



Thawāb al-‘Ibādāt ilā Arwāḥ al-Amwāt

The Conveyance of the Reward of Worship to the Souls of the Deceased

Honourable Faḍīlat al-Shaykh,
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Types of Worship

There are three types of worship, and they are:

- 1- **Physical:** that which is connected to the physical aspect, e.g. the recitation of the Noble Qur’aan, the *tasbīḥ* (praising God the Exalted) and *tablīl* (acclamation of God the Exalted), the *du‘ā’* (supplication) and *istighfār* (repenting), and the *ṣalāh* (prayer) and *ṣawm* (fasting), etc.
- 2- **Financial:** that which is connected to the financial and monetary aspect, e.g. the *zakāh* (mandatory almsgiving), the *ṣadaqāt* (charities) and *khayrāt* (philanthropies), etc.
- 3- **Combined (Physical and Financial):** that which is a combination of both the physical and financial aspects, e.g. the *ḥajj* (annual pilgrimage to the sanctified city of Makkah al-Mukarramah to perform various religious rites), in which both the physique of an individual is necessary to reach Makkah al-Mukarramah in order to perform the rites of *ḥajj*, as well as the monetary expenditure that goes with it.

Of all these different types of worship, when a Muslim performs even one type with sincerity, Allāh ﷻ, by His divine grace and affection, blesses him with *thawāb* (reward). The question that arises here is that whether one Muslim may confer the reward of his own performance of worship to another Muslim who has deceased, or not. (In other words, can one Muslim convey the reward of his own performance of worship to the deceased soul of another Muslim?)

The belief of the Mu‘tazila¹ is that neither the reward and nor any benefit thereof reaches the dead. On the contrary, the majority [of the Muslims, that is], the Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah believe that the reward reaches them, and that the deceased also benefits from such reward.

¹ Mu‘tazila: name of a theological school which introduced speculative dogmatism into Islām.

Although the Mu‘tazila cease to exist today, but, unfortunately, there have appeared within the Muslims, [some] people, who reject the fact of ‘*Īṣāl al-Thawāb*’ (the conveying of reward). To declare faith in the Blessed Qur’ān and the Noble Ḥadīth, whilst at the same time to reject the reality of the *Īṣāl al-Thawāb*, are beliefs of a contradictory nature. These people believe in the teachings of the Glorious Qur’ān and the Blessed Ḥadīth, and it is astonishing that whilst declaring faith and actions in these two, however, have they managed to reject the reality of *Īṣāl al-Thawāb*, and with it they have rejected the benefits thereof.

Such people should analyse the following pieces of evidence (with respect to the truth of *Īṣāl al-Thawāb*) in accordance with the teachings of the Majestic Qur’ān and the Honourable Ḥadīth), and reconsider their position.

Physical Forms of Worship

To supplicate and seek forgiveness for the deceased:

- 1- Sayyidunā Nu‘mān ibn Bashīr ؓ says that the Blessed Messenger ﷺ said:

“*al-du‘ā’u huwa ‘l-ibādah*”

(Abū Dāwūd)

(Supplication is [in itself] worship.)

- 2- Sayyidunā Anas ؓ reported that the Blessed Messenger ﷺ said:

“*al-du‘ā’u mukhbhu ‘l-ibādah*”

(Kanz al-‘Ummāl)

(Supplication is the essence of worship.)

It has been proven from the two *ḥadīths* mentioned above that the supplication is the reality of that respective worship, and to state further, it is in actual fact the essence of that worship.

- 3- Allāh ﷻ says:

“*wa ‘l-ladhīna jā’ū min-ba‘di-him yaqūlūna: ‘Rabba-na ‘ghfir la-nā wa li-ikhwāni-na ‘l-ladhīna sabaqūnā bi’l-īmān’*”

(The Majestic Qur’ān – 59:10)

(And those who came after them, they say: “Our Lord! Forgive us and (forgive) our brothers who have preceded us in faith.”)

In this verse, Allāh ﷻ has stated the noble act of the Muslims with commendation and praise. He praises them for their seeking of forgiveness for themselves as well as for their Muslim brothers who have passed away before them.

It has been proved that the *du‘ā’*, or supplication, is the essence of worship, and therefore, it has been proven that the worship of those alive can be of benefit to the dead. If this, now, is not accepted, then we may say that the *du‘ā’* and *istighfār* (supplication and seeking of forgiveness) by the Muslims in the favour of their deceased brothers is futile and a waste of

time. Likewise, we shall also have to believe that (May Allāh ﷻ safeguard us from believing so) that the Blessed Qurʾān praises and prefers useless and time-wasting acts.

This, therefore, proves that the supplication and seeking of forgiveness by living Muslims for the deceased Muslims is a means of forgiveness and exaltation of status for the latter.

4- Imām Jalāluddīn al-Suyūṭī ؒ says:

“wa qad naqala ghayru wāhidin al-ijmāʿu ‘alā anna al-du‘ā’a yanfa‘u’l-mayyita, wa dalīlu-hu mina ‘l-qurʾāni qawlu-Hu ta‘ālā: ‘wa’l-ladhīna jā’ū min-ba‘di-him yaqūlūna Rabba-na ‘ghfir la-nā wa li-ikhwāni-na ‘l-ladhīna ...’ ”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.127)

(And on this issue, many scholars have transmitted a consensus (*ijmāʿ*) that the supplication definitely benefits the deceased and it is supported by the saying of Allāh ta‘ālā in the Qurʾān: “And those who came after them, they say: “Our Lord! Forgive us and (forgive) our brothers who have preceded us in faith.” (59:10))

5- Allāh la-Hu ‘l-‘aḡmatu wa ‘l-kibriyā’u mentions the supplication of Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ with praise in the Magnificent Qurʾān:

“Rabba-na ‘ghfir-lī wa li-wālidayya wa li’l-mu‘minīna yawma yaqūmu ‘l-ḥisāb”

(The Blessed Qurʾān – 14:41)

(Our Lord! Forgive me and my parents and the Faithful on the day when the reckoning is done.)

Here, Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ is supplicating to Allāh ﷻ for the forgiveness of his deceased parents² and for [all] the Muslims. *Du‘āʿ* (Supplication) is worship, and the worship of Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ will definitely benefit his parents and the Muslims; otherwise his supplication would prove useless. Would it be, then, adequate to say that such a high-ranking prophet as Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ indulged in an act that was futile, and that the Glorious Qurʾān mentioned something to us that is of no use? (May Allāh ﷻ protect us from saying so!)

6- Allāh ﷻ says that those angels who have the honourable duty of lifting the Throne (*‘Arsh*) of Allāh the Creator, and those who surround the Throne, they praise me and glorify my Divinity, and at the same time they:

“wa yastaghfirūna li’l-ladhīna āmanū”

(The Noble Qurʾān – 40:7)

(...and the angels) seek forgiveness for those who have faith.)

This verse tells us that the angels supplicate to Allāh ﷻ for the forgiveness of the Muʾmins (those who have faith) whilst praising and glorifying Allāh ﷻ Himself. How wonderful, that it is the angels who are seeking forgiveness for the Muslims, and that it is the Muslims who will benefit thereof. If their supplication goes unheard and the Muslims do not receive any benefit from their supplication, then such an act of theirs would be useless, whereas the angels are

² Who were the parents of Prophet Ibrāhīm ؑ? For the detailed research by the author, please see the book titled ‘Zikr-e-Ḥasīn’.

innocent and *ma'mūr min-Allāh* (ordained by Allāh ﷻ) and that none of what they do goes fruitless. This proves that the worship of one individual can benefit another individual, with respect, undoubtedly, to the particular intention.

7- Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās ؓ says that the Noble Messenger ﷺ said:

“mā al-mayyitu fi al-qabri illā ka al-gharīq al-mutaghawwithi, yantaziru da‘watan talḥaqu-hū min abin, aw ummin, aw akhin, aw ṣadīqin. fa-idhā laḥiqat-hu, kāna aḥabba ilayhi min al-dunyā wa mā fī-hā, wa inna ‘Llāha ta ‘ālā layudkhillu ilā ahl al-qubūri min du‘ā’i ahl al-arḍi amthāl al-jibālī, wa inna hadiyat al-aḥyā’i ila al-amwāti al-istighfāru la-hum”

(Mishkāt, pp. 206)

(The situation of a deceased one in the grave is like that of someone who is drowning and yelling for help. He awaits a supplication from his father, his mother, his brother or his friend. When a supplication reaches him, then its arrival is more beloved to him than the world and whatever it contains. And indeed, Allāh *ta‘ālā* blesses, by virtue of the supplication of those of the land, to those of the graves, the reward and blessings [the size of] like those of mountains. And, obviously, the gift of those alive to those who have deceased is the [supplication of] seeking forgiveness for them.)

This *ḥadīth* proves that the deceased awaits the supplication of *istighfār*, and it also proves that gifts from those alive, i.e. supplication for the seeking of forgiveness, are a means of great benefit to him.

