon he danced behind Zayd. Then he said to me (Ali): “you are from me and I am from you,” whereupon I danced behind Ja'far and Zayd.”

3) Abdullah ibn Umar and 'Amr ibn Zubayr ibn 'Awwam and some other Sahaba came to the mosque on the day of 'Eid, and began doing dhikr together, and one of them said, “did not Allah say 'those who invoke Allah standing...' (Q3:191)?” And so they rose to their feet and began doing dhikr standing, in accordance with this verse.²⁷³

4) Imam Ali and Fudayl ibn 'Iyad stated that when the Sahaba used to do dhikr, they would move and sway side-to-side like the trees move in the strong wind.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁹ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (4:124 #16499) with a strong chain, Hakim (1:501), Bazzar (Musnad: #2717 and #3483, Zawa'id: 1:13), Tabarani in his Mu'jam al-Kabir (7:347-48), and others, on the authority of 'Ubada ibn Samit, and Shaddad ibn 'Aws. Hafiz al-Haythami in Majma' az-Zawa'id (1:18-19 and 10:81) and Hafiz Mundhiri in his Targhib (2:330 #2288) said it was Hasan.

²⁷⁰ Recorded by Abu Ya'la (2:359 #1110), Ibn Hibban (#398), and Tabarani in his Kitab ad-Du'a (#1748). Haythami in his Majma' az-Zawa'id (10:78) said it is Hasan, while Suyuti (Jami' Saghir, #7560) said it is Sahih.

²⁷¹ Recorded by Tabarani with a Hasan chain according to Hafiz Mundhiri (Targhib, 2:406, 4:21), Haythami (Majma', 10:77), and Suyuti (Jami' Saghir, #5625).

²⁷² Also recorded by Ibn Sa'd (Tabaqat, 4:35-36), Bayhaqi in his Sunan (8:6, 10:226) and Dala'il an-Nubuwwa (4:340), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 3:220; Sahih according to Haythami in his Majma' 5:176), Ibn Hibban (15:520 #7046 Sahih), Hakim (3:120 Sahih), and Diya' al-Maqdisi in his Mukhtara (2:392).

²⁷³ See the Tafsirs of Mahmud al-Alusi (Ruh al-Ma'ani, 4:140), Zamakhshari (al-Kashshaf), Abu's Su'ud (Irshad al-'Aql as-Salim), and Abu Hayyan (al-Bahr al-Muhit). Whether or not this story really happened, the main point is how the scholars of Tafsir understood this Ayah and how it supports this act.

²⁷⁴ Recorded by Abu Nu'aym in his Hilya (1:76, 10:388), Ibn Kathir in his Bidaya (8:6), Ibn 'Asakir, and others.

These narrations are important to understand because they especially mention the phenomenon of bodily motion and swaying during group dhikr, which a group of Muslims object to. In the first narration we notice 3 things:

- These Ethiopians (obviously Muslims) were dancing in front of the Prophet (asws),
- They were doing this in his mosque in Madina,
- They were singing praises of the Prophet (asws) while doing so.

Qadi 'Iyad said: "It serves as a strong proof of permissibility (of dancing), because the Prophet (asws) not only accepted their act but encouraged them further". The Maliki Shaykh Muhammad Abdul-Hayy al-Kattani (Taratib Idariya 2:93) wrote: "Were it the case that the Ethiopians were aimlessly playing, the Prophet (asws) would have stopped them from saying 'Muhammad is a righteous servant' during their play. However, since he (asws) accepted their act and incited them in it, this means that it was an act of dhikr and obedience and worship and an expression of joy with Allah and His Messenger (asws), which explains why he encouraged them further... As for the statement of Hafiz Ibn Hajar in his Fath al-Bari ["A group of Sufis used this hadith as proof for the permissibility of dancing and listening to musical instruments, and the scholars have rejected this (derivation) due to the contrast between the two intentions, for the playing of the Ethiopians with their spears was to practice for war, so it is false to use it to justify aimless dancing"], it is disputable, because the dancing of the Sufis is not done out of aimless play and distraction and amusement...; rather, their aim and intention in that is to gather together in dhikr of Allah and to approach Him wholly with heart and body, by employing each limb and organ in (the dhikr), and this is a sound aim, due to the narrations which encourage abundant and frequent dhikr regardless of the condition and state of the invoker. So there can be no refutation of deriving legal permissibility of that from this hadith".

As for the second narration, Ibn Hajar Haytami and Jalal ad-Din Suyuti mentioned that some scholars have derived from it evidence for the permissibility of dancing (raqs) upon hearing a recital (Sama') that lifts the spirit.²⁷⁵ They also mention Shaykh 'Izz ibn Abdus-Salam as the chief example of such scholars, since it is authentically reported that he himself attended the Sama' and danced in states of ecstasy (yarqusu wa yatawajjad).²⁷⁶ Imam Suyuti also quoted Siraj al-Bulqini, who said there should be no condemnation of that, and the one who condemns it should be disciplined; and Suyuti added: "How can one condemn reciting dhikr while standing, or standing while reciting dhikr, when Allah praised those who invoke Him while standing or sitting or on their sides (Q3:191)?... And if dancing or similar (controlled movement) is added to this (dhikr while) standing, there can be no condemnation either, because such arises out of spiritual states of vision and ecstasy; and so the hadith (of Ja'far's dancing) becomes a legal basis for the dancing of the Sufis (in dhikr)".

Imam Ahmad Dardir al-Maliki stated in his epistle Tuhfat al-Ikhwan (p. 17): "It is not a cause of blame for them (the Sufis) that they invoke Allah together while standing and sitting, and that they move during the dhikr and recitation of spiritual poetry. Nor does this constitute

²⁷⁵ See Haytami's Fatawa Hadithiya (p. 212) and Suyuti's Hawi lil Fatawa (2:234).

²⁷⁶ Quoted by: Ibn 'Imad al-Hanbali, in Shadharat adh-Dhahab (5:302); Imam al-Yafi'i, in Mir'at al-Jinan (4:154); Yusuf al-Nabhani, in Jami' Karamat al-Awliya (2:71); Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, in Zawajir (2:282). In his Farah al-Asma', the Maliki Shaykh Abu'l Mawahib at-Tunisi also mentions that other top scholars used to regularly attend the Sama', including: the Maliki Qadi of Egypt Shams ad-Din Bisati, the Mujtahid Imam Taqiyuddin Ibn Daqiq al-'Eid, the Qadi Badr ad-Din Ibn Jama'a, and a number of others.

frivolity as the naysayers claim. For the dhikr contains sweetness and delight and inward ecstasy, experienced only by its masters, and this state naturally leads to outward movement during intense dhikr, as alluded to by Sidi Abu Madyan al-Maghribi when he said: ‘And say to the one who forbids spiritual ecstasy from its people, if you have not tasted the drink of love, then leave us! When the souls shake out of yearning for the meeting, then yes, the bodies will dance as well, Oh ignorant of this reality!’” Shaykh Ahmad as-Sawi, in his commentary on Dardir’s *Sharh as-Saghir* (2:503), writes: “As for dancing (raqs), the scholars have disagreed concerning it, some ruling that it is disliked, others ruling that it is permissible (mubah), while others state that there is a distinction in the ruling between those of spiritual states and others, it being permissible for those of spiritual states and disliked for anyone else. This (last) is the most acceptable position, held by the majority of scholars who permit listening to singing, and is the position taken by the Sufi masters.”

As for the third and fourth narrations, they serve as evidence that the Sahaba used to participate in group dhikr together while standing and moving, which is an early simple form of the Hadra (audible group dhikr coupled with movement and poetry) of the Sufis.

As for particular cases where the dancing may be prohibited, it regards the worldly kind of effeminate dancing which has nothing to do with the ecstasy of Sama’ and dhikr. Shaykh ‘Izz ibn Abdus-Salam himself wrote: “Dancing is an innovation not countenanced except by one deficient in his mind. It is unfitting for other than women. As for the audition of spiritual poetry (Sama’) which stirs one towards states of purity (ahwal saniyya) and reminds one of the Hereafter, then there is nothing wrong with it; rather, it is recommended (yundabu ilayh) for lukewarm dry hearts. However, the one who harbors wrong desires in his heart is not allowed to attend the Sama’, for the Sama’ stirs up whatever desire is already in the heart, both the detestable and the desirable” (Fatawa Misriyya, p. 158). Imam Nawawi wrote: “Dancing is not forbidden, unless it is languid, like the motions of the effeminate. And it is permissible to recite and sing poetry, unless it contains satire, obscenity, or alludes to a particular woman and her features” (Minhaj at-Talibin, p. 152). Imam Ibn ‘Abidin al-Hanafi wrote in his famous Hashiya (4:259-60) and his Majmu’ Rasa’il (“Shifa’ al-‘Alil”, pg 172-73): “Dancing – which is defined as swaying side-to-side, and rising up and down with measured movements – is forbidden, when accompanied with musical instruments and singing... The real conclusion which settles any difference of opinion is that there is a differentiation in the ruling, as detailed in the book ‘Awarif al-Ma‘arif (by Suhrawardi), between it being permissible for the knowers of Allah (the Sufis), who fill their times with the best spiritual works, those on the spiritual path, who have firm control over their lower selves... (while being forbidden for other than these).”

The Maliki faqih Ahmad al-Wansharisi (Mi‘yar Mu‘arrab 11:105) quotes Shaykh Abu Sa‘id Faraj Ibn Lubd (head of the Maliki muftis of his time in Muslim Spain), who wrote: “As for movement and dancing in ecstasy (tawajud) during the Sama’, it originates from a sensitivity and restlessness in the soul, and so the outward manifests what the inward is affected with. Allah said, ‘Those who – when Allah is mentioned – their hearts tremble’ (Q8:2), meaning their hearts become restless with yearning and awe. The motion of the heart leads to the motion of the body, as He (Most High) said, ‘If you saw them, you would have turned away from them and fled, and become filled with fright due to them’ (Q18:18). Therefore, the reality of tawajud is a sensitivity of the heart and a stirring of the soul, and this refers to physical manifestation of true genuine ecstasy (wajd), for which there is no blame heard of in

the Shari'ah. Behind this is a physical manifestation of ecstasy when there is no true internal ecstasy, which is the object of the Shari'ah's blame because the outward does not match the inward. However, this second state can become acceptable when one intends by it to revive and stir up the sleeping heart, as it says in the hadith, 'O people, cry (when reading the Qur'an), and if you cannot cry true tears, then try to cry artificial tears' (Ibn Majah 2:1403, Abu Ya'la 7:161, and others: Da'if), but what a difference between the two states!"

Even Ibn Taymiyya said: "What takes place in the sessions of listening to sama' and dhikr, like the trembling of hearts, crying, shaking and swaying of the bodies, etc, this is the best state mentioned in the Qur'an (see Q39:23) and Sunna; and as for violent shaking, fainting, death, screaming, and the like, if the one who does it is overtaken, he is not to be blamed, as such happened with the followers (tabi'in) and those after them... For the arrival of the incoming spiritual state (warid) upon weak hearts was their condition, whereas stability and strength under the warid was the state of the Prophet (saws) and his Companions."²⁷⁷

Finally, Shaykh Ahmad ibn 'Ajiba al-Hasani wrote (Sharh al-Mabahith al-Asliyya, p. 291-92): "Know that the objections of the literalists and people of the outward against the Sufis will never cease (which has become a long-established sunna), especially in the subject of Sama' and dancing; and they are excused because all they can see are bodies moving up and down, without comprehending the ecstasy and joy that occurs within (those bodies), and so they attribute those motions to frivolity and insanity, thereby falling into guilt and blame from criticizing them, except those whom Allah keeps safe... Allah said, 'Rather, they rejected that which they could not comprehend in their knowledge' (Q10:39)."

Analysis of the Evidence

Notice that Allah has assigned these specific angels the sole task of looking for gatherings and circles of dhikr, and as Imam Suyuti writes: "dhikr in a gathering can not logically be except loud/audible." Otherwise, it would be considered a form of silent dhikr if each one was invoking internally or to himself, and this is not the same thing. The famous hadith qudsi (related in Sahih Bukhari) differentiates between the two states of silent or individual dhikr, and group audible dhikr, when Allah says in it: "and if you invoke Me in yourself, I will invoke you in Myself, and if you invoke Me in a gathering, I will invoke you in a gathering better than yours." Those who object, saying that "group dhikr" can only mean that a group of people sit in a circle and each person does silent dhikr to himself, have only referred to and allowed the first part of the Hadith Qudsi, and actually cancelled and annulled the second part!

Furthermore, the reader will notice that when the above hadiths (e.g., numbers 2 and 4) mention the actions of the invokers, it says in the plural sense that "they are glorifying You, praising You, declaring Your Oneness, etc." which implies their communal participation in the same act. In other words, when the hadiths above encourage "a group of people coming together and gathering for dhikr," it takes no mental energy to see how this means audible dhikr done together in a group. In all of the authentic hadiths above, we see numerous examples of circles of dhikr happening during the Prophet's (asws) time, with him participating, and also examples of him highly encouraging group dhikr.

²⁷⁷ See Fatawa Ibn Taymiya (1:221), number 172. See also Ibn Qayyim's Madarij as-Salikin (3:65-66).

Another Objection

There are a few who claim that the “gatherings of dhikr” in this context can only mean that a group gathers together and reads and studies and discusses Islamic knowledge together... and nothing else. In other words, gatherings of dhikr can only mean gatherings of knowledge (‘Ilm). This reasoning is faulty for many reasons.

Firstly, because the Prophet (asws) is the most eloquent and precise speaker of Arabic, he could not have confused between using the word ‘Ilm (knowledge) and dhikr (invoking Allah), nor did he use them interchangeably. As an example, he said: “The best dhikr is La Ilaha Illa Allah, and the best du’aa is Hamdu Lillah,”²⁷⁸ and did not mention anything about the study of knowledge in this specific case. Also, notice how he even differentiated between du’aa (which is a form of dhikr) and dhikr...so how could he not differentiate between ‘ilm and dhikr?

Secondly, Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani in his commentary of the hadith collection of Imam Bukhari, when discussing some of the above hadiths (which are found in Bukhari’s collection) writes in very clear terms: “What dhikr here means is the phrases that are highly recommended to say frequently from those phrases mentioned in the Sunnah, such as “la ilaha illa Allah” and “la hawla wa la quwwata illa bil-llaah,” and so on...”²⁷⁹ When we consider hadith #2 quoted above, we see that when Allah asked the angels what His worshippers were doing, the angels did not say, “they were reading books of fiqh,” but rather, “they were reciting tasbih, tahlil, tahmid” and other formulas of dhikr.

An even clearer rebuttal to this objection is what Imam Ibn Hajar also said in his commentary: “What is meant by “gatherings of dhikr” is the invocation and remembrance of Allah by what has been transmitted from the Sunnah, such as tasbih, takbir, tahlil, etc. As for reading hadith, studying religious knowledge, engaging in supererogatory prayers, etc...in these gatherings, there is great doubt in that (constituting ‘gatherings of dhikr’). The more correct understanding is that the gatherings of dhikr involve (recitation of) the known phrases of dhikr and the reading of Qur’an, and only that... even though the studying of religious knowledge and hadith could be called “dhikr” in an extended generalized sense.”²⁸⁰

Another Objection

Some cite a hadith²⁸¹ wherein Abdullah ibn Mas’ud goes out of his house and finds people

²⁷⁸ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#3305), Ibn Majah (#3790), Ibn Hibban (3:126 #846), Hakim (1:498, 503 Sahih), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab al-Iman 1:128), Nasa’i in ‘Amal al-Yowm wa’l Layla (#831), and others. Hadith Sahih.

²⁷⁹ See his Fath al-Bari (11:209).

²⁸⁰ Ibid. (11:212). See also Imam Qastallani’s commentary Irshad as-Sari for a similar explanation.

²⁸¹ Recorded by Darimi (#206), Abdur-Razzaq (#5409) – and from him Tabarani in his Kabir, and Ibn Waddah in his book on Bid’as (p. 11, 14, 21). 1) As for Darimi’s chain, it contains al-Hakam ibn Mubarak (accused of stealing hadiths: Mizan I’tidal 2:345), and ‘Amr ibn Yahya al-Hamadani, whose narrations are not considered or accepted, according to Dhahabi, Ibn Hajar, Haythami, Ibn ‘Adiyy, and other hadith masters such as Yahya ibn Ma’in, who said after seeing him, “his narrations are worth nothing” (Lisan al-Mizan, 4:378). 2) As for Abdur-Razzaq’s chain, it is from Ja’far ibn Sulayman from ‘Ata ibn Sa’ib from Abu’l Bukhtari, and Dhahabi (Kawakib Nayyirat, p. 61) said that Ja’far heard from ‘Ata after ‘Ata became senile, and thus Imam Ahmad rejected such

in the mosque doing dhikr together and saying “La Ilaha Illa Allah” together in an audible voice. When he saw them, he said words to the effect, “you are all only performing a (reprehensible) innovation,” and he kicked them out of the mosque. In response to this, Imam Suyuti mentions this hadith and says about it:

- 1- That the chains of transmission of this hadith are weak (da’if); and
 - 2- Even if it were authentic, it would still contradict the great number of authentic narrations mentioned above, which very clearly encourage this action which Ibn Mas’ud supposedly forbade, and the marfu’ takes precedence over the mawquf; and
 - 3- That Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal knew also of this narration, and wrote about it in his Kitab az-Zuhd: “There are people who claim that Ibn Mas’ud used to forbid gatherings of dhikr. By Allah, never did Ibn Mas’ud sit in a gathering except that he invoked Allah in it.”²⁸² In other words, he participated in them instead of forbidding them!
- Therefore, this narration cannot be relied upon as evidence against dhikr gatherings.

Again, the “dancing” referred to in these fatwas is not the modern day dancing one finds in bars and night clubs and discos and other places of illicit partying, for that is the action of animals. Rather, this “sacred dancing” is the result of the direct experience of the Divine Beauty during the invocation of Allah, when one feels overwhelmed by the intensity of the Divine Presence (Hudur). And if the ladies of Pharaoh’s wife could lose consciousness of themselves and cut their hands when beholding the created beauty of Sayyidina Yusuf (asws), then surely one must go through some kind of intense states when catching or beholding a glimpse of the Creator’s beauty. Anyone who denies this from happening, then the sickness of hardness and dry lifelessness is in their hearts, and it would do them well to grant good opinion to the other Muslims whose hearts and skins are alive and sensitive, moving and shaking in Allah’s remembrance (see Q39:23).

In light of the preceding, there is no way escaping the fact that coming together in a group and reciting Qur’an and dhikr in a loud audible voice in unison has a firm basis in the Sunna, and is a very highly recommended act, as our scholars have inferred from the numerous evidences for it in the Qur’an and Sunna. We seek the protection of Allah against those who wish to prevent the gatherings of dhikr and the uniting of hearts upon it.

“And who is more unjust than the one who bars access to the places of prostration to Allah (masajid), so that His Name might not be mentioned in them, and strives towards their ruin?...” (Q2:114).

“And be patient in sticking to the company of those who call on their Lord, in early morning and late night, desiring His Presence, and do not turn your eyes away from them to seek the ornaments of the life of this world. And do not obey the one whose heart We have made heedless (preventing his) remembrance of Us, who follows after his caprice, and whose affair is in chaos” (Q18:29).

hadiths from him, and that Shu’ba said, “hadiths of ‘Ata from Abu’l Bukhtari... do not record them.” Tabarani recorded this hadith of Abdur-Razzaq thru Ishaq ad-Duburi, who was 6 or 7 years old when Abdur-Razzaq died, and thus took his hadiths from him only after his becoming senile, as mentioned by Sakhawi (Fath al-Mughith 3:377). 3) As for Ibn Waddah (who is himself untrustworthy), his chains are all very weak because some of them are broken, and others are narrated thru forgers and rejected narrators (namely, Aban ibn Abi ‘Ayyash and Ibn Sam’an: Jarh wa Ta’dil 1:134, 5:60).

²⁸² See Imam Suyuti’s al-Hawi lil-Fatawi (1:394) and Munawi’s Fayd al-Qadir (1:457).

Question: Is the compilation of Ahzab by the Sufi Shaykhs, and their passing them on and recommending their recitation to their followers, allowed according to the Shari'ah? For example, Shaykh al-Shadhuli compiled his own collection of du'as titled *Hizb al-Bahr*, and said to his followers, "Continue reciting this hizb, and teach it to your children, for it contains the Greatest Divine Name"

Yes, this is certainly allowed, and there is nothing wrong in this. According to the principles upon which Islamic jurisprudence is based (Usul al-Fiqh), it is known that an act is prohibited only if a specific prohibition against it can be found explicitly mentioned by Allah in His Book or the Prophet (asws) in the ahadith. The idea that, "if the Prophet didn't do it, then it is not allowed" is a great misunderstanding and misapplication of the principles of Fiqh.

In regards to compiling one's own Ahzab and Du'as and recommending one's own students and followers to recite them, this is something that is supported in the Sunna and seen throughout the history of Islam. This issue revolves around two points:

- 1- Using or employing a du'a that is not specifically mentioned as coming from the Qur'an or the Prophet (asws), especially if it contains some foreign words;
- 2- Passing on this du'a/hizb to one's students and followers, and likewise recommending them to recite it.

About point #1, we have numerous examples in the hadith literature, where the Prophet (asws) heard of someone reciting an improvised du'a, and then confirming it and saying for example, "Allah has inspired you (laqqanaka) with His Greatest Divine Name," or where he expressed praise and joy at the du'a and the person making it, as in the following examples:

1) Anas ibn Malik narrated: "There was a man in the time of the Prophet (asws) who traded between Syria and Madinah, who used to go alone on his journeys without the caravans, trusting in Allah. One time on his way back to Madina, a thief came up to him and told him to stop and the merchant said, 'take my goods, and leave me alone,' and the thief replied, 'the goods are easily taken, I want you.' The merchant said, 'wait until I make ablution and pray to my Lord,' and the thief let him. So the merchant prayed four rak'as, then raised his hands and made this du'a: "O Loving One! O Loving One! O Lord of the Glorious Throne, O One from Whom all begins and to Whom all returns, O One Who does what He wishes, I ask You by the Light of Your Countenance that fills the corners of Your Throne, I ask You by Your Power by which You command Your creation, and by Your Mercy that encompasses all things, there is no God but You! O Helper, come to my aid"...and he said this three times.

When he finished making his du'a, a rider on a gray horse wearing green garments came with a lance of light, and when the thief saw the rider, he left the merchant and started towards the rider, but when he came near, the rider charged him and dealt him a blow that knocked him off his horse. Then the rider told the merchant to kill the thief, but the merchant declined, so the rider killed him instead." The hadith goes on to say that this rider was an angel from the third heaven, whom Allah sent to aid the merchant, and that the angel told the merchant: "Know, O servant of Allah, that Allah will relieve and help one who makes this prayer of yours in any moment of distress, calamity, or desperation." The merchant went on safely to Madina

and when he arrived, told the Prophet (asws) of all that had happened, and of the prayer he had made. The Prophet (asws) replied to him, “Allah has inspired you (laqqanaka) with His most beautiful Names to which, when invoked by them, He responds, and when asked for something by them, He bestows it.”²⁸³ Consider the following points: 1) the Prophet (asws) confirmed that this du’a was inspired by Allah to him; 2) this du’a, because of its blessings, is to be passed down to future generations, as the angel alluded to.

2) Ibn Abi Shayba recorded in his Musannaf (Kitab ad-Du’a) that Anas also related that he was with the Prophet (asws) and there was a man praying, and then he supplicated Allah and said: “O Allah, I beseech You for You deserve all praise, and there is no god but You, O Loving, O Giver, Originator of the heavens and the earth, O Possessor of Majesty and Bounty, O Living, Self-Subsisting...”, and the Prophet (asws) then said, “he has asked Allah by His Greatest Name, by which if He is asked, He responds...”²⁸⁴

3) He also recorded that Burayda narrated that the Prophet (asws) overheard someone make this du’a: “O Allah, I request You by virtue of the fact that I bear witness that You are Allah, other than Whom there is no God, the One and Only, Eternal Being, Who does not beget nor is He begotten, and Whom there is nothing similar to Him...”, and then he told him: “you have asked Allah by His Greatest Name...”²⁸⁵

4) We also have some examples of some Sahaba teaching that the Greatest Name of Allah is something that is different from what the Prophet (asws) specified, such as Ibn Jarir in his Tafsir recording that Ibn Mas’ud said that the Greatest Divine Name is “Alif-Lam-Mim,” and also Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim recording Ibn ‘Abbas also saying that it is “Alif-Lam-Mim.” Daylami (Firdaws, #5467) recorded that “Ha-Mim” is one of the Divine Names. Also, Fakhruddin al-Razi in his Tafsir records that Zayn al-‘Abidin, the son of Imam Husayn, said that he had a vision of the Greatest Name, and that it is “Allah Allah Allah La Ilaha Illa Huwa Rabb ul-‘Arsh il-‘Adhim.” They did not narrate this from the Messenger of Allah (asws) but said it from themselves. If one holds on to the mistaken notion that “if the Prophet did not do it or say it, then it is null and false,” then this apparently is a contradiction by none other than the Companions and Tabi’in themselves! But the truth is - as we saw in the section on Bid’a - that they passed on this teaching and did not see it as contravening the Sunna in anyway, for these were their inspirations they received from Allah (see Abu Ya’la 13:132), and as long as those inspirations did not contradict an express statement in the Qur’an or Sunna, then it is perfectly fine to hold to it and pass it on to posterity.

5) Consider the well-known hadith wherein the Prophet (asws) is leading the salat and when

²⁸³ This hadith is recorded by al-Lalika’i in his *Karamat al-Awliya’* (1992 ed. p. 154-55 #111), and by Imam Abu’l Qasim al-Qushayri with his own chain in his famous *Risala*, in the chapter on Du’a (p. 298), and by Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Mujabi Da’wa #23, and K. al-Hawatif #14). See also Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani’s *Isaba fi Tamyiz as-Sahaba* (7:178 #10551), under the name of the Companion to whom this karama happened: Abu Mu’allaq (or Abu Mi’laq) al-Ansari.

²⁸⁴ Imam Ahmad (1:230; 2:132; 3:158, 245), Abu Dawud (2:167 #1277), Nasa’i (3:52 #1283), Tirmidhi (5:550 #3467), Ibn Majah (#3848), Ibn Hibban (3:175-76 #893), Bayhaqi (Dala’il, 6:241-42), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:57), Hakim (1:504), Tabarani (M. Saghir 2:96, Kabir #4722), Ibn Mubarak (#1171-72), and Harith (Zawa’id, #1066).

²⁸⁵ Abu Dawud (#1276), Tirmidhi (5:515 #3397), Ibn Majah (2:1267 #3847), Imam Ahmad (5:349-350; #21874, 21887, 21963), Hakim (1:504), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:57), Ibn Hibban (3:173-74), Ibn as-Sunni (#758), and Ruyani (1:71 #24). Hadith Sahih: Hakim, Dhahabi, Ibn Hibban, Mundhiri (Targhib, 2:485), and others.

he gets up from ruku', one of the companions behind him says, "Rabbana laka'l hamdu hamdan kathiran tayyiban mubarakan feeh;" and after the prayer is over, the Prophet (asws) asks for the man and praises him and said, "30-odd angels were vying who would be the first to record the rewards of your words." It is enough to quote what Imam Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani comments on this hadith: "This indicates the permissibility of initiating new expressions of dhikr during the prayer other than the ones related through specific hadith texts, as long as they do not contradict those conveyed by the hadith, and the permissibility of raising one's voice in dhikr as long as it does not bother others" (Fath 2:287). Notice he did not follow the hollow argument of, "if it wasn't specifically done or said by the Prophet, then it is a reprehensible innovation." As long as someone does not depart from the general form defined by the Lawgiver (asws), there is no blame.

6) Ibn 'Umar said: "While we were praying with the Prophet (asws), one man with us said, "Allahu Akbaru Kabira, wal-Hamdu lillaahi Kathira, wa Subhan Allahi Bukratan wa-Asila." The Prophet (asws) said, "Who said this?" and the man replied, "I did." So the Prophet (asws) looked at him and said: "I was amazed at this, because I saw the gates of heaven open when you said it (in another narration, "I saw 12,000 angels rush to (record) it)." Then Ibn 'Umar said: "so I never left those words after hearing him (asws) say that." ²⁸⁶ And thus a dhikr introduced by someone and praised by the Prophet (asws) was passed down by the Sahaba...supporting what we said above.

7) Finally, Imam Nawawi in his Kitab al-Adhkar (p. 152) has a short chapter which he titled "concerning he who slept and missed his Hizb and routine exercise (of dhikr and qur'an)," and in it related the authentic hadith wherein the Prophet (asws) says: "Whoever sleeps and misses his hizb of the night or a part of it, and then makes it up between the time of salat al-fajr and adh-dhuhr, then it will be considered as if he read it in (the previous) night." ²⁸⁷ We learn from this hadith a number of things: 1) that the Prophet (asws) encourages us to formulate our own collection of adhkar and da'awat (called hizb); otherwise, which specific hizb of his (asws) is he referring to? 2) that one attempt to make a regular habit of reading this hizb, 3) regular recitation of ahzab brings with it rewards and blessings that one should be careful not to miss. He also says in the same book (p. 13): "for one who has a Wadhifa of dhikr in the day or night, or after every prayer, or during some other time, then if he misses it he must make it up as much as possible and take care not to neglect it..." And he wrote (p. 32-33): "A'isha said, 'I recite my Hizb while I lay upon my bed'."

As for point #2 above: Because the Prophet (alayhi salat wa salam) confirmed and accepted and praised their inspired du'as in the presence of other Companions, then it constitutes an implicit recommendation that the Prophet (asws) is telling the others in his presence to likewise employ such a du'a inspired to so-and-so, because of its great blessing and the fact that it contains the Greatest Divine Name for example. So from this, the Sahaba and the Salaf in general would have collected these supplications from different people other than the Prophet (asws), and employed them for their own use...in other words, a Hizb! And so Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, for example, in his Ihya 'Ulum ad-Din, in the section on Adhkar

²⁸⁶ Recorded by Muslim in his Sahih (Kitab al-Masajid #943), Tirmidhi (#3516), Nasa'i (#875-76), Imam Ahmad (#4399, 5464), Diya' (13:118-19), Abu Ya'la (10:95 #5728 Sahih), Abdur-Razzaq (2:76 #2559), Abu 'Awana (2:100), Ibn Abi Umar al-'Adani (Matalib, 1:206-07), Harith (Zawa'id, p. 62 #166), and Tabarani in Kitab ad-Du'a.

