

International Institute of Islamic Studies
Objective Jurisprudential Research Papers



The Preferred Opinion About Seeking Intercession Through the Prophet (PBUH)

Author

Dr. Khālid Naṣr

Dean of International Institute of Islamic Studies

Translator

'Aḥmad Khālid



issued and distributed for free by the institute

First Edition
1444 AH – 2024 AD

Introduction

In the name of Allāh, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allāh, Muḥammad ibn Abdullāh.

Therefore,

This is a concise and beneficial paper on the issue of seeking intercession through His Majesty, the Prophet (peace be upon him).

First: Seeking intercession (Tawassul):

It refers to seeking something (tafa'ūl). It is derived from wasīlah (a means). It also involves taking a means to achieve something. The transportation means is called (wasīlah) because it delivers us to our desired destination. Similarly, an intermediary (wāsīṭah) is called a means (wasīlah) because we use it to reach our objective.

Allāh, the Most High, has encouraged us to use various means to seek His pleasure. He said: "O you who have believed, fear Allāh and seek the means [of nearness] to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed." [Al-Mā'idah 5:35].

It has been reported from Ibn 'Abbās, 'Atā', Mujāhid, and Al-Ḥasan: "It [the means] refers to acts of worship,"¹ and Qatādah said: "Drawing near to Him (Allāh) with what pleases Him."²

These acts of worship include obligations imposed by Allāh upon us, such as prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage. Others are means

¹ See: Tafsīr at-Ṭabari (402/8, 403), Hajar Publishing House's edition, and Zād al-Masīr fī 'Ilm at-Tafsīr [Provision of the Journey of Quranic Interpretation] by Ibn al-Jawziy (543/1).

² Documented by Aṭ-Ṭabariy in his Tafsīr (404/8).

that Allāh has set for guidance and reaching the truth, such as the Qur'ān and the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The mention of means is connected to supplication and seeking Allāh's help in both the Qur'ān and the Sunnah:

In the Qur'ān:

Allāh Almighty says: “Those they invoke are (themselves) seeking the means for (close) proximity to their Lord, whichever of them will be nearer; and they hope for His mercy and fear His torment.” [Al-'Isrā' 17:57]. It means they seek a means that makes their supplication closer to acceptance.

In the Sunnah:

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever supplicates with these five phrases, Allāh will grant him whatever he asks for:
Transliteration: Lā 'ilāha 'ila Allāh, wa Allāh 'Akbar, Lā 'ilāha 'ila Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīka lah, lahu al-Mulk wa lahu al-Ḥamd, wa huwa 'alā kulli shay'in qadīr, lā 'ilāha 'ila Allāh, wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwata 'illa bi Allāh.
Translation: There is no god but Allāh, Allāh is the Greatest, There is no god but Allāh alone, He has no partner, to Him belongs the dominion, and to Him is all praise, and He is capable of all things, There is no god but Allāh, and there is no power nor strength except with Allāh.”¹

¹ Documented by Aṭ-Ṭabarāniy in Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr (The Major Collection) (361/19), from Mu'āwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, in the same meaning, Ibn Taymiyah Library's edition. It is also rendered Ḥasan (good) by Al-Mundhiriy in At-Targheṭb

- The ḥadīth of the three individuals trapped in the cave, in which one of them said: "Nothing can save you from this rock except that you invoke Allāh by your righteous deeds."¹

Second: Seeking intercession through the status of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him):

The Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) holds a special position among creation in the eyes of Allāh. He is the intercessor and the one who possesses a unique status that others do not. He is the bearer of the great intercession on the Day of Judgement, and his position with Allāh is not limited to his lifetime. Rather, his status was preserved even before his birth, as we will mention in the evidence for seeking intercession through his status (peace be upon him).

If it is permissible for us to seek intercession with our imperfect deeds, then seeking intercession through him (peace be upon him) due to his perfection is even more appropriate.

