



## **Tawassul and Shafa'ah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)**

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Tawassul (intermediation) through the Prophet is a way in acknowledgement of his standing as the chief intercessor for the Ummah before Allah (SWT).

Allah has said of His Holy Prophet, Peace be upon him:

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

In another verse it has been mentioned:

'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 indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful.' (4:64)

Allah has mentioned all this about His Prophet because it is through His Prophet that He Himself has shown His greatest mercy and most comprehensive forgiveness, and it is by coming to the Prophet that the believers seek to obtain these from Allah. This is clear evidence, both now as it was then, that the mediation of the Prophet (Tawassul) for that is the meaning of intercession (Shafa'ah) can be sought to obtain forgiveness from Allah.

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

'Tawassul (using means), tashaffu` (using intercession), and istighatha (asking help) all have the same meaning, and the only meaning they have in the hearts of the believers is that of tabarruk (using blessings) with the mention of Allah's beloved ones, since it is established that He grants His mercy to all His servants for the sake of His beloved ones.'

The early and late Imams of the Ummah have said clearly that tawassul through the Prophet is highly desirable and recommended for every person.

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

He replied: "How could you turn your face away from him when he is the means (wasila) of your and your father Adam's forgiveness to Allah on the Day of Resurrection? Nay, face him and ask for his intercession (istashfi` bihi) so that Allah will grant it to you as He said: "If they had only, when they were

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

Intercession is the greatest means as it will be only through intercession that the people of the fire will enter Paradise

When the distress becomes too great for the people on the Day of Judgement and they have stood for too long, suffering in the heat and terror and distress, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) says, "How will you be when Allah gathers you together like arrows in a quiver, for fifty thousand years, during which Allah will not look at you?"

There follows the lengthy hadeeth about intercession:

It was narrated that Anas ibn Maalik said: Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us: "When the Day of Resurrection comes, the people will surge with each other like waves. They will come to Adam and say, 'Intercede for us with your Lord.' He will say, 'I am not fit for that. Go to Ibraaheem for he is the Close Friend of the Most Merciful.' So they will go to Ibraaheem, but he will say, 'I am not fit for that. Go to Moosa for he is the one to whom Allaah spoke directly.' So they will go to Moosa but he will say, 'I am not fit for that. Go to 'Eesa for he is a soul created by Allaah and His Word.' So they will go to 'Eesa but he will say, 'I am not fit for that. Go to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).' So they will come to me and I

will say, I am fit for that.' Then I will ask my Lord for permission and He will give me permission, and He will inspire me with words of praise with which I will praise Him, words that I do not know now. So I will praise Him with those words of praise and I will fall down prostrate before Him. He will say, 'O Muhammad, raise your head. Speak and intercession will be granted to you, ask and you will be given, intercede and your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my ummah, my ummah!' He will say, 'Go and bring forth everyone in whose heart there is faith the weight of a barley-grain.' So I will go and do that. Then I will come back and praise Him with those words of praise and I will fall down prostrate before Him. He will say, 'O Muhammad, raise your head. Speak and intercession will be granted to you, ask and you will be given, intercede and your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my ummah, my ummah!' He will say, 'Go and bring forth everyone in whose heart there is faith the weight of a small ant or a mustard-seed.' So I will go and do that. Then I will come back and praise Him with those words of praise and I will fall down prostrate before Him. He will say, 'O Muhammad, raise your head. Speak and intercession will be granted to you, ask and you will be given, intercede and your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, my ummah, my ummah!' He will say, 'Go and bring forth from the Fire everyone in whose heart there is faith the weight of the lightest, lightest grain of mustard-seed.' So I will go and bring them forth."

When we left Anas I [the narrator of the hadeeth] said to some of our companions, "Why don't we go to al-Hasan, who is hiding in the house of Abu Khaleefah, and tell him what Anas ibn Maalik has told us?" So we went to him, greeted him with salaam and he gave us permission to enter. Then we said, "O Abu Sa'eed, we have come to you from your brother Anas ibn Maalik, and we have never heard anything like what he narrated to us about intercession." He said, "Tell me." So we narrated the hadeeth to him and we came to this point and he said, "Keep going." We said, "He did not tell us any more." He said, "He told me this hadeeth when he was a young man, twenty years ago. I do not know if he forgot or if he did not want to let you depend on what he might have said. We said, "O Abu Sa'eed, tell us." He smiled and said, "Man was created hasty. I only mentioned that because I wanted to inform you of it. Anas told me the same as he told you, and said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) added: "Then I will come back a fourth time and praise Him with those words of praise and I will fall down prostrate before Him. He will say, 'O Muhammad, raise your head. Speak and intercession will be granted to you, ask and you will be given, intercede and your intercession will be accepted.' I will say, 'O Lord, give me permission (to bring forth) all

those who said Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah.' He will say, 'By My Might, My Majesty, My Supremacy and My Greatness, I will most certainly bring forth from it those who said Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah.'" (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 7510)