²⁸⁷ Recorded by Muslim in his Sahih (1:515 #1236) on the authority of 'Umar ibn Khattab, and by many others.

and Da'awat, compiled numerous Ahzab from some Sahaba such as Abu Bakr (radiyallahu anhu), Anas (radiyallahu anhu), Abu Darda' (radiyallahu anhu), Fatima (radiyallahu anha), and from numerous salaf such as Ma'ruf al-Karkhi, 'Utba al-Ghulam, Sulayman at-Taymi Ibn al-Mu'tamir, Ibrahim ibn Adham, etc... that have passed down to his time (and to our time), still being recited by Muslims around the world.

So what does the Shari'a forbid or call against in terms of supplications? Let us look at the most common examples from the Sunna:

- "If your livelihood is made in a lawful way, your prayers will be answered." ²⁸⁸
- "Allah will not answer the prayer of the servant whose heart is heedless and unfocused." ²⁸⁹
- "No Muslim ever makes a du'a, which does not involve or contain a sin or cutting off of relations, without Allah giving him one of three responses: either He gives him what he asks, or He averts a harm equal to it, or He stores it up for him to be given in the Qiyama." ²⁹⁰
- "Your supplications will be answered so long as you do not become impatient, and say, "I asked Allah repeatedly but He did not answer me." ²⁹¹

Therefore, as long as a certain du'a does not include asking for a sin, or separation from one's relatives, or impatience with Allah, or heedlessness, or illicit means of livelihood, then such a du'a is perfectly within the bounds laid by the Shari'a, and there is no harm in using that du'a. And if such a du'a is furthermore known to have "tested" benefits and blessings, then it is all the more clear that the Shari'a encourages that this du'a be passed on and used by others to participate in the blessings of it. Thus, it would be against the principles of the Shari'a for someone to forbid or prevent a certain Hizb or Du'a from being used, simply on the grounds that "the Prophet never said it". And in passing down du'as to others, one is not inventing something new in the Din, because Allah says in the Qur'an, "Call upon me and I answer you (Q40:60)," thereby opening the door to any du'a (that does not have one of the above limitations); so rather than it being a "reprehensible innovation," it is actually included in the umbrella of this verse and others like it, for it is a du'a like any other du'a, and this verse sanctions all du'as in general. And Allah encourages us furthermore to "aid each other and cooperate in righteousness and taqwa" (Q5:2), and sharing blessed and inspired du'as and hizbs is a form of that. Indeed, the blameworthy innovation in this context is that someone adds a new limitation to the usage of du'a that is not found in the Qur'an or Hadiths of the Prophet (asws). As for giving certain numbers to adhkar, it is permissible as long as one does not claim that only this specific number is allowed and other numbers not.

Shaykh Nuh Keller writes: Again, the point is worth stressing: Islamic scholars infer that every act for which there is evidence in the Shari'a that it is called for and which does not oppose an unequivocal primary text or entail harmful consequences is not

²⁸⁸ Imam Nawawi mentioned a hadith of similar import in his famous collection of 40 hadiths, hadith #10; which is recorded by Imam Muslim (#1686), Tirmidhi (#2915), Darimi (#2601), Imam Ahmad (#7998), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 4:215), Tabarani (Mu'jam al-Awsat, 6:311 #6495), and others on the authority of Abu Hurayra and Ibn 'Abbas.

²⁸⁹ Recorded by Tirmidhi (Kitab ad-Da'awat #3401), Imam Ahmad (#6368), Hakim (1:493), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 5:211 #5109), Ibn Mubarak (K. Zuhd, p. 391), Ibn 'Adiyy, and Rafii (Tarikh Qazwin, 3:329). Hafiz Mundhiri said Ahmad's chain is Hasan (Targhib wa Tarhib, 2:491-92).

²⁹⁰ Recorded by Muslim (#4918), Ibn Hibban (3:164 #881, 3:257 #976), Hakim (1:493 Sahih), and others.

²⁹¹ Recorded by Bukhari in his Sahih (#5865) and his Adab al-Mufrad (#654), and by Muslim (#4916-17).

included in the category of reprehensible innovation (*bid'a sayyi'a*), but rather is of the Sunna. Making a dhikr or a supplication at a certain time at one's own initiative does not become a reprehensible innovation unless it conflicts with a specific sunna legislated for that occasion, such as saying "al-hamdu lillah" 10 times right after the Adhan, when the sunna calls for prayers and blessings upon the Prophet (asws) at that time ²⁹².

In addition, there are numerous examples of major scholars in Islam who have compiled their own Ahzab, which are still recited today, and this constitutes evident proof that they saw nothing wrong with it. For example:

- In the Hanafi Madhhab, the scholar Mulla 'Ali Qari compiled his Hizb known as "Hizb al-A'dham" which is divided into seven parts, one part to be recited each day of the week.
- In the Maliki Madhhab, the scholar Ahmad Zarruq al-Fasi compiled his Hizb known as "Safinat un-Najat".
- In the Shafi'i Madhhab, the scholar Imam Nawawi compiled his own Hizb, known as "Hizb al-Imam an-Nawawi."
- In the Hanbali Madhhab, the scholar Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jaylani compiled many Ahzab and forms of Salawat upon the Prophet (asws).

These are all top-notch scholars in their Madhhabs, recognized for their knowledge and piety and faithful following of the Sunna, all of whom supported the practice of compiling their own Ahzab and having their students recite them...and we have no record of any man or woman of knowledge censuring these scholars for that. As another example, Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali compiled his own Hizb known as "al-Hisn ul-Mani'", and the scholar Sayyid Abdur-Rahman ibn Abdillah as-Saqqaf al-Husayni al-Hadrami wrote: "Shaykh Muhammad 'Aqila narrated that the Mufti of Madina Shaykh Muhammad As'ad narrated from one of the righteous men from Maghrib, that he said about the Hizb of Imam Ghazali: "(This is a) noble collection, which benefits the one who recites it and carries it on one's person, and I spent a long time searching for its compiler, and did not know who it was until I came to the Hanafi scholar, Mulla 'Ali al-Qari, who spoke much about it, and mentioned that it was compiled by Hujjat ul-Islam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (radiyallahu anhu), and so I desired to spread it as a benefit for the believers, by the blessed secrets of the Qur'an."

Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami writes: "The awrad which Sufis customarily recite after the prayers...have an authentic legal basis in the hadith recorded by Bayhaqi (and others) that the Prophet (asws) said: "To invoke Allah with a group of people after the dawn prayer until sunrise is more beloved to me than this world and all it contains, and to invoke Allah with a group of people after the 'asr prayer until sunset is more beloved to me than this world and all it contains." Because the Sufis' practice of joining to recite awrad and adhkar after the subh and 'asr prayers and at other times has an authenticated basis in the Sunna – namely, this hadith – there can be no objection to their doing so." ²⁹³

²⁹² Imam Muslim recorded in his Sahih (Kitab as-Salat #577) on the authority of Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn 'Aas that the Prophet (asws) said: "When you hear the mu'adhin, then say as he says, and then send salawat upon me..." Also recorded by: Tirmidhi (#3547), Nasa'i (#671), Abu Dawud (#439), Imam Ahmad (#6280), Ibn Khuzayma (Kitab as-Salat, #418), Ibn Hibban (4:588-90 #1690-92), and numerous others.

²⁹³ See Fatawa Hadithiyya, p. 76. Trans.: Shaykh Nuh Keller.

Shaykh Abu Sa'id Faraj Ibn Lubb al-Maliki wrote: "As for recitation of a section of the Qur'an (hizb) as a group, as is commonly done, no one has declared it offensive (makruh) except Malik, due to his view of preferring the practice of Madina, whereas the majority (jumhur) of the scholars hold it to be permissible and recommended. The proof they held to was the authentic hadith, 'No group of people gathers together in one of the houses of Allah, reciting together the Book of Allah, and studying it amongst themselves, except that tranquility and mercy descend upon them' [Muslim]. Furthermore, this act (of communal recitation) has become widespread across many lands and eras, and it is founded upon a number of beneficial goals, and whoever aims for these goals will not miss the reward in that act. These include: reviewing the Qur'an, as encouraged by numerous hadiths; providing an opportunity for the lay (who does not know the rules of tajwid) to hear the Qur'an recited properly; obtaining the reward promised in this hadith, which did not specify a certain time in exclusion of others. In addition, the fact that the Salaf did not do this regularly (tark) does not in itself lead to any legal ruling, as long as there is no mention of any of them stating that this act is disliked or forbidden, and the basic legal ruling concerning voluntary acts of pious deeds (nawafil) is that it is permitted to not do them. The reality is that this act brings with it much reward and benefit, because it falls under the category of good deeds for which there is general encouragement. The one who undertakes it should not believe – due to following Malik's opinion – he is doing something disliked, but should rather keep in mind the above hadith, following the ruling of those who declare it a recommended and praiseworthy act." ²⁹⁴

In light of the above, we see that the compilation of Ahzab and Da'awat, and passing them on to posterity and recommending their recitation, is fully in accordance with the principles and teachings of Shari'a, and thus should not be rejected.

Advice of a Sufi Shaykh

Shaykh Ahmad Zarruq al-Shadhuli wrote the following: "For every kind of problem, issue and request that one may have, the Lawgiver (meaning the Prophet) has given a helpful benefit (as a solution for it), and the Awliya' have given additional solutions. So whoever combines the benefit of the Lawgiver with the additions of the Awliya', then he has full success and guidance. And whoever confines himself to one without the other, then he is deficient accordingly. However, lacking in the guidance of the Lawgiver precludes any benefit, whereas lacking in the additions of the Awliya' would not necessarily cause harm because they are only for fortification and consolidation. Halting with the additions of the Awliya' while abandoning what has been transmitted from the Lawgiver is harmful in this life and the next. So if you wish to employ a certain set of invocations and supplications (wird) which a Wali has taught for a certain situation, then precede that with what has been transmitted from the Lawgiver concerning that situation, and I will give you seven examples:

²⁹⁴ Quoted by al-Wansharisi in his encyclopedia of Maliki fatawa: al-Mi'yar al-Mu'arrab (1:155; see also 1:281 and 11:60). Imam Dusuqi (Hashiya 1:198) states that Imam Malik disliked it due to the risk of the Qur'anic words becoming chopped up between the reciters; adding that even with this risk, it still is not to be prohibited. The Maliki Imam Burzuli stated in his Fatawa: "As for their gathering together to recite Qur'an, Malik – according to one narration – permitted it, and it is the apparent conclusion due to the hadiths detailing the blessings of group dhikr and Qur'an-recital... As for listening to recited poetry which stirs within one noble states and turns one's attention to the Hereafter, there is no fault in that; and is in fact recommended when the heart becomes stale and dull, because that which leads to something recommended is itself recommended."

If you want to recite the Hizb al-Bahr (“Litany of the Sea”) of Imam ash-Shadhuli to keep safe from ship-wreck, then precede that with the following words as you board the boat: “By the Name of Allah is its course and its berth, surely my Lord is Forgiving, Merciful” (Q11:41). “And they have not appraised Allah with a true appraisal, (for) the whole earth shall be in His grasp on the Day of Standing, and the heavens shall be folded into His Right Hand. Limitless is He in His Glory, and high above all that which they associate with Him” (Q39:67). For the hadith literature (Tabarani’s Awsat #6136, Abu Ya’la #6781) mentions that this is a safeguard against drowning at sea.

If you want to exit from difficulty and constriction into ease and comfort by using what Shaykh al-Shadhuli taught his students to recite for this intention, namely, “O Vast! O Knower! O Possessor of great bounty! You are my Lord and Your Knowledge suffices me, if You touch me with affliction then there is none to remove it but You, and if You will good for me then there is none to turn away Your bounty. You grant of it whom You choose among Your slaves, and You are Forgiving, Merciful,” then precede that with frequent *istighfar* (asking forgiveness). For it is narrated that abundant *istighfar* is a cause of relief from worry, of a way out from constriction, and of sustenance from unaccounted sources. And use the “supplication of distress” narrated in the Sahih of Bukhari, which is: “No god but Allah, the Clement, the Generous; No god but Allah, Lord of the Immense Throne”; and what was narrated by Abu Dawud in his Sunan from Abu Umama, who complained of sins and worries, that the Prophet (asws) taught him to say morning and evening, “O Allah, I seek refuge in You from anxiety and sadness...”

If you wish to attain victory over your enemies by reciting what the Shaykh taught for this purpose, namely, “In the Name of Allah, by Allah, from Allah, to Allah, and upon Allah shall the believers place their trust...” seven times after each ritual prayer, then precede that with what the Prophet (asws) used to recite when he feared an enemy. He (asws) used to say, “O Allah, suffice me my needs in the manner You will and with whatever You will,” and “O Allah! We seek Your protection from their evil...” (Ahmad 4:414, Ibn Hibban #2373).

(After listing four more similar examples, he goes on to say):

“In conclusion, the secrets of the Awliya’ are under the umbrella of the secrets of the Shari’ah. So whoever wishes to attain his goal, should precede first with what the Lawgiver transmitted, and then follow that up with its like from the inheritance of the Awliya’.”²⁹⁵

Objection: the Repetition of the Name of Allah, Allah

Some people object wrongfully to the practice of repeating the Supreme Name (as in “Allah, Allah, Allah”) without any vocative particle or construct (such as “O Allah”), which is a common practice among the Sufis specifically and a great number of Muslims in general. However, there is no reason to object to this practice, which is sanctioned by the Qur’an and Sunnah, and there is nothing incorrect about it, whether from the aspect of grammar or the aspect of belief.

Allah (Most High) in numerous places of the Qur’an asks us to invoke His Name, as when

²⁹⁵ Taken from: Sharh Hizb al-Bahr, by Sidi Ahmad Zarruq al-Fasi al-Maliki, pp. 44-48.

He says: “and invoke the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself to Him with complete devotion” (Q73:8), and: “say ‘Allah,’ then leave them plunging in their games” (Q6:91). And in general, He asks us to call Him by His most beautiful Names (Q7:180), which include “Allah,” “Hayy,” “Qayyum,” “Haqq,” “Lateef,” etc. And because there is no restriction found in the Qur’an or Sunna applying to the number or type or method of invoking His Names, then it is against the principles of the Shari’a to come up with a prohibition from one’s self, as we have seen in the previous chapter on innovations. More specifically, it seems that those who object to this are unaware that the Prophet (asws) and his companions invoked Allah in this way, without any grammatical vocative particle. For example, Imam Muslim records in his Sahih (Kitab al-Iman, Ch. 66) from Thabit from Anas that the Prophet (asws) said, “the Final Hour will not come upon anyone saying ‘Allahu Allahu,’” and in another narration, “the Hour will not come before ‘Allahu Allahu’ is no longer said on earth.” And in his commentary on this hadith, Imam Nawawi wrote: “Know that the narrations of this hadith are unanimous in the repetition of the Name of Allah Most High for both versions, and that is the way it is found in all the authoritative books” (1:537). Mulla ‘Ali Qari wrote: “Meaning, there will be no reason for man’s continued existence upon the earth. From this it is known that the continuance of the life of this world is thru the blessing of the upright scholars and righteous servants and the generality of believers” (Mirqat al-Mafatih, 5:226). Furthermore, when Sayyidina Bilal was enduring torture by Umayya ibn Khalaf, he would make dhikr saying “Ahad, Ahad” (One, One) and nothing else (See: Sira Ibn Hisham, and Ibn Hajar’s Isaba fi Tamyiz as-Sahaba (1:171 #732)), and the Prophet (asws) did not object. There is also the hadith which states that the Prophet (asws) used to frequently recite, “Allahu Allahu Rabbi...”²⁹⁶

From a grammatical standpoint, the grammatical preconditions for a complete sentence do not apply to formulas of invocation, but rather only to communication between two intelligent beings. Therefore in this specific question, the vocative construct is only necessary when the speaker wishes to transmit a certain message to his listener. As for the invoker, his intention is only to benefit himself, and establish the meaning of that Glorious Name in his heart thru repetition of it. Similarly, the grammarians did not make it a necessary condition that the sufferer or one in pain use complete meaningful sentences when he relieves his anguish thru certain sounds, such as “ahh!” That is because his intention is other than the intention of someone who wishes to convey a certain intelligible meaning to his listener. Such is the case with the invoker, who does not intend to convey any meaning to someone else, but simply to reflect upon the meaning of the Name he invokes, and to consolidate and deepen its effects within him.

For every name, whether it be Divine or otherwise, has an effect on its invoker, especially if he is regular in its invocation. The Messenger of Allah (asws) said, “Make frequent mention of the slayer of delights,”²⁹⁷ referring to death, and it is narrated that some of the Salaf used

²⁹⁶ Recorded by Ibn Majah (K. Du’a, #3872), Abu Dawud (K. Salat, #1304), Nasa’i in his ‘Amal al-Yowm wa’l Layla (p. 412-13 #647-50) and Sunan Kubra (6:166), Imam Ahmad (6:369), Tabarani (M. Kabir 24:136, 154, M. Awsat #5290, 6119, 8474, K. Du’a p. 313), Ibn Hibban (3:146 #864), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:22), Khatib (Tarikh, 5:457), and others. It is Sahih, according to Ibn Hajar, Ibn Hibban, Dhahabi, and others.

²⁹⁷ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (Musnad #7584 and K. Zuhd, p. 17), Hakim (4:321 Sahih), Tirmidhi (#2229, 2384), Nasa’i (#1801), Tabarani (M. Awsat 1:213-14, 6:56, 8:256 Hasan), Ibn Hibban (7:259-61), Diya’ Maqdisi in his Mukhtara (1:521), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 7:354), and others. Hafiz Sakhawi wrote (Maqasid, p. 74 #147) that it is Sahih according to Ibn Hibban, Hakim, Ibn as-Sakan, Dhahabi, Mundhiri (4:236), and others.

to repeat the word “death” – by itself – to themselves, to actualize its meaning and effects in their conscience. As for the Divine Name “Allah,” there is no doubt that it has numerous and sublime effects on the one who invokes it consistently.

Also, there is nothing that we know of in the Shari’a of Islam which prohibits the repetition of the name of something – whatever it may be – as long as the name itself is not expressly forbidden (such as an obscene word). So assuming that the Name “Allah” by itself is an example of a word that is not only permissible to say but blessed, then how is it that repeating it becomes forbidden or disliked? Especially when we add to this that we are commanded in the Qur’an to frequently invoke Allah and His Names?

“Those who invoke Allah while standing sitting or reclining on their sides...” (Q3:191): meaning, in all moments. “In houses which Allah has allowed to be erected, that His Name might be invoked in them. They glorify Him in the mornings and evenings – men whom neither commerce nor sale distracts from the invocation of Allah...” (Q24:36-37): meaning, that the primary reason Allah permits His houses to be erected is so that His Name may be invoked abundantly *in them*. Let this be a warning against those who wish to prevent dhikr in the masajid. “...And the men and women who invoke Allah abundantly, Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward” (Q33:35). “And invoke the Name of your Lord morning and night” (Q76:25), and other similar verses. Indeed, it is the Sufis, more than anyone else, who fit most closely the following description: “Successful is the one who purifies (his soul) and, invoking the Name of his Lord – worships” (Q87:14-15).

In addition to the above, there is another aspect in which the single repeated invocation of the Divine Name is correct from the grammatical standpoint, and that is when it is considered a “call” (*nida*), meaning that the invoker is repeatedly calling out Allah’s Name. Whether or not a vocative particle is used (such as “O so-and-so”) does not affect whether it is correct or not, as both forms are common in Arabic language, and there are even certain occasions where not having a vocative particle is necessary and more appropriate. The rule is that the vocative particle is employed only when calling out to someone far to gain his attention, and is dropped when calling out to someone near and in one’s presence. This is why, in the Qur’an, when Allah is calling out to the slaves, the vocative particle is used, because the attention of the slaves needs to be directed to Allah and away from their heedlessness, which makes them far. But when in the Qur’an the slaves are calling out to Allah, the vocative particle is dropped, because He is always near to His slaves, and because there is no need to call Allah’s attention to oneself or remind Him, for He is not heedless. Therefore, those who repeat the Name of Allah are absolved from blame.

Finally, assuming that there are no indications – from the Qur’an or the Sunnah – of the single repeated invocation of the Divine Name “Allah,” then at the very least this practice has to be considered among the *mubah*, or neutrally licit, for there is at the same time no proof-text (*dalil*) which shows that such a thing is disliked or forbidden. And we have seen in a previous chapter how it is necessary to have a primary proof-text that explicitly prohibits a certain action to have that act considered *haram*; otherwise, those who would prohibit that action have nothing to stand upon.

A note on prayer formulas ²⁹⁸ (*ruqya*) and amulets (*tama'im*)

Allah (Most High) stated in a number of places in His Book that He has placed healing (*shifa'*) in the Qur'an (ex: Q10:57, Q17:82), and in keeping with this the Prophet (asws) said, "Whoever does not heal by the Qur'an, then may Allah not heal him." It is also well-known that one of his frequent supplications of protection was, "I seek refuge in the Blessed and Perfect Words of Allah from the evil of what He created." Ibn 'Amr used to write these words and hang them on the necks of his young children for their protection (Tirmidhi #3451, Abu Dawud #3395, Ahmad #6409). We also saw in an earlier chapter that the Prophet (asws) used the words of Qur'an as a healing and protection, and that he confirmed one of the Companions who used the Fatiha as a prayer formula (*ruqya*) for healing the poisonous bite of a scorpion. And if one looks in the collections of hadith (such as Imam Bukhari's Sahih, Kitab at-Tibb; Imam Muslim's Sahih, Kitab as-Salam) one can notice whole chapters devoted to the usage of *ruqyas* in healing, from which the scholars have concluded that there are two kinds of *ruqyas*: one which is in conformity with and supported by the Sunnah, and another which is considered magic, and thus Kufr. And the scholars state that the permissible form must have three conditions: 1) it must be from the blessed Words of Allah, or from His Names and Attributes, 2) it must be in Arabic, or from words whose meanings are understood (if in another language), 3) it must not be believed that the *Ruqya* in itself causes the healing or protection but that it is by the Power of Allah that the *Ruqya* is a source of benefit. ²⁹⁹ 'Awf ibn Malik once asked the Prophet (asws): "We used to use *ruqyas* in Jahiliyya, so what is your view of that?" and he replied, "There is no harm in it as long as it contains no shirk" (Muslim #4079, Ibn Hibban #6094). So if one of these three conditions are lacking, then it is forbidden. See also Ibn Hibban's Sahih (13:464 #6098).

As an example of condition #2 above, there are certain *Ruqyas* used which are in languages other than Arabic, such as Siryani. It is narrated that a *Ruqya* for snake bites and fever was brought to the Prophet (asws), which is: *Shajja Qaraniyya Malhat Bahr Qaft*. The Prophet (asws) was asked about it and he replied, "These are the words that Sulayman (asws), the son of Dawud (asws), used, in which I see no harm," and he permitted its use, even though he didn't explain its meaning. ³⁰⁰

As for the hadith, "Whoever hangs an amulet (*tamima*) has committed shirk" (Ahmad #16781), the scholars say that the intended meaning here is those amulets that were used in the time of Jahiliyya, which they believed had the power in themselves to attract benefits and repel harms independently from Allah, whereas this cannot be the case if the amulet contains only the Words or Names of Allah. For example, Ibn al-Qayyim in his *Zad al-Ma'ad* (3:180) recorded that Ja'far as-Sadiq was asked about amulets of protection (*ta'widh*) and he said, "If it contains the Words of Allah or from the Messenger of Allah, then hang it (upon one's person) and use it as a means for healing." And he also recorded that Imam Ahmad agreed to the use of amulets, and that his son Abdullah stated that he saw him writing amulets for

²⁹⁸ The word *Ruqya* is defined here as any specific prayer formula or groups of formulas recited for a specific purpose, usually for protection or healing.

²⁹⁹ Scholarly consensus (*Ijma'*) on this was mentioned by Hafiz Ibn Hajar in his *Fath al-Bari* (Kitab at-Tibb, 10:195-97), and Imam Nawawi in his *Sharh Sahih Muslim* (14:168-69). See also Sahih Bukhari (#5305), and Ibn Hajar's commentary on this hadith.

³⁰⁰ Recorded by Tabarani (M. Kabir 10:111, M. Awsat 5:266) from Ibn Mas'ud and (M. Awsat, 8:297 Hasan) from Abdullah ibn Zayd, Ibn as-Sunni (#573, 575), and Hakim Tirmidhi in *Nawadir al-Usul* (Asl #82).

use in fevers and other diseases. Ibn Abi Shayba in his *Musannaf* (5:437-40) reported the permissibility of hanging amulets of protection from a number of the early Salaf, including: 'Ata, Sa'id ibn Musayyab, Mujahid, Ibn Sirin, Abdullah ibn 'Amr, and others. Ibn Taymiyya also mentioned in his *Fatwas* (19:65) that Ibn 'Abbas used to write words of Qur'an and Dhikr, and then wash them off with water and give that to a lady in labor to drink for ease of delivery. And his main student Mujahid said, "There is no harm if one writes words of Qur'an, and then washes it and gives that water to the sick to drink (for healing)." Ibn Qayyim also mentioned that Abu Qilaba would write verses of the Qur'an, then wash them and give the water to a person in pain to drink for healing (*Zad al-Ma'ad*, 4:156).

Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani wrote in his *Fath al-Bari* (4:457) the following: "...And from this hadith we see the permissibility of Ruqyas using the Book of Allah, and this extends to the permissibility of Ruqyas with other transmitted words of dhikr and du'a from the Prophet (asws), and also with words of dhikr not transmitted from the Prophet (asws) as long as they do not contradict or conflict with those transmitted words of dhikr. As for Ruqyas with other than these, then there is nothing in the hadith which either confirms or negates their permissibility... Rabi' asked (Imam) al-Shafi'i about Ruqyas, and he answered, "There is no problem in using Ruqyas containing words from the Book of Allah or other known formulas of dhikr..." Similarly, Imam Nawawi said (*Sharh Muslim*, 14:183): "In this hadith we find proof for the desirability (istihbab) of Ruqyas with the Qur'an and formulas of dhikr."

Imam Bukhari in his *Sahih* recorded that the Prophet (asws) – in his periods of sickness – used to recite words of Qur'an and dhikr and then blow on himself, and when his sickness was severe, A'isha would use his blessed hand to wipe his body. In commentary on this hadith, Ibn Hajar (12:371) and Nawawi (14:182) wrote: "Qadi 'Iyad said, 'The benefit of blowing here is to gain the blessings (tabarruk) from that moisture of the air which carries the dhikr (recited by the mouth), just as one seeks blessings from the water which is used to wash written words of dhikr and the Divine Names...'” Also, about amulets (tama'im), Ibn Hajar wrote (*Fath al-Bari*, 6:142): "...As for those amulets which contain formulas of dhikr, then there is no prohibition against them, for these are used to gain blessings and protection by the Divine Names and dhikr of Allah..."

As for the hadith which mentions that 70,000 people in the Ummah of Muhammad (asws) will enter Paradise without having to go through the Divine Accounting, some people use it to prove the prohibition of using Ruqyas, because the hadith states, "...and they do not use Ruqyas." Ibn Hajar answered this argument, saying (*Fath*, 10:211-212):

"The 'Ulama have answered those who claim that this hadith forbids Ruqyas with a number of answers and proofs, among them being: 1) The hadith does not forbid Ruqyas but rather refers to those, such as the materialists, who believe that medicines can effect cures by themselves (independently of Allah), as the people of the Jahiliyya believed... 2) Qadi 'Iyad said: 'Some of those who commented on this hadith took this interpretation, and this interpretation is not sound. Rather, the Prophet (asws) alluded to the fact that these 70,000 have a special distinction, namely, that they enter the Janna without the Accounting, and that their faces will be as bright as the full moon. If it meant what these have said, then the 70,000 would not have been specified with this trait, for that is the belief of every single Muslim (reliance on Allah and seeing no independent effect in Ruqyas and medicine). So why specify only these

70,000 with this distinction?’ 3) The scholars have said that those Ruqyas which should be abandoned are those which employ the words of Jahiliyya and whose meanings are unknown, because of the risk of their containing disbelief. 4) Their abandonment of Ruqyas arises from their reliance upon Allah in His repelling harm and disease, and being content with His decrees, not that it negates the permissibility of Ruqyas, because their use is established in the authentic hadiths and is transmitted from the Salaf. However, contentment and submission is superior to using secondary means.” (See also Nawawi’s *Sharh Muslim* 3:90-91).

Ibn Mas’ud related that the Prophet (asws) said, “Indeed, Ruqyas, amulets of protection, and love spells are shirk.”³⁰¹ The commentator of *Sunan Abi Dawud* wrote: “...al-Khattabi said, ‘As for Ruqyas, those among them which are forbidden are those whose meanings are unknown, for they could contain sorcery or disbelief (kufr). As for those whose meanings are understood and which contain the dhikr of Allah, then they are recommended and are sources of blessing, and Allah knows best.’ As for amulets, those which are referred to in this hadith are only those which contain no Divine Names or Qur’anic Ayat or words of dhikr and du’a, which are hung on youth. Ibn al-Athir said in his *Nihaya*, ‘These are amulets which the Arabs used to hang upon their children to safeguard them from the evil eye, so Islam abolished them...’ Qadi ‘Iyad said, ‘He (asws) stated that these are shirk either because what was common during his time were those used during the Jahiliyya period which included words of shirk, or because the one using it would believe that they had independent power to effect certain results, a belief that leads to shirk...’”

Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami wrote in his *Fatawa Hadithiyya* (p. 120-21): “Our madhhab (Shafi’i) in this matter is that all written or spoken (Ruqyas) – which contain names whose meanings are unknown – are forbidden to inscribe or recite... whereas if they contain the Names of Allah, His revealed verses, or adjuration (iqsam) by His Prophets or Angels, then they are permissible to use (in written and spoken form)... Among those who stated that Ruqyas with non-Arabic words whose meanings are not known are prohibited to use include Ibn Rushd al-Maliki, ‘Izz ibn Abdus-Salam al-Shafi’i, and a group of other Imams, while it was said that (the Tabi’i) Sa’id ibn al-Musayyib permitted their use.” In other words, if the meanings of those non-Arabic phrases are understood, and it is confirmed that there is no kufr or shirk in them, their use is permissible. He also wrote (*Fatawa*, p. 47-48): “al-‘Izz ibn Abdus-Salam stated that inscribing phrases of unknown meaning for purposes of healing (and other uses) is impermissible... However, if we find such Ruqyas in the books of those whom we can trust in their knowledge and din, and if they specifically advise their use (written or spoken), then this indicates the permissibility of their use, for he would not have advised their use until after understanding their meanings and implications, and verifying that they contained no kufr. On the other hand, if they simply mention it without recommending their use, then employing them remains prohibited, for in the majority of those cases, the authors simply record whatever they come across without examining their contents and meanings, only on the basis that someone benefited from that specific Ruqya.”

Ibn ‘Allan as-Siddiqi in his *Dalil al-Falihin – Sharh Riyad as-Salihin* (1:323, Ch on “Yaqin”) quotes Imam al-Qurtubi al-Maliki, who states that Ruqyas using the names of Angels and Prophets and other righteous servants are permissible to use but better to avoid. Imam

³⁰¹ Recorded by Abu Dawud (*Kitab at-Tibb*, #3385), Ibn Majah (#3521), Imam Ahmad (#3433), and others.

Ahmad Dardir wrote in his *Sharh as-Saghir* (4:768-69): “It is permissible to use Ruqyas containing the Names of Allah and the Names of the Prophet (asws) and the righteous, and the Qur’an...and it is permissible to use amulets (tamima) upon which these Names and Words are inscribed, whether the person is ill or healthy, or during menstruation or lochia, or to hang them upon an animal after placing them in a protective covering. One must not use words in the Ruqya whose meanings are unknown, for Malik said they might be words of kufr”; Ahmad as-Sawi commented: “Meaning, it is forbidden to use those words unless they were transmitted from a trustworthy knowledgeable source, such as the words found in the *Da’irah* of Abu’l Hasan al-Shadhuli, and in the *Ahزاب* of Sayyid Ibrahim Dasuqi...”

The Maliki Hadith master Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr said (*Tamhid* 17:161): “Imam Malik said, there is no blame in hanging written ruqyas which contain the Names of Allah upon the necks of the sick, to derive the healing blessings contained therein, so long as he does not intend by that to prevent the effects of the evil eye before they fall. If some effects of the evil eye have already befallen one, then it is permissible to employ ruqyas according to Imam Malik, and to hang written ones upon oneself.”

Imam Haytami was also asked about the use of *Awfaq*,³⁰² and he answered (*Fatawa*, p. 4, 12): “There is no danger in the knowledge (and use) of *Awfaq* as long as they are used for licit purposes (e.g., facilitating delivery of a newborn, releasing the imprisoned, etc)... but if used for forbidden purposes, then their use is likewise forbidden, for means are categorized according to their intended purposes (*maqasid*), and Allah knows best.”

³⁰² *Awfaq*: a matrix of squares of equal dimensions (e.g. 3x3, 4x4...), each square containing a letter, or a number (or symbol) representing that letter according to the “*Abjad*” numbering system, organized in such a way that whichever direction you add the squares (horizontal, vertical, diagonal), it gives the same numerical result.

TOPIC:
Commemorating the Birth (Mawlid) of the Prophet (asws)

The Mawlid as it is celebrated today did not exist in the first three generations of Islam's history, and so according to the literal sense, it is an 'innovation' (bid'a). However, as we have seen in the previous chapter on the understanding of "innovation" as it applies to the fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence, the Salaf and the scholars after them (such as Imam Shafi'i, Imam Nawawi, etc.) defined reprehensible innovations as those things which both: 1- did not exist in the time of the Prophet (asws), AND 2- cannot be inferred from a primary basis in the Qur'an or Sunna. Both of these conditions have to be met for something to be considered a 'reprehensible innovation' according to the Shari'a. Therefore, in regards to the Mawlid, it cannot be considered a reprehensible or forbidden innovation, because it does have an inferable basis in the Qur'an and Sunna, as we shall see below. Remembering the Prophet's birthday is an act that the scholars of Islam have accepted and still accept. This means that Allah accepts it, according to the saying of Ibn Mas'ud: "Whatever the (majority of) Muslims see as right, then it is good to Allah, and whatever is seen by the (majority of) Muslims as evil, it is evil to Allah."³⁰³ How then can someone declare the belief of the vast majority of Muslims a bid'a? What does it mean to follow "Ahlus-Sunna wa'l JAMA'A"?

From the Qur'an

1) To rejoice and express happiness for the Prophet (asws) coming to us is an obligation given by Allah through Qur'an, as He said: "Of the favor of Allah and His mercy, in that should they rejoice" (Q10:58). Ibn 'Abbas said that "His mercy" refers to the Prophet (asws), as documented in the many Tafsirs of that verse. What greater mercy did Allah give to us than the Prophet (asws) himself, of whom Allah says:

- "Indeed, Allah has granted an immense bounty upon the believers in that He sent them a Messenger from them selves..." (Q3:164); and
- "There has come to you a Messenger from your selves... and to the believers is he most kind and merciful" (Q9:128); and
- "We have not sent you (O Muhammad) except as a mercy to all the worlds" (Q21:107).

2) He also commands us to honor and venerate him (asws), and informs us that He sent him (asws): "...so that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger, and that you may honor him and venerate him and glorify Him/him morning and evening" (Q48:9).

The scholars of Tafsir are in two camps concerning this verse. The first group considers all of the pronouns to refer to the Prophet (asws). The second considers the last pronoun to refer to Allah ("glorify Him") but the rest to refer to the Prophet (asws), in such a way that honoring and venerating the Prophet (asws) naturally leads to and is considered glorification of Allah, which the wording of this verse implies.

³⁰³ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (#3418), Hakim (3:78-79 Sahih), Tayalisi (#243), Tabarani (M. Kabir 9:118 and Awsat 4:58 #3602), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 1:81 #130), Abu Nu'aym (1:135), Baghawi (#105), and Imam Bayhaqi in his Kitab al-I'tiqad (p. 208 = p. 251). See also: Sakhawi (Maqasid, #959) and 'Ajluni (Kashf al-Khafa', #2214). It is Sahih according to Haythami (Majma' 1:177-78 #832) and Dhahabi.

3) Allah said, “Whoever honors the symbols of Allah does so from the taqwa of their hearts” (Q22:32). There is no doubt that he and the other prophets (upon all of them be blessings and peace) are among the greatest symbols of Allah upon this earth.

Imam Shihab ud-Din Abu Shamma al-Shafi’i, who was one of the main teachers of Imam Nawawi, wrote in his book *The impetus to reject the innovations and invented matters* the following (p. 13): “Among *the best of what has been newly introduced in our era is what occurs every year during the time of his birth* (asws), such as charity, show of happiness and joy, and other good deeds. For this – which includes beneficence towards the needy – is a manifestation of love of him (asws) and veneration of him in the heart of the one who commemorates that event, and an act of gratitude to Allah for the great bounty He blessed us with in creating His Messenger (asws), whom He sent as a mercy to all the people...”

4) Remembrance of the birth of the Prophet (asws) is an occasion for and an encouragement towards praying for blessings upon the Prophet and praising him, which is an obligation on us through Allah’s order in the verse, “Indeed Allah and His angels shower blessings upon the Prophet. O you who truly believe, ask blessings upon him and greet him with greetings (worthy of his high station)” (Q33:56). Coming together and remembering the Prophet (asws) causes us to pray for blessings upon him and to praise him, and is a means of consolidating frequent remembrance and love of him in our hearts, which is one of the manifestations of the experience of the sweetness of true faith. And it is known among the scholars of the fundamentals of Fiqh that “any action which aids one in performing an obligation is itself praiseworthy and recommended.” Therefore, this is one of the Qur’anic verses that serve as a primary basis for the Mawlid, thus taking it out of the category of reprehensible innovation into praiseworthy innovation.

That obligation, furthermore, is mentioned in the plural: Allah and His angels are continuously sending blessings upon and praising the Prophet -- in a heavenly gathering. It is entirely incorrect, therefore, to say that sending blessings (salawat) upon and praising the Prophet must be done alone. We have also seen before the hadith recorded by Imam Muslim in his Sahih (and others) that the Prophet (asws) encouraged dhikr of Allah and salawat upon him in a group, and warned that any group which does not send salawat upon him (asws) exposes themselves to the punishment of Allah.

5) Allah said, “And all that We relate to you about the messengers is to make your heart firmly rooted thru that...” (Q11:120). And He said to Sayyidina Musa (asws), “bring your people from the darkness into the light, and remind them of the Days of Allah...” (Q14:5). In the first verse, Allah emphasizes the importance of regularly recounting the stories of the messengers and righteous people, so that our hearts may be kept firm thru mention of them. One of the principle functions of the Mawlid is to recount the events of his birth and life, and draw lessons from it, so this is another Qur’anic basis.

Furthermore, the second verse here goes further in supporting the regular recounting of the events of the “Days of Allah”...and what is meant by the “Days of Allah”? The scholars of Tafsir state that it means those days in which Allah granted them great blessings and in which occurred notable and great events, such as the day when Allah saved the Bani Isra’il from the grip of the Pharaoh. Those who explained the verse in this way include Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, Ubayy ibn Ka’b, and Qatada; and this explanation is the preferred one in the

Tafsirs of at-Tabari, Qurtubi, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Baydawi, Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi, Suyuti, Shawkani ³⁰⁴, Baghawi, Mawardi, Ibn 'Atiyah, Nasafi, Khazin, Sayyid Mahmud al-Alusi, Imam al-Qushayri, and many others. Allah said: "Indeed, Allah has granted an immense bounty upon the believers in that He sent them a Messenger from them selves..." (Q3:164).

Shaykh 'Isa ibn Mani' al-Himyari wrote about this verse (Q14:5):

"The intended meaning behind it is to make regular mention of them and to recall the blessings Allah graced them with, and to remember the guidance, light, wisdom, laws, counsels, and miracles they came with, by virtue of which hearts and intellects are turned towards the favors of Allah upon His slaves. By this, they will attend to the rights of Allah upon them, in the hopes they will come to hope for His mercy and fear His punishment, and call Him in desire and dread. Therefore, this verse includes in its meaning the events and lives of the Messengers from the moment of their birth until their passing away from this world, all of which is considered guidance by which Allah makes the hearts firm (upon the truth), and enlightens the intellects, and uplifts the spirits, and polishes the insights, and purifies the emotions, and softens the hold of the rebellious self so that it is returned to the obedience of Allah and submersion in His love, and to remain constant in His company and stick to His Presence, and become attached to His contentment and escape from His anger. All of this and more are among the benefits of recalling and commemorating the blessings of Allah. This is why it is recommended to invite people to this activity, to make them aware of and encourage them in following the object of the Mawlid (i.e., Muhammad asws)...Indeed, the longing of the souls after noble goals and sublime intentions and lofty stations occurs as a result of making regular mention and commemorating he who is the most perfect model and example. For there is nothing that has a deeper and longer-lasting effect upon the soul than mentioning and commemorating the life-story of he whom people recognize and love, whose lofty image and sublime stature is firmly etched in their minds. For when they hear news of him and listen to recountings of events related to him, in which the unsurpassed greatness of his life and acts and the inimitable eloquence of his words and speech is brought to light, then without doubt they will constantly press themselves towards imitating him and following him with unquenchable desire and great longing. How much clear loss have the Muslims suffered when they dispensed with and abandoned the commemoration of their great leaders and models ... It is indeed strange that they neglected the commemoration of our noble Messenger (asws) while the Qur'an is replete with commemoration of the love of the great ones, and took great care concerning their lives, from the moment they were fetuses in their mothers' wombs until Allah took them to Himself. Therefore, this is among the Qur'anic verses from which we can infer the desirability of commemorating his birth of the Messenger (asws)."

6) As an example of the previous point, Allah said:

³⁰⁴ Who mentions in his tafsir of this ayah a hadith from the Messenger (asws) wherein he himself interprets it this way, which is recorded in the collections of: Nasa'i, Imam Ahmad (#20207, from Ibn 'Abbas) and his son Abdullah ibn Ahmad in his *Zawa'id al-Musnad*, Daylami in *Firdaws* (5:123 #7377), Imam Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Iman* (#4418, from Ubayy ibn Ka'b), Ibn Jarir, Ibn Mundhir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Ibn Mardawayh, Abdur-Razzaq, and 'Abd ibn Humayd in his *Musnad* (#168).

“Isa, son of Maryam, said, ‘O Allah, our Sustainer, send down for us a table spread with food from the heaven that it might be an ever-recurring feast (‘eid) for us – for the first of us and the last of us – and a Sign from You...’ (Q5:114). In other words, the day of its descent would become an ‘Eid which we and the succeeding generations to follow would commemorate. By extension, the same principle would apply to the blessed event of our noble Prophet’s birth, with the exception that it should not be taken as a once-a-year event, but rather a regularly recurring one, not restricted to a particular time or place.

7) There is commemoration of the birthdays of some of the Prophets and righteous servants in the Qur’an itself! Allah recounts the events and details the blessings found in and lessons derived from the births of Sayyidina Yahya (Q3:38-41, Q19:2-15), Sayyidina ‘Isa (Q3:42-48, Q19:16-34), Sayyida Maryam (Q3:33-37), and so on, may Allah bless them all and grant them peace. In addition, Allah details how the Prophet ‘Isa ibn Maryam celebrated his own birthday when he said, “and peace be upon me the day I was born...” (Q19:33). Is there not in all of this evidence for the permissibility of commemorating the blessing of the birth of our Prophet (asws), who is the best of Allah’s creation?

From the Sunna

1) The Prophet (asws) emphasized Monday as the day he was born. Abu Qatada al-Ansari narrates that the Prophet (asws) was asked why he regularly fasted on Monday, and he answered, “That is the day that I was born and that is the day I received the prophecy.”³⁰⁵ This means that the Prophet was expressing his gratitude for the day of his birth and commemorating it by fasting, which is a kind of worship.

2) Expressing happiness and celebrating the Prophet (asws) on his birthday causes even unbelievers, by Allah’s favor and mercy, to gain some benefit. For example, every Monday, Abu Lahab in his grave is released from punishment because he freed his handmaiden Thuwayba when she brought him the news of the Prophet’s (asws) birth. This hadith is mentioned in Bukhari’s Sahih (Kitab an-Nikah, #4711), Abdur-Razzaq’s Musannaf (7:478), Baghawi’s Sharh as-Sunna (9:76), and Ibn Kathir mentions it in his books Sirat al-Nabi (1:224), Mawlid al-Nabi (p. 21), and al-Bidaya. The hafiz Shamsuddin Muhammad ad-Dimashqi wrote on this the following verses in his book Mawrid as-sadi fi Mawlid al-Hadi: “If this, a kafir who was condemned to hell eternally with “Perish the hands” (Q111:1), is said to enjoy a respite every Monday because he rejoiced in Ahmad, what then do you think of the servant who, all his life, was happy with Ahmad, and died believing in Divine Unity?”

3) Some object to the Mawlid because according to them, it fosters the deification of the Prophet Muhammad (asws) due to the people over-exaggerating in praising him (asws) and invoking too many prayers upon him, and that this poses the danger of shirk. However, the Prophet Muhammad (asws) is known to have encouraged frequent invocations of blessing (salawat) upon him, as is established in the following hadiths:

³⁰⁵ Recorded by Muslim (Kitab as-Siyam #1977-78), Abu Dawud (#2071), Nasa’i (Sunan Kubra, 2:147), Imam Ahmad (#21508), Hakim (2:602), Bayhaqi (Sunan 4:286, Dala’il 1:72-73), Abu Ya’la (1:133-34 #144), Tayalisi (#636), and others. Similarly, Ibn Hibban (8:403 #3642) and Ibn Khuzayma (3:298 #2087) in their Sahih collections both devoted a whole chapter to this topic and called it: “Mention of the desirability of the fast of Monday *because* on that day the Messenger (asws) was born and on that day the Revelation descended.”

Ubayy ibn Ka'b said: "O Messenger of Allah, I make much salawat upon you as a personal habit. How much of my daily devotions should I devote to you?" The Prophet (asws) said: "As much as you like." Ubayy said: "A quarter?" The Prophet (asws) 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 (asws) answered: "As you like, but if you add to that it will be better for you." Finally Ubayy said: "O Messenger of Allah, I want to devote my entire prayer 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.")³⁰⁶ Both Anas and 'Ali said that "every supplication is blocked (mahjub) until the one making it sends salawat upon the Prophet."³⁰⁷

The Prophet (asws) also said, "The person most deserving of me (my closeness, kindness, intercession) on the Day of Rising is the one who sends the most salawat upon me."³⁰⁸ He (asws) also said, "None of you will believe until I am more beloved to him than his parents, children, and all of mankind,"³⁰⁹ and "Whoever loves something mentions (dhikr) it frequently."³¹⁰ This means that the true believers love the Prophet Muhammad (asws) more than any other human, and that because of this love, they mention and invoke him frequently, each time sending salawat upon him. The Prophet (asws) also said, "No Muslim sends salawat upon me without the angels sending salawat upon him in return, as long as he sends salawat upon me. So let him decrease or increase (his salawat) as he wishes."³¹¹ Let those who complain of people reciting "too much" salawat upon the Prophet Muhammad (asws) reflect upon these hadiths.

4) Imam Qastallani said in his commentary on Sahih Bukhari: "In his book on Jana'iz (Funerals, hadith #1298), Bukhari named an entire chapter "Dying on Monday." In it there is the hadith of 'A'isha relating her father's (Abu Bakr as-Siddiq) question: "On which day did the Prophet die?" She replied: "Monday." He asked: "What day are we today?" She said, "O my father, this is Monday." Then he raised his hands and said: "I beg you, O Allah, to let me die on Monday in order to coincide with the Prophet's day of passing." Imam Qastallani

³⁰⁶ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#2381), Hakim (2:421, 513 Sahih), Imam Ahmad (5:137 #20290), Tabarani (M. Kabir 4:41-42 #3574 – Hasan: Haythami 10:160, Mundhiri 2:500-01), Abdur-Razzaq (#3114), Ibn Abi Shayba (2:399), Diya' (Mukhtara, #1185-88), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #1579-80), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 4:45-46), Ruyani (3:21), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#170), Ibn Shahin (#21), Qadi Isma'il (Fadl as-Salat, #13-14), and others. Hadith Sahih.

³⁰⁷ Recorded with thiqah narrators (Mundhiri's Targhib 2:505, Haythami's Majma' 10:260) by Tabarani (M. Awsat, 1:220 #721), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, 2:216 #1575), Daylami (Musnad Firdaws, 3:255 #4754), Abu'l Shaykh, and others.

³⁰⁸ Recorded by Bukhari in his Tarikh al-Kabir (5:177), Tirmidhi (Kitab as-Salat, #446), Bazzar (Musnad 4:278 #1446), Abu Ya'la (8:428 #5011, 9:13 #5080), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #1563-64), Tabarani in his Mu'jam al-Kabir (10:22 #9800), Ibn Hibban (3:192 #911), and Ibn 'Adiyy (Kamil, 3:906, 6:2342), from Ibn Mas'ud. Hadith Hasan, while Suyuti states it is Sahih (Jami' Saghir #2249). Cf. Fath al-Bari (11:167).

³⁰⁹ Recorded by Bukhari (#14), Muslim (#62-63), Imam Ahmad (#12349), Nasa'i (#4927-29), Ibn Majah (#66), Darimi (#2624), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #1374-75), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 8:355 #8859, also 6:59 #5790), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#1173), and others.

³¹⁰ Ibn Daylami (Musnad Firdaws – Da'if: Suyuti's Jami' Saghir #8312), Ibn Abi Dunya and Imam Ahmad (p. 259) in their Kitab az-Zuhd, Ibn Shahin (Targhib, 1:191 #158), Abu Nu'aym (2:144), and Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #501), with slight differences in wording. See also: Sakhawi (Maqasid, #1050) and 'Ajluni (Kashf, #2352).

³¹¹ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:445-46), Ibn Majah (#897), Diya' al-Maqdisi, Ibn Abi Shayba (2:398), Abdur-Razzaq (#3115), Baghawi (#688), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #1557), Abu Nu'aym (1:180), Ibn Mubarak (K. Zuhd, #1026), Qadi Isma'il (Fadl as-Salat, #3, 6), 'Abd ibn Humayd (#317) and Ibn Ja'd (#896) in their Musnads, and it is Sahih according to Suyuti (Jami' Saghir, #8074) and Hasan according to Mundhiri (Targhib, 2:500).

continues, “Why did Abu Bakr ask for his death to be on Monday? So that his death would coincide with the day of the Prophet’s passing, in order to receive the blessing of that day... Does anyone object to Abu Bakr’s asking to pass away on that day for the sake of blessing? Then why are people objecting to celebrating or emphasizing the day of the Prophet’s birth in order to get blessing?”

5) One lady came to the Prophet when he was returning from one of his battles and she said, “Ya Rasulallah, I have made an oath that if Allah sends you back safe, I would play this drum near you and sing for you.” The Prophet said, “Fulfill your oath.”³¹² One commentator wrote: “There is no doubt that the playing of a drum is a kind of entertainment, even though the Prophet (asws) ordered her to fulfill her oath. He did that because her intention was to honor him for returning safely, and her intention was a good intention, not with the intention of a sin or of wasting time. Therefore, if anyone celebrates the time of the birth of the Prophet in a good way, with a good intention, by reading Sira and praising him, it is accepted.”

6) When the Prophet (asws) reached Madina, he saw the Jews fasting on the day of ‘Ashura’. He asked about that day and they told him that on that day, Allah saved their Prophet, Sayyidina Musa (asws) and drowned their enemy. Therefore, they fast on that day to thank Allah for that favor. The Prophet (asws) replied, “We have more right to Musa than you,” and he used to fast that day and the day preceding it.³¹³ Similarly, the Prophet (asws) was ordered by Angel Jibril (asws) during the Isra’ to commemorate the birth of Sayyidina ‘Isa (asws) by dismounting from the Buraq in Bethlehem and praying at the place where he was born, precisely for that reason and no other.³¹⁴

7) Just as places can be blessed because of their connection to blessed people, times can similarly be blessed. As an example of this, the Prophet (asws) declared the day of Friday as a special day of ‘Eid because “it was the day in which Sayyidina Adam (asws) was created.”³¹⁵ Therefore, the day of Friday partly derives its blessings from the birthday of our common

³¹² Recorded by Abu Dawud (3:237 #2880), Tirmidhi (#3623), Imam Ahmad (5:353 #21911, 5:356 #21933), Ibn Hibban (#4386), Bayhaqi (Sunan, #20681), and Tabarani (M. Awsat, 4:191).

³¹³ Recorded by Bukhari (#3649), Muslim (#1910-11), Imam Ahmad (1:291, 310, 336, 340 and 2:359; also mentions that the Ark of Sayyidina Nuh landed on Judi on that day), Humaydi (1:452 #525), Tayalisi (#2747), and Abu Ya’la (4:441 #2567) in their Musnads, Darimi (#1694), Tabarani in his Mu’jam Kabir (12:25, 44, 50) and Awsat (7:107), Ibn Khuzayma (3:286 #2084), Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (4:286, 289), Ibn Hibban (#3625), Baghawi (#1782), and many others. Similarly, Ibn Khuzayma (3:284) and Bayhaqi (4:289) record that the Prophet (asws) said, “Ashura is a day among the days (ayyam) of Allah.”

³¹⁴ Part of a longer hadith from Anas recorded by Imam Nasa’i (Kitab as-Salat, #446), and from Shaddad ibn Aws by Imam Bayhaqi in Dala’il an-Nubuwwa (2:355-57), Tabarani in his (M. Kabir, 7:283) and Musnad al-Shamiyyin (1:194 #341), Bazzar (8:409-10, Zawa’id 1:36), and Ibn ‘Asakir (65:281). Declared Sahih by Haythami (Majma’ 1:73-74 #236), Ibn Hajar (Isaba 4:764), Bayhaqi, and Ibn Kathir (Bidaya 2:66, 75).

³¹⁵ Recorded by Imam Bukhari in his Tarikh al-Kabir (5:432), Imam Malik (#222), Muslim (#1410), Tirmidhi (#453), Nasa’i (#1356, 1413), Abu Dawud (#882), Imam Ahmad (#9041, 10141), Ibn Sa’d (Tabaqat, 1:30), Tayalisi (#2483), Abu Ya’la (10:331 #5925, 11:176 #6286), Bayhaqi in Sunan al-Kubra (3:250) and Dala’il (5:485), Ibn Khuzayma (#1729), Ibn Abi Shayba (2:398-99), Ibn Hibban (3:191 #910), Hakim (Mustadrak, 1:277-78, 2:544 Sahih), Tabarani (M. Kabir 5:23, M. Awsat 4:326), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 1:294 #615, 1:298 #620), Harith (Zawa’id, p. 67 #189), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#309), Abu Shaykh (K. Adhamah, #888), Imam Shafi’i in his Musnad (1:277-28), Hakim Tirmidhi in his Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #192), and Daylami in Firdaws (#1397, #3297). See also Imam Suyuti’s Tafsir Durr al-Manthur (Q62:10).

father Adam (upon him be peace). The same principle applies to the day of Monday being blessed, because on it fell the birthday of our Prophet (asws).

Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani wrote ³¹⁶ in relation to this: “Abdur-Razzaq recorded (Musannaf 3:159-60 #5144) from Muhammad ibn Sirin with a Sahih chain of narrators that the Ansar of Madinah came together – before the Messenger (asws) came to them and before (Surat) al-Jum’a was revealed – and they said, ‘the Jews have a special day in the week for them in which they gather, as do the Christians, so let us make a special day for ourselves in which we gather to invoke (dhikr) Allah and pray and show our gratitude to Him,’ and so they chose the day of the Arabs (meaning, Friday), and As’ad ibn Zurara led them in prayer that day. Later on, Allah revealed the verses of Jum’a. Even though this hadith is Mursal (missing a Companion-link in its chain), it has authentic corroborating narrations (shawahid) which strengthen it, which are recorded by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawud, and Ibn Majah on the authority of Ka’b ibn Malik, and declared Sahih by Ibn Khuzayma (#1724) and others. This means that the Ansar chose the day of Friday thru independent reasoning (ijtihad)...and it is said that the wisdom behind the cause of choosing Friday is that Adam (asws) was created in that day, and that mankind was created for worship, so it is most proper that this day be a day of special worship; and also that on this day Allah completed the creation of things, from which the human derives benefits, so it is most appropriate that gratitude be expressed on that Day...”

The Prophet (asws) agreed to their gathering on this day, even though they did not wait for permission from him or an order. From this incident we also gain another indication of the desirability of commemorating the days in which great blessings occur.

8) Imam Suyuti writes: “I have derived the permissibility of Mawlid from another source of the Sunna (besides the hadith of ‘Ashura’), namely, the (authentic) hadith found in Bayhaqi (and others), narrated by Anas, that the Prophet (asws) slaughtered an ‘Aqiqa (sacrifice for newborns) for himself after he received the prophecy ³¹⁷, although it has been mentioned that his grandfather ‘Abd al-Muttalib did that on the seventh day after he was born, and the ‘Aqiqa cannot be repeated. Thus the reason for the Prophet’s (asws) action is to give thanks to Allah for sending him as a mercy to the worlds, and to give honor to his Umma, in the same way that he used to pray on himself. It is recommended for us, therefore, that we also show thanks for his birth by meeting with our brothers, by feeding people, and other such

³¹⁶ In his Fath al-Bari (2:355). Imam Suyuti also mentioned it in his Tafsir Durr al-Manthur (Surat al-Jum’a) and said that it was also recorded by ‘Abd ibn Humayd and Ibn Mundhir.

³¹⁷ Recorded by Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (9:300), Ruyani (Musnad #1371), Ibn ‘Adiyy (4:1452), and Haythami said that Bazzar (Zawa’id, 2:74) and Tabarani narrated it, the latter with a Sahih chain (Majma’ 4:59 #6203). The chains of Bayhaqi, Ruyani, and Bazzar contain Ibn Muharrar, who is very weak and abandoned as a narrator, according to Ibn Hajar, Bayhaqi, and others. However, the hadith is related thru other chains that do not include Ibn Muharrar, which are recorded by: Imam Tahawi in Sharh Mushkil al-Athar (ch. 162), Hafiz Diya’ al-Maqdisi in al-Ahadiith al-Mukhtara (5:205, Sahih) – which is a collection of mostly Sahih hadiths, Tabarani in Mu’jam al-Awsat (1:298 #994) from Anas, Ibn Hazm in al-Muhalla (7:258) where he considers it Sahih, and Ibn Hajar in Fath al-Bari (9:595) mentions other chains recorded by Abu’l Shaykh thru Ibn al-Muthanna (from Thumama from Anas), whom Bukhari and others consider trustworthy, and Bukhari in his Sahih (#92, 93, 954, 1362, 2307, 3434, 4620, 5775) narrated a number of hadiths with this very chain, meaning that this hadith of the ‘Aqiqa is at least Hasan and most probably Sahih. Therefore, Imam Suyuti is correct in adducing it as one of the authentic proofs for the commemoration of the Mawlid.

good works and rejoicing.” This hadith confirms the aforementioned hadith of the Prophet’s (asws) emphasis on Monday as the day of his birthday and that of his prophet-hood.

Another objection against the Mawlid

Some of those who are against the commemoration of the Mawlid argue that the man who introduced it as it is celebrated today – Muzaffar Abu Sa’id the king of Irbil (d. 630H.) – was an evil man and other unfounded claims. Consider the testimony of our trustworthy scholars concerning this man...