Evidence for the permissibility of seeking intercession through the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him):

1. The saying of Allāh, the Most High: "Although they used to pray for victory (by means of the Prophet) over the polytheists, when there came to them a Book from Allāh which they recognized,

wa at-Tarhīb (Reward and Terror) (318)/2), Dār al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyah's edition, and by Al-Haythamiy in Majma' a-Zawā'id (The Collection of Additives) (241/10), Dār al-Fikr's edition.

¹ Documented by Al-Bukhāriy in his Ṣaḥīḥ (2316), Jam'iyat al-Maknaz al-'Islāmiy's edition, and by Muslim in his Ṣaḥīḥ (7127), Jam'iyat al-Maknaz al-'Islāmiy's edition.

confirming the Scripture they had (in their hands), they rejected it. So may Allāh's condemnation be upon the disbelievers." [Al-Baqarah 2:89].

The scholars of interpretation (Tafsīr) said: When the Jews fought against the Arab tribes, they used to say, "O Allāh, we ask You by the name of the Prophet whom we find mentioned in our scripture, the one You promised to send at the end of times, to grant us victory," and they would be victorious over their enemies¹.

This is evidence that they used to seek victory through the Prophet (peace be upon him) before his birth and before his mission, and they would seek intercession through him to Allāh, and their prayers would be answered.

Al-'Aājjurriy narrated in Ash-Sharī'ah (The Legislation)², Al-Ḥakīm in Al-Mustadrak (The Following Up)³ and Al-Bayhaqiy in Dalā'il an-Nubuwwah (Signs of Prophethood)⁴ from Ibn 'Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him and his father) that he said: The Jews of Khaybar were fighting against the tribe of Ghaṭfān. Whenever they met in battle, the Jews were defeated, so they sought refuge through

¹ See: Tafsīr Muqātil ibn Sulaymān (1/63), Dār al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyyah's edition, and Tafsīr aṭ-Ṭabariy (2/236).

² Ash-Sharī'ah (The Legislation) by Al-'Aājjurriy (978), Dār al-Waṭan's edition in Riyadh.

³ Al-Mustadrak (The Following up) by Al-Ḥakīm (3042), Dār al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyyah's edition.

⁴ Dalā'il an-Nubuwwah (Signs of Prophethood) by Al-Bayhaqiy (2/76), Dār ar-Rayān li al-Turāth's edition.

this supplication, saying, "O Allāh, we ask You by the truth of Muḥammad, the unlettered Prophet, whom You promised to send at the end of times, to grant us victory over them." He said: Whenever they faced each other in battle, they invoked this supplication, and they defeated Ghaṭfān. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sent, they disbelieved in him, and Allāh revealed: "Although they used to pray for victory (by means of the Prophet) over the polytheists, when there came to them a Book from Allāh which they recognized, confirming the Scripture they had (in their hands), they rejected it." [Al-Baqarah 2:89] – by means of you, O Muḥammad, against the disbelievers.

2. The saying of Allah, the Most High: "If you (Meccans) sought judgment, now it has come to you." [Al-'Anfāl 8:19].

It is mentioned in the interpretation of this verse that Abū Jahl said, "O Allāh, judge between us and Muḥammad. O Allāh, whichever of us is closer to maintaining family ties and pleases You, grant him victory." Allāh granted victory to the believers due to the nearness of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to his Lord, and this verse was revealed¹.

3. The saying of Allāh, the Most High: "And if, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muḥammad], and asked forgiveness of Allāh and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allāh Accepting of Repentance and

¹ See: Tafīr al-Matrīdiy (5/172), Dār al-Kotob al-'Ilmiyyah, and Tafsīr Muqātil (2/10).

Merciful." [An-Nisā' 4:64].

Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him and his father) said, "There are eight verses in Sūrat an-Nisā' that are better for this Ummah than whatever the sun rises upon and sets upon," and he mentioned this verse among them¹.