From amongst the tremendous favours Allah (swt) has granted our beloved Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is the Major Intercession on the Day of Judgment. It is one of the blessings of distinction and excellence that is the mark of his excellence over the other Prophets and Messengers (peace be upon them all).

The scholars of Qur'anic Exegeses regard the "praiseworthy station" mentioned in verse 79 of Surah Isra'a to refer to the Major Intercession that has been singularly reserved for al-Habib (peace and blessings be upon him). [Alusi, Ruh al-Ma'ani ; Ibn Ashur, Tahrir wa Tanweer]

The Aqeedah of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jma'ah is that, the way Tawassul (seeking help) and Shafa'ah (intercession) of the Holy Prophet (SAW) continued in his blessed life, in the same way seeking his mediation for forgiveness and expressing one's need at his shrine has also been an established fact in the lives of the Companions, 'Tabeen and Tabe-Tabeen and Jurists on Hadith.

The above-mentioned ayah from surah al-Nisa confirmed that when people become unjust to themselves by doing any act of sins, they should present themselves in the court of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and seek forgiveness from Allah Almighty. If the Prophet (saw) asks forgiveness for them, they would find Allah Almighty as the Merciful and the One who accepts their repentance. This commandment of Allah (SWT) was during the Prophetic period and would continue to hold till the Day of Judgment. Imam Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami and Imam Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri offered the best interpretation of this verse 1100 years ago. Hafiz Ibn Kathir, the disciple of Allama Ibn Taimiyya, also interpreted this verse. Hafiz Ibn Kathir still holds considerable influence in the Arab world. Interpreting the verse, he has written that Allah Almighty has ordained the sinners from among the Ummah of the Holy Prophet (SAW) that if they committed any sin, they should present themselves in the court of the Prophet (SAW). This commandment of presenting themselves holds till the Day of Judgment.

It has been narrated that Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal narrated, that Marwan bin Hakam once saw a man falling on the grave of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and weeping. He made that person stand up and asked him as to what he was doing as this was the shrine of the Holy Prophet (SAW). When that person turned his face, it was known that the man was Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA), Companion of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) warned

Marwan to be careful in uttering his words as they were present in the court of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and that he had not come to a stone. This action of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (RA) establishes the principle of this belief that the Holy Prophet (SAW) is present among us and he who believes to the contrary happens to deviate from the path of the Companions.

Another incident has been narrated regarding intermediation through the Holy Prophet (SAW) after his demise from this world. Once the people of Madinah suffered from the worst drought, they came to Hazrat Ayesha (RA), mother of believers and pleaded their case. She instructed them to go to shrine of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and that there should be nothing between the sky and shrine. The Companions dug up a hole in the shrine. It rained so

heavily in Madinah that the entire city became inundated with water. The animals drank to their hearts' fill. It becomes established from this that intermediation at the shrine of the Holy Prophet (SAW) is the order of the mother of the believers and there is consensus within the Companions on it.

From the above-mentioned verses of the Qura'n, authentic narrations of the Hadith and many true incidents from the life of the Shaba, Tabyeen, Tabe Tabyeen and the Mujtahid Imams it has been proved that asking Allah (swt) through the Waseela of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is permissible, praiseworthy and a strong mean of accepting our Du'as. Aslo it has been proved from the verses of the holy Quran and authentic narrations of the Holy Prophet (SWS) that our beloved Prophet (SWS) will do Shafa'ah (intercession) for his Ummah on the day of Judgment and his Shafa'ah will be accepted. May Allah (swt) grant true love in our hearts for His beloved and may Allah grant us the Shafa'ah of His beloved on the day of judgment, as no one will be able to enter Jannah without the Shafa'ah of His Beloved (SallaAllahu Alaihi Wa Sallam). Ameen!

*[Imam & Khateeb at Shahjalal Mosque & Islamic Centre, Manchester, UK]*