8- It was reported by Sayyidunā ibn ‘Abbās ؓ that the Beloved Messenger ﷺ said:

“mā min rajulin muslimin yamūtu, fayaqūmu ‘alā janāzati-hī arba‘ūna rajulan, lā yushrikūna bi ‘Llāhi shay’an illā shaffa‘abum Allāhu feehi”

(Abū Dāwūd)

(Whenever forty Muslims, who have never committed polytheism, participate in the funeral of a Muslim, Allāh ﷻ accepts their intercession [made] in favour of the deceased, i.e. forgives him of his sins.)

So, here we see that the intercession of forty living Muslims for a deceased Muslim, i.e. supplicating for his forgiveness, is a means for salvation.

9- Sayyidunā Mālīk ibn Buḥayrah ؓ reported that he heard the Beloved Messenger ﷺ say:

“mā min muslimin yamūtu, fa-yuṣallī ‘alay-hi thalaathatu ṣafoofin min al-muslimīna illā awjaba”

(Mishkāt, pp. 147)

(When three rows of congregation of Muslims gather at the funeral of a Muslim then Paradise becomes definite for him.)

This is why we normally try to form three rows of congregation at a funeral. It is obvious that forming lines in a congregation and saying the funeral prayer are not acts to be done by the deceased, but rather, by others. This act of other people becomes a means of forgiveness for the deceased.

- 10- It has been reported by Sayyidunā Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī ؓ that the Noble Apostle of Allāh ﷺ said:

“yatba‘u al-rajulu yawm al-qiyāmati min al-ḥasanāti amthāl al-jibāli, fa-yaqūlu: ‘annā hādihā?’, fa-yuqālu: ‘bi istighfāri waladika lak(a)’ ”

(al-Adab al-Mufrad Li ‘l-Bukhārī, pp.9 ; Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 127)

(On the Day of Judgement, a man will be pursued by [such a vast number of] pious deeds that would [literally] resemble mountains. He will ask, “Whence are these?” And it will be said to him, “Due to your son’s seeking of forgiveness for you.”)

- 11- Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah ؓ reported that the Noble Apostle ﷺ said that Allāh *jalla sha‘nu-Hu* exalted the status of one of His pious servants:

“...fa-yaqūlu: ‘yā Rabbi annā hādhibī ?’, fa-yaqūlu: ‘bi istighfāri waladika lak(a)’ ”

(Mishkāt, pp. 256)

(He [the servant] asks, “O’ my Lord , why is this [exaltation of status] done for me?” [Allāh ﷻ]replies, “Due to your son’s seeking of forgiveness for you.”)

It is evident from this *ḥadīth* that supplicating for the seeking of forgiveness in the favour of a pious person, or for a saint, is a means of elevating his status, and if the same is done in the favour of a sinful person, then that becomes a means of easement, rather vindication of punishment from him, as we have discussed earlier.

- 12- It was reported by Sayyidunā Anas ؓ that the Final Prophet ﷺ said:

“ummatī ummatun marḥūmatun, tadkhubu qubūra-hā bi-dhunūbi-hā, wa takhruju min qubūri-hā lā dhunūba ‘alay-hā, tamaḥḥaṣa ‘an-hā bi istighfāri al-mu‘minīn(a)”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 128)

(My nation (*ummah*) is a blessed nation. It will enter the graves with its sins, but it will emerge from the graves without a [single] sin upon it. It shall be purified [of its sins] due to the seeking of forgiveness by the faithful.)

- 13- The ‘Sharḥ ‘Aqā‘id Nasafī’, an authoritative book in the Ḥanafī school of thought, states:

“wa fī du‘ā‘i ‘l-aḥyā‘i li ‘l-amwāti aw ṣadaqati-him ‘an-hum nafun la-hum kbilāfan li al-mu‘tazilah”

(And, contrary to [the beliefs of] the Mu‘tazilah, the supplication of those alive for those who have deceased, or giving in charity and in good causes on their behalf, are [acts] of benefit to them.³)

- 14- The author of ‘Mirqāt – a commentary on Mishkāt’, the great Imām, Sayyidunā al-‘Allāmah al-Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī ؓ says:

³ The deceased.

“ittafaqa Ahl al-Sunnati ‘alā anna al-amwāti yantafi ‘ūna min sa‘yi al-aḥyā’i”
(Sharḥ al-Fiqh al-Akbar)

(The Ahlu ’s-Sunnah are united [on the fact] that the deceased ones benefit from the [noble] acts of those alive.)

To perform the prayer, to fast and to perform the *Hajj* on behalf of the deceased:

- 15- A person presented himself in front of the Merciful Messenger ﷺ and said: “O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! When my parents were alive, I treated them well. Now that they have passed away, how may I do good to them?”
The Noble Prophet ﷺ replied:

“inna mina ’l-birri an-tuṣalliya la-humā ma’a ṣalāti-ka wa an-taṣūma la-humā ma’a ṣiyāmi-ka”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 129)

(For them, it is best that whilst you offer your prayer, you offer [extra] prayers on their behalf also, and when you fast [for yourself], you fast [extra] for them also.)

- 16- Mother of the Faithful (*Umm al-Mu’minīn*), Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah al-Ṣiddīqah *raḍiy-Allāhu ta‘ālā ‘anhā* says:

“qāla rasūlu ’Llāhi ṣall-Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallama: ‘man māta wa ‘alayhi ṣiyāmun, ṣāma ‘an-hu waliyyu-hū’ ”

(Muslim)

(The Apostle of Allāh ﷺ said: “Whoever dies and [in such a state that] there are fasts [still] due on him, then his heir (*walī*) should complete those fasts for him.”)

- 17- Sayyidunā Barīdah ؓ reports from his father that he [his father] was sitting with the Blessed Messenger ﷺ when came a woman. She said: “O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! My mother has passed away. [She continued:]

“...inna ‘alay-hā ṣawmu-shabrin a-fa-aṣūmu ‘an-hā?’ , qāla: ‘ṣūmī ‘an-hā’, qālat: ‘inna-hā lam-taḥujja qattu, a-fa-aḥujju ‘an-hā?’ , qāla: ‘ḥujjī ‘an-hā’ ”

(Muslim, Kitāb al-Ṣawm; Abū Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Waṣāyā)

(...and she had a month’s fasting [still] due on her. Shall I fast on her behalf?)

The Great Messenger ﷺ replied: “[Yes,] fast on her behalf.”

She [then] said: “My mother had never performed the *ḥajj*. Shall I perform the *ḥajj* on her behalf?”

The Noble Prophet ﷺ replied: “[Yes,] perform the *ḥajj* on her behalf.”)

The above-mentioned three *ḥadīths* prove that the Blessed Messenger ﷺ commanded that the prayer, the fast and the *ḥajj* should be performed on behalf of the deceased. It is obvious that such performance of prayer, fast and the *ḥajj* would definitely benefit those who have passed away. If, however, the dead did not benefit from the worship of those alive, then the Final Prophet ﷺ would never have allowed such worship to be performed on their behalf, but rather,

he would have told us that our worship is of no benefit to them, and that to perform an act of worship on their behalf is useless.

- 18- Sayyidunā ibn ‘Abbās ؓ says that a woman from the tribe of Juhaynah came to the Beloved Messenger ﷺ and said: “O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ,:

“inna ummī nadharat an-taḥujja, fa-lam-taḥujja ḥattā mātāt, a-fa-aḥujju ‘an-hā ?’, qāla: ‘ḥujjī ‘an-hā’ ”

(Bukhāri)

(My mother had pledged to perform the ḥajj, but unfortunately, she passed away before she could perform the ḥajj. Shall I perform the ḥajj on her behalf?”

(The Blessed Prophet ﷺ replied: “[Yes,] perform the ḥajj on her behalf.”)

Here we see that a woman had died with the burden on herself of a pledge for the performance of ḥajj, which, naturally, was compulsory on her. She was ultimately liable to punishment, but when her heir, who was alive, [carried out her pledge and] performed the ḥajj for her, she was now free from the punishment due to her. This tells us that the dead may benefit from the [noble] actions of the living, as long as that act has been carried out with the sincere intention of conferring its reward to that particular deceased person.

- 19- Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ؓ reported that the Blessed Messenger ﷺ said:

“man ḥajja ‘an-wāliday-hi ba‘da wafāti-himā, kataba ‘Llāhu la-hu ‘itqan min al-nāri, wa kāna li al-maḥjūji ‘an-humā ajra-ḥajjatin-tāmmatin min ghayri an-yanquṣa min ujūri-himā shay’un’.

qāla rasūlu ‘Llāhi ﷺ: ‘mā waṣala dbū-raḥmin raḥma-hu bi-afdala min ḥajjatin yadkbulu-hā ‘alay-hi ba‘da marṭi-hi fī qabri-hi’ ”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.129)

(Whosoever performs the ḥajj on behalf of his parents after they have passed away, Allāh ﷻ notes down his exoneration from the Fire [of Hell] and he wins the reward of a complete ḥajj [performed by himself], whereas nothing is deducted from the reward of his parents.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Nothing reaches the uterine relative, in his/her grave, after his/her demise, better than the ḥajj performed on his/her behalf.”)