It is not valid for someone to claim that this is specific to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) lifetime, as it is a specification without a specifying indicator, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) is alive in his grave, sending prayers and returning greetings to his Ummah, as stated in the authentic ḥadīth².

Some scholars, including Shaykh Abū Naṣr Ibn aṣ-Ṣabbāgh in his book *Ash-Shāmil* (The Comprehensive), narrated a story from Al-'Utbiy who said: "I was sitting by the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when a Bedouin came and said, 'Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allāh. I heard Allāh say [in the Qur'ān]: "And if, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muḥammad], and asked forgiveness of Allāh and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allāh Accepting of Repentance and Merciful." I have come to you [O Prophet] seeking forgiveness for my

¹ Documented by Aṭ-Ṭabariy in his *Tafsīr* (6/661), Ath-Tha'labiy in *Al-Kashf wa al-Bayān* (Discovery and Clarification) (3/291), Dār 'Iḥyā' at-Turāth al-'Arabiyy's edition, and Al-Bayhaqiy in *Shu'ab al-'Iymān* (Sections of Faith) (6744), Ar-Rush Library's edition in Riyadh.

² Documented by Abū Dawūd in his *Sunan* (1049), An-Nasā'iy in his *Minor Sunan* (1385), and Ibn Mājah in his *Sunan* (1154). All the three are from Al-Maknaz al-'Islamiyy's edition.

sins, seeking your intercession with my Lord.' Then he recited [lines of poetry]:

O best one laid to rest in the lowest confines,
The fragrance of your abode pervades the depths and the peaks.

I sacrifice my soul for the grave where you reside,
In it, there is chastity, generosity, and benevolence.

Then the Bedouin departed, and my eyes became heavy, and I saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a dream, saying, 'O 'Utbiy, catch up with the Bedouin and Give him glad tidings that Allāh has forgiven him.'" Ibn Kathīr mentioned that this narration is reported by a group of narrators¹.

4. The well-known story of the blind man whom the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) taught a supplication (Du'ā') that he should use in all situations: "O Allāh, I ask You and turn to You through Your Prophet Muḥammad, the Prophet of Mercy. O Muḥammad, I turn through you to my Lord in this need of mine, to fulfill it. O Allāh, make him intercede for me."² In some narrations, it is mentioned that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, "If you have any need, ask for it in the same manner."

5. Narrated by Ibn Mājah, Ibn as-Sunniy, and others, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever leaves his house to go to the

¹ Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr (2/348), edition of Dār Ṭībah for publication and distribution.

² Documented by At-Tirmidhiy (3927), Al-Maknaz' edition, Ibn Mājah (1466), Al-Maknaz's edition, and An-Nasā'iy in Al-Kubrā (The Major) (10420), Ar-Risālah Foundation's edition. It is also rendered Ṣaḥīḥ (authentic) by a group of Ḥadīth scholars.

prayer and says, 'O Allāh, I ask You by the right of those who ask You, and I ask You by the right of the path upon which I am walking, for I am not leaving (my house) with any evil intention, arrogance, show-off, or seeking reputation. I am leaving to avoid Your displeasure and seek Your approval. I ask You to protect me from the Hellfire and forgive my sins, for none forgives sins except You.' Allāh turns towards him with His face [i.e., acceptance] and commands seventy thousand angels to seek forgiveness for him."¹

His saying, "By the right of those who ask You," refers to the right of intercession granted to those who have this right in the eyes of Allāh. The Messenger does not invoke anything that is impermissible. Moreover, is there any right greater than the Prophet's status with his Lord that we can use for invocation?