Imam Dhahabi wrote in his *Siyar A’lam an-Nubala’* (22:335-336) about him: “He loved charity and built four hospices for the poor and sick... He would forbid any reprehensible matter to enter into his country... As for his celebration of the Noble Mawlid al-Nabawi, words are too poor to describe it. The people used to come all the way from Iraq and Algeria to attend it... Preachers would roam the field exhorting the people. Great sums were spent (as charity). He was modest, a lover of good, and a true sunni who loved scholars of jurisprudence and scholars of hadith, and was generous even to poets. He was killed in battle according to what is reported.”

Imam Ibn Kathir wrote in his *al-Bidaya wa’l Nihaya* (1966 ed., 13:136-137) the following about him: “He used to celebrate the noble Mawlid in Rabi’ al-Awwal and organize huge festivities for it. He was a wise king, brave, a fierce fighter, intelligent, learned, and just. May Allah have mercy on him and ennoble his grave. Shaykh Abu al-Khattab ibn Dihya compiled for him a book on the Mawlid of the Prophet (asws) and named it *al-Tanwir fi Mawlid al-Bashir al-Nadhir* and the king rewarded him with 1,000 dinars for it. His rule lasted until he died in the year 630H. as he was besieging the French in the city of ‘Akka (in Palestine) after a glorious and blameless life.”

I ask the reader to reflect upon the words of these trustworthy scholars, and see how their defense of King Muzaffar is a defense of the Mawlid itself. May Allah bless those who have no arrogance keeping them from accepting the truth when they see it!

The Celebration of Mawlid as Understood by the Scholars

Ibn Taymiyya on the Mawlid

This is Ibn Taymiyya’s opinion about Mawlid from his *Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya* (23:132) and his *Iqtida’ al-sirat al-mustaqim* (Section on: “The innovated festivities of time and place”, p. 266):

“Also: what the people do, either as a competition with the Christians in their commemoration of the birth of ‘Isa (asws), or out of love and veneration of the Prophet (asws), and indeed Allah will reward them for this act of love and sound inference.” And: “Honoring the day of his birth and taking it as a date of celebration, as some people do, will confer upon them an immense reward, due to the soundness of their good intentions and their veneration (ta’dhim) of the Messenger (asws).” However, the Muslims never commemorated his birth to compete with the Christians, so this claim is unfounded.

Other scholars who wrote in support of the Mawlid include, but are not limited to:

- Hafiz Ibn Kathir ad-Dimashqi, in his book *Mawlid Rasul Allah* (published in Beirut in 1961, and edited by Salahuddin al-Munajjid), as mentioned by Hafiz Ibn Hajar in his *Durar al-Kamina*;
- Imam Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani and Imam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti (and his Shaykh Hafiz al-Munawi), as detailed in his *Hawi lil-Fatawa* (1:196) – see below;
- Ibn Hajar al-Haytami in his *Itmam an-Ni’ma ‘ala-l ‘Alam bi Mawlid Sayyid walad Adam*
- The Shafi’i Mufti of Makka Ahmad ibn Zayni Dahlan (d. 1304H.), in his book *al-Sira al-Nabawiyya wa al-Athar al-Muhammadiyya* (p. 51), wrote: “To celebrate the Mawlid and to remember the Prophet (asws) is accepted by all the ‘Ulama.”
- Shaykh al-Islam Taqiyyudin as-Subki said, “When we celebrate the Prophet’s birthday, a great uns (pleasure) comes to our heart, and we feel something special.”
- Imam Shawkani, in his book *al-Badr at-tali’*, said, “It is permissible to celebrate the Prophet’s birthday.”
- Mullah ‘Ali Qari al-Hanafī held the same opinion in his book entitled *al-Mawrid ar-Rawi fi al-Mawlid al-Nabawi*.
- Hafiz Sakhawi said, “The Mawlid was begun three centuries after the Prophet, and all Muslim nations celebrated it, and all ‘Ulama accepted it, by worshipping Allah alone, by giving donations and by reading the Prophet’s Sira” (quoted in *Sira Halabiyya* 1:83-84). He also wrote a book in defense of the Mawlid called *al-Fakhr al-‘Uluwi fi’l Mawlid an-Nabawi*.
- Ibn al-Jawzi wrote a booklet of poems and sira to be read at mawlid celebrations. It is entitled *Mawlid al-‘Arus*. He also said that commemoration of the Mawlid brings about Divine protection for that year (quoted in *Sira Halabiyya*).
- San’ani in his *Subul as-Salam* (2:166)
- Ibn al-Haj al-Maliki in his *Madkhal* (2:2-33)
- Ibn Marzuq al-Maliki, who stated that the night of his Mawlid is greater than the night of Qadr (as quoted by Ahmad Wansharisi in his *Mi’yar* 11:284), which is also confirmed by a number of Hanafis and Shafi’is (see Ibn ‘Abidin’s *Hashiya* 2:511)
- Abdul-Wahid ibn ‘Ashir al-Maliki (author of *Murshid Mu’in*), who said to his student Shaykh Ibn ‘Abbad al-Rundi: “This day is a day of joy and happiness, and it is not correct to fast during it, because it is a day of celebration (‘Eid)” (Wansharisi’s *Mi’yar* 11:279). The Maliki madhhab³¹⁸ states it is makruh to fast on the day of the Mawlid.
- ‘Ali al-Halabi in his *Sira Halabiyya* (1:83-84), where he also quotes other scholars
- Hafiz Shihabuddin al-Qastallani al-Maliki, in his *Mawahib Ladunniyya* (1:147-48)
- Imam Shamsuddin al-Jazri, in his *‘Urf at-Ta’rif bi’l Mawlid ash-Sharif*
- Ibn Dihya al-Maliki, in his *Tanwir fi Mawlid al-Bashir an-Nadhir*
- Hafiz Ibn Nasir ad-Din ad-Dimashqi, in his *al-Mawlid as-Sadi fi Mawlid al-Hadi*
- Hafiz al-‘Iraqi, in his *al-Mawrid al-Haniyy fi’l Mawlid as-Saniyy*
- Imam Muhammad Ibn ‘Abidin al-Hanafī, in his *Sharh Mawlid Ibn Hajar*.

³¹⁸ See: Khurashi (*Sharh Mukhtasar Khalil* 2:241), Muhammad Dusuqi (*Hashiya* 1:518).

Imam Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti said (Hawi lil Fatawi 1:196): “The Shaykh of Islam and hadith master of his time, Ahmad ibn Hajar (‘Asqalani) was asked about the practice of commemorating the birth of the Prophet, and gave the following written reply:

“As for the origin of the practice of commemorating the Prophet’s birth, it is an innovation that has not been conveyed to us from any of the pious early Muslims of the first three centuries, despite which it has included both features that are praiseworthy and features that are not. If one takes care to include in such a commemoration only things that are praiseworthy and avoids those that are otherwise, *it is a praiseworthy innovation*, while if one does not, it is not. An authentic primary textual basis from which its legal validity is inferable has occurred to me, namely the authentic hadith in the collections of Bukhari and Muslim that the Prophet came to Medina and found the Jews fasting on the tenth of Muharram (‘Ashura’), so he asked them about it and they replied: “It is the day on which Allah drowned Pharaoh and rescued Moses, so we fast in it to thanks to Allah Most high,” which indicates the validity of giving thanks to Allah for the blessings He has bestowed on a particular day in providing a benefit, or averting an affliction, repeating one’s thanks on the anniversary of that day every year, “giving thanks” to Allah taking any various forms of worship such as prostration, fasting, charity or reciting the Qur’an... And what blessing is greater than the birth of the Prophet (asws) – the Prophet of Mercy – on this day?”

The Maliki faqih Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Wansharisi wrote (Mi’yar Mu’arrab 11:280): “The actions to undertake during this night (of the Mawlid) include invoking abundant salawat on the Prophet (asws), reviving his Sunna, aiding and helping and honoring his descendants, increasing one’s charity and good works, giving aid to and easing the hardship of those in need and distress, and so on, which are superior than some other invented acts.”

Did the Sahaba commemorate the birthday of the Prophet (asws)?

Yes, it is a well recorded fact that they did commemorate his birthday by fasting on Monday, like the Prophet himself did when he told them he fasted on Mondays because it was the day he was born (thereby commemorating his own day of birth), and also by composing and reciting poetry in praise of the Prophet (for example: Ka’b ibn Zubayr, Abdullah ibn Rawaha, Hassan ibn Thabit, Qurra ibn Hubayr, and many others), and through other expressions of joy, due to which he (asws) would reward them greatly (as narrated by the compilers of Sira, such as Ibn Sayyid an-Nas in his Minah al-Madh, who listed the names of over 180 companions who composed praise-poetry for him asws). Anyone who claims otherwise, that the Sahaba did not commemorate his day of birth but rather ignored it, will have to answer before them on the Day of Judgment for his claims. For example:

1) The uncle of the Prophet (asws), al-‘Abbas ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib (RA) said: “And then, when you were born, a light rose over the earth until it illuminated the horizon with its radiance. We are in that illumination and that original light and those paths of guidance and thanks to them we pierce through.”³¹⁹ The light mentioned by al-‘Abbas is confirmed by the Prophet (salla allahu alayhi wa sallam) himself in the famous narration describing his own

³¹⁹ Ibn Sayyid al-Nas narrated it with his isnad through Tabarani and Bazzar in Minah al-Madh (p. 192-193). Ibn Kathir in al-Sira al-Nabawiyya (4:51) and ‘Ali al-Qari in his Sharh al-Shifa’ (1:364) say it is narrated by Abu Bakr al-Shafi’i and Tabarani, and cited by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in al-Isti‘ab and Ibn al-Qayyim in Zad al-Ma‘ad.

birth. 'Irbad ibn Sariya and Abu Umama - Allah be well-pleased with both of them - said that the Prophet said: "The night I was delivered my mother saw a light that lit the castles of Damascus so that she could see them."

2) Ibn Hisham, in the last lines of his Sira, related that the poet of the Prophet (salla allahu alayhi wa sallam) Hassan ibn Thabit (RA) said: "By Allah, no woman has conceived and given birth to one like the Messenger, the Prophet and guide of his people. Nor has Allah created among his creatures one more faithful to his sojourner or his promise than he who was the source of our light." This is clearly commemoration of his birth set in poetry.

3) Finally, part of the funeral eulogy Hassan ibn Thabit recited for the Prophet states: "I say, and none can find fault with me/But one lost to all sense and kept far/My love shall never cease to praise him/It may be for so doing I shall be forever in Paradise/With the Chosen One for whose support in that I hope/And to attain to that day I devote all my efforts" (Sira Ibn Hisham).

As for the hollow argument that Mawlid celebrations should be banned because of some unlawful activities that take place in some of them, then one should similarly forbid weddings celebrations, 'Eid al-Fitr celebrations, 'Eid al-Adha celebrations, and other similar ones because people perform unlawful activities in these as well.

Who, then, can forbid the commemoration of his birth (in the Mawlid Sharif) after:

- 1) Allah commanding us to rejoice in His bounties and mercies, and he (asws) is the greatest mercy from Allah to us;
- 2) The Prophet (asws) himself commemorating his own day of birth by fasting on every Monday, and his companions also fasting on Monday for the same reason;
- 3) His companions composing poetry specifically for the occasion of his birth and in praise of him;
- 4) The scholars of the Ahlus-Sunna supporting the Mawlid and participating in it and composing books about it, finding nothing reprehensible about it (save for illicit practices later introduced to it, like free mixing and immoral dancing).

We should now clearly understand why the commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet (salla allahu alayhi wa sallam) is supported by the Qur'an, by the Sunna, and by the majority consensus of the scholars of Ahl us-Sunna. The Prophet (asws) has told us that "this Ummah will never come together (as a consensus) upon misguidance, and the Support of Allah is with the gathering."³²⁰ Therefore, the commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet (asws) is not only allowed but recommended in Islam.

³²⁰ Recorded by Ibn Majah (#3940 Sahih – Suyuti's Jami' Saghir #2221), Tirmidhi (K Fitan #2093), Abu Dawud (#3711), Nasa'i (Sunan Kubra, #3483), Bayhaqi in Asma' wa Sifat (p. 322 Sahih) and Shu'ab al-Iman (6:67 #7517), Abu Nu'aym (Hilya, 3:37, 9:238), Hakim (1:115-16, 4:556 Sahih), 'Abd ibn Humayd (Musnad, #1218), Ahmad (Musnad, #25966), Darimi (#54, Da'if), Diya' al-Maqdisi (7:129), Quda'i (1:167 #239), Daraqutni in his Sunan (4:245), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:604, 672, 683), Tabarani in his Mu'jam al-Kabir (1:153, 1:186, 3:209, 12:447, and 17:239-40, Sahih – Haythami in his Majma' 5:218-19) and Mu'jam al-Awsat (5:122, 6:277, 7:193), Ibn Abi 'Asim in his Kitab as-Sunna (p. 39-41 #80-85, p. 44 #92), and others. And it is well-known and authentic.

TOPIC:
The Origin of the Sufi Practice of Spiritual Retreat (*Khalwa*)
and Seclusion (*'Uzla*) in the Qur'an and Sunna

From the Qur'an

1) Allah says in the Qur'an, quoting the people of the Cave (Kahf): "when you have withdrawn (*'uzla*) from them and what they worship besides Allah, take refuge in the cave, and your Lord will spread out His Mercy for you and provide you with ease in your situation" (Q18:16).

2) And He says: "And invoke the Name of your Lord, and devote yourself wholly to Him with utter devotion" (Q73:8).

Each of these verses support the practice of seclusion as an act of the righteous slaves, during which one devotes himself to his Lord with dhikr, and because of which Allah graces him with His protection and mercy and favor.

3) Seclusion is also mentioned as being the practice of other Prophets (and Awliya') in the Qur'an, and it is known among the scholars of fiqh that the practice of previous prophets can serve as a source of ruling among the sources of Shari'a, as long as there is no specific text against a certain practice. And there is no such text in the Qur'an or Sunna that disapproves of this practice, but on the contrary, we will see below texts which support it. As for the hadith which says no one should go a whole day without speaking, this does not apply to khalwa, for one is uttering words of dhikr and du'a. So for example:

- *Ibrahim* (asws): "So when he withdrew (*'uzla*) from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub, and made each of them a prophet" (Q19:49).
- *Musa* (asws): "And We made an appointment with Musa for 30 nights (on Mount Sinai) and We added to them ten, so that the term of his Lord was completed in forty nights..." (Q7:142).
- *Maryam* (as): "Every time that Zakariyya came to her in her seclusion-chamber (mihrab) he found provision before her. He asked, 'O Maryam, how does this come to you? (for no one was allowed in except him) She said, "it is from Allah..." (Q3:37). And: "she took a veil (of seclusion) from them. Then We sent to her our Spirit..." (Q19:17).

Each of these verses speaks of these righteous servants going into seclusion from people to be with Allah, and the resultant gifts and blessings that Allah granted them. This would not be the case if going into periods of seclusion to be with Allah and worship Him were blameworthy. This was the habit of the righteous prophets and Awliya' before us, and Allah says: "Allah desires...to guide you in the ways of those (who have passed) before you, and to turn (in mercy) to you..." (Q4:26).

From the Sunna

1) Abu Hurayra said that while on the road to Makka the Prophet (asws) passed on top of a mountain called Jumdan, and he said, "Move on, this is Jumdan." And then he (asws) said: "the solitary ones (mufarridun) are foremost." They asked, "Who are the solitary ones?" He said: "The men and women who invoke (dhikr) Allah frequently/abundantly." And in another narration: "those who are engrossed in the dhikr of Allah, whose burdens the dhikr removes from them so that they come to Allah light-weighted on the Day of Rising."³²¹

In this hadith, the Prophet (asws) praises those who are solitary and isolated, while devoting themselves to the dhikr of Allah in all times, and goes so far as to state that they are the "foremost," which is the highest category of believers according to the Qur'an 56:11-12. And the practice of the spiritual retreat (khalwa) is exactly that: isolating yourself for a number of days, and devoting oneself to dhikr at every moment.

2) Dhikr in seclusion (khalwa) is confirmed by the famous hadith recorded by Bukhari and others from Abu Hurayra³²²: "Seven types of people will be shaded by Allah on the Day when there will be no shade except His (Throne's) shade...", and among them are: "the one who invokes Allah in seclusion (khaliyan) and his eyes flow with tears."

3) The Prophet (asws) himself is also known to have loved moments of seclusion, as stated by A'isha when she said: "in the beginnings of the Messenger's Prophethood...he would not have any vision (ru'ya) except it came to pass as surely as the sun rises. Then (i.e. after the beginning of Prophecy), seclusion (khalwa, khala') was made beloved to him, and there was nothing he loved more than to be alone in seclusion. So he would seclude himself from time to time in the mountain of Hira for a certain number of days each, and then come back down to his family..."³²³

Ibn Abi Jamra al-Andalusi (d. 699H.) in his Bahjat an-Nufus (1:10-11), which is a commentary on his abridgment of Sahih Bukhari, wrote about this hadith: "In this hadith there is an indication (daleel) that Khalwa is an aid for the human in his worship and the soundness of his Din, for when the Prophet (asws) secluded himself from the people and devoted himself to worship, this great good came to him. And so anyone who imitates him in this receives good in accordance with the degree of his "sainthood" (walaya)..." And Imam Qastallani (d. 923H.) in his Sharh of Bukhari (1:62) wrote about this hadith: "In it is an indication of the merit of seclusion in that it is a rest for the heart from the occupations of this world, and empties him for Allah (Most High), so that the springs of wisdom burst open in him from it. And seclusion (Khalwa) is that he become secluded from other-than-Him, nay, even from himself, with his Lord. And at that he becomes worthy of receiving the incoming-inspirations (warid) from the Unseen, and his heart becoming a receptacle for them..." And in commentary of this hadith in Sahih Muslim (2:198), Imam Nawawi writes: "As for the

³²¹ Recorded by Muslim (Kitab ad-Dhikr wa'd Du'a, #4834), Tirmidhi (Kitab ad-Da'awat, #3520), Imam Ahmad (2:323 #7940, 2:411 #8964), Hakim (1:495, Sahih according to Dhahabi), Ibn Hibban (3:140 #858), Tabarani (M. Awsat 3:155, M. Kabir 20:157), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, 1:314 #504-06), and others.

³²² Recorded by Bukhari (#620, 1334), Muslim (#1712), Imam Malik (#1501), Tirmidhi (#2313), Nasa'i (#5285), and many others.

³²³ Recorded by Bukhari (Kitab Bad' al-Wahi, #3), Muslim (#231), Tirmidhi (#3565), Imam Ahmad (#14502, 24768), Ibn Hibban (1:216 #33), Abdur-Razzaq (5:321-24 #9719), and Bayhaqi in his Dala'il (2:135-36).

Khalwa, it is the affair of the righteous and the gnostic slaves of Allah ('arifeen)...Abu Sulayman al-Khattabi said: "Seclusion was made beloved to him (asws) because in it is found the rest of the heart, and it aids in meditative reflection (tafakkur), and through it one severs from the habits of men and one's heart becomes humble." See also: Ibn Hajar's *Fath al-Bari* (1:18) and Hafiz al-'Ayni's *'Umdat al-Qari* (1:60-61) and Shaykh al-Kirmani's *Sharh* (1:32), to see that almost all the hadith scholars interpreted this hadith as a proof for the Sufi Khalwa. Imam az-Zuhri, one of the great Salaf, said: "How suprising of the people, how they have abandoned seclusion! And the Messenger of Allah used to do a thing and leave it, but he never left seclusion until his soul was taken" (Quoted in: *Hashiyat at-Tahtawi 'ala Mara'iq al-Falah*, p. 463). So the Prophet (asws) from the beginning never left this Khalwa (seclusion) to the end of his life, and he used to return to it at the end of every Ramadan.

4) Abu Hurayra and Abu Sa'id al-Khudri relate that they heard the Prophet (asws) say: "There will come a time when the best property of a Muslim...will be a man with his cattle on the tops of these mountains or in the bellies of these valleys, to run away with his religion far from trials, who prays the salat and pays the zakat, and worship his Lord until certainty (i.e., death) comes to him..."³²⁴

In this hadith, we find a general praise (and therefore encouragement and recommendation) of seclusion by the Prophet (asws); and the best action performed in that seclusion is worship, and the best worship is dhikr and du'a (see Q29:45).

Qadi Abu Bark ibn al-Arabi al-Maliki, in his commentary on Tirmidhi's collection of hadith (in the "Book of Supplications"), wrote: "If it is said that the times have become so corrupt that there is nothing better than isolating oneself, we say one should isolate oneself from people in one's actions, while he keeps mixing with them with his physical body. However, if he cannot succeed in this, then at that time he isolates himself from them physically but without entering into monasticism, which is rejected by the Sunna." And monasticism is lifelong seclusion, which no Sufi practices. It is known among the Sufis that the khalwa is only for a few days, lasting up to a month or two, and there have only been a rare number of exceptions of it going longer than a year. The strongest 'proof' that Sufis do not practice monasticism is the Sufi Tariqas themselves, for how could these Tariqas be established if the Sufi masters spent their whole lives outside the company of humans? On the contrary, the history of Sufis is filled with examples of traveling, learning, teaching, fighting Jihad, spreading Islam, trading, and other activities in the midst of society, past and present. It is also known that many Sufi shaykhs, such as Imam Abu'l Hasan ash-Shadhuli and the Shaykhs who succeeded him, would never accept any student unless he/she had sufficient knowledge of Shari'a, and a means of livelihood by which he/she could benefit society.

Imam Abu'l Qasim al-Qushayri writes in his *Risala* (p. 138): "The method of the one who enters seclusion is that he must have the belief that he is keeping people (safe) from his evil, not the reverse, for the former presupposes belittlement of oneself, which is the quality of

³²⁴ Recorded by Bukhari (#6013-14), Muslim (#3501-03), Imam Malik (#852), Nasa'i (#2522, 3054, 4950), Abu Dawud (#2126, 3722), Tirmidhi (#1576, 1584), Imam Ahmad (#1883, 2694, 8779, 9346, 10894, 11109, 11411), Ibn Majah (#3967-68, 3970), Darimi (#2288), Hakim (2:67, 4:458 Sahih), Ibn Hibban (2:367-69 #604-06), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #3539), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:592), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 25:104, 150-51), and many others. See also Imam Qushayri in his *Risala* (p. 137-38).

the humble, while the later presupposes considering oneself better than others, which is the quality of the arrogant.”

Shaykh Ahmad Ibn ‘Ata’illah as-Sakandari al-Shadhuli wrote in the chapter on Khalwa in his book *Miftah al-Falah* (p. 37) the following: “The spiritual retreat (khalwa) is in reality the intimate conversation of the innermost being with Allah in such a manner that no one else is perceived. As for its (outward) form, it is that which allows one to reach this goal of devoting one’s life to Allah Most High and withdrawing from all else.” Sayyidina ‘Umar said, “Take your share (of goodness) from seclusion.”³²⁵

5) Mu’adh ibn Jabal related that the Prophet (asws) said: “...and whoever sits in his house and refrains from backbiting people, then he is secure with Allah,” meaning, his position of favor with Allah is secured.³²⁶ The scholars have stated that one of the benefits of performing profuse dhikr in seclusion is that it keeps one from forbidden acts of the tongue such as backbiting people, and of the other limbs such as seeing forbidden things, or hearing forbidden things, etc. So this constitutes another hadith that indicates encouragement of seclusion and virtuous actions during it.

6) As for the specific practice of the forty-day retreat, its origin from the Qur’an comes from the words of Allah concerning Prophet Musa (asws): “...so the meeting with his Lord became completed in forty nights” (Q7:142); and from the Sunna from the hadith related by Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, who said that the Prophet (asws) said: “Whoever dedicates himself wholly to Allah for forty mornings (or, days), then the springs of wisdom appear from his heart upon his tongue.”³²⁷ This hadith is strengthened by the following hadiths:

6a) Abu Hurayra related that the Prophet (asws) said: “If you see a man who is graced (by Allah) with renunciation (zuhd) in this world, and who has weak rhetoric (skills), then go closer to him, for indeed he is inspired (yulaqqa) with wisdom.”³²⁸

³²⁵ Cited by Ibn Mubarak in his *Kitab ar-Raqa’iq*, according to Hafiz Ibn Hajar in *Fath al-Bari* (commentary on Bukhari’s “chapter on seclusion as rest from evil company” in *Kitab ar-Riqaq*).

³²⁶ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (5:241 #21079), Bayhaqi in his *Sunan al-Kubra* (9:166-67), Tabarani in *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (20:37) and *al-Awsat* (3:262, 4:143, 8:288), Ibn Hibban (2:94-95 #372), Hakim (1:212, 2:90 Sahih), Ibn Khuzayma (2:375 #1495), Abu Nu’aym (9:251), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 1:218, 2:257), Ibn ‘Asakir (16:633), and others. Haythami in *Majma’ Zawa’id* (2:23, 5:277, 10:304) said Hadith Hasan or Sahih, while Munawi (*Fayd al-Qadir* 4:95) said Sahih. Hafiz Sakhawi (*Maqasid*, #1258) and ‘Ajluni (*Kashf*, #2830) cite a similar statement of Abu Darda’ recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (8:169), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab*, 7:379), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (*Tamhid* 17:442, *Istidhkar* 8:501), Quda’i (#1322), Ibn ‘Asakir in his *Tarikh* (47:177), and by Imam Ahmad (p. 135), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (#80), Hannad (#1235), Bayhaqi, and Abu Dawud in their *Kitab az-Zuhd*, which is: “How excellent a seclusion-chamber (*sawma’a*) the house of a Muslim is!”.

³²⁷ Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (8:131), Quda’i (*Musnad Shihab*, 1:285 #466), Abu Nu’aym in his *Hilya* (3:191, 5:189, 10:70) and *Akhbar Asbahan* (2:353), Ibn ‘Adiyy (5:1945), Daylami (*Firdaws*, 4:213 #6179), Ibn al-Mubarak (#1014), Hannad (2:357 #678), and Imam Ahmad in their *Kitab az-Zuhd*, and others, with different chains thru different Companions, and it is Da’if according to Sakhawi (*Maqasid*, #1054). However, because it is narrated thru so many different chains, Hafiz Abdullah al-Ghumari considers it Hasan Sahih, in his *Mudawi* (6:108-111). Also, Husayn al-Marwazi in his *Zawa’id Zuhd* Ibn Mubarak recorded another chain (mursal) for this hadith from Makhul, as did Abu Nu’aym and Ibn Abi Shayba, which is Sahih. So the combination of the Sahih mursal chain and the Da’if musnad chain makes this hadith’s authenticity established. Cf. ‘Ajluni’s *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#2361) and Suyuti’s *La’ali Masnu’a* (2:276-77).

³²⁸ Recorded by Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (*Kitab az-Zuhd*), Bayhaqi in his *Shu’ab al-Iman*, and Abu Nu’aym in his *Hilya*. See below (in the Appendices) for a more detailed sourcing. Hadith Da’if.

6b) ‘Imran ibn Husayn related that the Prophet (asws) said: “Whoever cuts himself off (from things) to turn wholly to Allah, then He will suffice him every hardship and provide for him from whence he is unaware; and whoever separates himself to become wholly attached to the lower world (dunya), Allah will abandon him to it.”³²⁹

Seclusion is related to zuhd (renunciation, inward detachment), and with zuhd comes many resultant virtuous blessings, such as inspired wisdom (as seen in the hadiths above), and love of Allah, for it is narrated that a man asked the Prophet (asws) about something that would attract the love of Allah for him, and he (asws) answered: “Become non-attached in regards to the dunya, and Allah will love you.”³³⁰ Along with this resultant love of Allah, one achieves His companionship, for in the Hadith Qudsi He said: “I am the sitting-companion (jalīs) of the one who invokes Me.”³³¹ Sayyidina ‘Ali also reported that the Prophet (asws) warned: “Whoever increases in knowledge without increasing in detachment (zuhd) from the lower world, then he increases in nothing but distance from Allah.”³³²

A note on the use of weak hadiths in the context of virtuous extra-voluntary actions

The hadith quoted above (#6) forms one of the proof-texts of the permissibility of the spiritual retreat (khalwa) – aside from the authentic ones mentioned earlier – and it is of the

³²⁹ Haythami in *Majma’ az-Zawa’id* (10:303 #18189) said, “Tabarani recorded it in his *Mu’jam al-Awsat* (3:346 #3359, also *Saghir* 1:115-16), and all of its narrators are trustworthy except for Ibrahim ibn al-Ash’ath, who is weak, while Ibn Hibban declared him trustworthy and said he makes mistakes.” Also recorded by Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab al-Iman*, #1351-52), Khatib in his *Tarikh Baghdad* (7:196), Quda’i in his *Musnad Shihab* (1:298-99 #493-97), Abu ‘Abdur-Rahman Sulami (*Forty Hadiths*, #13), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. *Qana’a* #77, K. *Faraj* #26), and Hakim Tirmidhi in his *Nawadir* (Asl #31, 120). See also Mundhiri’s *Tarhib* (2:538, 3:444-45, 4:178-79).

³³⁰ Recorded by Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* (*Kitab az-Zuhd* 2:1374 #4092), and Imam Nawawi mentioned it among his ‘forty hadiths’ and said it is Hadith Hasan. Also recorded by: Hakim (4:313), Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (6:237 #5972), Abu Nu’aym in his *Hilya* (3:252-53, 7:136, 8:41-42) and *Tarikh Asbahan* (2:245), Quda’i (1:373 #643), Bayhaqi in his *Shu’ab al-Iman* (#10522-23), Ibn ‘Adiyy (Kamil, 3:902), Daylami (*Firdaws*, 1:524 #1763), ‘Uqayli (2:11), Ibn Abi Dunya, Abu’l Shaykh, and others. Also mentioned by Hafiz Mundhiri in his *Tarhib wa Tarhib* (4:156-57), who said: “Even though its narrators are very weak, it still has a light from the lights of the words of Prophecy, and just because it was narrated thru weak narrators does not by itself mean that the Prophet (asws) did not say it.” Furthermore, this hadith was already well known in the first and second generations, and related by some of the Tabi’in (such as Mujahid) in *mursal* form, meaning before Khalid ibn ‘Amr (one of its narrators accused of lying) would have any influence on it, and it has other chains which do not contain him. This is why the hadith masters retained it in their books, relying primarily on its being famous during the first two generations. Hence, Imam Nawawi is correct in adducing its authenticity.