- 20- Sayyidunā Zayd ؓ ibn Arqam says that the Blessed Messenger ﷺ said:

“man ḥajja ‘an abaway-hi wa-lam-yahujjā, jazā ‘an-humā wa bush’shirat arwāḥu-humā fī al-samā’i wa kutiba ‘inda ‘Llāhi barran’ ”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.129)

(Whosoever performs the ḥajj on behalf of his parents who did not perform the ḥajj, then this ḥajj shall be sufficient for them, and their souls in the heavens shall be given the glad tidings thereof, and the performer of the ḥajj shall be recorded with Allāh ‘azza wa jalla as a devout person.)

- 21- Sayyidunā Abū Hurayrah ؓ is reported to have said that the Noble Messenger ﷺ said:

“*man ḥajja ‘an-mayyitin fa-li ‘l-ladhī ḥajja ‘an-hu mithla ajri-hi*”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 129)

(Whosoever performs the *ḥajj* on behalf of a deceased person, then the performer of the *ḥajj* shall receive an equal reward as that of the deceased [on behalf of whom the *ḥajj* was performed].)

22- It is stated in the ‘Hidāyah’, a famous book in the *Hanafī* school of thought:

“*inna al-insāna la-hū an-yaj‘ala thawāba ‘amali-hī li-ghayri-hī ṣalātan aw ṣawman aw ghayru-hā, ‘inda ahli’ s-sunnati wa ‘l-jamā‘ati*”

(According to the Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah, a person may, certainly, confer the reward of his [good] action to another person, be it [the reward of] prayer, fasting or anything else [whatsoever].)

23- Sayyidunā Shah Waliyyullāh al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؒ says:

“*ba‘d az-farogh dogāna thawāb Amīr ‘Alī Hamdānī ba-khwānad*”

(Intibāh fī Salāsili Awliyā‘i ‘Llāh, pp.116)

(When one is free, he should confer the same reward to Amīr Sayyid ‘Alī Hamdānī)

To recite the Glorious Qur’ān and to do ‘Fātiḥah-Khwānī’⁴ (special supplication for deceased) in favour of the deceased:

24- Sayyidunā Anas ؓ reported that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

“*man dakhala ‘l-maqābira fa-qara’a sūrata yā-sīn, khaffafa ‘Llāhu ‘an-hum, wa kāna la-hu bi-‘adadi man fī-hā ḥasanātin*”

(Whosoever enters a cemetery and recites the Sūrah Yā-Sīn, Allāh ﷻ makes a concession [in punishment] for them, and He grants the amount of reward for the reciter as there are the number of buried persons.)

“*wa qāla al-qurṭubīyyu fī ḥadīthi ‘iqra’ū ‘alā maṭwā-kum yā-sīn’: ‘hādhā yaḥtamilu an-takūna hādhīhi ‘l-qirā’atu ‘inda al-mayyiti fī ḥāli maṭwi-hi, wa yaḥtamilu an-takūna ‘inda qabri-hi’*”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.130)

(and ‘Allāmah al-Qurṭubī ؒ, with respect to the *ḥadīth*, “Recite the Sūrah Yā-Sīn on your deceased ones”, says:

“This (*ḥadīth*) could possibly mean that the recitation be made close to the deceased person whilst he/she is dying, or it could [also] possibly mean that it be made next to his/her grave.”)

⁴ A ceremony in which the Sūrat al-Fātiḥa, with other parts of the Noble Qur’ān, supplications and prayers are said, and the reward thereof is conferred to the soul of the deceased.

- 25- It has been reported by Sayyidunā ‘Alī *karram-Allāhu wajha-hu al-karīm* that the Final Messenger ﷺ said:

“man marra ‘alā al-maqābiri wa qara’a ‘qul huwa ‘Llāhu aḥadun’ iḥdā ‘asharata marratan, thumma wahaba ajra-hu li ‘l-amwāti, uṭiya min al-ajri bi‘adadi ‘l-amwāti”

(Dār al-Quṭnī; Durr al-Mukhtār, Qirā’tu ‘l-Maytah, Bāb al-Dafan; Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.130)

(Whosoever passes by some graves and recites the “*Qul Huwa ‘Llāhu Aḥad*” (Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ) eleven times, and that he confers the reward thereof to the deceased ones, then he [himself] shall be given reward equal to the reward of the number of the deceased persons [in total].)”

- 26- Sayyidunā Abū Harayrah ؓ says that the Blessed Apostle ﷺ said:

“man dakhala al-maqābira thumma qara’a fātiḥata ‘l-kitābi, wa ‘qul huwa ‘Llāhu aḥadun’, wa ‘alhā-kumu ‘t-takāthuru’, thumma qāla: ‘Allāhumma innī qad ja‘altu thawāba mā qara’tu min kalāmi-Ka li-ahl al-maqābiri mina ‘l-mu’minīna wa ‘l-mu’mināti’, kānū shufa‘ā’a la-hū ila ‘Llāhi ta‘ālā”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.130)

(Whosoever enters a cemetery and recites the Sūrat al-Fatiḥah, the “*Qul Huwa ‘Llāhu Aḥad*” (Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ) and the “*Alhā-kumu ‘t-Takāthur*” (Sūrat al-Takāthur) and says, “O’ Allāh! I have conferred, the reward of whatever I have recited from your Word, to the Faithful men and the Faithful women of these graves, the deceased in those graves intercede for him in the presence of Allāh *t‘ālā*.)

- 27- Imām al-Sha‘bī ؓ says:

“kānat al-anṣāru, idhā māta la-hum al-mayyitu, ikhtalafū ilā qabri-hī yaqra’ūna la-hu ‘l-qur’āna”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.130)

(It was the custom of the Anṣār that whenever one passed away from amongst them, they would repeatedly visit his grave and recite the Noble Qur’ān for him.)

- 28- In the commentary of the ‘Hidāyah’, ‘Allāmah Badruddīn al-‘Aynī ؓ, also a commentator of the ‘Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī’, says:

“inna ‘l-muslimēna mā zālū fī kulli ‘asrin yaqra’ūna ‘l-qur’āna wa yahdūna thawāba-hu, wa lā yunkiru dhālika munkirun, fa-kāna ijmā’an ‘inda abli ‘s-sunnati wa ‘l-jamā’ati”

(The Muslims have, incessantly, been reciting the Majestic Qur’ān and conferring its reward [to the deceased ones], and even the ‘Munkir’ (rejecter of the Truth) does not reject [this fact], and, furthermore, the Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah have a consensus [on this issue].)

- 29- Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal ؓ says:

“idbā dakhaltum al-maqābira fa iqra’ū bi-fātiḥati ’l-kitābi, wa ’l-mu’awwadhatayni, wa ’qul huwa ’Llāhu aḥadun’, wa ij’alū dhālika li-ahl al-maqābiri, fa-inna-hū yaşilu ilay-him”
(Sharḥ al-Şudūr, pp. 130)

(Whenever you go to the graves (cemetery), recite the Sūrat al-Fātiḥa, the Mu’awwadhatayn (Sūrat al-Falaq and Sūrat al-Nāss) and the “Qul Huwa ’Llāhu Aḥad” (Sūrat al-Ikhlāş), and confer the reward thereof to those of the graves, for it definitely reaches them.)

30- Imām al-Za’farānī *rahmat Allāhi ta’ālā ‘alayhi* says:

*“innī sa’altu al-Shāfi’iyyah *rahima-hu* ’Llāhu ‘ani al-qirā’ati ‘inda al-qabri, fa-qāla: ‘lā ba’sa bibi’”*
(Sharḥ al-Şudūr, pp. 130)

(I asked Imām al-Shāfi’ī رحمته regarding the recitation [of the Qur’ān] near the grave and he told me that there is nothing wrong with that.)

31- Imām al-Nawawī رحمته says:

“yustahabbu li-zā’ir al-qubūri an-yaqra’a mā tayassara min al-qur’āni wa yad’ū la-hum ‘aqabahā, naşşa ‘alayhi al-shāfi’iyyu, wa ittafaqa ‘alayhi al-aşḥābu, wa zāda fī mawḍi’in akhara ‘wa in khatamū al-qur’āna ‘alā al-qabri, kāna afḍal”
(Sharḥ al-Şudūr, pp. 130)

(It is desirable, for the one who visits the graves, to recite as much as he can from the Glorious Qur’ān and to pray for them. Imām al-Shāfi’ī رحمته presented legal evidence on this [issue] and all [his] followers⁵ have agreed upon it. In another place it further states that if they⁶ complete the [recitation of the whole of the] Qur’ān near that grave then that is even better.)

