

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Conveying the rewards of the good deeds of the living to the deceased¹

A translation of Sayyid Muhammad ibn ‘Alawī al-Mālīkī al Ḥasanī’s
Tahqīq ul Āmāl fī mā yanfa ul mayyit min al ‘amāl

Translated by Ebrahim Moos, Auwais Rafudeen and Dawood Terblanche²

Released by www.marifah.net 1431 H

¹ Originally published in the IPSA Journal of Islamic Studies (Issue 9, 2010)

² Lecturers at the *International Peace Varsity South Africa* (IPSA), Cape Town

Part 1

Translators' introduction

Sayyid Muhammad ibn ‘Alawī al-Mālikī (1947-2004) was, during his lifetime, one of the most prominent intellectual opponents of the official Saudi religious orthodoxy, known as Salafism.

Born into a scholarly Hijazi family, he authored close to a hundred books on Islamic belief, law, spirituality, Quran, Ḥadīth, history and biography. His views brought him into frequent conflict with the religious authorities and he was forced to relinquish his university post and ancestral chair of teaching within the precincts of the Maṣjid ul Ḥaram in the 1980's. But because of his considerable stature he continued to enjoy a significant degree of royal support and was appointed head adjudicator of the official national *Qirā'ah* competition. He passed away in Ramadan 2004 after complications arising from diabetes.³

The *Tahqīq ul Āmāl fī mā yanfa ul mayyit min al ‘amāl* [*The realization of aspirations regarding that which benefits the deceased from among good deeds*] is a polemical engagement on matters around the issue of *iṣāl thawāb ‘alā al mayyit*, that is, the living gifting the rewards of their good deeds to the deceased. The typical Salafī position allows this under stipulations delimited by certain aḥādīth. The conferral of deeds not covered by these stipulations are regarded as *bid‘ah*- a blameworthy innovation. The traditional recital of the Quran (particularly *Sūrah Yā Sīn*) in order to confer its reward to the latter, its group recitation or recitation at the grave for the same purpose, the recital of the *tahlīl*⁴ and so forth would all, at various levels of severity, be regarded as problematic. For example, with regard to the reading of the Quran the head mufti of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh bin Bāz, stated:

With regard to reading Qur’aan, the scholars differed as to whether the reward for that will reach the deceased. There are two scholarly views, the more correct of which is that it does not reach the deceased because there is no evidence to that effect. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do that for his deceased Muslim loved ones such as his daughters who died during his lifetime, and the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) did not do that or approve of it, as far as we know. It is better for the believer not to do that and not to read Qur’aan for the dead or the living, or to pray on their behalf, or to observe voluntary fasts on their behalf, because there is no evidence for any of that. The basic principle concerning acts of worship is that we do not do anything except that

³ For more on the life of the Sayyid the following links are useful: Fakhruddin Owaisi al-Madani, “Obituary to al-Sayyid Muhammad bin Alawi al-Maliki”: http://qa.sunnipath.com/issue_view.asp?HD=7&ID=4342&CATE=22 [Accessed 27 August 2009] Shaykh Seraj Hendricks, “As Sayyid Muhammad ibn Alawi Abbas ibn ‘Abdul Aziz al Maliki” http://www.sunnah.org/history/Scholars/assayyid_muhammad_alawi_almaliki.htm [Accessed 27 August 2009]

⁴ Lit. “The mentioning of ‘There is no god but Allah’- being a traditional litany whose reward is donated to the deceased

which is proven to be prescribed by Allaah or His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).⁵

The *Tahqīq* offers a defence of these practices. The Sayyid brings in an arsenal of arguments ranging from the use and evaluation of other *aḥādīth*, the employment of legal principles (*uṣūlī* arguments) and the statements of authorities in all four *madhāhib* to validate the more traditional majoritarian perspective which regards such practices as acceptable and efficacious.

This part of the translation covers the first 56 pages of the work where the Sayyid specifically tackles the following issues: why the Quranic verse “But for man is that which he earns” [Quran 53:39] does not preclude the deceased receiving rewards by the good deeds of the living; why such good deeds are not confined to the famous *hadīth* ““When a human being dies except from among three: a recurring charity; or knowledge by which is benefitted; or a pious child who prays for him”; that the recital of the Quran is the most significant of deeds that can be done in this regard; and testimonies by authorities in all the *madhāhib* attesting to the acceptability of all manner of good deeds being done for the deceased.

The Sayyid devotes considerable attention to the views of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab* and quotes at length from Ibn Qayyim [1292-1350] and Ibn Taymiyyah [1263-1328] in relation to the issue. This is significant and characteristic of the Sayyid’s polemics: in the Saudi context Hanbalism is the official madhhab and Ibn Qayyim and Ibn Taymiyyah are particularly respected by contemporary Salafis. By focusing on this school and such scholars the aim of the Sayyid was, it appears, to make his adversaries reassess their approach to their own authorities.

The Sayyid also piles quote upon quote from highly regarded *‘ulamāh* in elaborating his argument. This is deliberate: in traditional Islamic learning authority derives from transmission [*naql*] as opposed to originality. The Sayyid’s extensive use of statements by earlier authorities should be seen in such a light.