³³¹ Recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (1:138, 8:121), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab*, 1:451 #680), Abu Nu’aym (8:217), Imam Ahmad (K. *Zuhd*, p. 68), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (K. *Zuhd*, #83), Daylami (*Firdaws*, 3:243), and Abu Shaykh in his *Thawab* (Ch. 17), and in another chapter he narrated that Muhammad ibn an-Nadir said to Abi Ahwas: “Do you not transmit that He said ‘I am the sitting-companion of he who remembers Me’? So what have I to do with sitting with people?” Cf. Bayhaqi’s *Shu’ab* (#709), and Sakhawi’s *Maqasid* (#186). In a similar Hadith Qudsi, which is *Sahih*, Allah says, “I am with my worshipper when he invokes Me, and his two lips move by Me (in the dhikr).” This is recorded by Ibn Majah (*Kitab al-Adab*, #3782), Imam Ahmad (#10545, 10552, 10553), Ibn Hibban (3:97 #815), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab*, #509-10), Hakim (1:496, *Sahih*), Baghawi in *Sharh as-Sunna* (#1242), Tabarani (*M. Awsat*, #6621), Ibn Mubarak (K. *Zuhd*, #956), and Ibn ‘Asakir (70:50-51), and Dhahabi and Suyuti said it is *Sahih* (*Jami’ Saghir*, #1928). It is also one of the chapter titles of the “Book of Tawhid” in *Sahih* Bukhari. Cf. ‘Iraqi’s *Takhrij al-Ihya* (1:296). This is one allusion to the powerful spiritual states experienced in the dhikr wherein one’s control over one’s self is disrupted.

³³² Hafiz Sakhawi cited it in his *Maqasid* (#1078) and said Daylami recorded it (*Firdaws*, 4:254 #6298). Hadith *Da’if*, according to Shawkani in his *Fawa’id* (#906).

type that is authentic in meaning but weak in transmission (sanad). The hadith masters state it is permissible to use weak hadiths in other than the derivation of legal rulings, such as in the encouragement to good and discouragement to evil, and other voluntary practices (nawafil), such as the use of this hadith as a proof-text of the 40-day spiritual retreat. Imam Nawawi for example said, “The scholars are all in agreement on the legitimacy of using weak hadiths in the realm of virtuous works.”³³³ Hafiz Sakhawi (Ibn Hajar’s student) also stated the view of scholarly consensus on this question in his *Qawl al-Badi’* (p. 245-46). He also quotes Imam Nawawi, who wrote in his *Kitab al-Adhkar* (in which he included a number of weak hadiths): “The scholars among the experts in hadith and fiqh and others have said that it is permissible and (also) recommended that the religious practice concerning good deeds and character...be based on weak hadith as long as it is not forged. As for legal rulings, such as the halal and haram, or the modalities of trade, marriage, divorce, and so on: one’s practice is not based upon anything other than the sahih or hasan hadiths, except as a precaution in some matter related to these...” (*Adhkar*, p. 27).

Imam Sakhawi also wrote: “I have heard my Shaykh (Ibn Hajar ‘Asqalani) insist on the following, and he put it to me in writing himself: ‘The conditions for religious practice based on weak hadith are three, and this is unanimously agreed upon: 1) that the weakness must not be very strong, 2) that there be a general legal basis for it, excluding what is invented and has no legal basis to start with, and 3) that one not think, while practicing on the basis of it, that it has been established as authentically narrated from the Prophet (asws).’” Then Imam Sakhawi stated: “It has been reported from Imam Ahmad that one may practice on the basis of weak hadith if there is no other hadith to that effect and also if there is no hadith that specifically contradicts it.” Ibn Taymiyya also wrote in his *Qa’ida Jalila* (p. 162): “But Ahmad ibn Hanbal and other scholars permitted the narration of hadith – regarding the virtues of good – that are not established as authentic as long as they are not known to be forgeries.”

The Hafiz Khatib al-Baghdadi, in his book *al-Kifayah*, wrote a whole chapter about this entitled: “strictness with regard to hadiths pertaining to legal rulings and leniency with regard to those pertaining to virtuous actions.” Other hadith masters who accept the use of weak hadith as a basis for practicing good deeds and virtues and ethics include the following:

- 1) Ibn as-Salah in *Muqaddima fi ‘Ulum al-Hadith* (p. 217);
- 2) Sufyan al-Thawri;
- 3) Sufyan ibn ‘Uyayna;
- 4) Ibn al-Mubarak;
- 5) Abdur-Rahman Ibn Mahdi;
- 6) Yahya ibn Sa’id al-Qattan;
- 7) Yahya Ibn Ma’in;
- 8) Imam Bukhari, as proven by his use of them in his *Adab al-Mufrad*;
- 9) Mulla ‘Ali Qari;
- 10) Ibn Abd al-Barr (see Sakhawi’s *Maqasid* #1091);
- 11) Ibn al-Qayyim in his *I’lam al-Muwaqqi’in*;
- 12) Imam Abu Dawud;
- 13) Abu Sa’id al-‘Ala’i (forgery specialist);
- 14) Ali al-Madini;

³³³ In: *Tibyan fi ‘Ulum al-Qur’an* (p. 17).

- 15) Ibn Abi Hatim ar-Razi;
- 16) Imam Tirmidhi (according to Ibn Rajab in his Sharh 'Ilal at-Tirmidhi 1:73);
- 17) Imam Bayhaqi in his introduction to Dala'il an-Nubuwwa (1:34-38, where he quotes most of the above);
- 18) Imam Suyuti in his Tadrīb ar-Rawī;
- 19) The Maliki scholar Abu Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi, who said about a weak hadith in his 'Aridat al-Ahwadhi (10:205): 'its chain is unknown, but it is preferable to put it into practice' – although the opposite opinion has also been recorded from him;
- 20) The Mujaddid Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, as shown by his use of them in his Ihya' 'Ulum ad-Din;
- 21) And the entire Hanafi madhhab (as stated by Ibn Hazm).

Therefore, even if there were only this weak hadith to use as a legal basis for the practice of the khalwa, it would be sufficient and permissible according to the scholars of hadith and fiqh. Fortunately, however, we have also seen authentic sahih narrations (and Qur'anic verses themselves) serving as proof-texts for the legal basis of the spiritual retreat, so there should be no aversion against this practice (which is entirely voluntary) or those who practice it.

To conclude, we quote the fatwa of Shaykh Muhammad 'Ullaysh al-Maliki (author of the famous Minah al-Jalil Sharh Mukhtasar Khalil), who wrote: "The khalwa is recommended (mustahab) in the Shari'ah, and it has proofs from the Sahih hadiths in the collection of Bukhari and others. It can also become obligatory if it becomes necessary for maintaining the safety of one's Din and struggling against the ego and removing the obstacles it places before one. It is well known that these are individual obligations, and that which the fulfillment of an obligation necessarily rests upon is itself also obligatory. So the one who claims that it is kufr or prohibited is ignorant, and his words are false, and he deserves severe discipline, and is asked to repent, due to his irresponsibly making light of the Din" (from his collection of Fatawa entitled Fath al-'Ali al-Malik, p. 54).

TOPIC:
The Virtues and Blessings of Rajab and Sha'ban

“Rajab is the month of Allah, Sha'ban is my month, and Ramadan is the month of the Muslim community.”³³⁴ The Prophet (alayhi salat wa salam) emphasized in this and other hadiths the special rank of these three months among the months of the year. For this reason, the worshippers among the Sufis and others have increased their voluntary devotions and special acts of piety in them. Since Sha'ban, for example, is the month of the Prophet (asws), they recite a great number of salawat to honor him in that month. Some, however, object to the performance of special prayers and fasts and other devotional acts in these months, and that the Sufis who perform them are mistaken and exposing themselves to Divine punishment. But this idea itself is false, for Allah asks us to honor those things which He honors, when He says: “and whoever honors the sacred (signs and rites) of Allah, does so from the taqwa of (their) hearts” (Q22:30, 32).

Rajab

The nights that are especially marked with blessings in Rajab are the first night, the night of its first Friday (when the Prophet asws was conceived) called “laylat ar-ragha'ib” (night of wishes, in which they perform salat ar-ragha'ib), and the night of the 27th, which is the night of the Isra' and Mi'raj. Imam Nawawi and Imam 'Izz ibn Abdus-Salam stated that it is a blameworthy innovation to perform special prayers because of these special nights thinking that the Prophet (asws) specifically advised them, since the evidence according to them is invalid; but that it is fine to perform extra nafl prayers in general during these nights, while not believing that the Prophet (asws) specifically legislated these prayers. However, the hadith specialist Mulla 'Ali Qari al-Hanafi (in *Asrar Marfu'a* p. 234-35) said: “The hadith (“prayer in daytime is silent”) even if invalid, nevertheless its meaning is true. The same holds about the hadiths of the prayers they have been mentioned concerning honored days and exalted nights such as salat ar-ragha'ib and (the most famous) mid-Sha'ban, because the hadiths concerning them (the prayers) are not forged but merely weak”; and the Shafi'i hadith master Ibn Salah agreed with him.

Fasting in Rajab is also recommended, because it is one of the four sacred months (hurum), and the Prophet (asws) recommended fasting during the sacred (hurum) months.³³⁵ So no objection can be advanced here, and on this basis alone it is perfectly sound to say that fasting during Rajab is a meritorious practice. 'Amir ibn Shibl heard Abu Qilaba (d. 104H.) say: “There is a place in Paradise specifically for those who fast the month of Rajab.”³³⁶

³³⁴ Recorded by Daylami in his *Firdaws* (2:402 #3095 from Anas) and his son in *Musnad Firdaws* (2:275 #3276). The first clause was also recorded by Abdur-Razzaq (#17301) and Bayhaqi (from A'isha) in *Shu'ab al-Iman* (#3804) thru weak chains. See also Sakhawi's *Maqasid* (hadith #510, #595), and *Firdaws* (2:401 #3093-94). Hadith Da'if, according to Hafiz Suyuti (*Jami' Saghir* #4411). Another more authentic narration which indicates the blessings of these two months is that when the new moon of Rajab would appear, the Prophet (asws) would pray, “O Allah, bless us in these months of Rajab and Sha'ban,” which is recorded by: Imam Ahmad (#2342), Bayhaqi (*Shu'ab*, #3815), Tabarani (*M. Awsat*, 4:189 #3939), Bazzar, Abu Nu'aym (*Hilya*, 6:269), Ibn as-Sunni (#659), and others, from Anas. Therefore, he recognized these months as months of special blessings.

³³⁵ For example, see: Abu Dawud in his *Sunan* (*Kitab as-Siyam*, chapter on “fasting during the sacred months”), Abdur-Razzaq in his *Musannaf* (4:292-93, chapter on “fasting during the sacred months”).

³³⁶ Recorded by Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Iman* (#3802) and *Fada'il al-Awqat* (1:126), and Tabari in his *Tafsir* (Q44:4).

Shaykh al-Jaziri in his *Fiqh ala-l Madhahib al-Arba'a* (1:569) documented that the Hanafis, Malikis, and Shafi'is say that it is recommended to fast Rajab and Sha'ban, while the Hanbalis added that it is disliked to fast everyday of Rajab, but recommended to fast some of it.

Ibn al-Haj al-'Abdari al-Maliki wrote: "The Salaf did not honor this month (of Rajab) except with increased worship, greater diligence in fulfilling its rights, and upholding its sacredness, due to its being the first of the sacred months and the first of the three months of blessing. They did not greet it by immersion in food and dance and competition in gifts. Among the innovations some have invented in this noble month is the communal prayer they perform publicly in the mosques during the eve of its first Friday, which they name *salat al-raqa'ib*, as if it is like any other legally sanctioned prayer. As for a person praying it by himself, privately like other voluntary *nafl* prayers, then this is fine, and it is offensive for him to treat it as a regular *sunna* act which he must do. For the scholars have stated that it is permissible to act according to weak hadiths in the realm of virtuous deeds, as long as one does not make a regular habit of it. If he performs it once in his life, and if the hadith turns out to be *sahih*, then he is considered to have implemented it; and if the hadith is weak, then his having implemented it poses no harm for him, for he has done something virtuous in any case, without turning it into a manifest rite of Islam, like fasting Ramadan... As for the night of the 27th of Rajab, the Salaf used to honor it as well, out of their exaltation of the Prophet (asws), as was their noble habit in exalting those things which Allah exalted, implementing the regular practice of the Prophet (asws) when he said 'Expose yourselves to the gift-laden fragrant breezes (*nafahat*) of Allah'; this blessed night (the 27th) being one of those breezes. When it arrived, they would in turn receive it in the manner described, out of gratitude to their Lord for the bounties and blessings He provided them with" (*Madkhal* 1:292-94).

Sha'ban

The night of mid-Sha'ban, called "*laylat al-bara'at*" (night of absolution), is especially blessed. Allah said: "Surely We revealed it in a night that is blessed...in it every wise and just order is made distinct" (Q44:3-4). The majority interpret this blessed night to refer to *Laylat ul-Qadr*, while others interpret it to mean the night of the middle of Sha'ban (which is a weaker opinion). Imam Tabari in his *Tafsir* quotes 'Ikrimah among the Salaf as those who stated it was the night of mid-Sha'ban, and he (along with Ibn Kathir, Baghawi, Khazin) also records the hadith (*mursal*) in which the Prophet (asws) said, "The life-spans are decreed finished from one Sha'ban to the next, to the degree that someone could marry and beget children while his name is written among the dead (of that year)." ³³⁷ Others who mention its interpretation being the night of mid-Sha'ban in their *Tafsirs* are: Fakhruddin ar-Razi, Qurtubi, Baydawi, Suyuti, Baghawi, Ibn 'Atiyya, Nasafi, al-Khazin, Mawardi, and others. Qurtubi in his *Tadhkira*, and Baghawi in his *Tafsir* record that Ibn 'Abbas said, "Allah decrees the (annual) decrees every mid-Sha'ban, and then submits them to their owners every *Laylat ul-Qadr*."

³³⁷ Abdur-Razzaq (4:317 #7925-26) and Dinawari in his *Mujalasa* (#944; "Da'if" – *Jami' Saghir* #5964). Imam Suyuti in his *Tafsir Durr al-Manthur* (6:26) mentions this hadith and says that Daylami (*Firdaws*, 2:115 #2228) and Ibn Zanjawayh recorded it on the authority of Abu Hurayra, and Tabari (Q44:4) and Bayhaqi in his *Shu'ab* (#3839) on the authority of Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Mughira ibn Akhnas.

Imam Suyuti (in Durr al-Manthur) states that Ibn Abi Shayba (2:514) and Ibn Abi Dunya recorded that ‘Ata ibn Yasir said, “The Prophet (asws) did not fast any month (besides Ramadan) more than Sha’ban, and that is because people’s life-spans are decreed to end during that month in the year.” He also said that Ibn Mardawayh and Ibn ‘Asakir (Tarikh, 61:250) recorded something similar on the authority of A’isha. And Hafiz al-Khatib (Tarikh, 4:437), Diya’ al-Maqdisi (#1356-58), Abu Ya’la (8:312 #4911 Hasan – Mundhiri’s Targhib 2:117), and others recorded that A’isha asked the Prophet (asws) why he would fast all of Sha’ban, and he (asws) responded, “Allah decrees the death of each soul that will die in the following year during that month, so I prefer that my end is decreed while I am fasting,” or in another narration, “while I am engaged in worship of my Lord and good deeds.”³³⁸ And Hafiz al-Khatib and al-Asbahani recorded that A’isha heard the Prophet (asws) say, “Allah opens up the (means to) good in four nights, which are the nights preceding the two ‘Eids, the night of mid-Sha’ban because during it life-spans and provisions and pilgrimages are decreed, and the night of ‘Arafa until the Adhan (of its morning).”³³⁹ Ibn Taymiyya said, “Authentic (Sahih) reports have been transmitted concerning fasting during the month of Sha’ban...” (Iqtida’ Sirat al-Mustaqim, p. 302).

1) The Prophet (asws) said, “Allah looks at His creation in the night of mid-Sha’ban and He forgives all His creation except for a mushrik or one bent on hatred.”³⁴⁰

2) The great Tabi’i and grand-son of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, al-Qasim ibn Muhammad, related from his grandfather that the Prophet (asws) said, “Allah descends on the night of mid-Sha’ban and He forgives all His servants except two: one intent on hatred, and the killer.”³⁴¹ Hafiz Zayn al-‘Iraqi stated³⁴² that this night is distinguished from other nights (in which Allah also “descends”) in that with other nights, it is only the last third or last half of them in which Allah sends down His Mercy, whereas in this night of Sha’ban, it begins from sunset until sunrise; and also because in this night Allah forgives “more people than the hairs of the sheep of the tribe of Kalb,” whereas this is not a property in other general nights of the year.

3) Imam Bayhaqi records that A’isha related that the Prophet (asws) stood up in prayer during part of the night (of mid-Sha’ban) and made his prostration so lengthy that she

³³⁸ Imam Bayhaqi records (Shu’ab, #3820) that he also said, “In that night the deeds of the servants are presented before Allah, so I prefer that my deeds be presented to him while I am fasting.” From this we can infer that he (asws) was keen on increasing his acts of worship during special occasions, and can take this as one of the principles of the Sunna.

³³⁹ Also recorded by Ibn Daylami in Musnad al-Firdaws (5:274). See Mundhiri’s Targhib wa Tarhib (2:152).

³⁴⁰ Recorded by Ibn Hibban (12:481 #5665), Ibn Majah (#1380), Ibn Khuzayma in his Kitab at-Tawhid (#90), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:139), Abdur-Razzaq (4:317), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 5:272 #6628), Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 5:191), Ibn Abi ‘Asim in K. Sunna (p. 224 #512, Sahih), Ibn ‘Asakir (54:97), Harith (Zawa’id, p. 116 #335), Ishaq ibn Rahawayh, Daraqutni (‘Ilal, 6:50, 323), and Dinawari (Mujalasa, #944); and Haythami (8:65 #12960) and Mundhiri (3:459) said that Tabarani (M. Kabir 20:109, M. Awsat 7:36 #6776, Musnad Shamiyyin #203, 3570) recorded it with Sahih chains.

³⁴¹ Recorded by Bazzar (Zawa’id 2:435-36 #2045-48), who also recorded it from Abu Hurayra, Mu’adh ibn Jabal, Abu Musa al-Ash’ari, ‘Awf ibn Malik, and Abu Tha’laba, and the hadith of Abu Bakr and Abu Hurayra was declared authentic by Haythami (Majma’, #12957-58); Ibn Abi ‘Asim (p. 222 #509 Sahih, and #511), Imam Ahmad (2:176 #6353 Da’if – Majma’ 8:65) from Ibn ‘Amr, Tabarani (22:223-24 Da’if), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, #3827), and Lalika’i in his Sunna (#750, 760, 763-64). Hadith Sahih. Hafiz Ibn Rajab (Lata’if al-Ma’arif, p. 263) said: “Sa’id ibn Mansur recorded from... ‘Ata ibn Yasar, who said,” then he quoted a similar wording to this hadith.

³⁴² Quoted by Munawi in Fayd al-Qadir (2:317).

thought his soul was taken, and she moved his big toe to see if he was still alive... then the Prophet asked her, “Do you know what night this is? This is the night of mid-Sha’ban! Indeed, Allah (Most High) looks at His servants on the night of mid-Sha’ban, and He forgives those who ask forgiveness, and bestows mercy on those who ask for mercy, and He gives a delay to the people of envy and spite in their state.”³⁴³

4) In a similar hadith, A’isha states that the Prophet (asws) spent the night with her during mid-Sha’ban, and she went out to find him in the Baqi’ graveyard. He (asws) said to her: “O A’isha, were you afraid that Allah and His Messenger would wrong you?” and she replied: “I thought you went to visit one of your wives.”... He said: “Allah Most High descends to the nearest heaven on the night of mid-Sha’ban and He forgives more people than the number of hairs on the sheep of the tribes of Kalb (a large tribe).”³⁴⁴

5) Ibn Umar said: “There are five special nights in which du’a is not turned back: the night preceding Jum’a, the first night of Rajab, the night of mid-Sha’ban, and the two nights preceding the two ‘Eids.”³⁴⁵ In all, these hadiths of mid-Sha’ban are narrated from over fifteen Sahaba and Tabi’in, making it nearly mass-transmitted (mutawatir).

Hafiz Ibn Hajar in Talkhis al-Habir (2:160) said: “(Abu Bakr) al-Khallal recorded in his book “The Merits (Fadl) of Rajab” on the authority of Khalid ibn Ma’dan: “There are five nights in the year which, if someone regularly fills them (with ‘ibadat) in expectation of their rewards and believing in their promised benefits, Allah will enter him into Paradise. They are the first night of Rajab... the nights preceding the two ‘Eids, the night of ‘Ashura, and the night of mid-Sha’ban.”

6) The nights preceding the two ‘Eids: It is also related that the Prophet (asws) said: “Whoever stands in prayer during (most of) the nights preceding the two ‘Eids, his heart will not die on the day when hearts die.”³⁴⁶ Imam Nawawi wrote about this hadith in his Adhkar (p. 228-29), saying: “Know that it is recommended to stay up during the two nights preceding the ‘Eids, doing dhikr of Allah and salat and other righteous deeds, based on (this) hadith... and it is Da’if, which we narrated from Abu Umama... Nonetheless, weak hadiths are acceptable to put into practice in these situations, as we detailed in the beginning of the book.”

From the above, one can see the primary and derived evidence for the additional acts of worship performed by the Sufis during these months for the sake of honoring them and

³⁴³ Recorded by Bayhaqi thru numerous chains in his Shu’ab al-Iman (#3824-38), and he said its chains are jayyid (strong). Suyuti also reproduces these chains in his Tafsir Durr al-Manthur. Also: Tabarani (K. Du’a, #606).

³⁴⁴ Recorded by Tirmidhi (3:116 #670), Ibn Majah (1:444 #1379), Imam Ahmad (6:238 #24825), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:139), Imam Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, #3825-26), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#1507), and others. See also Tafsir Durr al-Manthur of Imam Suyuti (Qur’an 44:3). Hafiz Mundhiri authenticates the chains of Bayhaqi and Bazzar in his Targhib wa Tarhib (2:74, 3:461-62), as does Bayhaqi himself, and Suyuti said it is Hasan (Jami’ Saghir, #1942).

³⁴⁵ Recorded by Imam Bayhaqi (Sunan, #6386 and Shu’ab, 3:342 #3711, 3713), Abdur-Razzaq (4:317 #7927), and from Abu Umama by Ibn ‘Asakir and Ibn Daylami in Musnad al-Firdaws (2:311 #2797).

³⁴⁶ Recorded by Ibn Majah (K. as-Siyam, #1772 – Hasan: Jami’ Saghir, #8903) from Abu Umama, Bayhaqi from Abu Darda in his Sunan (#6386) and Shu’ab (#3711), Tabarani from ‘Ubada ibn Samit in his Awsat (#159) and Kabir (see Jami’ as-Saghir #8343 and Majma’ 2:198 – “Da’if”), and others. Ibn Muflih al-Hanbali (Furu’, 1:509) also argued that Ibn Majah’s chain is Hasan. The chains of this hadith strengthen each other. Imam Shafi’i himself recorded this hadith in his Kitab al-Umm (1:384), and said: “I declare that all that was mentioned about these nights is desirable and recommended to perform, without that becoming obligatory (fard).”

obtaining the Divine blessings in them – such as fasting, extra prayers, recitation of dhikr and Qur'an, charity, etc. It is worthwhile to note what Shaykh Mubarakfuri wrote in his commentary on the hadith of mid-Sha'ban in Tirmidhi's Sunan (#670=#739 Shakir ed.): "Know that a number of hadiths mention the virtuous blessings of the night of mid-Sha'ban, from whose combined totality we can be certain that it has an established authentic basis (in the Sunna)." After mentioning a few of them, he writes, "So these hadiths, in their collective totality, form a proof against one who claims that nothing has been established concerning the special virtues of (this night)."

Hafiz Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali wrote: "The Tabi'in of Syria, such as Khalid ibn Ma'dan, Makhul, Luqman ibn 'Amir, and others, used to hold the night of mid-Sha'ban in high status, and put great effort in acts of worship during it..." (Lata'if al-Ma'arif, p. 263). Ibn Taymiya said: "A number of hadiths and secondary reports have been narrated concerning the night of mid-Sha'ban, and a group of the Salaf used to spend it in prayer. Therefore, a man praying alone during that night has a legitimate precedence and valid proof for his acts... As for group prayer during it, it is based upon the general principle of gathering for acts of worship and obedience" (Fatawa, 23:131-32). Al-Khatib al-Shirbini wrote: "Supplication during the two nights of 'Eid, the night before Friday, and the nights preceding the first of Rajab and mid-Sha'ban are accepted, and so it is recommended to make supplication during them..." (Mughni'l Muhtaj, 1:591).³⁴⁷

Finally, after seeing the origin in the Qur'an and Sunna of the special blessings of these nights and the Prophet's increased worship in them, if someone says that nothing has been proven concerning spending their nights and days in prayer and fasting, we say that if their special blessings are demonstrated (as in the Sahih hadiths above) then all kinds of acts of worship are recommended in them, and that if something is demonstrated as true, then that which is necessarily attached to it is true also. Furthermore, not being satisfied with a general daleel, and demanding a specific daleel for every single issue or topic or action in itself, necessarily nullifies the general principles of fiqh and the Shari'a (from which rulings are derived according to variable circumstances and actions), and the dynamic and general nature of these principles disappears, leaving a rigid, frozen, restricted, and static set of rules with which Ijma' (scholarly consensus), Qiyas (analogical reasoning), and Ijtihad become impossible and meaningless. It makes no difference then whether you pray 10, 20, 50, or 100 rak'as during the night of mid-Sha'ban or other special nights, or whether a hadith has come mentioning the specific number of rak'as to be prayed, for each is acceptable due to the fact that the Prophet (asws) used to spend that night in prayer and explained to us its distinctive blessings, calling us to increase our worship to attract those blessings. That is the general principle concerning mid-Sha'ban (and other similar nights) established in the Shari'a. As for those who look down upon these nights and give them no importance and do not take advantage of them with extra worship, then the loss is theirs only.

³⁴⁷ All Four madhhabs agree upon the above. (Hanafi): Hashiyat Ibn 'Abidin (2:25), Bahr ar-Ra'iq (2:56); (Maliki): Fawakih ad-Dawani (1:275), Mawahib al-Jalil (2:193), Hashiyat ad-Dusuqi (1:398); (Shafi'i): Abu Shamma's Bida' wa'l Hawadith (p. 44), Rawdat at-Talibin (2:75); (Hanbali): Kashaf al-Qina' (1:437, 444).

TOPIC:
The Integral Place of Tasawwuf in the Tradition of Islam

Tasawwuf is indeed an integral part of Islam, for it is the science of Ihsan and the method of its realization and implementation, without which the Din is only two-dimensional. It is through the Sufis primarily that Islam was spread to new lands and upheld and protected in old lands.

Anyone from the subcontinent knows of the name of Hazrat Mu'inuddin Chishti, who single handedly by Allah's blessing brought 9 million Hindus to Islam. Also, the ones who brought Islam to Indonesia were nine famous Sufis, whose names are known to the historians of that country. They are referred to as "the Nine Awliya' of Java." As for protecting the lands of Islam through Jihad, (instead of attacking Muslims), the Sufis have always stood up to that task...just to name a few more recent examples:

- Shaykh Shamil Daghestani (1800's) of the Naqshbandi Tariqa in Daghestan and Chechnya,
- Shaykh Uthman Dan Fodio (early 1800's) of the Qadiri Tariqa in Northern Nigeria,
- Shaykh Abdal-Qadir Jaza'iri (1830's and 40's) of the Qadiri Tariqa in Algeria,
- Hajj Umar Tal (1850's and 60's) of the Tijani Tariqa in Senegal and Mali,
- Sayyid Abdullah Muhammad as-Somali (early 1900's) of the Salihyya Tariqa,
- Hajj Muhammad Ahrash (1799) of the Darqawi Tariqa in Egypt,
- Ma' al-'Aynayn al-Qalqami (early 1900's) of the Qadiri Tariqa in Morocco and Mauritania,
- Shaykh Muhammad 'Ali al-Sanusi (early to mid-1800's), founder of the Sanusiyya Order who spread Islam in sub-Saharan Africa,
- Shaykh Muhammad Ma'ruf of the Shadhuli Tariqa, who helped spread Islam in East Africa,
- Shaykh 'Izz ad-Din al-Qassam al-Shadhuli in al-Quds Palestine... and so on.

In addition, the vast majority of Islam's greatest scholars and recognized luminaries were either Sufis themselves, trained in Tasawwuf, or both, such as: 1) Imam Abu Zakariyya an-Nawawi, 2) Imam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, 3) Imam Abu'l Qasim al-Junayd (one of the Salaf), 4) Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti, 5) Hafiz al-Mundhiri, 6) Hafiz al-'Asqalani (as he said in his Mu'jam) and 7) his student Hafiz al-Sakhawi, 8) Shaykh al-Islam Zakariyya Ansari, 9) Imam 'Izz ibn Abd as-Salam, 10) Imam al-Bayhaqi, 11) Ibn Daqiq al-'Id, 12) al-Shawkani (as he said in his Badr at-Tali'), 13) Imam Taqiuddin as-Subki and 14) his son Tajuddin as-Subki ash-Shafi'i, 15) Imam Dhahabi, 16) the hadith master Ibn as-Salah, 17) the hadith master Murtada az-Zabidi, 18) Ibn Qudama al-Hanbali (author of al-Mughni), 19) Abdul-Qadir al-Jaylani, 20) Ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, 21) Ahmad Zarruq al-Maliki, 22) Qadi 'Iyad al-Yahsubi al-Maliki, 23) Imam Abdul-Ghani an-Nabulsi al-Hanafi, 24) Imam Abdul-Wahhab ash-Sha'rani ash-Shafi'i, 25) Hujjat al-Islam al-Ghazali, 26) Imam Ibn 'Abidin al-Hanafi, 27) Mulla 'Ali al-Qari al-Hanafi, 28) Ibn Qayyim (Dhayl Tabaqat al-Hanabila 2:448, and his Madarij as-Salikin), 29) Khalil ibn Ishaq al-Maliki, 30) Abdul-Wahid Ibn 'Ashir al-Maliki, 31) Ahmad Dardir al-Maliki, 32) Ahmad as-Sawi al-Maliki, 33) Ali al-'Adawi al-Maliki, 34) Imam al-Qushayri al-Shafi'i, 35) Hafiz Abu 'Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami, 36) Hafiz Abu Nu'aym, 37) Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbi al-Maliki, 38) Imam Abdul Karim al-Rafi'i al-Shafi'i, 39) Qadi Yusuf Nabhani, 40) Ibn 'Aqil al-Hanbali, and many others. Anyone who reads their biographies knows this.