32- Imām al-Qurṭubī رحمته says:

“kāna al-shaykhū Izzuddīni ibnu-’Abdil Salāmi yuftī bi-annahū lā yaşilu ilā al-mayyiti thawāba mā yuqra’u la-hū, fa-lammā tuwuffiyya, ra’ā-hū ba’ḍu aşḥābi-hī fa-qāla la-hū: ‘inna-ka kunta taqūlu, ‘inna-hū lā yaşilu ilā al-mayyiti thawāba mā yuqra’u wa yuhdā ilay-hi’, fa-kayfa al-amru?’ qāla la-hū: ‘kuntu aqūlu dhālika fī dāri ’d-dunyā, wa al-āna fa-qad raja’tu ‘anhu lammā ra’aytu min karāmi ’Llāhi fī dhālika, wa anna-hu yaşilu ilay-hi thawāba dhālika’”
(Sharḥ al-Şudūr, pp. 123)

(Shaykh ‘Izzuddīn ibn ‘Abdul Salām would decree that a deceased person does not receive the rewards of the recitation [of the Blessed Qur’ān] made on his behalf. When he⁷ passed away, one of his companions saw him in his dream, and asked, “You used to say that the deceased person does not receive the reward of what is recited for him and gifted to him [of the Magnificent Qur’ān]. [Tell me,] how is it?”

⁵ Shāfi’īs

⁶ the visitors to the graves.

⁷ Shaykh ‘Izzuddīn ibn ‘Abdul Salām

He replied, “I used to say that in the world, but now, I have withdrawn from that since I saw that, with the benevolence of Allāh ﷺ, the reward [of such recitation] definitely does reach the deceased person.”)

33- Imām Jalaluddīn al-Suyūṭī ؒ says:

“*wa ammā al-qirā’atu ‘alā al-qabri, fa-jazama bi-mashrū’iyyati-hā as-ḥābunā wa ghayru-hum*”
(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 130)

(And as far as the recitation [of the Blessed Qur’ān] on the grave is concerned, our companions, as well as others, are absolutely certain on its legality.)

34- Sayyidunā Mālik ibn Dīnār ؒ is one of the superior Awliyā’. He says, “Once, on a night of Friday, I went to the cemetery and saw that there was a luminance over it. I thought that Allāh *‘azza wa jalla* had forgiven the dwellers of that cemetery. Then, there was a voice from the Unseen, “O’ Mālik ibn Dīnār! This is a gift from the Muslims, sent to those of the graves.”

I said, “By Allāh *ta’ālā*, tell me what gift the Muslims have sent.”

“*qāla: ‘rajulun min al-mu’minīna qāma fī hādhibi ‘l-laylata, fa-asbagha al-wudū’a, wa ṣallā rak‘atayni, wa qara’a fī-hā fāṭihata ‘l-kitābi, wa ‘qul yā ayyuhā ‘l-kāfirūna’, wa ‘qul huwa ‘llāhu aḥadun’, wa qāla, ‘Allāhumma innī qad wahabtu thawāba-hā li-ahl al-maqābiri mina ‘l-mu’minīna’, fa-adkhala Allāhu ‘alaynā li ‘d-diyā’i, wa ‘n-nūri, wa ‘l-fuṣḥati, wa ‘s-surūri fī ‘l-mashriqi wa ‘l-maghribi’*”

(It [the luminance]) replied: “One man, from the Faithful, stopped [at this cemetery] tonight. He performed the ablution and prayed two units of prayer. In both the units, he recited the Sūrat al-Fāṭiḥa, and [in the first he added] the “*Qul Yā Ayyuhā ‘l-Kāfirūn*” (Sūrat al-Kāfirūn), and [in the second unit he added] the “*Qul Huwa ‘llāhu Aḥad*” (Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ). Then he said, “O’ Allāh! I have gifted the reward of it (the prayer) to those Faithful persons of the graves.” [It is due to this, that] Allāh ﷺ entered upon us the light and the luminance and [blessed our graves with] spaciousness and bliss, in the east and in the west.”⁸)

“*qāla mālikun: ‘fa-lam-azal aqra’u-humā fī kulli laylati-jumu’atin, fa-ra’aytu al-nabiyya ṣall-Allāhu ta’ālā ‘alayhi wa ‘lī-hī wa-sallama fī manāmī yaqūlu lī: ‘yā mālika ‘bna dīnārin, qad ghaḥara ‘llāhu laka bi‘adadi ‘n-nūri ‘l-ladhī abdayta-hū ilā ummatī, wa la-ka thawābu dhālika’, thumma qāla lī: ‘wa banā ‘llāhu la-ka baytan fī ‘l-jannati fī qaṣrin yuqālu la-hū al-munīfu’, qultu: ‘wa mā al-munīfu?’ qāla: ‘al-maṭālu ‘alā ahli ‘l-jannati’*”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 128)

(Sayyidunā Mālik ibn Dīnār says, “Thus, I incessantly performed these two units [of prayer] on the night of Friday. [Once] I saw the Prophet ﷺ in my dream saying to me, “O’ Mālik ibn Dīnār! Allāh *jalla sha’nu-Hu* has forgiven you [of your sins] equal to the amount of luminance you have gifted to my *ummah*, and there is an equal amount of reward for you. Moreover, Allāh *la-Hu ‘l-‘izzatu wa ‘l-kibriyā’u* has built for you a house in Paradise; it is in a palace named ‘Munīf.’”

I asked, “What is ‘Munīf?’”

He replied, “That which the people of Paradise envy upon.”)

⁸ in all directions.

35- Sayyidunā Ḥammād al-Makkī ؓ says, “One night, I entered the cemetery of Makkah al-Mukarramah. I placed my head upon a grave and fell asleep. I dreamt that the people of the graves were sitting in a circle, so I asked them what big calamity had taken place:

“qālū: ‘lā, wa lākin rajulan min ikhwāni-nā qara’a ‘qul huwa ‘Llāhu aḥadun’ wa ja‘ala thawābahā la-nā, fa-naḥnu naqtasimu-hū mundhu sanatin’”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 130)

(They replied, “Nothing, except that one of our Muslim brothers recited the “*Qul Huwa ‘Llāhu Aḥad*” (Sūrat al-Ikhlās) and conferred its reward on us. Thus, we are [sitting here,] dividing it for a year.⁹”)

36- Sayyidunā Shah Waliyyullāh al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؓ says:

“...after this, one should recite the Sūrat “*A-Lam-Nashrah Laka*” (Sūrat al-Inshirāḥ) three hundred and sixty times, then he should say the respective, mentioned supplication three hundred and sixty times, then he should recite Durūd Sharīf ten times and complete the procedure. He should recite the Fātiḥah mentioning the names of all the saints of the Chishtī cluster upon something sweet and then he should ask Allāh ﷻ concerning his need. He should do likewise every day and, In ‘Shā Allāhu ta‘ālā, his purpose will be fulfilled in a few days.”

(Intibāḥ fī Salāsili Awliyā’i ‘Llāh, pp.100)

37-The same scholar, Sayyidunā Shah Waliyyullāh al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؓ, in another passage, says:

“...wa yaqra’u shay’an min al-qur’āni li-wāliday-hi, thumma li-shaykhi-hi, wa li-ustādhi-hi, thumma li-aṣḥābi-hi, wa li-ikhwāni-hi, wa yarūḥu arwāḥa ‘l-mu’minīna wa ‘l-mu’mināti”

(Intibāḥ fī Salāsili Awliyā’i ‘Llāh, pp.116)

(...and he should read a portion of the Noble Qur’ān, which he should [then] confer the reward of to the departed souls of his parents, to his Murshid (religious guide), to his teachers, to his friends and to his brothers from all the male and female Faithful people.)

38-Sayyidunā ‘Allāmah Qāḍī Thanā’ullāh of Pāni Pat ؓ says:

“All the legal jurists have decreed that the reward of reciting the Blessed Qur’ān and of the ‘I’tikāf (religious seclusion) [and then conferring the reward thereof to the dead] are valid acts. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām al-Mālik and Imām Aḥmad ؓ also acknowledge this fact. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Shamsuddīn ibn ‘Abdul Wāḥid has said that the Muslims, since long ago, gather in the cemetery and recite the Glorious Qur’ān for the sake of the dead. Thus, we have ‘Ijmā’ (consensus) on this [issue].”

(Tadhkirat al-Mawtā wa ‘l-Qubūr)

39- Sayyidunā ‘Allāmah Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azīz al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؓ says:

⁹ It had been a year and, due to the sheer amount of the reward, the people of the graves were still distributing the reward of that recitation between themselves.

“It is a very noble and good act to visit the graves of the pious people, [in order] to receive blessings from them, to ‘Iṣāl al-Thawāb’ (confer religious reward) upon them, to recite the Majestic Qur’ān there, to supplicate goodness for them and to distribute food and something sweet in their honour. The scholars are unanimous (there is ‘Ijmā‘) on this issue.”