6. Aṭ-Ṭabarāniy, Abū Nu'aym, and Al-Ḥākim narrated from 'Anas ibn Mālik (may Allāh be pleased with him) that when Fāṭimah bint 'Asad, the mother of 'Aliy (may Allāh be pleased with them both), passed away, the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) entered upon her. He sat beside her head and said, "May Allāh have mercy on you, O my mother. You were like a mother to me after my own mother. You would stay hungry to make me full, stay without enough clothes to clothe me, and deprive yourself of a good living to provide

¹ Documented by Ibn Mājah in his Sunan (842), and Ibn as-Sunniy in 'Amal al-Yawm wa al-Laylah (The Work of Day and Night) (84, 85), Dār al-Qiblāh's edition. In Al-Mughniy 'an Ḥaml al-'Asfār (The Sufficient for Carrying Books) (1/289), Ṭabariyyah Library's edition, Riyadh, Abū al-Faḍl al-'Irāqiy rendered the chain mentioned by Ibn Mājah as Ḥasan (good).

for me, while seeking the pleasure of Allāh and the Hereafter." Then he ordered that she be washed three times. When the water containing camphor reached her, the Prophet (peace be upon him) poured it with his own hands. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) took off his shirt and dressed her in it. He shrouded her with a white cloth and then called 'Usāma ibn Zayd, Abā 'Ayyūb al-'Anṣāriy, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and a young black slave to dig her grave. When they reached the side of the grave, the Prophet (peace be upon him) personally used his hands to dig the grave and remove the soil. When he finished, the Prophet (peace be upon him) entered the grave, lay down in it, and said, "O Allāh, the One who gives life and causes death, and He is the Living, who will not die. Forgive my mother Fāṭimah bint 'Asad, instruct her in her reckoning, and widen her entrance by the right of Your Prophet and the prophets who came before me. Indeed, You are the Most Merciful of the merciful." Then he recited Takbīr over her four time (i.e., he performed the funeral prayer), and he, along with Al-'Abbās and Abū Bakr, lowered her into the grave¹.

¹ Documented by Aṭ-Ṭabarāniy in *Al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* (The Major Collection) (24/351) and *Al-Mu'jam al-'Awsaṭ* (The Most Moderate Collection) (189), Dār al-Ḥaramayn's edition, Cairo. It is also documented by Abū Nu'aym in *Ḥulyat al-'Awliyā'* (The Adornment of Righteous Figures) (3/121), Dār as-Sa'ādah's edition, Egypt, and Al-Ḥākim in *Al-Mustadrak* (3/108), Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah's edition. Al-Haythamiy, in *Majma' az-Zawā'id* (9/414), Dār al-Fikr's edition, Beirut, said: "[This Ḥadīth is] narrated by Aṭ-Ṭabarāniy in *Al-Kabīr* (The Major) and *Al-'Awsaṭ* (The Most Moderate), and its chain contains Rawḥ ibn Ṣalāh whom Ibn Ḥibbān and Al-Ḥākim considered trustworthy, but it contains some weakness and the rest of his narrators are the same mentioned in the Ṣaḥīḥ [referring to Ṣaḥīḥ al-

7. Narrated by Ad-Dārimiy and others with its chain of transmission from Abī al-Jawzā' 'Aws ibn 'Abdullāh who said: "Severe drought afflicted the people of Al-Madinah, so they complained to 'Aā'ishah. She said, 'Look at the Prophet's (peace be upon him) grave and make from it an opening towards the sky so that there is no barrier between it and the sky.' The narrator said: They did so, and we were blessed with abundant rain until the grass grew, and the camels became well-fed and their humps swelled with fat. This year was called the Year of Swelling."¹

It is important not to dismiss the authenticity of this narration based on weakening it by certain scholars. Our respected Imām Aṣ-Ṣiddīq al-Ghumāriy authenticated it in his collection titled "Irgām al-Mubtadi' al-Ghabiy Fī Jawāz at-Tawassul Bin-Nabi" (Compelling the Foolish Innovator Regarding the Permissibility of Seeking Intercession through the Prophet, peace be upon him). He mentioned: "Ad-Dārimiy in his Sunan... transmitted this narration and then said: 'Al-'Albāniy weakened this narration due to Sa'īd ibn Zayd, but this weakening is rejected because Sa'īd is a narrator mentioned by Muslim [in his Ṣaḥīḥ], and Yaḥyā ibn Ma'īn declared him to be trustworthy"².