1) Imam Shafi'i said:

“Three things in this world have been made lovely to me: avoiding affectation (takalluf), treating people kindly, and following the way of Tasawwuf.”³⁴⁸ And: “A scholar (faqih) and a Sufi you should be, not one (without the other), for verily I am giving you sincere advice by Allah!”³⁴⁹ It is also established that he accompanied the Sufis and learned from them (see Imam Suyuti’s *Ta’yid al-Haqiqa al-‘Aliyya* p. 14-15). As for the claim that he said: “A rational man does not become a Sufi except he reaches noon as an idiot,” that is an unreliable and false narration. The correct narration was quoted by Abu Nu’aym on the narrative authority of Yunus ibn Abd al-A’la (one of Shafi’i’s students, and he is trustworthy), who said that he really said: “If a rational man does not become a Sufi, then he does not reach noon except as an idiot.”³⁵⁰

2) Imam Abu Hanifa:

He is considered one of the pillars of the initiatic chain of early Sufi masters, being the Shaykh of Sidi Dawud at-Ta’i, “who took sacred knowledge and the Tariqa (of Tasawwuf) from Abu Hanifa”, as stated by al-Hasfaki (*Durr Mukhtar* 1:64-65). Ibn ‘Abidin commented: “And he (Abu Hanifa) is the champion of this Path”.³⁵¹

3) Imam Sufyan Thawri said:

“If it were not for Abu Hisham as-Sufi, I would have never perceived the presence of the subtlest forms of hypocrisy in the self...among the best of people is the Sufi learned in Jurisprudence (Fiqh)”³⁵² See also Dhahabi’s *Siyar A’lam an-Nubala* (7:203).

4) Imam Malik made this famous statement:

“Whoever learns/studies Fiqh but not Tasawwuf becomes a corrupt sinner (fasiq), and whoever learns/studies Tasawwuf but not Fiqh becomes a heretic (zindiq), but whoever combines the two in himself has realized the truth (tahaqqaq).”³⁵³ Whoever said that no such thing as “Tasawwuf” ever existed in the era of the Salaf is clearly mistaken, as Imam Malik – who was among the Salaf – refers to Tasawwuf as something known and without need of explanation. Sidi Ahmad Zarruq al-Fasi – one of the principle scholars of the Maliki madhhab and a shaykh of the Shadhuli Tariqah – wrote, after quoting Imam Malik: “When we obtained this statement of Imam Malik from the most trustworthy sources, we became convinced on our part that he was also a Sufi, and not just a lover of Sufis; otherwise, he himself would fall under the blame of these words... Imam Malik joined between fiqh and tasawwuf, and this is not far fetched of him, if we consider tasawwuf to mean directing

³⁴⁸ See *Kashf al-Khafa’* of Hafiz ‘Ajluni, 1:341, #1089.

³⁴⁹ See *Diwan al-Imam ash-Shafi’i*, ‘Ilmiyya ed. p. 48.

³⁵⁰ See *Hilyat al-Awliya’* (9:142). The other false narration is transmitted thru two unknowns, making it extremely weak.

³⁵¹ See: Imam Ibn ‘Abidin in his *Hashiyat Radd al-Muhtar* (1:156-57).

³⁵² Ibn Qayyim *Jawziyya* in *Madarij as-Salikin* (2:330), Ibn Jawzi in his *Sifat as-Safwa* (Ch. on Abu Hisham az-Zahid), Abu Nu’aym in his *Hilya* (6:155), and al-Harawi al-Ansari in *Tabaqat as-Sufiyya* (1:159).

³⁵³ This is a very famous narration known by the students and followers of Imam Malik and is narrated by: Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Tata’i in his *Khutat as-Sadad wa’l Rushd – Sharh Muqaddamat Ibn Rushd* (1:6); Mulla Ali al-Qari al-Hanafi, in *Sharh ‘Ayn al-Ilm* (1:33) and *Sharh al-Shifa’*; Ahmad Zarruq, in *Qawa’id at-Tasawwuf* (#4), Ali al-‘Adawi, in his *Hashiyah ‘ala Sharh az-Zurqani* (2:195); Ibn Ajiba, in *Iqadh al-Himam* p. 13, ...and others.

oneself wholeheartedly and sincerely to Allah Most Exalted. Someone might ask why the science of tasawwuf was not manifestly transmitted from the Imam as it was from others attached to tasawwuf in that time, and the answer would be that the Imam was busy with what was a necessary responsibility at that time, namely preservation of the principles of fiqh and detailing the rules of the Shari'ah, especially since he saw himself up to and fully capable of that task (where others were not). Even so, this did not completely prevent him from participating with the Sufis in their science with regards to his own self.”³⁵⁴ Imam Dhahabi in his *Siyar A'lam an-Nubala'* (Chapter on Abu Sa'id Ahmad ibn Ziyad al-Basri) similarly said: “The scholar devoid of Tasawwuf and devotional practice is empty, just as the Sufi devoid of knowledge of the Sunna has strayed from the right path.”

5) Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said about the Sufis:

“I do not know people on this earth better than them.” Someone said, “They listen to music and they reach states of ecstasy,” to which the Imam replied, “Do you prevent them from enjoying an hour with Allah?”³⁵⁵ It is also reported that he advised his son Abdullah to sit and accompany the Sufis, because “they have superceded us in their wealth of knowledge, watchful awareness of Allah (*muraqaba*), reverential awe of Him (*khashya*), inward detachment from the world (*zuhd*), and lofty spiritual aspirations (*himma*).”³⁵⁶ The strange claim that Imam Ahmad said about al-Harith al-Muhasibi, “warn the people against him with the strongest warning,” is a forgery in a book filled with forgeries (*Talbees Iblis*), and Imam Dhahabi narrated (with a chain he classified as *Sahih*) that Imam Ahmad praised al-Muhasibi with the strongest praise.

6) Imam Abdul-Qahir al-Baghdadi, who is the authority on heretical sects, wrote in his book *Usul ad-Din*, p. 315-316 (cf. *Farq bayn al-Firaq*, p. 189): “The book *Tabaqat as-Sufiyya* (Biographies of the Sufis) by Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami comprises the biographies of nearly a thousand shaykhs of the Sufis, none of whom belonged to heretical sects and all of whom were from the Sunni community, with the exception of only three of them: 1) Abu Hilman of Damascus, who pretended to be of the Sufis but actually believed in *Hulul* (Allah's mixing and indwelling with creation), 2) al-Hallaj, whose case remains problematic, since some accepted him such as Ibn Khafif..., and 3) al-Qannad, whom the Sufis accused of being a *Mu'tazili* and thus rejected, for the good does not accept the wicked.”³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ See: Ahmad Zayni Dahlan al-Makki's *Durar Saniyya* p. 153-54. It should also be noted that Imam Malik did in fact teach basic Tasawwuf, such as when he said: “The inward knowledge cannot be known except by those who know the outward knowledge, so whenever one knows the outward knowledge and in turn acts upon it, Allah will open to him the inward knowledge, which only occurs by Allah opening and illuminating his heart” (recorded by Qadi 'Iyad in *Tartib al-Madarik*, Munawi in *Fayd al-Qadir* 4:388 #5710); and he also said to his student Ibn Wahb: “Knowledge is not in transmitting a great number of narrations, but knowledge is rather a light which Allah casts into the heart” (Ibn Mandah in his *Fawa'id* (p. 94 #68) with a *Sahih* chain to the Imam, Munawi in *Fayd al-Qadir* 4:388, Ibn al-Haj in *Madkhal* 1:17, Suyuti in *Durr al-Manthur* in *tafsir of Q35:28*). For other Sufic statements and teachings of the Imam, refer to Qadi 'Iyad's *Tartib al-Madarik* (Ilmiyya ed., 1:96-98).

³⁵⁵ Narrated by Shaykh Mansur al-Buhuti al-Hanbali in his *Kashaf al-Qina'* (7:2539), and Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Saffarini al-Hanbali in his *Ghidha' al-'Albab* (1:120).

³⁵⁶ Quoted by Shaykh Amin al-Kurdi in his *Tanwir al-Qulub* (p. 405).

³⁵⁷ The great mufassir Imam Fakhruddin ar-Razi wrote a book about the beliefs of the various sects of Muslims (*I'tiqadat Firaq al-Muslimin...*), and on pages 72-73 he gave a similar appraisal, and said, “and these (the Sufis) are the best group of the children of Adam.”

7) Shaykh al-Islam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti wrote a whole book called “Defense of the Sublime Truth and Support of the Shadhuli Tariqah (of Tasawwuf),” in which he said (on pages 56-57): “Tasawwuf in itself is a most honorable knowledge. It explains how to follow the Sunnah and to leave innovation, how to purify the nafs (ego), and submit to Allah truly...I have looked at the matters which some of the Imams have criticized in the Sufis, and I did not see a single true Sufi actually holding such positions.”

He, in addition to Hafiz as-Sakhawi, Shaykh ‘Izz ibn Abdus-Salam, Hafiz al-Mundhiri, Taqiyuddin Ibn Daqiq al-‘Id, Ahmad Zarruq al-Maliki, and Shaykh al-Islam Taqiyuddin as-Subki were all students and followers of the Sufi Imam Abu’l Hasan ash-Shadhuli and his Tariqah, who himself said: “Whoever finds that his inspiration (Ilham) contradicts the Qur’an and Sunna, then let him hold to the Quran and Sunna and throw his inspiration to the wall, and let him say to himself that Allah has guaranteed the protection of Quran and Sunna, but not the protection of inspiration (which could be true or false)”

Imam Suyuti also quoted ‘Izz ibn Abdus-Salam, who said: “The Sufis have established themselves upon the foundations of the Shari’a, which do not disintegrate in this life nor the next, while other than them have only established themselves upon its surface...”³⁵⁸

8) Shaykh al-Islam Imam Nawawi, who was a Sufi, and even considered a Wali, wrote the following: “The specifications of the Way of the Sufis are five:

- a) to keep the Presence of Allah in your heart in public and private
- b) to follow the Sunna of the Prophet in action, and speech
- c) to keep away from dependence on people and asking them
- d) to be content with what Allah gave you, whether it is a little or a lot
- e) to always commit your matters to Allah”³⁵⁹

This Imam also wrote another book about Tasawwuf called “Bustan al-Arifin fi-z Zuhd wa’t Tasawwuf” (Garden of the Gnostics in Abstinence and Sufism), but died before he could complete it. On page 47, he quoted Imam Shafi’i, who said: “Whoever wishes that Allah open (Fath) his heart and grant him knowledge, then he must undertake the Khalwa and decrease the food he eats, and leave the company of the ignorant and some of the people of knowledge who have no balance or Adab.” These words of Imam Shafi’i are the very words of the people of Tasawwuf.

9) The master of hadith scholars, Imam Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani...

Umar al-Batanuni, in his biography of Shaykh Shamsuddin Muhammad al-Hanafi al-Shadhuli, called as-Sirr as-Safi (1:7), describes Imam Ibn Hajar as sitting on his knees before Shaykh Shamsuddin Muhammad, taking care not to raise his eyes at him, then kissing his hand before walking backwards to exit the room. In addition, Abu’l Mahasin al-Qaraqji, in

³⁵⁸ Also mentioned by Shaykh Hamid Saqr in his Nur at-Tahqiq p. 96. See also his Fatawa (p. 138-42) where he speaks on the superiority of the Sufi Awliya’ over the ‘Ulama. Imam ‘Izz also interpreted “Allah’s Party” (Q58:22) as the Sufis, and said “Tasawwuf is the betterment of hearts...” (Qawa’id al-Ahkam, 1:29, 2:212), and wrote a number of books on the science of Tasawwuf.

³⁵⁹ See his al-Maqasid (p. 20), Eng. Translation (Shaykh Nuh Keller): p. 95-96.

his book (unpublished) about the chains of transmission of the Shadhuli Tariqa (Shawariq al-Anwar al-Jaliyya), states that Hafiz Ibn Hajar received the Sufi cloak of Shaykh al-Akbar Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi from the son of Imam Dhahabi, who received it himself from Ibn al-'Arabi. In addition, Ibn Hajar praises the Futuhat al-Makkiyya (the most famous book of Ibn al-'Arabi) in his Lisan al-Mizan (5:315). He also wrote a partial commentary on Ibn al-Farid's long Sufi poem "at-Ta'iyya."

10) Ibn Hajar al-Haytami wrote: "It is incumbent upon every person endowed with intellect and religion not to fall into the trap of criticizing them (Sufis), for that is a lethal poison, as has been demonstrated in the past and present" (Fatawa Hadithiyya, p. 331).

Sidi Ahmad Zarruq al-Fasi wrote in his book Qawa'id at-Tasawwuf (principles #216-17): "The causes of people's opposition to Tasawwuf are five: 1) The perfection of their path; so that if some of them follow an easy dispensation, or break proper comportment, or slip and become lax in some affair, or some deficiency appears from them, then the people quickly rush to criticize them. This is because the smallest of faults appears easily on a spotless background, and no human can be free of all deficiencies unless he has Divine protection or infallibility from Allah. 2) The subtle nature of their sciences, due to which they were accused and censured, because the ego rejects that which it has not come to understand. 3) The large numbers of those with false and empty claims, and seekers of worldly aims thru religiosity... 4) The fear that the commonality will focus only upon the inward aspects of the Din and ignore the outward, as has transpired with many among the ignorant. 5) The ego being covetous for ranks and positions, due to which people became inflamed with the Sufis (who consistently held lofty ranks in the eyes of the masses throughout history) more than other groups, and the rulers exerted great pressure in bringing the Sufis to their side. Those who fall in any of these categories – except the last – are either rewarded or excused, and Allah knows best". Then Imam Zarruq continues: "When one's connection to something is actualized, the effects of that connection necessarily come to appear upon one, and for this reason, the memory of the Sufi remains and spreads more than the memory of the Faqih. The Faqih is connected to a quality of his self, namely, his own understanding and scholarship, which vanishes when he does. The Sufi is connected to his Lord, and how can anything connected to the Eternally Living die? Many have physically passed, but remain alive among the people, so understand!"

We have shown that the main Imams of the Muslims, both from the times of Salaf and later on, have been not only supportive of Tasawwuf, but also many of them Sufis themselves! How could it be then that Sufism is a heretical sect if the most knowledgeable of this Ummah supported it and followed it?

APPENDIX: OTHER MISCELANEOUS TOPICS

Kissing the hands and feet of the Righteous and the Scholars

It is firmly established in the authentic Sunna that kissing the hands and feet of pious scholars and Awliya' out of veneration and respect is permissible in Islam, and the ones who deny this do so because they think everyone has the same level and thus no Muslim deserves more respect than any other Muslim. Let us examine what the Sunna teaches:

First of all, the Prophet (asws) commanded us to recognize those righteous ones who are worthy of veneration and to show them respect, as this is one of their rights upon us. He said, "Whoever does not revere our elders or show mercy to our young ones, or fulfill the rights of the scholar upon us, then he is not one of us." ³⁶⁰ Ibn 'Abbas also reported that he (asws) said, "Blessing (baraka) is with your elders – the people of knowledge." ³⁶¹ He also pointed to the special status of the 'Ulama when he said, "The Ulama are the inheritors of the Prophets," ³⁶² and "the Ulama are the keepers of Allah's creation." ³⁶³ The Prophet (asws) also said, "It is from the exaltation of Allah that one respect and venerate the Muslim who is old, the one who memorizes the Qur'an...and the just rulers." ³⁶⁴

³⁶⁰ Imam Ahmad (5:323 #21693 Sahih) and Hakim (1:62, 122), Tabarani in Mu'jam Kabir (11:449 #12276), Abu Ya'la (6:191 #3476), Bukhari in his Adab al-Mufrad (#355, 356, 358, 360), Tahawi in Mushkil Athar (2:133), and others. Cf. Sakhawi's Maqasid (#925), and 'Ajluni's Kashf al-Khafa' (#1911, #2057). Hadith Hasan according to Haythami (Majma', #532, also 8:14), Mundhiri (Targhib, 1:114), and others, while Dhahabi (along with Hakim) said it is Sahih.

³⁶¹ Hafiz Sakhawi cited it (Maqasid #290, 362) and said it is recorded by Ibn Hibban (#559), Hakim (1:62, Sahih), al-Khatib (Tarikh 11:165), Abu Nu'aym (Hilya 8:171-72), Quda'i in his Musnad Shihab (1:57 #36-37), Hakim Tirmidhi (Asl #114), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 2:402), Tabarani (M. Awsat 9:16), and Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #11004); and it has corroborating narrations recorded by Abu Nu'aym (from Ibn Mas'ud) and Bayhaqi in his Shu'ab al-Iman (from Hasan): "People will always find good as long as there remain differences in their levels in relation to each other, and if they come to all be equal on the same level, then that is their destruction." It is Sahih according to Hakim, Dhahabi, Bazzar, Ibn Hibban, and Ibn Daqiq al-'Id. Cf. 'Ajluni's Kashf (#903).

³⁶² Recorded (from Abu Darda') by Imam Ahmad (5:196 #20723), Tirmidhi (#2606), Abu Dawud (#3157), Ibn Majah (#219), Darimi (#346), Hakim (1:89 part), Ibn Hibban (1:289-90 #88), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab, #1696-99), al-Quda'i in his Musnad Shihab (2:103 #975), Ibn 'Asakir (14:509, 511), Bazzar (Zawa'id, 1:82; Sahih – Haythami in Majma' 1:126 #523), Baghawi (#129), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm (1:37-41), and others. Hadith Hasan. 'Ajluni mentioned (Kashf, #1745, #1751) a similar hadith recorded by Daylami (Firdaws, 3:100 #4028, with 'paradise' instead of 'world'), and Ibn 'Adiyy (from 'Ali), which says, "the 'Ulama are the lamps of the world, and the representatives of the Prophets, and the inheritors of me and the Prophets," which he and Hafiz Munawi declared Sahih. Daraqutni (Sunan, 3:80), Tabarani (9:105), Bayhaqi (Shu'ab #10580, Zuhd #458), Daylami (Firdaws, 1:154 #401), Abu Nu'aym (1:133-34), Quda'i (#307), Imam Ahmad (K. Zuhd, p. 201), and Ibn Najjar recorded with a trustworthy chain of sound narrators that Ibn Mas'ud and Anas similarly said, "the 'Ulama are the leaders, and the Muttaqin are the masters, and sitting with them is increase (in good)" (Kashf, #1746 and Majma', 1:125 #520). Ibn Abi Shayba (6:121, 8:206) and Tabarani (M. Kabir, 22:133) recorded that the Tabi'i Abu Juhayfa said: "Sit with the elders, mix with the wise, and ask the people of knowledge," and Haythami said that its chain is Sahih (Majma', 1:125 #519).

³⁶³ Recorded by Quda'i in his Musnad Shihab (1:100 #115), Ibn 'Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (14:267), Daylami in Firdaws (3:100 #4030 and 3:101 #4036), and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in Jami' Bayan al-'Ilm (1:52), from Anas, Uthman ibn 'Affan, and Mu'adh. 'Ajluni said in his Kashf al-Khafa' (#1749) that this hadith is Hasan.

³⁶⁴ Recorded by Abu Dawud in his Sunan (Book of Adab, Chapter on dealing with people according to their worth, #4203), Ruyani (1:66 #12), Bukhari in his Adab al-Mufrad (#357), Ibn Abi Shayba (Musannaf, 7:199, 571), Abdur-Razzaq (#20136), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 7:21-22), Bayhaqi (Sunan 8:163, Shu'ab 7:459-60), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (Tamhid, 17:429-30), Ibn Mubarak (K. Zuhd, #388), and others. Hafiz 'Iraqi, Mundhiri (Targhib, 1:113), Ibn Hajar, Busiri (Ithaf as-Sada, 8:467 #6691), and Nawawi (Riyad as-Salihin, #354) state it is Hasan.

How did the Sahaba apply this advice in their dealings with the Messenger (asws)?

- 1) 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 then sat down... 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.”³⁶⁵
- 2) Ibn Umar narrates that he and a group of people ran away from battle, and then apologized to the Prophet, and he accepted their apology. So then he said, “and we then kissed the hand of the Prophet.” Ibn Majah relates this in his Sunan in the Book of Adab, and as-Sindi wrote in his commentary of it, “in summary, kissing the hand of someone to seek the blessings through it is allowed and permissible...”³⁶⁶
- 3) Safwan ibn ‘Assal narrates that two Jews came to the Prophet (asws) and asked him some questions, which he answered. And then they kissed his hands and feet.³⁶⁷
- 4) A’isha narrated that Fatima, whenever the Prophet came to her house, would stand for him, kiss his hand, and then have him sit in her seat.³⁶⁸
- 5) A deputation of Abd Qays came to Madina, and one of them (Zari’) said: “so we competed who could get off our horses faster (and go to our homes) so that we could kiss the hands and feet of the Prophet. And the first one to do it was Ashajj.”³⁶⁹
- 6) What about the practice of some Muslims who shake and kiss each other’s hands after Subh and ‘Asr prayers? Imam Nawawi writes about it in his Kitab al-Adhkar (p. 340): “Know that hand-shaking is recommended whenever Muslims meet. As for what has become the habit of some people to shake hands after Subh and Asr prayers, then it has no specific precedent in the Shari’a in this form. But there is

³⁶⁵ Recorded by Abu Dawud (#3357), Tirmidhi (#1961 hasan sahih), Ibn Majah (#3427), Hakim (4:400 Sahih), Hafiz al-Khatib in Kitab al-Jami’ (1:90 #314), Imam Ahmad (4:161 #16831) and Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab (#1528). See also Bukhari’s Sahih (#3289) and Tabarani’s Mu’jam al-Awsat (4:348-49 #4398).

³⁶⁶ Also recorded by Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jihad #2276 and Kitab al-Adab #4546), Imam Ahmad (2:70 #5128), Tirmidhi (#1638), Ibn Majah (#3694), Bayhaqi in Sunan al-Kubra (7:101 #13352), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:733), Abu Ya’la (9:447-48 #5597), Ibn Sa’d (Tabaqat, 4:145), Bukhari in his Adab al-Mufrad (#975), Hafiz al-Khatib in Kitab al-Jami’ (1:90 #313), Humaydi (Musnad, #687), and others. Cf. Haythami’s Majma’ (8:42) and Ibn Hajar’s Fath al-Bari (11:67).

³⁶⁷ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#2657, #3069 Sahih), Ibn Majah (Kitab al-Adab, #3695), Nasa’i (7:111 #4010), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 8:69 #7396), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:436-37), Abu Nu’aym (5:97), Bayhaqi (Sunan 8:166, Dala’il 6:268), Tayalisi (#1260), and Hakim (1:9 Sahih), and it is Sahih (Nawawi’s Adhkar p. 336).

³⁶⁸ Abu Dawud (4:355 #4540), Nasa’i (Sunan al-Kubra: 5:96 #8369), Tirmidhi (5:700 #3807), Hakim (3:160; 4:272-73 Sahih), Tabarani (M. Awsat, 4:242 #4089), Bayhaqi in Shu’ab al-Iman (6:467 #8927) and Sunan al-Kubra (7:101), and Bukhari in his Adab al-Mufrad (#974), Ibn Muqri’ (Ta’qbil al-Yad, #26), and others. Imam Nawawi used it among other hadiths to prove the permissibility of standing for someone out of respect and love.

³⁶⁹ Recorded by Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Adab, #4548), Tabarani (M. Kabir #5313, M. Awsat #418), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 3:278), Abu Ya’la (12:246 #6850), and Bukhari in his Adab al-Mufrad (#978). Hafiz al-Mundhiri, Haythami (9:388), and Ibn Hajar (Fath al-Bari 11:57) said it is Hasan, and the commentator of Abu Dawud’s Sunan wrote about it: “In this hadith there is evidence for the permissibility of kissing someone’s feet.”

nothing wrong in it (la ba'sa bihi), for the act of shaking hands itself is Sunna³⁷⁰ ... Imam Izz ibn Abdas-Salam (in the end of his *Qawa'id al-Kubra*) mentioned that bid'as are in five categories, and he mentioned that one example of the permissible (mubah) bid'as is shaking hands with each other after the Subh and Asr prayers.”

- 7) A'isha related that when the Prophet (asws) passed away, Abu Bakr walked in, and uncovered the Prophet's face and kissed it and cried and spoke to him directly.³⁷¹ About this hadith, Imam Nawawi wrote (*Adhkar*, p. 337): “And there is no harm in kissing the face of the deceased righteous person to gain blessings from that (tabarruk)...”
- 8) Su'ayb said: “I saw 'Ali (ibn abi Talib) kissing the hand and feet of al-'Abbas.”³⁷²
- 9) Abdur-Rahman ibn Razin said, “We passed by Rabdha and were told that Salmah ibn al-Akwa' lived there. So we went to him and greeted him. He lifted his hands and said, “with these two I pledged my allegiance (bay'ah) to the Prophet of Allah (asws).” Then he offered his palm, and we stood and kissed it.”³⁷³
- 10) Thabit used to kiss the hands of Anas ibn Malik to gain the blessings of his hands having touched the Prophet's hands (asws). He would also kiss his eyes and say, “these are the eyes that saw the Prophet (asws).”³⁷⁴

The hadith about the lesser and greater Jihads

Some have a problem with the Sufis quoting the statement: “We have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad, which is the Jihad against the ego-self (nafs),”³⁷⁵ and citing it as a hadith, while some of the hadith scholars say it is not a saying of the Prophet. They want to claim by this that the Sufis seek to do away with jihad since they misinterpret it as only meaning striving against the ego and its inclinations. However, this cannot be further from the truth, as history has repeatedly shown how it was the Sufis who were always active in jihad and defending the lands of Islam, as we have referred to in a previous chapter.

³⁷⁰ Imam Nawawi is here referring to the hadith narrated by Imam Ahmad (#17813-14), Abu Dawud (#4535-36), Ibn Majah (#3693), Tirmidhi (#2651), Abu Ya'la (5:334), Bayhaqi (Sunan 7:99, Shu'ab 6:475), and many others, which states: “No two Muslims meet and shake hands except that their sins are forgiven before they depart each other's company.” Suyuti states (*Jami' Saghir*, #8109) it is Hasan.

³⁷¹ Recorded by Bukhari (#1165, 3394, 4098, 5273), Nasa'i (#1816, 1818), Ibn Majah (#1616), Tirmidhi (*Shama'il* #373-74), Imam Ahmad (#23718), Ibn Hibban (7:299-300), Bayhaqi (Sunan, 3:406 #6811, also 8:142), Baghawi (#1471), Ibn Abi Shayba (3:259), Tayalisi (#1818), Abdur-Razzaq (#6774, 20948), Tabarani (M. Kabir #10723, M. Awsat #9168), and Bazzar (*Zawa'id*, 1:402).

³⁷² Recorded by Bukhari in his *Adab al-Mufrad* (#979), and Hafiz Ibn Muqri' in his *Taqbil al-Yad* (#13, 15).

³⁷³ Ibid. (#976); Also by Ibn Sa'd in his *Tabaqat* (4:306), Tabarani (*Mu'jam al-Awsat*, 1:205, 8:56), and Hafiz al-Khatib in his *Kitab al-Jami'* (1:90 #315). See also Imam Haythami's *Majma' az-Zawa'id* (8:42).

³⁷⁴ Ibid. (#977); Also recorded by Ahmad (3:111 #11651), Darimi (#50), Abu Ya'la (6:211), Ibn Abi Umar al-'Adani (*Matalib*, 3:186), Hafiz al-Khatib in *Kitab al-Jami'* (1:90-91 #317), and Hafiz Ibn Muqri' in his *Taqbil al-Yad* (#18-19), in which he also recorded most of the above. It is Sahih according to Haythami (*Majma'* 9:325).

³⁷⁵ Recorded by Imam Bayhaqi in *Kitab az-Zuhd* (p. 198 #374) with a very weak chain from Jabir, Hafiz al-Khatib in *Tarikh Baghdad* (13:493, 523-24), and Nasa'i in his *Kuna* from the *Tabi'i Ibrahim ibn abi 'Abla*.

Furthermore, without the purification of the nafs – which is called for in the Qur’an in numerous places (e.g. Q91:7-10) – our acts and deeds become worthless, and the mujahid in the battle with an impure nafs risks going into the Fire. Allah says, “But as for one who feared the standing before his Lord, and restrained his nafs from lust...” (Q79:40-41)...what is this but jihad an-nafs? And He said: “as for those who strive in Us, We will guide them to Our ways” (Q29:69). This was revealed in Makka, and there was no military jihad until Madina, so this refers to jihad an-nafs, as Qurtubi and others mentioned in their Tafsir. Abdullah ibn ‘Amr related that he asked the Prophet (asws) about jihad, and he told him, “Begin with your nafs and make jihad against it...for if you fight jihad in haughtiness and ostentation, then Allah will resurrect you as such, and if you fight jihad in perseverance and expectation of reward, then Allah will resurrect you as such.”³⁷⁶ And: “The sword does not erase hypocrisy.”³⁷⁷ For similar examples, see Mundhiri’s *Tarhib* (2:296-300).

It also remains to be said that there is a more direct hadith supporting the statement of the Sufis that Jihad, in addition to meaning fighting against the outward enemy, also means struggling against the ego-self (nafs), for the Prophet (asws) said: “The mujahid is the one who makes Jihad against his nafs and its desires for the sake of obeying Allah.”³⁷⁸ And this is exactly one of the basic principles of Ihsan (Tasawwuf).