(Fatāwā ‘Azīzī)

To perform the ‘Tasbīh’ and recite the ‘Kalimah’ on behalf of the deceased

40- Sayyidunā Jābir ؓ says, “When [Sayyidunā] Sa‘d ibn Ma‘ādh ؓ passed away, we performed the funeral prayer alongside the Blessed Messenger ﷺ. He was then lowered into the grave and [his body] was covered with earth. After that, the Noble Apostle [ﷺ] began to recite the ‘*Takbīr*’ (exaltation of Allāh ﷻ) and the ‘*Tasbīh*’ (praise of Allāh ﷻ). We joined him in [this] recitation, which went on for a long time.

“fa-qīla: ‘yā rasūla ‘Llāhi, li-ma sabbaḥta thumma kabarta?’ qāla: ‘la-qad taḍāyyaqa ‘alā hādihā al-‘abd al-ṣāliḥi qabruh-hu ḥattā farraja-hu Allāhu ‘an-hu’”

(Mishkāt, pp. 26)

(Then, someone asked, “O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! Why did you say the *Takbīr* and the *Tasbīh*?”

He replied, “The grave had become contracted for this pious servant (of Allāh *ta‘ālā*). (It is due to our *Tasbīh* and *Takbīr* that) Allāh ﷻ has made it spacious for him.”)

This *ḥadīth* tells us very clearly the *Tasbīh* (praise of Allāh ﷻ) and the *Takbīr* (exaltation of Allāh ﷻ) by the Beloved Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ and by his Companions ؓ over a grave. One need not be a genius, thereby, to understand the issue of the saying of the Adhān (call to prayer) either, over a grave, shortly after a burial.

41- Sayyidunā ibn ‘Abbās ؓ says that the Great Messenger ﷺ passed by a couple of graves and said, “These two persons in the graves are in punishment, and it¹⁰ is not due to a big sin, but rather, that one was not cautious of splashes during urination whilst the other was a backbiter.”

“thumma akhadha jarīdatan raṭabatan, fa-shaqqā-hā bi-niṣṣayni, thumma gharaza fī kullī qabrin-wāḥidatin, qālū: ‘yā rasūla ‘Llāhi, li-ma ṣana‘ta hādihā?’ fa-qāla: ‘la‘alla-hu an-yukhaffifa ‘an-humā mā lam-yaybisaa’”

(Agreed Upon; Mishkāt, pp. 46)

(He then took a fresh branch [of date-palm] and split it in two halves. He then fixed one on each grave. They¹¹ asked, “O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! Why have you done this?”

(The Messenger ﷺ) replied, “Because their punishment will be lessened so long as they remain fresh.”)

We may note a number of important points in this *ḥadīth* :

- 1- That nothing of the ‘*Barzakh*’ (life in the grave) is hidden from the Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ,

¹⁰ the punishment

¹¹ the Companions ؓ

- 2- That the Messenger ﷺ had perfect knowledge of those particular sins due to which the deceased persons were being punished,
- 3- That the Merciful Messenger ﷺ declared the placing of fresh branches on a grave as a means of reduction in punishment by personally doing such an act.

We may ask, whether it was only the branches that were a means of the concession in punishment for those in the graves, or whether there was something else besides them. If we take the branches as the sole means of the lessening of punishment, then they would act for the same purpose (just as effectively) even after drying out. But rather, that is not the case. This shows that means for the concession in punishment in the grave is not the branches alone, but the *Tasbīḥ* (praise of Allāh ﷻ), as made by the branches. The verse of the Noble Qur’ān “*wa in-min shay’in illā yusabbiḥu bi-ḥamdi-Hī ...*” tells us that everything praises Allāh *jalla sha’nu-Hu*, and because branches die when they go dry, meaning their cessation of *Tasbīḥ*, this proves that the means of the easing of the punishment in the grave is the *Tasbīḥ* of the (fresh) branches and not the branches themselves.

If, therefore, the *Tasbīḥ* done by branches of trees is a means of a concession in the punishment for a deceased person in the grave, then, and beyond any doubt whatsoever, the *Tasbīḥ* made by us, that is the humans, is definitely a means for the easement in punishment for those in the grave, as is evident in *ḥadīth* No. 40.

Furthermore, this also proves the permissibility of the placing of (fresh) flowers on graves, because just as (fresh) branches of date-palms do the *Tasbīḥ* (of Allāh ﷻ), so do fresh flowers.

Some people say that the Messenger ﷺ placed fresh branches to help alleviate the punishment of those in the graves. They take this point to attack us, saying that we place flowers on graves of the *Awliyā Alāh* (friends of Allāh *ta’ālā*) believing that they are in punishment, and that we place flowers to help ease their punishment. The simple answer to this query is that the *Tasbīḥ* does not only prove useful to those who are being punished, but also for those who have been divinely blessed. If the *Tasbīḥ* is, on the one hand, a means for the easement in punishment to him who is being punished in the grave, then it is also, on the other hand, a means of happiness and elevation of status to him who is in the state of divine mercy.

Many a Ṣaḥābī¹² ﷺ and Walī¹³ have, at the times of their demise, willed to have fresh branches of date-palms placed on their graves. What were we to know what such sick people¹⁴ would regard of them!

Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azīz al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ﷺ says, “The placing of flowers and (the placing of) something with fragrance on a grave is a means of bliss for the one in the grave, and it is legally proven in Islām as valid.”

(Fatāwā ‘Azīzī – Part One)

42- Imām Rabbānī, Mujaddid Alf Thānī, Shaykh Aḥmad Farūqī Sirhindī ﷺ says:

“Tell friends and companions to recite the Kalimah (Ṭayyiba)¹⁵ “*Lā ilāha illa ‘Llāhu...*” seventy thousand (70,000) times for the sake of the deceased Khwājah Muḥammad

¹² Companion of the Blessed Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ

¹³ Saint, or Friend of Allāh ﷻ

¹⁴ those who reject the *Awliyā’*

¹⁵ *Lā ilāha illa ‘Llāhu muḥammadu ‘r-rasūlu’Llāh.*

Ṣādiq, and to recite it seventy thousand (70,000) times for his late sister, Umm Kulthūm. (Ask them to) confer the reward of (the recitation of) seventy thousand (70,000) *Kalimah* (*Ṭayyiba*) to the soul of one, and to confer the reward of (the recitation of) seventy thousand (70,000) *Kalimah* (*Ṭayyiba*) to the soul of the other. I ask friends to supplicate (to Allāh ﷻ) in their favour.”

(Maktūbāt Sharīf)

43- Muḥammad Qāsim Nanotvī, the founder of the School of Deoband, says:

“The colour (of the face) of one of the disciples of Sayyidunā Junayd ؓ suddenly changed. He¹⁶ asked the reason and he replied that he, by way of revelation, sees his mother in Hell. Sayyidunā Junayd ؓ had, some time ago, recited the *Kalimah* (*Ṭayyiba*) one hundred and fifty thousand times. Silently, he conferred the reward thereof to the mother of that disciple, without letting him know, in the faith that, according to some reports, the reward to such an amount of *Kalimah* (*Ṭayyiba*) recitation is a definite pardon. With that, he saw that the disciple was now looking very cheerful (and in high spirits). Sayyidunā Junayd ؓ asked the reason, again. He replied that he now saw his mother in Paradise. He¹⁷ then said that he had come to know of the truth of the disciple’s revelation by way of *ḥadīth*, and (now) the truthfulness of the *ḥadīth* had been proven by his revelation.”

(Taḥdhīr al-Nāss)

Financial Forms of Worship

To give ‘Ṣadaqah’ (alms) and ‘Khayrāt’ (charity) for the sake of the deceased:

44- Ummu ‘l-Mu’minīn (Mother of the Faithful) Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah al-Ṣiddīqah *radīy-Allāhu ta’ālā ‘anhā* says that once someone said to the Messenger ﷺ, “O’ Messenger of Allāh! My mother died suddenly without having made any will. I think she would have definitely given Ṣadaqah (alms) if she had been able to speak.

“*fa-hal la-hā ajrun in taṣṣadaqtu? qāla: ‘na’am’*”

(Muslim, Kitāb al-Zakāh; Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Waṣāyā; Muwaṭṭā’ Imām al-Mālik; Abū Dāwūd)

“If I give alms for her sake, will she receive the reward thereof?”

He replied, “Yes.”

45- The mother of Sayyidunā Sa’d ibn ‘Ubādah ؓ passed away, so he asked the Beloved Messenger ﷺ:

“*yā rasūl-Allāhi, hal yanfa‘u-hā an ataṣaddaqa ‘an-hā? fa-qāla rasūlu ‘Llāhi ﷺ: ‘na’am’, fa-qāla: ‘ḥā’iṭun kadhā wa kadhā ṣadaqatun ‘an-hā’*”

(Bukhārī; Nāsā’ī, Kitāb al-Waṣāyā; Muwaṭṭā’, Kitāb al-Aqḍiyah)

“O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! Will it benefit her if I give alms on her behalf?”

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Yes.”

Sayyidunā Sa’d ؓ (then) said, “My so-and-so a garden is (given as) alms on her behalf.”