Third: All four schools of Islamic thought unanimously agree on

Bukhāriy and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

¹ Sunan ad-Dārimiy (94), Jam'iyat al-Maknaz' edition.

² 'Irgām al-Mubtadi' al-Ghabiy Fī Jawāz at-Tawassul Bin-Nabi (Compelling the Foolish Innovator Regarding the Permissibility of Seeking Intercession through the Prophet, peace be upon him), (p. 23), Dār al-'Imām an-Nawawiy, Oman, Jordan.

the permissibility and virtue of seeking intercession through the status of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him), as reported by As-Subkiy and others.

- Imām az-Zayla'iy stated: "It is permissible to seek means to Allāh and seek help through the prophets and the righteous people even after their death because miracles and supernatural acts are not severed by their death." This view is supported by Ar-Ramliy, who also emphasized the continuation of miracles and supernatural acts even after death. Imām Al-Ḥaramayn added, "The occurrence of supernatural acts, even after death, is not denied except by the Rafidis (Shī'ah)." Al-'Ajhūriy expressed a similar sentiment, stating, "The man of God in this world is like a sword in its sheath, and when he dies, it is as if the sheath has been removed; then it becomes even more effective in its function."¹

- Al-Qurṭubiy in his book *At-Tadhkira* (The Reminder) stated: "May Allāh save us from the horrors of that day (i.e., the Judgement Day) by the merit of Muḥammad, the Prophet of Mercy, and his noble companions. May He make us among those gathered in their ranks and may He not make us deviate from their tradition and school"². Ibn al-Ḥājj mentioned in *Al-Madkhal* (The Entry): "One may seek

¹ Attributed to Abī 'Aliy as-Sinjīy in his book *Nūr al-Hidāyah* (Light of Guidance) by Abū Sa'īd al-Khādīmiy al-Ḥanafīy in his book *Barīqah Maḥmūdiyyah fī Sharḥ Ṭarīqah Muḥammadiyyah wa Sharī'ah Nabawiyyah fī Sīrah 'Aḥmadiyyah* (A Praised Glowing Document in Explanation of Muḥammad's Way and A Prophetic Law in Explanation of 'Aḥmad's Biography) (1/230), Al-Ḥalabiy's edition.

² *At-Tidhkīrah* (The Reminder) (1/579), Dār al-Minhāj's edition, Riyadh.

nearness to Allāh by them (the prophets and the righteous) in fulfilling his needs and seeking forgiveness for his sins. He may seek their help, ask for his needs through them, and be confident in getting a response through their blessings. They are the open door to Allāh, and Allah has decreed the fulfillment of needs through them and because of them. For those unable to reach them, let him send greetings upon them, mentioning his needs, seeking forgiveness for his sins, and concealing his faults. They are the generous masters, and the generous masters do not turn away those who ask, seek intercession through them, approach them, or resort to them. This discourse pertains to the visitation of the graves of the prophets and messengers, may peace and blessings be upon them all, in general."¹

- Taqiyy ad-Dīn as-Subkiy states: "Know that it is permissible and commendable to seek means, help and intercession through the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) to his Lord, the Most High. This permission and commendation are well-known matters to every religious person, recognized from the practices of the prophets and messengers, the biographies of the righteous predecessors, and the scholars and common people among the Muslims. No one from the people of religions has denied this fact. This denial has not been recognized throughout various times until Ibn Taymiyyah came and spoke on this matter with words that may confuse the weak-minded, introducing ideas that were not previously suggested in all ages."²

¹ Al-Madkhal (The Entry) by Ibn al-Ḥājj (1/258), Dār at-Turāth's edition.