Furthermore, the Prophet (asws) said to Um Anas, “Perform the ritual prayer, for it is the best jihad. Abandon sins, for that is the best migration (hijra). And invoke Allah frequently, for that is the most beloved act with which you meet Allah.”³⁷⁹ From this hadith we learn that the act of jihad is not exclusive to the battlefield, and that the regular performance of the salat – and fulfilling all of its conditions with perfection – is a kind of jihad against the lazy and erring self (nafs).

Mu’adh and Abu Darda’ related that the Prophet (asws) stated: “Shall I not inform you of the best of your deeds, and the purest in the sight of your King, and the loftiest in your degrees, and better for you than spending gold and silver in charity, and better for you than meeting your enemy in battle, striking their necks and your necks being struck (by them)? It is the dhikr of Allah...”³⁸⁰ Abu Sa’id al-Khudri related that the Prophet (asws) was asked,

³⁷⁶ Recorded by Abu Dawud (Kitab al-Jihad, #2157) and Abu Ya’la (see *Matalib al-‘Aliya*, 2:301).

³⁷⁷ Imam Ahmad (4:186) with a strong chain (Mundhiri’s *Tarhib* 2:317), Ibn Hibban (#4663), and others.

³⁷⁸ Recorded by Ibn Hibban (11:5 #4706, also: #25, 1624, 2519, *Sahih*), Hakim (1:10-11 *Sahih*), Tirmidhi (#1594) who said it was authentic, Ibn Majah (#3924), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 2:35 #1143), Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (18:309), Imam Ahmad (6:20 #22826, 6:21 #22833, 6:22 #22840), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab*, #11123), Abu Nu’aym (*Hilya*, 2:249), Quda’i in his *Musnad Shihab* (1:109 #131, 1:139-40 #183-84), and Ibn Mubarak in *Kitab az-Zuhd* (#826). *Hadith Sahih*. See also Bukhari (#9).

³⁷⁹ Recorded by Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (25:129, 150) and *Mu’jam al-Awsat* (7:21, 51), Daylami in *Firdaws* (3:63 #3893), Ibn Shahin (#163), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. *Wara’* p. 58), and others. See Ibn Hajar’s *Isaba fi Tamyiz as-Sahaba* (8:167-68). Haythami (*Majma’* 10:75 #16755-56) and Mundhiri (*Tarhib* 2:400) said its chain is strong. Related to this is the hadith: “The invoker of Allah among the heedless is like the staunch fighter among those who flee away”, which is recorded by Tabarani (M. *Kabir* 10:19, M. *Awsat* 1:90 #271), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 4:4), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:223), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab* 1:412 #567), Abu Nu’aym (4:268, 6:181), Ibn Mubarak (K. *Zuhd*, #357), and others with *Sahih* chains (Haythami’s *Majma’* 10:80, Mundhiri’s *Tarhib*, and Suyuti’s *Jami’ Saghir* #4310).

³⁸⁰ Imam Malik (#441), Tirmidhi (#3299), Ibn Majah (#3780), Imam Ahmad (#20713, 26249), Hakim (1:496, *Sahih*), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:168), Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (20:167) and *Saghir* (1:77), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#127 *Sahih*), and Ishaq ibn Rahawayh (*Matalib*, 4:30). See also Bayhaqi’s *Shu’ab al-Iman* (#518-522) and Tabarani’s *Awsat* (7:250 #7414). Munawi (*Fayd al-Qadir*, 5:457), Mundhiri (*Tarhib* 2:395-96), Busiri (*Ithaf as-Sada*, 8:492 #6775), and Haythami (*Majma’*, 10:73-74) also state it is *Sahih*.

‘Which slave of Allah will have the loftiest rank with Allah on Judgment Day?’ He answered, “The men and women who invoke Allah frequently.” They said, “Even better than the warrior in the way of Allah?” He replied, “Even if he fights the disbelievers and idolaters with his sword until it breaks, and becomes covered with blood, those who invoke Allah would still occupy a higher degree than him.”³⁸¹ So dhikr – which is an essential pillar of Tasawwuf – is also essential for the soundness and success of jihad in all of its aspects, whether against the outer enemy in the battlefield, or the inner enemies in one’s soul (nafs, shaytan, hawa, dunya).

Hadith Qudsi: “Nothing contains Me but the heart of My believing slave”

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated in his Kitab az-Zuhd (p. 81) from Wahb ibn Munabbah: “Allah opened the heavens to the Prophet Hizqeel (Ezekiel) until he beheld the Throne (‘Arsh), whereupon he said, “Glory to You, what greatness is Yours, O my Lord!” Allah replied: “Verily the heavens and the earth are unable to encompass Me, and the devoted, soft heart of My faithful scrupulous servant is able to encompass Me.”³⁸²

This idea is also related in another hadith: “Allah has vessels (for Him) from among the people of the earth, and the vessels of your Lord are the hearts of His righteous servants, and the most beloved of those vessels to Him are those which are the softest and purest.”³⁸³

Of course, it goes without saying that these hadiths are not to be interpreted literally, as meaning that Allah resides in the hearts of people. Rather, what it means is that the only creation (among the heavens and the earth and everything in them) which can carry and contain all the Attributes of Allah is the heart of the believing servant. This is what is referred to as the Amanah (Trust) in Qur’an 33:71-72, and why only Adam (asws) and certain of his children are able to be the Khalifa of Allah (Q2:30 and 38:26). Only a few of the servants of Allah reach this status of reflecting all of the Qualities of Allah in their hearts, and these are the true Awliya, who “if you see them, you are immediately reminded of Allah.”³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ Recorded by Tirmidhi in his Sunan (#3298), Imam Ahmad (#11295), Ibn ‘Adiyy (3:981), and Daylami (3:503 #5442) with a weak chain. However, a hadith of similar wording (thru Jabir) was recorded by Tabarani in his Mu’jam as-Saghir (1:77) and al-Awsat (3:5-6), which Haythami said is Sahih (#16749), and another by Ahmad (#21064), Tabarani, and Ibn Abi Shayba (7:71), which ‘Iraqi said is Hasan (Takhrij al-Ihya’ 1:296). It also has supporting narrations recorded by Ibn Abi Shayba (8:143, 8:196-97), and Ibn Mubarak in K. Zuhd (#1116).

³⁸² Also recorded by Daylami in his Firdaws (3:213 #4462) from Anas, and by Abu’l Shaykh in his ‘Adhama (p. 57 #125) with a Sahih chain to Wahb ibn Munabbah.

³⁸³ Recorded by Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (from Abu ‘Inaba Khawlani) and Musnad al-Shamiyyin (2:19 #840) with a Hasan chain according to Haythami (see also Munawi’s Fayd al-Qadir 2:496, and ‘Ajluni’s Kashf al-Khafa’ #2256), Hakim Tirmidhi in his Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #242, 266) from Sahl ibn Sa’d, Abu Nu’aym in his Hilya (6:97), Daylami in Firdaws (1:225 #678, 3:256 #4619), and Imam Ahmad in Kitab az-Zuhd (p. 384) and his son Abdullah’s Zawa’id az-Zuhd (p. 153) from Abu Umama.

³⁸⁴ Recorded by Nasa’i in his Sunan al-Kubra (6:362), Imam Ahmad (#17312 and 6:459 #26317,19), Ibn Majah (#4109), Bazzar (Zawa’id, 4:241), Tabarani (Kabir, 10:253, 12:13), Abdur-Razzaq (11:202 #20325), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:119, 130), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab al-Iman, 5:297 and 7:494), Abu Ya’la (#2437), Hakim at-Tirmidhi in his Nawadir (Asl #103, 265), Ibn Mubarak in Kitab az-Zuhd (#218, 958), Tabari in his Tafsir (11:131-32), Daylami in Firdaws (1:166 #454, 1:173 #486 Sahih), Abu Nu’aym in his Hilya (1:6, 7:231) and Akhbar Asbahan (1:231), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (Musnad, #1578), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Awliya, #15-17, 19, 26-27), al-Khara’iti in Masawi’ al-Akhlaq (#233), ad-Dulabi in his Kuna (1:106), and many others. See Haythami’s Majma’ az-Zawa’id (8:93; 10:78), Munawi’s Fayd al-Qadir (#2885, #3976), and ‘Ajluni’s Kashf al-Khafa’ (#3626). Hadith Sahih.

Is there such a thing in Islam as special or secret knowledge?

Yes, there is. First of all, we must understand that sacred knowledge is not only acquired through books, but there is also a type of knowledge which is only acquired and transmitted and inherited through heart-to-heart connection, which is what the Sufis term “Ma’rifah.” This can be seen, for example, in the hadith which states, “Knowledge is two (kinds): the knowledge which is firmly lodged in the heart, and that is the beneficial knowledge, and the knowledge which is (carried) upon the tongue, and that forms the evidence (hujjah) of Allah for or against the son of Adam.”³⁸⁵ In other words, the book-knowledge, which is transmitted by the tongue, is the knowledge of Shari’a, by which Allah judges His worshippers. However, the other type of knowledge is that which is carried in the heart, and is a blessing from Allah.

Allah in the Qur’an (3:7) tells us: “No one knows its ultimate interpretation (ta’wil) except Allah and those firmly rooted in sacred knowledge.” Many of the top Salaf (e.g., Ibn ‘Abbas, Mujahid, etc.) read this ayah in this way, without stopping before “those firmly rooted in knowledge,” but continuing on in the reading.

Secondly, He tells us (Q18:110, 31:27) that had all the trees been pens and all the oceans been ink, and if they were to transcribe the Words of Allah, they would never be able to accomplish that task. Does it take this much ink to write the Qur’an? No of course not. So what does Allah mean? It means that there is an infinite amount of knowledge deposited within the Qur’an...and only some of His servants are able to penetrate through and understand these knowledges. Allah mentioned that Asaf ibn Barkhiyya, who was not a Prophet but the cousin of Sayyidina Sulayman (asws), was able to bring the Throne of Sheba from hundreds of miles away to Prophet Sulayman before he could finish blinking his eyes. He could do this because he “had knowledge of the (Divine) Book” (Q27:40). It is obvious that not everyone has that knowledge of the Book, and this is why some refer to that knowledge as “secrets.” Indeed, such knowledge should be kept a secret from those who are unloyal and untrustworthy, or else harm will result.

Also, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr narrates that the Companion Abu Darda’ said, “You will not have complete understanding until you can see the Qur’an from various perspectives.”³⁸⁶

One can also see how the Prophet Muhammad (saws) in many occasions referred to this special knowledge, and some of the ways it is acquired. For example, he said, “Whoso acts

³⁸⁵ Recorded by Darimi in his Sunan (Muqaddima, #367), mursal (missing the Companion-link) from al-Hasan al-Basri, with a trustworthy chain of narrators (and thus Sahih). However, Daylami in his Firdaws (3:97 #4018) recorded it as being on the authority of Anas. Also recorded by Hakim Tirmidhi in his Nawadir (Asl #188), Ibn Abi Shayba (Musannaf, 8:133), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 2:294), Al-Asbahani in his Targhib (#2112), Hafiz al-Khatib (4:364, from Hasan from Jabir), Ibn Mubarak (K. Zuhd p. 407 #1161), Ibn Abd al-Barr in Jami’ Bayan al-‘Ilm (1:190-91), Abu ‘Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami (Forty Hadiths, #7), and Abu’l Shaykh in his Tabaqat al-Muhaddithin (4:101). It is Sahih according to Mundhiri (Targhib 1:103), ‘Iraqi (Takhrij al-Ihya’ 1:59), and Hasan according to Suyuti (Jami’ Saghir, #5717).

³⁸⁶ Also recorded by Abdur-Razzaq (11:255 #20473), Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 1:211), Imam Ahmad in his Kitab az-Zuhd (p. 134), Hakim Tirmidhi in Nawadir al-Usul (Asl #19), and others.

upon what he knows, Allah will bequeath him knowledge he did not have.”³⁸⁷ And: “Truly, your Lord gives, on certain of your days, fragrant gifts (nafahat). Therefore, expose yourselves to the fragrant gifts of your Lord.”³⁸⁸ This hadith explains to us that certain knowledges and blessings are gained through “exposing oneself” to Allah’s gifts, which is not the same thing as book-learning.

The Prophet (asws) said: “If you see a man who is graced (by Allah) with renunciation (zuhd) in this world, and who has weak rhetoric (skills), then go closer to him, for indeed he is inspired (yulaqqa) with Wisdom.”³⁸⁹ This hadith speaks of being inspired by Allah with wisdom, even if one’s outward knowledge is little; and also about the desirability to remain in the company of these inspired people to gain benefits from them. A similar hadith on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas and Imam ‘Ali states, “Whoever is inwardly detached from the lower world and his hope in it is shortened, Allah will grant him knowledge without learning and guidance without seeking (it), and cause him to have (inward) vision and remove his (inner) blindness.”³⁹⁰ What confirms the meaning of this hadith is the following Qur’anic verse: “And whosoever strives (jihad) in Us, We shall surely guide him upon Our Ways, and Allah is with those who excel in goodness” (Q29:69). As we saw above, this jihad refers primarily to the jihad against the lower-self and its desires and love of this world. As a result of this, Allah grants this one who excels in goodness guidance directly from Him, without secondary or intermediary sources, causing his inward sight to open, to become one of those firmly rooted

³⁸⁷ Recorded by Abu Nu’aym in his Hilya (10:14-15) as the words of Prophet ‘Isa (asws) related by Imam Ahmad, and Abu’l Shaykh from Ibn ‘Abbas. See also the Tafsirs of Imam Suyuti (Durr al-Manthur 1:372) and Qurtubi (13:364). Mulla ‘Ali Qari states its meaning is authentic in his Asrar al-Marfu’a (p. 325). Hafiz Munawi, in his long commentary on this hadith (Fayd al-Qadir, #5711), quotes Imam Malik as saying: “No one knows the inner (batin) knowledge except one who knows the outer (dahir) knowledge. So when one knows the outer knowledge and applies it, Allah opens up for him the inner knowledge, and this does not occur except thru the opening of his heart and its illumination.” And he also quoted Imam Malik as saying: “Knowledge is not evidenced by much transmission of words (riwayah), but it is rather a light which Allah deposits in the heart” (recorded by Ibn Mandah in his Fawa’id p. 94 #68), referring again to that inner knowledge.

³⁸⁸ Narrated by Tabarani in his Mu’jam al-Kabir (1:250 #720, 19:233-34) and Awsat (3:180, 6:222), Ibn ‘Asakir (24:123), Hakim at-Tirmidhi in his Nawadir (Asl #184), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:168-69), Bayhaqi in his Shu’ab al-Iman (2:42 #1121-23), Abu Nu’aym in his Hilya (1:221 and 3:162), Ibn Abi Dunya in Kitab al-Faraj (#27), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in his Tamhid (5:339), and Quda’i in his Musnad Shihab (1:407). Haythami said it is Sahih (Majma’, 10:231). Cf. ‘Ajluni’s Kashf al-Khafa’ (#708).

³⁸⁹ Recorded – with different chains which strengthen each other – by Ibn Majah (2:1373 #4091), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 4:254, 7:346-47), Abu Ya’la (12:176 #6803), Tabarani (M. Kabir 22:392, M. Awsat 2:248 #1885), Abu Nu’aym in his Hilya (7:317, 10:405), al-Harith in his Musnad, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in his Isti’ab, Daylami (#1019, 6580), and Imam Qushayri in his Risala (p. 151). It also has a strong corroborative narration, recorded by Abu Ya’la (4:326 #2437), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, 7:57), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#630), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Awliya, #25), Hakim Tirmidhi (Asl #103), and others, in which the Prophet (asws) was asked, “which people are the best to sit and associate with?” and he (asws) answered, “the one who reminds you of Allah when you see him, whose discourse (mantiq) inspires you to action, and whose deeds remind you of the Hereafter.” Haythami (Majma’, #17686), Mundhiri (Targhib, 1:112), and Busiri (Ithaf as-Sada, 8:502 #6814) said its narrators are men of the Sahih except for Mubarak ibn Hassan, who was declared trustworthy by some and weakened by others.

³⁹⁰ Recorded by Abu Nu’aym in his Hilya (1:72) and Akhbar Asbahan (1:127), Rafi’i in Tarikh Qazwin (3:228), and Daylami in his Firdaws (4:102 #5812), with a weak chain. However, it has many corroborative narrations, which establish its authenticity. 1) From Hasan al-Basri (mursal): Abu Nu’aym (Hilya, 6:312, 8:135). 2) From Abu Dharr: Ibn Daylami in Musnad Firdaws (4:360 #6580). 3) From Abu Darda’, in which Allah describes to Prophet ‘Isa (asws) how the Umma of Muhammad (asws) will be grateful and patient without that coming from any moral refinement (hilm) or knowledge (ilm) of their own, but Allah said, “I will give them from My own hilm and ‘ilm.” It is recorded by Imam Ahmad (6:450), Hakim (1:348 Sahih), Bayhaqi (Sunan, 3:276), Tabarani (M. Awsat 3:311), and others, and is Sahih according to Haythami (Majma’, 10:67), Hakim, Dhahabi, and others.

in knowledge. He also said (Q2:282): “Have taqwa of Allah, and Allah will teach you...”; in other words, knowledge without learning in the normal fashion, but directly from Him.

The Prophet (asws) said, “There is in sacred knowledge a hidden aspect (maknun) which none knows except those who are granted gnosis by Allah (‘Ulama billaah). And if they reveal it, then those who are deceived by Allah will reject it.”³⁹¹ Sahl at-Tustari, one of the many Sufi Salaf, said, “The people of Ma’rifa become silent out of knowledge, and speak out of permission, and in this they avoid unnecessary speech and vain talk.”³⁹² Imam Sha’rani related in his book *al-Yawaqit wa-l Jawahir* that Ibn ‘Abbas said: “Had I told you what I know of the meaning of Allah’s Words (“And He causes His Command to descend between them” – Q65:12), then you would have stoned me or said I was a disbeliever (kafir).”³⁹³

And we have already seen the statement of Abu Hurayra narrated by Bukhari in his *Sahih* (Kitab al-Ilm #121) and Ibn Abd al-Barr, wherein he said that the Prophet (asws) poured into his breast two containers of knowledges, one of which he spreads freely, and the other one he does not, because if he did his throat would be cut off by the people. It is also related that the Prophet (asws) said, “Abu Bakr did not supercede you because of much fasting or prayer, but rather because of a spiritual meaning deposited in his breast.”³⁹⁴

Ibn Mas’ud relates that the Prophet (asws) said, “The Qur’an was revealed in seven Ahruf; each verse has an outer and inner aspect; a limit and an azimuth (matla’).”³⁹⁵ Abu Juhayfa relates that he asked Imam ‘Ali, “Do you have from the Prophet any revelation (wahy) besides the Qur’an?” And he answered, “No, by He Who sprouted the garden and created the winds...except that Allah would give a certain servant of his an understanding into His Book.”³⁹⁶

Anas ibn Malik related that the Prophet (asws) said: “Seeking knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim, and the one who places knowledge with those who are not worthy of it is like one who gives pearls and precious jewels and gold to swine.”³⁹⁷

³⁹¹ Recorded by Daylami in his *Firdaws* (1:258 #799), Abu Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami in his “Forty hadiths on *Tasawwuf*” (#32), and others, on the authority of Abu Hurayra, with a Da’if chain according to Hafiz ‘Iraqi in his *Takhrij al-Ihya’* (Ch. on Knowledge) and Hafiz Suyuti in his *Ta’yid al-Haqiqa al-‘Aliyah* (p. 5-6). Cf. *Nawadir al-Usul* (#267) and *Mundhiri* in his *Tarhib* (1:103).

³⁹² Quoted in Imam Bayhaqi’s *Shu’ab al-Iman* (#5053).

³⁹³ See for this Hafiz Abu’l Shaykh’s *Kitab al-‘Adhama* (p. 100-01 #258).

³⁹⁴ Hafiz ‘Ajluni in *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#2228) discusses this hadith and says it is recorded by Hakim Tirmidhi in his *Nawadir al-Usul* (Asl #21, #220) as a saying of Bakr ibn Abdillah al-Muzani, Abu Ya’la in his *Musnad Kabir* (from A’isha), and Ahmad ibn Mani’ (from Abu Bakr).

³⁹⁵ Recorded by Tabarani in his *Mu’jam al-Kabir* (10:130) and *al-Awsat* (1:236 #773), Ibn Hibban (1:276 #75), Bazzar (*Zawa’id*, 3:90 Hasan), Abu Ya’la (#5149, 5403 *Sahih*), Baghawi (*Sharh Sunna*, 1:262-63), Tahawi (*Mushkil Athar*, 8:87), and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in his *Tamhid* (8:282), and Haythami said its narrators are trustworthy (thiqat) in his *Majma’ az-Zawa’id* (7:152 #11579), and Suyuti said Tabarani’s chain is Hasan (Jami’ *Saghir*, #2727). Also narrated by the Sufi hadith master Abu Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami in his *Haqa’iq at-Tafsir* (Beirut ed. 2001, 1:21).

³⁹⁶ Recorded by Bukhari in his *Sahih* (Kitab al-Ilm #108 and Kitab al-Jihad #2820), Muslim (#2433), Tirmidhi (4:17 #1332), Ibn Majah (2:887 #2648), Abu Dawud (#1739, 3927), Nasa’i (*Sunan* #4663 and *Sunan Kubra* #4277), Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (1:79 #565), Ibn Hibban (#5896), Abu Ya’la (1:282 #338, 1:350-51 #451, 1:462 #628), Tabarani (*M. Awsat*, 2:339 #2160, 3:81 #2555), Tayalisi (#92), Humaydi (#40), Abu Nu’aym (*Hilya*, 4:131), and Ibn Jarud (#794). Also narrated by as-Sulami in his *Haqa’iq at-Tafsir* (1:20).

³⁹⁷ Recorded by Ibn Majah in the Introduction to his *Sunan* (hadith #220), Ibn ‘Adiyy (*Kamil*, 6:2091), and Daylami in his *Firdaws* (3:15 #3721 from Anas). Both Hafiz al-Mizzi (the student of Imam Nawawi) and Hafiz

How do we understand all of these hadiths? Some would find objection to such things, saying that the Prophet came with everything and there is nothing left, and therefore there is no such thing as secrets...but this claim shows a lack of understanding.

The reality is that the Prophet (asws) did pass on and transmit every knowledge to his companions (and continues to do so). However, not every companion received every knowledge, since some knowledge is essential for everyone to know, and other knowledge is not essential for everyone to know. The knowledge which is essential for everyone to know is the knowledge of salvation and the Din, without which one could not reach Paradise and felicity in the Hereafter. He (asws) said:³⁹⁸ “O People! Indeed there is nothing which brings you closer to the Garden and further from the Fire except I have commanded you all to it, and there is nothing which brings you closer to the Fire and further from the Garden except I have forbade you from it...” It is this knowledge which Abu Hurayra meant when he said that he spreads the first kind of knowledge freely, and this is the knowledge gained through books. The second type of knowledge is not essential for salvation in the hereafter, but rather deals with inward realization of the reality (Haqiqah) of Allah, and gnosis of the truths of the Unseen. This is the hidden knowledge which is also referred to as “secrets” (Asrar), and which Abu Hurayra and Ibn ‘Abbas would not tell to every person. This knowledge is not passed on through books, but is inherited and transmitted through the spiritual connection of hearts, as the hadiths above indicate, and is something that only a special few servants (the Awliya’) can comprehend. Keeping these secrets hidden from some people but revealing them to others who are trustworthy and capable of understanding them, does not therefore contradict the hadith which says: “Whoever is asked about some knowledge but keeps it hidden will be bridled with a bridle of Fire on the Day of Judgement”³⁹⁹ because they are not keeping it hidden from everyone...just from the unworthy. So this warning is qualified and restricted by the other sound hadith: “Speak to the people according to their capacity to understand.”⁴⁰⁰ So it is not a knowledge that is essential for every Muslim to know, and the former hadith only refers to the knowledge essential for salvation.

Suyuti (Durar Muntathara, p. 180-81) stated that this hadith is Hasan due to corroborating chains. Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in his *Jami’ Bayan al-‘Ilm* (1:9) said that the scholars consider the meaning of this hadith authentic (sahih), and thus acceptable. Imam Ahmad in his *Kitab az-Zuhd* (p. 93, 295), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#674), and Hafiz Ibn ‘Asakir related that Sayyidina ‘Isa (alayhi salam) similarly said, “O disciples! Do not cast the pearls to the swine, for the swine make no use of pearls. And do not give wisdom to those who do not desire it, for wisdom is indeed better than pearls, and those who do not desire it are indeed worse than swine.” This statement of Sayyidina ‘Isa (asws) was also recorded by Abdur-Razzaq (11:257 #20482), who also recorded that the Prophet (asws) said, “It is considered squandering knowledge that one discuss it with someone unworthy of it” (Musannaf, 11:257 #20480). See also ‘Ajluni’s *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#3124), Ibn Hajar’s *Matalib* (3:345-46), Bayhaqi’s *Shu’ab al-Iman* (#1765), and Harith (Zawa’id, p. 321).

³⁹⁸ Part of a famous hadith recorded by Hakim (Mustadrak, 2:4), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab, #1185), Ibn Abi Shayba (8:129), Ibn Abi Dunya (K. Qana’a, #57), Ibn Mardawayh (Amali, #24), and others.

³⁹⁹ Recorded by Tirmidhi (#2573), Abu Dawud (#3173), Ibn Majah (#257, 260-62), Imam Ahmad (#7255, 7602, 7704), Tabarani (M. Kabir 8:401 #8251, 10:125, 158 and M. Awsat 2:382, 3:335 and M. Saghir 1:60, 114, 162), Tayalisi (#2657), Ibn Hibban (1:297-98 #95-96), Bayhaqi (Shu’ab al-Iman, #1743-47), Ibn Abi Shayba (6:231-32), Hakim (1:101-02 Sahih), Abu Ya’la (4:458, 11:268), Baghawi (#140), Daylami (4:130 #5910), Hafiz al-Khatib in his *Tarikh Baghdad* (5:38-39 and 160, 7:198 and 406, 9:92), Abu Nu’aym (Akhbar Asbahan, 1:297), Quda’i in *Musnad Shihab* (1:266-67 #432-33), and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *Kitab al-‘Ilm* (#8, 12). Hadith Sahih (Mundhiri’s *Tarhib* 1:121). See Hafiz Busiri (Ithaf as-Sada, 1:179 #428) and Ibn Hajar (Matalib, 3:314).

⁴⁰⁰ Hafiz Sakhawi cited it in his *Maqasid* (#180), who said that it was recorded by Daylami (Firdaws, 1:483 #1614 – Da’if, also 1:327 #1031) and others, and that it has corroborating narrations recorded by Bukhari and

Consider how in a previous chapter we gave the example of Haritha, and how he reached to the vision of the Unseen through turning his heart away from the world and doing without the pleasures of this world, just like the Sufis do. Reflect deeply on the nature of the transmission which the Prophet (asws) refers to in the following hadiths:

“Great blessings (Tuba) for the one who (truly) saw me and believed in me, and great blessing for the one who saw the one who saw me, and who saw the one who saw the one who saw me and believed in me; great blessings for them and how wonderful an end (for them) indeed!”⁴⁰¹ and in other narrations, “No Muslim will enter the Fire who saw me, or who saw the one who saw me...” (Tabarani’s *Mu’jam al-Awsat* 1:308 #1036).

“Wear clothes of wool (Suf), and eat small meals in moderation, and you will enter into the hidden spiritual dominions of the heavens (malakut as-samawat).”⁴⁰²

Abu Hurayra related that the Prophet (asws) said that Allah revealed to His Intimate Friend (Ibrahim asws): “O My Khaleel, make your character beautiful...for My Decree has been enacted that those who perfect their character (Akhlāq), I will shade under My Throne, and give a drink from the Presence (Hadra) of My Holiness, and bring near to Me.”⁴⁰³

These three hadiths all mention things which are pillars of Tasawwuf as a practice of Ihsan:

Muslim. In his *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#592 and #1118), Hafiz ‘Ajluni mentioned the statement of Imam ‘Ali recorded by Bukhari (*Kitab al-‘Ilm*, #124) and Daylami (#2478): “Speak to the people according to their capacity to understand; would you like that Allah and His Messenger be denied?” and the statement of Ibn Mas’ud recorded by Muslim (Introduction to his *Sahih*): “You do not speak words to a people which their intellects cannot grasp without that becoming a trial (fitna) for them,” and the hadith recorded by Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab*, #1766), Tabarani (*M. Awsat*, #8196), and Ibn ‘Adiyy (*Kamil*, 7:2542) in which the Prophet (asws) said, “If you speak to the people about their Lord, then do not say words which will be strange to them and difficult to understand,” and the hadith recorded by Daylami (5:168 #7498, from Ibn ‘Abbas) in which he (asws) said, “Do not tell the people words of mine which their intellects cannot hold, or it will be a source of trial for them,” and so Ibn ‘Abbas would conceal some of his hadiths (from the generality) and only discuss them among the people of knowledge. Hafiz Sakhawi also cited the hadith (*Maqasid* #179) which states: “Place people (i.e. deal with them) according to their proper place,” which is quoted by Imam Muslim in the Introduction to his *Sahih* (from A’isha), and recorded by Abu Dawud (#4202), Ibn Khuzayma, al-Hakim in his *Ma’rifat ‘Ulum al-Hadith*, Bazzar, Abu Ya’la (8:246 #4826), Ibn ‘Asakir (*Tarikh*, 42:523), Hakim Tirmidhi (*Asl* #84), Bayhaqi in his *Shu’ab* (#10999) and *K. Adab*, Abu’l Shaykh in *Amthal al-Hadith*, Ibn Abi ‘Asim in his *K. Zuhd*, and others, and it is Hasan according to ‘Ajluni in *Kashf al-Khafa’* (#590, #629) and Sakhawi, and *Sahih* according to Hakim and Ibn Salah. Also, Ibn Abi ‘Asim in his *Kitab as-Sunna* (p. 291 #641-43) mentions hadiths of similar meaning.