¹⁶ Sayyidunā Junayd ؓ

¹⁷ Sayyidunā Junayd ؓ

46- Sayyidunā ibn `Abbās ؓ says that once a person came and told the Blessed Messenger ﷺ that his mother had died. (He said):

“a yanfa‘u-hā in taṣaddaqtu ‘an-hā? qāla: ‘na‘am’, qāla: ‘fa-inna lī mikbrānan, wa ush’hiduka innī qad taṣaddaqtu ‘an-hā’”

(Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Zakāh)

(“Will she receive benefit if I give alms on her behalf?”

(The Messenger ﷺ) replied, “Yes.”

(Then that person) said, “I have a garden and I declare you a witness that I have given it as alms on her behalf.”)

It is proven from the above three (3) *ḥadīths* that if anyone from the relatives of a deceased one gives in charity or as alms on behalf of the latter, then the deceased one receives the benefit of that spending.

47- Sayyidunā Sa‘d ibn ‘Ubādah ؓ came to the Prophet ﷺ and said: “O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! My mother has passed away.

“fa-ayyu al-ṣadaqati afdalu? qāla: ‘al-mā’u’, fa-ḥafara bi’ran, wa qāla: ‘bādhībī li-ummi-sa‘din’”

(Abu Dawūd, Kitāb al-Zakāh)

(So, which [type of] charity is better [that I may perform for my mother]?”

[The Messenger ﷺ] replied, “Water.”

Therefore, he dug a well and announced, “This is for the Mother of Sa‘d”)

It is worth noting here that such an honourable Ṣaḥābī as Sayyidunā Sa‘d *radhiy-Allaahu ta‘aala ‘anhu* says, “*bādhībī li-ummi-sa‘d*” (This [well] is for the Mother of Sa‘d, i.e. his own mother). In other words, that well had been dug for the sake of conferring reward to her soul. This proves, directly, that if a donation is made to confer the reward thereof to the soul of a deceased person and the name of that person is mentioned, then that donation is certainly not *Ḥarām* (unlawful). Examples are such as saying that this ‘*Sabīl*’ is for Sayyidunā Imām Ḥusayn and the martyrs of Kerbalā ؓ or that such food is for the Ṣaḥābah ؓ, or for the Ahl al-Bayt (those of the household of the Noble Messenger ﷺ), or for al-Ghawth al-A‘ẓam¹⁸ ؓ, or for Khwājah Gharīb Nawāz¹⁹ ؓ, etc. Such *Sabīl* and such food or drink will definitely not be *Ḥarām*. If it were to be *Ḥarām*, then we would have to declare the water of the well that Sayyidunā Sa‘d ؓ dug as *Ḥarām*, whereas the Blessed Prophet ﷺ, as well as the Ṣaḥābah ؓ, and after them, the *Tābi‘ūn*²⁰ ؓ, then the *Tābi‘ū al-Tābi‘īn*²¹ ؓ and also the people of Madīna al-Munawwarah drank from that well. Can any Muslim dare to say that such pious people drank water that was *Ḥarām*? May Allāh *ta‘ālā* protect us from saying so! No Muslim can ever say such a thing.

If the water of the well for which it had been announced that it was for the mother of Sa‘d ؓ is lawful and good, according to the Crown of Creation, the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and his Ṣaḥābah ؓ, then likewise, the water of any *Sabīl* for which it has been pronounced that it is for

¹⁸ al-Sayyid ‘Abdul Qādir al-Jilānī al-Baghdādī ؓ

¹⁹ Khwājah Mo‘īnuddīn Ḥasan Chishtī Ajmerī ؓ

²⁰ the generation of Muslims succeeding the Ṣaḥābah ؓ

²¹ the generation of Muslims succeeding the *Tābi‘ūn* ؓ

Imām Ḥussain ؑ and for the martyrs of Kerbalā ؑ, or that any donation is for so-and-so a Mu'min, then that also is, according to the Muslims, Ḥalāl (lawful) and good.

- 48- Sayyidunā Ṣāliḥ ibn Dirham ؑ says, “We went on *ḥajj* to Makkah al-Mukarramah where we met Sayyidunā Aḥu Hurayrah ؑ. He said to us, “Near your city of Basrah, there is a village called ‘Uballah’. In it, there is a mosque called Masjid ‘Ishār. Which one of you promises to perform two (2) or four (4) units of prayer for me?”

“*wa yaqūlu ‘hādhibī li-abī hurayrata’*”

(Mishkāt, pp.468)

(and then say, “This is for Abu Hurayrah”)

Sayyidunā Abu Hurayrah ؑ narrated that he heard the Beloved Messenger ﷺ say that on the day of the Occurrence, the Resurrection and the Judgement,²² Allāh *la-Hu ‘l-‘izzatu wa ‘l-kibriyā’u* will raise the martyrs from the Masjid ‘Ishār, and they will be with the martyrs of Badr.

In this *ḥadīth*, a great Ṣaḥābī ؑ of the Messenger ﷺ is requesting another to perform optional prayer for him and to say, “*hādhibī ‘li-abī hurayrata’*” that this prayer is for Abu Hurayrah ؑ, i.e. the reward of this prayer is for him. This proves the conferring of the reward of physical worship of one person to another, be the latter dead or alive.

Nevertheless, the mentioning of the name on whom such reward is to be conferred is a must. This *ḥadīth* also proves that worshipping at those places that enjoy a specific sanctity is an act of great virtue, and the worshipper entitled to great reward.

- 49- Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar ؑ reports that the Great Messenger ﷺ said:

“*idbā taṣaddaqa aḥadu-kum bi-sadaqatin taṭawwū’an, fa-yaj’ala-hā ‘an abaway-bi, fa-yakūnu la-humā ajru-humā, wa-lā yantaqīsu min-ajri-hī shay’an*”

(Ṭabarāni Awsaṭ; Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.129)

(When any of you gives in supererogatory charity, he should transfer it (the reward thereof) to his parents. Thus, its reward will be given to both of them [in full], and the one who gives that charity will not lose anything [of the reward for himself].)

- 50- It has been reported that Sayyidunā Anas ؑ says that the Blessed Messenger ﷺ said that whenever the family members of one who has passed away give in charity and good causes on his behalf, the Archangel Sayyidunā Jibrā’il *‘alayhi’s-salām* takes that charity in a tray of light to the grave of that particular person, and says:

“*‘yā ṣāḥiba ‘l-qabri ‘l-‘amīqi, hādhibī hadiyyatun abda-hā ilay-ka ablu-ka, fa-aqbil-hā’, fa-tadkbulu ‘alayhi, fa-yafraḥu bi-hā, wa yastabshiru, wa yaḥzunu jirānu-hu al-ladhīna lam yubdaa ilay-him shay’un*”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp.129)

²² the Last Day.

“O’ you in the deep grave! This is a gift that your family members have sent you, so accept it.” It is then given to him and he becomes joyful and tells others about it. His neighbours who have not been sent anything [as a similar gift] become sorrowful.)

- 51- Sayyidunā Anas ؓ says that he asked the Beloved Messenger ﷺ whether the dead receive the [benefits of] charity, *ḥajj*, etc. that we do for them.

“*fā-qāla: ‘inna-hū yaşilu ilay-him wa yafrāḥūna bi-hī kamā yafrāḥu aḥadukum bi ‘l-hadiyyati’*”

(Musnad Imām Aḥmad)

((The Noble Apostle ﷺ) replied, “Definitely, this reaches them and they rejoice in it just as any of you rejoice at the receiving of a gift.”)

- 52- The author of the ‘Tafsīr Khāzin’, namely, ‘Allāmah ‘Alā’uddīn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī [ؓ] says:

“*inna al-ṣadaqata ‘an al-mayyiti tanfa‘u al-mayyita, wa yaşilu-hū thawābu-hā, wa huwa ijmā‘u ‘l-ulamā’(i)*”

(Tafsīr Khāzin)

(Indeed, the charity given on behalf of the deceased benefits the deceased, and its reward reaches him. The scholars have a consensus on this issue.)

- 53- Sayyidunā Shah Waliyyullāh al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؓ says:

“There is nothing wrong with cooking and eating creamed rice at the ‘Fātiḥah’ (reward-sending function) of a saint with the intention of conferring reward to him; this is permissible. If such a reward-sending function is held then the wealthy are also allowed to eat.”

(Zubdat al-Naṣā’ih, pp. 132)

- 54- Sayyidunā Shah ‘Abdul ‘Azīz al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؓ says:

“Food that is cooked for (charity to confer its reward to) Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn ؓ, and the ‘Qul’ and the ‘Fātiḥah’, etc. are recited over it, it becomes full of blessings and is good for you.”

(Fatāwā ‘Azīzi)

- 55- The author of ‘Taqqiyat al-Īmān’, Ismā’īl Dehlawī says:

“Every type of worship that a Muslim performs, and confers its reward to one who has passed away, and [also] supplicates to Allāh *ta‘ālā* for his sake, this is an excellent and virtuous act. Furthermore, there is no doubt in the excellence of performing the customary functions for the *Fātiḥah*, the ‘‘Urs’ (death anniversary) and the ‘Ṣadaqah’.”