² Reported from Al-Manāwiy in Fayḍ al-Qadīr (The Bestowment of The Most

- The author of *At-Talkhīṣ* (The Summary) said: "There is no harm in seeking intercession in seeking rainfall through the righteous Shaykhs and scholars. In *Al-Madhhab* (The Way), it is stated: It is permissible, and some say recommended, to seek intercession with Allāh through a righteous person. In his book to Imām Marwadhiy about the rituals of Hajj (Mansak 'Aḥmad), 'Aḥmad said that he should seek intercession through the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) in his supplications (Du'ā'). He confirmed the same view in "*Al-Mustaw'ib*" and other works."¹

Fourth: The rational evidence states that there is no difference in rank, honor, and status between life and death. One cannot claim that the Prophet's status with his Lord diminished with his death, because he is still a messenger and prophet, and the message has not ceased with his passing.

Similarly, it is unjust in a religion based on justice to grant the opportunity for supplication and seeking intercession through the Prophet to those who were present during the Prophet's life, and deny it to the later generations who believed in him and came after him, which constitutes the majority. The Prophet (peace be upon him) specifically expressed his love for those later generations.

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, it is narrated from Abī Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him) went to the burial grounds

Capable) (2/134), *Al-Maktabah at-Tujāriyyah al-Kubrā's* edition, Egypt.

¹ Reported by Ibn Mufliḥ in *Al-Mubdi' fī Sharḥ al-Muqni'* (The Creativity in Explanation of The Persuasive) (2/206), *Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah's* edition.

and said, "Peace be upon you, home of a people who believe! We shall be among you, Allāh willing. I wish that I had seen our brothers!" The people with him said, "Messenger of Allāh! Are we not your brothers?" "No," he said, "You are my companions. Our brothers are those who have not yet come. And I will precede them to the Ḥawḍ. (The Ḥawḍ: the watering place of the Prophet, may Allāh bless him and grant him peace, from which he will give to the people of his community on the day of rising.)" They asked him, "Messenger of Allāh! How will you recognize those of your community who come after you?" He said, "Doesn't a man who has horses with white legs and white blazes on their foreheads among totally black horses recognize which ones are his own?" They said, "Of course, Messenger of Allāh." He went on, "Even so will they come on the day of rising with white marks on their foreheads, hands and feet from wuḍū', and I will precede them to the Ḥawḍ. Some men will be driven away from the Ḥawḍ as if they were straying camels and I shall call out to them, 'Will you not come? Will you not come? Will you not come?' and someone will say, 'They changed things after you,' so I shall say, 'Then away with them, away with them, away with them!'"¹

Imām 'Aḥmad and others narrated from the ḥadīth of Abī Jum'ah (may Allāh be pleased with him) that he said: "We had lunch with the Messenger of Allāh (peace be upon him), and Abū 'Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāḥ was with us. He said, 'O Messenger of Allāh, is there people who are better than us? We embraced Islam and fought alongside you.'

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (607).

He (peace be upon him) replied, 'Yes, there will be people who will come after you, believe in me, and yet they did not see me.'¹

So, how can the people who gained the Prophet's (peace be upon him) love and are his brothers not have a way to seek intercession through his status (peace be upon him)?

In the end, this is just a glimpse of the abundant evidence in support of this view.

Dr. Khālid Naşr

Boston 2023 AD.

¹ Narrated by 'Aḥmad in his Musnad (17250), Jam'īyyat al-Maknaz' edition, Ad-Dārimiy in his Sunan (2802), and Al-Ḥākim in his Mustadrak (4/95). Al-Ḥākim, along with Ad-Dahabiy, rendered this Ḥadīth as Ṣaḥīḥ.

International Institute of Islamic Studies
Objective Jurisprudential Research Papers



The Preferred Opinion About Seeking
Intercession Through the Prophet
(PBUH)

Author

Dr. Khālid Naṣr

Dean of International Institute of Islamic Studies

Translator

ʿAḥmad Khālid



issued and distributed for free by the institute