⁴⁰¹ Imam Ahmad (4:152, 5:257, 5:264), Bukhari (*Tarikh al-Kabir*, 1:335 #1055), Hakim (*Mustadrak*, 4:86), Tabarani in his *Mu’jam Kabir* (8:311, 22:20), *Awsat* (6:171-72), and *Saghir* (2:34), Abu Ya’la (6:119 #3391), al-Khatib (*Tarikh Baghdad*, 13:127), Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (*Tamhid*, 20:247), Daylami in *Firdaws* (3:20), Tayalisi (#1228, 1956), Ibn Hibban (#7233), ‘Abd ibn Humayd (#767, 998), Ibn Abi ‘Asim (*K. Sunna*, p. 630-31), Ruyani (2:311), and Ibn ‘Adiyy (*Kamil*, 4:1427). Haythami (10:66-67) and Suyuti (*Jami’ as-Saghir* #5304) said it is *Sahih*.
⁴⁰² Recorded by Daylami in his *Firdaws* (1:139 #338) from Abu Hurayra, and in similar wording by Ibn Abi Shayba (8:111). Related to it is the very weak hadith: “Whoever wishes to find the sweetness of faith, let him wear wool out of humility to Allah,” which is recorded by Hakim (1:28), Bayhaqi (*Shu’ab al-Iman*, #6150-51, see also: #6161, 8189), and Daylami (4:182). Also: “Wearing clothes of wool and sitting with the poor believers is freedom from arrogance” (*Hilya* 3:229, *Shu’ab* 5:153) with chains that strengthen it to become Hasan, according to Suyuti (*La’ali* 2:225) and Ibn ‘Arraq (*Tanzih al-Shari’a* 2:273-74). Cf. Munawi (*Fayd*, 4:463).

⁴⁰³ Recorded by Tabarani (*M. Awsat*, 6:315 *Da’if*), Hakim Tirmidhi (*Asl* #230), Ibn ‘Adiyy (6:2432), Asbahani (*Tarhib*, 2:84 #1204), Abu ‘Abdur-Rahman as-Sulami (*Forty Hadiths*, #3), and Daylami (*Firdaws*, 1:175).

- inheriting the transmission from Shaykhs of Tariqa and taking blessings and sacred knowledge from being in their company (Suhba)
- wearing clothes of wool (Suf) and never eating to one's fill
- perfecting one's character
- entering into the Holy Presence of Allah and obtaining from Him special grants
- entering into the Unseen parts of the heavens (Malakut) and being unveiled some of its realities

All of these hadiths (none of which are forged) show that the Sufis are holders of a specific knowledge which can only be transmitted to and inherited by those whose hearts are receptive and alive, who have perfected their character and not busied themselves with the worldly pleasures, who have sat in the company of and served the Awliya Kiram, and who have upheld the teachings of the Shari'a like all Muslims are required to do.

Shaykh al-Akbar Ibn al-'Arabi and the "Oneness of Being" (*wahdat al-wujud*)⁴⁰⁴

The contemporary Shaykh Nuh Ha Mim Keller wrote in his biographical note on Shaykh Muhyiddin Ibn al-'Arabi the following: "A Mujtahid Imam in Shari'a, Tasawwuf, Tafsir, Hadith, and other Islamic sciences, and widely regarded as a friend (wali) of Allah Most High, he was the foremost representative of the Sufi school of the 'oneness of being' (*wahdat al-wujud*), as well as a Muslim of strict literal observance of the prescriptions of the Qur'an and Sunna...." (Reliance of the Traveler, p. 1080).

He was nicknamed "Sultan al-'Arifeen" and "Muhyiddin" and "Shaykh al-Akbar," and he authored over 500 books and treatises on numerous subjects, took knowledge from over a thousand shaykhs, and studied Hadith under such scholars as Ibn 'Asakir, Abdul-Haqq al-Ishbili, Ibn Bashkuwal, and others. Among those who expressed praise and admiration of him and spoke highly of him are the following:

- 1) the Syrian Hanafi Mufti Imam Abdul-Ghani an-Nabulsi;
- 2) Shaykh al-Islam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti and
- 3) his teacher Abdur-Ra'uf al-Munawi;
- 4) Shaykh Ibn 'Imad al-Hanbali;
- 5) the scholar of language and hadith al-Fayruzabadi, who often quoted Ibn al-'Arabi in his Sharh on Bukhari's Sahih;
- 6) Imam 'Afif ad-Din al-Yafi'i;
- 7) Imam Ibn 'Ata'illah as-Sakandari;
- 8) Shaykh al-Islam 'Izz ibn Abdus-Salam (after becoming the student of Imam Shadhuli) who described him as the spiritual Pole (Qutb);
- 9) Imam as-Safadi, who said about the statement of his 'Aqida in the beginning of his Futuhat, "I saw that from beginning to end it consists in the 'Aqida of Abu'l Hasan al-Ash'ari with no difference whatsoever";
- 10) the Qur'anic commentators al-Alusi, al-Baydawi, Abu's Su'ud, and Isma'il Haqqi;
- 11) the hadith master Ibn an-Najjar;

⁴⁰⁴ I am indebted to Shaykh Gibril Haddad for much of the information in this section, may Allah reward him.

- 12) Imam al-Qurtubi al-Maliki, in his Tadhkira and other books;
- 13) the scholar of language and hadith Murtada az-Zabidi;
- 14) Shaykh al-Islam Zakariyya al-Ansari;
- 15) the Shafi'i mujtahid and hadith master Siraj ad-Din al-Bulqini, who said: "We seek refuge in Allah from saying that Ibn al-'Arabi affirms hulul and ittihad! He is far above that. Rather, he is one of the greatest Imams and among those who have probed the oceans of the sciences of Qur'an and Hadith," and his student
- 16) Siraj ad-Din al-Makhzumi, who said: "Our Shaykh Siraj ad-Din al-Bulqini and likewise Shaykh Taqi ad-Din as-Subki used to criticize the Shaykh (Ibn al-'Arabi) in the beginning, then they changed their position after they realized what he was saying and the explanation of his intent;"
- 17) Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami in his Fatawa Hadithiyya (p. 50-54, 335-36);
- 18) the late hadith master of Syria Shaykh Badr ad-Din al-Hasani;
- 19) the Hanafi Mujtahid Imam Muhammad Ibn 'Abidin, who reports in his Hashiyat Radd al-Muhtar (4:238-40) that Jews had interpolated statements of kufr into his work Fusus al-Hikam, and that Shaykh Ibn al-'Arabi was innocent of them;

...and many others.

The late Syrian authority on Ibn al-'Arabi and his teachings and writings, Mahmud Ghurab, demonstrated that there were interpolations added to his book "Fusus al-Hikam" (86 according to him) which not only are falsely attributed to Shaykh Ibn al-'Arabi, but furthermore contradict what he wrote in the Futuhat al-Makkiyya, of which we have an autograph copy to this day. Most of those who attack Ibn al-'Arabi do so by pointing to those false statements found in Fusus al-Hikam, such as that Hell's punishment will turn into bliss for its inhabitants which those in Paradise will not experience, or Pharaoh is going to eventually be forgiven and attain salvation⁴⁰⁵, or that one does not have to die as a Muslim believer to attain salvation in the Hereafter, or that the Prophethood of Muhammad (asws) is not final and other religions are not abrogated with Islam, and so on...none of which Ibn al-'Arabi believed in. Anyone with a fairly good mastery of Arabic can read for themselves the 'Aqida of Shaykh Ibn al-'Arabi in his Futuhat al-Makkiyya, and see how it matches exactly the Aqida of Ahlus-Sunna. As an example, one of the lines of poetry found in the Fusus states:

Subhana man azhara-l ashyya' wa Huwa 'aynuha!
 Glory to Him Who manifested all things and is those (same) things!

This idea, that Allah is the creation and the creation is Allah, is the common misunderstanding of the true meaning of the 'oneness of being' (an expression which Shaykh al-Akbar never used in his writings but was coined by his students). Rather, as Shaykh Abdul-Ghani an-Nabulsi wrote in his book Idah al-Maqsud min Wahdat al-Wujud (Explaining what is meant by 'oneness of being'), the creation can never be Allah because Being (Wujud) is a necessary attribute of Allah, while the being of the creation is only something possible and not necessary to it, since it is subject to non-being, and a beginning and ending. Because of this primary difference, the creation cannot be Allah. Rather, the creation's being is not

⁴⁰⁵ In his Futuhat al-Makkiyya (Ch. 62), he said that Pharaoh will abide in Hell forever. Imam Sha'rani also demonstrated that Shaykh Ibn al-'Arabi believed in eternal punishment in Hell for the disbelievers, in his Yawaqit wa Jawahir (2:205). See also Ibn al-'Arabi's Futuhat (Ch 371 and 1:301).

independent of Allah, and it can exist only through the Being of Allah its Originator, the One True Being. Therefore, the true understanding of this concept of *wahdat al-wujud* is none other than that which is expressed in the hadith wherein the Prophet (asws) said, “The truest words ever spoken by a poet are the words of Labid: ‘Indeed, everything – other than Allah – is false (batil).’”⁴⁰⁶

So when the Sufis say ‘Oneness of Being,’ the ‘Being’ that they are referring to is only the Eternal Being of Allah, the Real (al-Haqq) Most Exalted, Who is indeed One in His Essence, Attributes, and Acts. They do not at all refer to created contingent beings (*hawadith*), whose existence is only metaphorical and secondary, and not essential to them, and whose true origin is nothingness (as Labid stated). Allah said, “Everything is perishing except His Being” (Q28:88). The verb form of the word “perishing” (*halik*) is present perfect, meaning that everything other than Allah is in a constant state of annihilation. The Shadhuli Sufi Shaykh Ibn Ata’illah as-Sakandari said in his *Hikam*, “Created beings are established (in existence) by His establishing them, and are (in the same moment) erased (from existence) by the Oneness (Ahadiyya) of His Essence.” The Syrian scholar Muhammad Sa’id al-Buti, in his commentary on the *al-Hikam al-‘Ata’iyya*, wrote:

“What is the meaning of the expression “oneness of perception” (*wahdat al-shuhud*)? When I interact with secondary causes with full respect to Allah’s ways, His orders, and His Law, knowing that the sustenance that comes to me is from Allah, the felicity that enters my home is from Allah, my food is readied for me by Allah – even the smallest details, the wealth which I have been graced comes from Allah, the illness that has been put in me or a relative of mine comes from Allah, the cure that followed it is from Allah, ...and so forth – when the efficacy of causes melts away in my sight and I no longer see, behind them, other than the Causator Who is Allah Almighty; at that time, when you look right or left, you do not see except the Attributes of Allah. As much as you evolve in the world of causes, you do not see – through them – other than the Causator, Who is Allah. At that time you have become raised to what the spiritual masters have called ‘oneness of perception.’ And this oneness of perception is what Allah’s Messenger expressed by the word *Ihsan* (‘you worship Allah as if you see Him’). You do not see the causes as a barrier between you and Allah. Rather, you see causes – in the context of this doctrine – very much like pure transparent glass. The glass pane is present, no one denies it, but as much as you stare at it, you do not see anything except what is behind it. Is it not so?... The world is entirely made of glass panes in this fashion. You see in them Allah’s efficacy in permanence, so you are always with Allah Ta’ala. None has tasted the sweetness of belief unless he has reached that perception.”

Finally, Imam Sha’rani wrote in his *Yawaqit wa Jawahir* (1:9): “During my abridgment of the *Futuh*, I would pause at a number of passages whose agreement with the *Ahlu-Sunna* I could not perceive, so I removed them from this abridgement...and a time passed wherein I continued to think that those passages which I omitted were nonetheless from the Shaykh (Ibn al-‘Arabi), until our noble brother the scholar Shamsuddin Abu’t Tayyib al-Madani (d. 955H.) came to us and I mentioned this to him. So he brought to me a copy of the *Futuh*, which matched with the autographed copy found in Konya, Turkey, and I did not see in it

⁴⁰⁶ Recorded by Bukhari (Sahih: #3553, 5681, 6008, Tarikh: 7:249), Muslim (Kitab al-Shi’r, #4186-90), Imam Ahmad (#8747, 9694, 9840), Tirmidhi (#2776), Ibn Majah (#3747), Abu Ya’la (#6015), Humaydi (#1084), Ibn Hibban (#5783-84), and Abu Nu’aym (Hilya 8:217 and Akhbar Asbahan 1:270), all from Abu Hurayra.

any of those passages which I omitted from my abridgment. So by this I came to know that the copies found in Egypt were all reproduced from the copies into which interpolations were added after the Shaykh.” Furthermore, it is known that the Shaykh Ibn al-‘Arabi rewrote the Futuhat a second time after noticing that his first draft became tampered with. (What is ironic is that the same thing happened to Imam Sha’rani with his own book at-Tabaqat al-Kubra and other books, into which some of his enemies inserted stories containing things contradictory to the Shari’a, with no fear of Allah, as Imam Sha’rani himself mentioned in the beginning of one of his last books al-Anwar al-Qudsiyya)⁴⁰⁷.

Shaykh al-Islam Jalaluddin as-Suyuti wrote a whole book in defense of Shaykh al-Akbar Ibn al-‘Arabi, called Tanbih al-Ghabi fi Tanzih Ibn al-‘Arabi (“Warning the Ignoramus concerning the Vindication of Ibn al-‘Arabi), in refutation of the book by Burhan ad-Din al-Biqai (one of his teachers) who declared Ibn al-‘Arabi a kafir. In this book Imam Suyuti wrote: “Whatever is transmitted and attributed to the (Sufi) Shaykhs – may Allah be pleased with them – if it contradicts external knowledge, bears various possibilities: A) first, we do not concede its attribution to them until it is established as authentic; B) second, after authenticity is established, it may have a figurative meaning; if not, then one should say, ‘perhaps it has a figurative meaning for the people of internal knowledge and the gnostics of Allah (Most High)’; C) third, this may have come from them in a state of intoxication and distraction from their senses, and the lawfully intoxicated person is not taken to task as he is not held responsible in such a state. Holding a bad opinion about them after all these resolutions is a sign of deprivation of success. We seek refuge in Allah from failure and a terrible verdict...” (p. 59-60). This last point is demonstrated by the authentic hadith recorded by Muslim (Kitab at-Tawba, #4932) in which a person traveling alone in an empty land loses his mount (and thus his food and drink), and gives up all hope of living. When he suddenly finds his mount directly above him with all of his provision, he says out of overwhelming joy, “O Allah, You are my slave and I am your Lord.” His intense happiness overtook his rational senses and caused him to say something that, if someone in control of their rational sense said, would be outright blasphemy. But as Qadi ‘Iyad explained in his commentary on this hadith, he is not to be taken into account because his words were not intended according to their apparent literal meaning... likewise for all of those statements which issue from the Sufis when overwhelmed in their spiritual states.

As for those who claim that he believed in Divine Union (Ittihad) and Indwelling (Hulul), then they are clearly believing in lies, and obviously have not read the numerous passages in the Futuhat (and his other books) wherein he denounces these beliefs as false (such as in Futuhat 2:134). He said in his statement of ‘Aqida, “Know that Allah Most High is One – according to consensus – and that the station of Oneness is transcendent above it being an object of indwelling (hulul), or that it indwell in an object, or that it unites (ittihad) with

⁴⁰⁷ Imam Sha’rani also documented how some of his own books were tampered with (Lata’if al-Minan 2:190-91, Yawaqit wa Jawahir 1:8-9), as did Ibn ‘Imad al-Hanbali (Shadharat 8:374) and Imam Ibn ‘Abidin (Hashiya 3:303), who stated that he proved his innocence by showing the Shuyukh of Azhar the signed originals of his works, which did not contain anything those envious of him interpolated into them. Nor was he the only one whose works were tampered with: Shaykh al-Jaylani’s Ghunya was tampered with (Haytami’s Fatawa Hadithiya p. 149), Imam Ghazali’s Ihya ‘Ulum ad-Din (Sha’rani’s Yawaqit 1:8 and Lata’if 1:127), and many other examples. In general, all Islamic sciences have examples of tampered works and interpolated texts, and Tasawwuf has had the greatest number of such examples, because its enemies knew that it was the spirit of Islam and its shining light, and they “wished to blow out its light, while Allah willed that its light come to completion” (Q61:8).

another object.” And he said in his Futuhat (Ch. 169): “The Eternal can never be the locus of contingent creations, nor can He indwell in a contingent being (muhdath).” And he said (Futuhat, Ch. 559): “...This demonstrates to you that the created order (‘alam) is not the very-same Being of the Real (al-Haqq), nor did the Real Most High come to indwell in them. For if it were the Being of the Real, or if He indwelled in them, then He Most High would not be Eternal (Qadim) or Unique (Badi).” And he said: “The gnostic-knower of Allah (‘arif) can never say that he is Allah, even if he reaches the loftiest levels of proximity to Him. Far be it indeed for the gnostic-knower to say such a thing! Rather, he says, ‘I am the lowly slave...’” (Sha’rani’s Yawaqit 1:80-81). And he said in the Introduction (1:7) to it: “Whoever casts the scale of the Shari’a from his hand for a single moment perishes.”

Finally, in some of his poetry he writes: “Leave the words of people whose leader/ states that he has united with the One God. Union with Him (ittihad) is impossible, and no one claims it/ except an ignoramus who is stripped of his intellect. And who is empty of His Reality and His Shari’a/ so worship your God and do not associate another with Him.”

al-Khadir (alayhi salam): Is he still alive?

Shaykh al-Islam Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti wrote in his Ta’yid al-Haqiqah al-‘Aliyyah (Ch. 38), which is a short book in defense of Tasawwuf, the following:

“Among the things which certain people have taken issue with against the Sufis concerns Sayyidina al-Khadir and their meeting him, and his continued life. Among those who objected to this was Ibn al-Jawzi, who stated that if he was still alive then he would have met the Prophet (alayhi salat wa salam), and this meeting would have been recorded and transmitted. These objections were rebutted by many people.

“Ibn as-Salah (the Shafi’i mufti and hadith master) stated (in his Fatawa 1:184-85): ‘al-Khadir is still alive according to the entirety of the righteous scholars, save for a minority of hadith scholars who parted with that majority.’ And Imam Nawawi wrote in Sharh Sahih Muslim (15:135-36): ‘The vast majority (jumhur) of the scholars state that he is alive and exists among us, and this is agreed upon among the Sufis and the people of virtue and knowledge. The reports of their seeing him, meeting with him, taking from him, asking him, getting answers from him, and his inhabiting the blessed lands and areas are too numerous to count and too evident to conceal.’ Many scholars have composed whole works on this subject, the last of whom was Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar (‘Asqalani).

“His meeting with the Prophet (asws) has been reported in a number of hadiths, and in my opinion, even if each individual chain of those narrations is weak, together they strengthen and confirm each other. Furthermore, his consolation of the Sahaba when he (asws) passed away, and Imam ‘Ali saying, “that was al-Khadir,” and the fact that no one disagreed with him, could as well be considered consensus (ijma’). Also, the report of his meeting with ‘Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz has a Sahih chain. In all, the narrations about him are numerous...”

In addition, these reports of him meeting with the Prophet (asws) and his companions are so convincing that Hafiz Ibn Hajar numbered him among the Sahaba in his famous book on them al-Isaba fi Tamyiz as-Sahaba (2:286-334 #2272), and he listed and analyzed those narrations concerning him in detail, devoting to him almost fifty pages. Therefore, based

upon this mass-transmission (tawatur) – which would preclude any lying on this massive scale – and the principle which states, “Affirmation takes precedence over negation,” and the fact that no sound narration (or revelation) states categorically that he has died, the only conclusion that can be reached is that he is still alive and meets with many servants whom Allah Most High gifts with that honor. And Allah knows best...

Loving and following the pure family of the Prophet (asws)

“The family of the Prophet is my way (to good),
 And they are my means (wasila) to him (asws)
 I hope by them that I will be given in the next life
 My account of deeds in my right hand.”

- Imam al-Shafi'i, in his Diwan (p. 50) ⁴⁰⁸

I wanted to end this book by reminding the reader with a few among the many statements and commands of the Messenger of Allah (asws), concerning his family and descendents, and the necessity of loving, respecting, and following them, as a mark of the true Ahl as-Sunna wa'l Jama'ah, in the hopes that this work will be blessed by mentioning them.

- 1) “I am entrusting you after me with two weighty things: the Book of Allah, and my household. If you adhere to both of them you shall never go astray. They will not separate from each other until they meet me both at the Pond, so take great care in how you treat them after me.” ⁴⁰⁹
- 2) “The best of you are the best (in treatment of) my household after me.” ⁴¹⁰
- 3) “I requested my Lord to grant that anyone who marries into my family or whom my family marries will be with me in Paradise, and He accepted my request.” ⁴¹¹
- 4) “Fatima (alayha salam) is a part of me, and who angers her angers me.” ⁴¹² “Whoever harms or bothers 'Ali (alayhi salam) has bothered me.” ⁴¹³ He (asws) said the same things about their two children Hasan and Husayn. ⁴¹⁴ See also Ibn Hajar's Isaba (4:564-69).
- 5) “Every blood-tie and relation is cut off on Qiyama except my blood-tie and relation.” ⁴¹⁵

⁴⁰⁸ Also Quoted by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami al-Shafi'i in his Khayrat Hisan (p. 69).

⁴⁰⁹ Recorded by Muslim (#4425), Tirmidhi (#3718, 3720), Darimi (#3182), Imam Ahmad (Musnad 3:14, 17, 59, 4:367, 5:181-82; Fada'il Sahaba 2:585, 779), Nasa'i (Sunan Kubra 5:45, 130; Khasa'is 'Ali p. 96), Hakim (3:109-110, 148 Sahih), Tabarani (M. Kabir 3:65-67, 5:153-54; M. Awsat 3:374), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:418), Ibn Sa'd (2:194), Abu Ya'la (2:376), Abu Nu'aym (1:355), Ibn Ja'd (Musnad, #2711), Ibn 'Asakir (42:216, 54:92), Quda'i (1:419 #721), and many others. See also Haythami's Majma' Zawa'id (9:163) and Busiri's Ithaf as-Sada (6:109).

⁴¹⁰ Recorded by Abu Ya'la (#5924), Hakim (3:311-12), Ibn Abi 'Asim, Khatib (Tarikh, 7:13, 276-77), and others, and it is Sahih according to Hakim, Dhahabi, Haythami (9:174), and Busiri.

⁴¹¹ Recorded by Hakim (3:137), and he and Dhahabi said it is Sahih. Also recorded by Harith ibn abi Usama (#1011), Ibn 'Asakir, Ajurri, and Tabarani in M. Awsat with a weak chain (Haythami's Majma' 10:17).

⁴¹² Recorded by Bukhari (#3437, 3483), Muslim (#4482-83), and others.

⁴¹³ Recorded by Imam Ahmad (3:483) and Abu Ya'la (2:109) with authentic chains according to Haythami (Majma', 9:129), and also by Tabarani, Bazzar (Musnad, 3:366), Hakim (3:121 Sahih), Ibn Hibban (15:365), Diya' (Mukhtara, 3:266-68), Ibn Abi Shayba (7:502), Harith (Zawa'id, #987), and others, and it is Sahih.

⁴¹⁴ Imam Ahmad (Musnad 4:172, Fada'il 2:772), Tirmidhi (#3708), Ibn Majah (#141), Ibn Hibban (15:427-28), Hakim (3:166, 177), Tabarani (M. Kabir, 3:32), Bukhari in Adab al-Mufrad (#364), and others, and it is Hasan according to Tirmidhi, Suyuti (Jami' Saghir, #3727), Haythami (9:181 cf. 9:179), and Busiri (Misbah, 1:22).

⁴¹⁵ Recorded by Tabarani (M. Kabir 3:44-45, 20:25-27, M. Awsat 4:257, 5:376, 6:357), Diya' (1:197-98), Hakim (3:142), Imam Ahmad (4:323, 332), Bayhaqi (Sunan, 7:63-64), Ibn Sa'd (8:463), Abu Nu'aym (2:34, 7:314), and

6) “If a person were to station himself for the rest of his life between the Rukn and Maqam, and do nothing but pray and fast, while he harbors any dislike towards the household of Muhammad (asws), then he will enter the Fire.”⁴¹⁶

7) The Prophet (asws) said to ‘Ali: “No one loves you except a believer, and no one dislikes you except a hypocrite,”⁴¹⁷ and Jabir and other Sahaba used to say that they did not know who the hypocrites were except by their dislike of ‘Ali (alayhi salam).

8) “Whomever I am a patron (mawla) of, then ‘Ali is likewise his patron. O Allah! Befriend those who befriend him, be an enemy to those who are an enemy to him...”⁴¹⁸

9) Muslim (#4450) and others recorded that the Prophet (asws) had on a large black cloak, in which he also covered over ‘Ali, Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn, and recited: “Indeed, Allah wills to remove from you all filth, O noble household, and purify you completely” (Q33:33).

10) “Allah has three inviolable things (hurma) which He demands respect of... the inviolability of Islam, my inviolability, and the inviolability of my blood-ties.”⁴¹⁹

Finally, al-Muttaqi al-Hindi gathered 190 hadiths on the merits of the noble purified household in his *Kanz al-Ummal* (12:93-130), and Haythami (9:163-212) gathered 270.

many others, and is Sahih according to Haythami (*Majma'*, 4:271-72, 9:173), *Diya'*, Hakim, Dhahabi, Suyuti (*Jami' Saghir*, #6309), and Busiri (*Ithaf as-Sada*, 9:48 #7069).

⁴¹⁶ Recorded by Ibn Abi 'Asim (K. *Sunna*, p. 642), Tabarani (M. *Kabir*, 11:176), and Hakim (3:148-49 *Sahih*).

⁴¹⁷ Recorded by Muslim (*Kitab al-Iman*, #113), Imam Ahmad (1:95), Tirmidhi (#3669), Nasa'i (#4932, 4936), Ibn Majah (#111), Tabarani (M. *Kabir* 23:375; M. *Awsat* 2:337, 5:87), Abu Ya'la (1:250, 12:362), Ibn Hibban (15:367), Abu Nu'aym (4:185), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (*Istidhkar*, 8:446), Ibn Abi 'Asim (K. *Sunna*, p. 598), and others.

⁴¹⁸ This hadith is related from over 30 Sahaba ('Ajluni's *Kashf al-Khafa'* 2:361). Recorded by Imam Ahmad (1:84, 118-19, 152, 4:218, 281, 368, 370, 5:370), Nasa'i (*Sunan Kubra*, 5:45, 130-136), Ibn Hibban (15:376), Hakim (2:130, 3:110, 134, 371), Tabarani (M. *Kabir* 3:180, 5:166, M. *Awsat* 1:112, 2:24, M. *Saghir* 1:119), Bazzar (*Musnad*, 2:133, 235, 3:30, 35, 171), *Diya'* (2:105-06, 274), Ibn Abi 'Asim (p. 566, 604, 607), Abu Ya'la (11:307), and is Sahih according to Hakim, Haythami (9:103-08), Ibn Hajar (*Fath*, 4:74), Dhahabi (*Siyar*, 5:415), and others.

⁴¹⁹ Recorded by Tabarani (M. *Kabir* #2881, M. *Awsat* #203) and Abu Nu'aym with a chain containing Ibrahim ibn Hammad who is Da'if (*Lisan Mizan*, 1:50). However, it is supported by Q42:23 and related hadiths, such as: “Keep to our love (the Ahl al-Bayt), for whoever meets Allah while having love for us, enters Paradise by our intercession. And I swear by Him... no slave will benefit by his deeds unless he acknowledges our rank” (Tabarani's M. *Awsat* #2230), and “Six groups are cursed: ... those who violate the inviolability of my household...” (Hakim 1:36, Ibn Hibban 13:60, Tabarani's *Kabir* 3:126, *Awsat* 2:186, Bayhaqi's *Shu'ab* 3:443; *Sahih*: Dhahabi, Ibn Hibban, Haythami 1:176, 7:205, Suyuti *Jami' Saghir* #4660).

CONCLUSION

In this book we have demonstrated the following, using authentic proof-texts from the Qur'an and Sunna, and the statements of the scholars and Imams of Islam:

- 1- The origin of the reality of the Prophet Muhammad (asws) is from the Light of Allah. He (asws) also has unique attributes which distinguish him from the rest of creation.
- 2- There do continue to exist special servants, the elect Awliya', whom Allah and His Messenger have described in detail, and who have been given many grants such as knowledge and unveiling of the Unseen, and the ability to see the Prophet (asws) while awake.
- 3- Using the Prophets and righteous as a means (wasila) to Allah and asking their intercession, whether they are physically alive or dead, is something which the Prophet (asws) taught us to do and which the Companions and Salaf and later scholars continued to practice, and does not constitute shirk. Also, seeking blessings through the righteous and their relics is permissible and was done by the Salaf, and does not constitute worship of them.
- 4- The Dead are able to hear our greetings and prayers, and if asked, will make prayers for us. This is especially true for the Prophets and righteous Awliya'. Therefore, it is recommended to visit their graves to obtain blessings, and to donate the rewards of voluntary worship to them.
- 5- Innovation (Bid'a) in Islam can be classified as mandatory, recommended, permissible, disliked, or forbidden. Therefore, saying that literally every bid'a is a misguidance leading to Hell is incorrect and baseless.
- 6- Audible group dhikr in mosques is not only allowed but very highly recommended, and there is no action that has greater reward than dhikr.
- 7- Commemorating the birth of the Prophet (asws) and expressing gratitude for it is something he did, the Companions did, and is recommended, as the scholars have derived and explained from the Qur'an and Sunna.
- 8- Tasawwuf has always been an integral part of the Din of Islam, since it is the practice and implementation of the principles of Ihsan, just as Fiqh is the science of Islam and its implementation. The Salaf and Ulama were Sufis and supported Tasawwuf.
- 9- The spiritual retreat which the Sufis practice is perfectly within the limits of Shari'a, and is a praiseworthy act of devotion and drawing near to Allah.
- 10- It is recommended to increase one's voluntary acts of worship in Rajab and Sha'ban and other holy times and blessed moments.

We end as we began in the praise and exaltation of Allah (Most Great), asking His blessings upon our liege-lord Muhammad, and seeking from Him His contentment and forgiveness of our shortcomings. And Allah knows best!