(Sirāt-e-Mustaqīm, pp. 55)

- 56- In another place he says:

“None should think bad of the food and *Fātiḥah* for the sake of the dead, but rather, this is a great and outstanding act.”

(Sirāt-e-Mustaqīm, pp. 64)

- 57- Here we present the ‘Fatwā’ (religious decree) of Ashraf ‘Ali Thanvī on the issue of *Īsāl al-Thawāb* or ‘the conferring of reward to the dead’:

Question- It is sometimes feared that if one confers the reward of his own noble act to someone else, then what is left (of the benefit) for himself? Therefore, do the dead [really] receive the benefit [of the noble act of another]? Please satisfy me by clarifying this to me.

Answer- “*fī sharḥ al-ṣudūri bi-takhrīj al-ṭabarānī ‘an abī ‘amrin, wa qāla rasūlu’Llāhi ﷺ: ‘idhā taṣaddaqa aḥadu-kum ṣadaqatan taṭarawwū’an, fa-yaj’al-hā ‘an abaway-hi, fa-yakūnu lahumā ajru-hā, wa lā yunqaṣu min ajri-hī shay’an’*”

This *ḥadīth* tells us that after one has conferred the reward, its full equivalent value still remains with him. Another *ḥadīth* in the Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim ‘*man sanna sunnatan ḥasanatan*’ also supports this *ḥadīth*.

(Imdād al-Fatāwā, part 5, pp. 399)

To make sacrifice or to free a slave on behalf of the deceased:

- 58- Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah al-Ṣiddīqah *raḍiy-Allāhu ta‘ālā ‘anhā* reports that the Noble Apostle ﷺ slaughtered a ram and said:

“*Allāhumma taqabbal min muḥammadin, wa āli-muḥammadin, wa min ummati-muḥammadin (ﷺ)*”

(Muslim; Abu Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Aḍāḥī)

(O’ Allāh! Accept [this sacrifice] on behalf of Muḥammad, on behalf of the household of Muḥammad and on behalf of the followers of Muḥammad ﷺ.)

- 59- It was reported by Sayyidunā Jābir رضي الله عنه that the Blessed Messenger ﷺ slaughtered a ram and said:

“*hādihā ‘an-nī, wa ‘an man lam-yuḍaḥḥī min ummatī*”

(Adu Dāwūd, Kitāb al-Aḍāḥī)

(This [sacrifice] is on my behalf and on the behalf of that person, from my followers, who has not sacrificed [anything of his own behalf].)

- 60- Sayyidunā Hanash رضي الله عنه says that he saw Sayyidunā ‘Alī *karram-Allāhu wajha-hu al-karīm* slaughtering two (2) animals, therefore he asked him why he was doing so. Sayyidunā ‘Alī *karram-Allāhu wajha-hu al-karīm* replied:

“*anna rasūla’Llāhi ﷺ aṣṣā-nī an-uḍaḥḥiya ‘anhu, fa-ana uḍaḥḥī ‘anhu*”

(Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Ḍaḥāyā; Tirmidhī; Abu Dāwūd)

(The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ made a will to me that I make a sacrifice on his behalf, therefore I am making a sacrifice on his behalf.)

The above three (3) traditions prove that the act of one person may benefit another. We see that the Beloved Prophet ﷺ sacrificed animals on behalf of his descendents as well as on behalf of his Ummah. Moreover, he also asked Sayyidunā ‘Alī *karram-Allāhu wajha-hu al-karīm* to sacrifice an animal on his behalf, and the obedience of Sayyidunā ‘Alī *karram-Allāhu wajha-hu al-karīm* in this regard is more than enough to prove that the act of one who is alive is beneficial and helpful to that person who has passed away.

61- Sayyidunā Zayd ibn Aslam ؓ says:

“*jā’a rajulun ilā al-nabiyyi ﷺ fa-qāla: ‘yā rasūla ‘Llāhi, a’tiqu ‘an abī wa qad maata?’*, qāla: ‘*na’am*’”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 129)

(A person came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked, “O’ Messenger of Allāh ﷺ! My father has died. May I free a slave on his behalf?”

(The Beloved Messenger ﷺ) replied, “Yes.”)

62- Sayyidunā Abu Ja‘far ؓ says:

“*anna al-ḥasana wa al-ḥusayna ؓ kānā yu’tiqāni ‘an ‘aliyyin ba‘da mawti-hi*”

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 129)

(Ḥasan and Ḥusayn ؓ would free slaves on behalf of (their father) Sayyidunā ‘Alī *karram-Allāhu wajha-hu al-karīm* after he had passed away.)

The ‘Ṣadaqah Jāriyah’ (Continuous Charity):

63- Sayyidunā Abu Hurayrah ؓ says that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said that a believer’s actions stop when he passes away. Nevertheless, there are seven (7) articles of which he continues to receive the reward and benefit of. (They are):

- i- If he has taught religious knowledge to someone, as long as that knowledge remains, he shall continue to receive equal reward,
- ii- If he leaves behind pious and righteous offspring that prays for him,
- iii- If he leaves behind (a copy of) the Noble Qur’ān,
- iv- If he has erected a masjid,
- v- If he has built a tavern for the benefit of travellers to rest in,
- vi- If he has dug a well or a stream, etc.,
- vii- If he has given a *ṣadaqah* (in charity) in his life,

So long as these articles exist and remain, he shall continue to receive due reward.

(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr)

Conclusion:

All of the evidences that we have given from the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the Scholars prove the deceased persons' reception of the reward of physical, financial and combined types of worship done by those alive. The entire Ummah has a consensus and an agreement on this issue.

This conferring of reward becomes a means of forgiveness for the sins of the sinful, and a means of the elevation of status for the righteous. The conferrer of the reward (the doer of the noble act) receives his own full reward that he is entitled to whilst the one whom the reward is conferred to also receives an equal amount.

To hold religious functions such as the 'Soyum' (the Third), the 'Sātawān' (the Seventh), the 'Gyārahvīn' (the Eleventh), the 'Chehlum' (the Fortieth), the 'Urs' (the Annual Anniversary), etc. for the deceased:

Now that we have satisfactorily dealt with and understood the issue of *Īsāl al-Tharwāb* or *Īsāl-e-Sawāb* (the sending/conferring of reward) in the light of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, it will be easier for us to know that holding various religious functions for the deceased such as the *Soyum* (the Third), the *Chehlum* (the Fortieth) and the *'Urs* (the Annual Anniversary), etc. are all legally valid and permissible.

Normally, when one dies, he is mourned for three (3) days. Even the scholars and saints have mourned for three (3) days. Before wrapping up the mourning at the end of the third day, the family and friends of the deceased person mutually give something in the way of *ṣadaqah* and *khayrāt* (alms and charity), they read some portions of the Blessed Qur'aan and they bless the reward of it all to the departed soul of the deceased person. The name of this function has come to be known as the 'Tijā' or the *Soyum* (meaning, the 'Third').

The family, friends and well-wishers of Sayyidunā Shah Waliyyullāh al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؒ held a *Tijā* (Third) in his honour. Sayyidunā Shah 'Abdul 'Azīz al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؒ writes:

“On the third day, the crowd of people was so large that words are not enough to describe it. There must have been 81 completions of the Glorious Qur'ān, maybe more, and the amount of times that the 'Kalimah Tayyibah' was recited is incalculable!”
(Malfūzāt-e-'Azīzī, pp. 55)

Sayyidunā Tā'ūs ؒ says:

“inna al-mawtā yuftanūna fī qubūri-him sab'an, fa-kānū yastaḥibbūna an-yuṭ'ama 'an-hum tilka 'l-ayyāmi”
(Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, pp. 57; Abū Na'im fī al-Ḥilyah, Imām Aḥmad fī al-Zuhd)

(Indeed, the deceased persons are tested for seven (7) days in their graves. Hence, the Ṣaḥābah ؓ would prefer that others be fed on behalf of that deceased person during those (seven) days.)

Shaykh al-Muḥaddithīn Shah 'Abdul Ḥaqq al-Muḥaddith al-Dehlawī ؒ says:

“*Ṣadaqah* should be given up to seven (7) days after the death of the deceased.”
(Ashi'at al-Lumu'āt – Sharḥ Mishkāt)

Scholars and saints say that the soul of the deceased remains in a special contact with the home for up to forty (40) days. The Beloved Prophet ﷺ is reported to have said that when a Mu'min dies, those portions of the earth where he would worship, those doors of the heavens wherefrom his noble actions would enter and from where his livelihood would descend to him, they cry for him for forty (40) days. (Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr pp. 24).

This is why many scholars and saints have conferred reward to the soul of a deceased person continuously for forty (40) days!

The basis of all this is that the Greatest Prophet ﷺ made *ṣadaqah* (gave in charity), for the Greatest Martyr (Sayyid al-Shuhadā'), Sayyidunā al-Amīr Ḥamzah ؓ on the third day, the tenth day, the fortieth day, the sixth month and one year following his martyrdom. (kadhā fī al-Anwār al-Sāti'ah ma'ziyan ilā Majmū'at al-Riwāyāt, Ḥāshiyat Khazānat al-Riwāyāt).

This proves that the customary religious functions of the *Tijā* or *Soyum* (the Third), the *Sātawān* (the Seventh), the *Gyārahvīn* (the Eleventh), the *Chehlum* (the Fortieth) and the *Urs*, etc. are all different names for *Īṣāl al-Tharwāb* and are, therefore, permissible in Islām. To call such functions as 'Bid'ah Sayyi'ah' or 'Biddat-i-Sayyi'a' (evil innovations) or a waste of time is itself a loss of way and a folly.

To place food and to recite the Word of Allāh ﷻ over it:

Sayyidunā Anas ؓ narrates that when the Blessed Messenger ﷺ married Sayyidah Zaynab *raḍiy-Allāhu ta'ālā 'anhā*, my mother (Sayyidah Umm Salīm *raḍiy-Allāhu ta'ālā 'anhā*) cooked some food as a gift and had me deliver it to the Noble Apostle ﷺ, stating that I should pass her *salām* (regards) onto him and to also request him to accept what little she could offer at that time. Accordingly, I delivered the food to him and passed him the *salām* from my mother as well as the message she had asked me to convey. The Messenger of Peace ﷺ replied, "O' Anas, place it²³ down and call so-and-so..."

I did as I was told and I continued calling [whomsoever the Messenger ﷺ was commanding me to call] until three hundred (300) people had gathered.

“fa-ra'aytu al-nabiyya ﷺ la-yada'u yada-hu 'alā tilka al-haysati wa takallama bi-mā shā'a”

(Thus, I saw the Prophet ﷺ place his blessed hand on the food and recited whatever he wanted to recite.)

Consequently, that food became so absorbed with blessings that everyone's hunger was satisfied. He then [turned to me and] said, "Take the leftovers of the food away."

When I saw the leftovers of the food, it was impossible for me to make out whether the food I had brought was more [in quantity] or this!

(Bukhārī; Muslim; Mishkāt, pp. 539)

This *ḥadīth* proves that the Beloved Messenger ﷺ placed food in front of himself and recited over it whatever he wanted to recite and the blessings thereof were immense!

²³ the food.

Sayyidunā Abu Hurayrah ؓ says that during the battle of Tabūk, the Muslim army was frustrated with hunger. Sayyidunā ‘Umar ؓ asked the Great Prophet ﷺ, “Yā Rasūla ‘Llāh (O’ Messenger of Allāh) ﷺ! Please send for the supplies [of food] that we have remaining and make a prayer of blessings over it.”

He²⁴ had the dining-mat laid out and called for the remaining amount of food. Some of the Companions ؓ brought a handful of dates; others brought pieces of bread whilst some had beans, etc. In short, whoever had whatever bits of food left over, he brought it, and soon there was a small gathering of food.

“*fa-da‘ā rasūlu ‘Llāhi ﷺ bi ‘l-barakati, thumma qāla: ‘khudhū fee aw‘iyatikum’*”
(Mishkāt, pp. 538)

(Then the Messenger of Allaah *sall-Allaahu ta ‘aalaa ‘alayhi wa-sallam* prayed for mercy and then said, “Fill your tiffin carriers.”)

Naturally, there was so much blessing in those scraps of food [as a consequence of that supplication] that the whole of the Muslim army had filled their tiffin carriers, had filled their stomachs and there was still much food remaining. He then said, “I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh, and I am His Messenger.”

This *ḥadīth* proves that the Great Messenger ﷺ had food placed in front of himself and prayed for blessings.

There are many other *ḥadīths* regarding this same topic of discussion, but these two (2) *ḥadīths* should be more than enough to prove our point. These two (2) *ḥadīths* validate the permissibility of the placing of food in front of oneself and making a prayer over it.

Conclusion:

We present this issue of *Īṣāl al-Thawāb* (the sending/conferring of reward) to our readers in the hope that they will understand its importance. The solid documentary proof we have provided should help the readers in estimating the level of ignorance, misunderstanding, short-sightedness and narrow-mindedness of those who claim the *Fātiḥah-Khwānī* as an absurdity or a Bid‘ah Sayyi‘ah, or Biddat-e-Sayyi‘a (evil innovations), in order to hinder Muslims from performing such-like Islāmic customs, and it should also help in exposing the negative stance of those who reject the existence of any proof [on any Islāmic issue] due to their ignorance of facts and their biased approach against the Truth. We also hope that the evidences given here are sufficient to prove the Truth of Islām.

The Procedure for the *Fātiḥah-Khwānī* and the *Īṣāl al-Thawāb* or *Īṣāl-e-Sawāb*

When one desires to confer the reward of a particular type of worship, he should complete that worship and say: “O’ Allāh *jalla sha’nu-Ka*, accept my worship and send its reward to the soul of so-and-so by the mediation of your Beloved Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ.”

²⁴ The Beloved Messenger ﷺ

The Normal Procedure for the *Fātiḥah-Khwānī* :

One should firstly recite a chapter or a unit of the Glorious Qur’ān. Then, the Sārat al-Kāfirūn once (1), the Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ thrice (3), the Sūrat al-Falaq once (1), the Sūrat al-Nāss once (1), the Sūrat al-Fātiḥa once(1), then the first few verses of the Sūrat al-Baqarah till “*humu ’l-muflīḥūn*” are recited. After that:

“inna raḥmata ’Llāhi qareebun mina ’l-muhsinīn(a). a-lā, inna awliyā’ Allāhi lā khayfun ‘alayhim wa-lā hum yaḥzanūn(a). Inna-mā yureedu-Llāhu li-yudh’biba ‘ankumu ’r-rijsa abla ’l-bayti wa yutaḥhira-kum taḥ-bīra(n). wa mā arsalnā-ka illā raḥmata ’l-li ’l-‘ālamīn(a). mā kāna muḥammadun abā aḥadin mi ’r-rijāli-kum wa-lāki ’r-rasūla ’Llāhi wa khātama ’n-nabiyyīna wa kāna-Llāhu bi-kulli shay’in ‘alīma(n). inna ’Llāha wa malā’ikata-Hū yuṣallūna ‘alā ’n-nabiyyi, yā ayyuha ’l-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū ‘alayhi wa sallimū taslīma(n). Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā sayyidi-nā wa maḥlā-nā muḥammadin-wa ‘alā āli sayyidi-nā wa maḥlā-nā muḥammadin-wa ‘alā aṣ’ḥābi sayyidi-nā wa maḥlā-nā muḥammadin-wa bārik wa sallim. aṣ’ṣalātu wa’s’salāmu ‘alayka yā rasūla ’Llāh(i), aṣ’ṣalātu wa’s’salāmu ‘alayka yā ḥabība-Llāh(i). subḥāna- Rabbi-ka Rabbi ’l-‘izzati ‘ammā yaṣīfūn(a). wa salāmun ‘alā ’l-mursalīn(a), wa’l-ḥamdu li ’Llāhi Rabbi ’l-‘ālamīn(a). Allāhu Akbaru, Allāhu Akbaru, Lā Ilāha illā ’Llāhu wa ’Llāhu Akbaru, Allāhu Akbaru, wa li ’Llāhi ’l-ḥamd.”

“O’ Allāh, convey the reward of these sacred words²⁵ as a gift on our behalf to the court of your Beloved Messenger Muḥammad ﷺ, and then, by his grace and his mediation, convey this reward to the souls of his family and posterity, of his Companions, of his wives, of the Tabi‘ūn, of the great Awliya’, the Imāms, the scholars, the saints, and of all the Believers, male and female, and then, in particular, convey this reward to the soul of so-and-so!”

To make it brief, one may recite the Sūrat al-Fātiḥa once and the Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ three times. To send a great amount of reward, one may recite parts of the Noble Qur’ān once, or many times (the more the better) before the *Fātiḥah-Khwānī*.

This is commonly know as the *Fātiḥah*, as in ‘today it is the *Fātiḥah* of such-and-such a person’ etc. al-Fātiḥa is the name of the *sūrah* (chapter) beginning with “*al-ḥamdu li ’Llāhi Rabbi ’l-‘ālamīn(a)*”, and it is this chapter that is mainly recited, hence the name of this Islāmic custom. In other words, ‘*tasmiyyat al-kulli bi ism al-juz’i*’ (the naming of the whole is due to the name of the part).

*“ Rabba-nā taqabbal minnā, inna-Ka anta ’s-Samī‘ u ’l-‘Alīm(u),
bi-ḥurmati sayyidi ’l-mursalīn(a) - ṣall-Allāhu ta‘ālā ‘alayhi wa āli-hi wa-sallama ”*

Servant of the Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah
Muḥammad Shafi‘ al-Khaṭīb Okārawī ﷺ

²⁵ and the reward of this food, sweetness, etc. if relevant