While the *Tahqīq* is a technical deliberation on a contentious issue, the work is part of a broader project. The book forms part of a series entitled “*Silsilah Ihyā Maḥāhīm il Sunnati Nabawīyyah*” [The series on reviving the understanding of the Prophetic Sunnah]. The aim of the series is to counter what is seen to be the narrow, literalist approach to the Sunnah taken by the Salafis and substitutes it with the traditionally broader methodological frame of reference of the classical schools for its understanding.

For completeness, we have translated the author’s original footnotes and have added our own where clarification may have been needed. These latter are preceded by [Tr] for purposes of distinction. As per academic convention, what is between square brackets are the translators’ own explanatory comments.

⁵ Quote to be found in Fatwa 46698 Islam Question and Answer <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/46698/Things%20that%20can%20be%20done%20for%20the%20deceased>

Tahqīq ul Āmāl fī mā yanfa ul mayyit min al ‘amāl

By Sayyid Muhammad ibn ‘Alawī al-Māliki al Ḥasanī

Preface

In the Name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful

All praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds. Salutations and Peace be upon the noblest Messenger, our Leader Muhammad, and upon his Family and Companions.

This treatise is an objective, needed study of the following issue: the conveying of the rewards of good acts done by others, such as reciting the Quran, to the deceased. It also studies other connected matters such as the *talqīn*⁶ and the mourning ceremony. I have named the treatise: “The realization of aspirations regarding that which benefits the deceased from among good deeds”.

We ask Allah, Glory be to Him the Exalted, that He lets there be benefit in it and that He lets it be done purely for His noble Countenance. And we ask Him that He shows us truth as truth and makes us its followers, and that He shows us falsehood as falsehood and keep us far from it. Indeed He is the Hearing and the Powerful Who alone is befitting of answering prayers. Sufficient is He for us, what an excellent Guardian! And I have no success except by Allah. In Him do I put my trust and to Him do I turn in constant repentance.

Glory be to You, oh Allah, and through Praise upon You. I testify that there is no god but You. I ask Your forgiveness and turn in repentance to You. I have committed sins and oppressed myself so forgive me, for indeed none forgives trespasses except You.

Oh Allah! We ask You for pardon and for well-being in religion, in worldly affairs, in the next world, in wealth, family and body.

Oh Allah, we ask You for your good pleasure and pardon in what has passed of our lives, and to shower us with kindness in what is still to pass.

And Salutations and Peace be upon the Seal of His Messengers, our Leader Muhammad and upon his Family and all his Companions.

⁶ Literally “instruction” being a particular type of litany recited at the burial of the deceased.

Introduction

“But that man can have nothing but what he strives for”

Allah, the Exalted, says: **“But that man can have nothing but what he strives for”** This noble verse is one of the important texts employed by those who focus on the outward meaning of words and the general, unrestricted meaning of verses, and who fail to observe the underlying principles and other associated factors that would specify or qualify that meaning. We are compelled to understand the text’s meaning in the light of these principles and factors- principles and factors which ensure that we all reading from the same page⁷ and that bring symmetry and order [into the discussion] as per a single system.

This would be in keeping with the message of the Bearer [*ṣāhib*] of the Sharī‘ah, who was divinely protected from contradiction and conflicting assertions since “he does not speak from whim-it is nothing but revelation which is given to him.”

The literal meaning of this verse appears to state that the deceased does not benefit by anything done after his death since it does not confirm anything other than that which he strives for- the sphere of his striving being this world. However, there are other texts that confirm his benefitting by other than that which he strives for, as we will show in this study. For that reason, the diligent scholars of the Sunna, especially the fair-minded among the Imams of the *Salafīyyah*, such as Shaykh ibn Taymīyyah and ibn Qayyīm, understood this verse correctly by confirming that the deceased benefits by both his acts and those of others. They clarified the meaning of the verse and its concord with other texts that are associated with this subject.

The very learned scholar Shaykh Fakhrudīn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Alī al-Zayla‘ī states the following in his commentary on *Kanz ul-Daqāiq* in the chapter of performing *Hajj* on behalf of another:

“With regard to the Exalted’s saying: “But that man can have nothing but what he strives for” Ibn ‘Abbās said that this verse was abrogated by His, the Exalted, saying: “And those who believed and whose families followed them in faith”. It is [also] said that the application of this verse [“But that man can have nothing but what he strives for”] was specific to the people of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm, peace be upon both of them, since this narration occurred in their revealed books [*ṣuḥuf*] due to the Exalted saying [as a prelude to the verse]: “Nay, he is not acquainted with what is in the books of Mūsā and Ibrāhīm who fulfilled his engagement”. It is [also] said that by “man” the verse refers to an unbeliever whereas to a believer will also accrue what a fellow believer strives for on his behalf [in terms of spiritual reward]. It is further said that this verse must not be examined from the point of view of pure justice [‘adl] but from the point of view of grace [fadl].⁸ Another view is that the “lām” in “But man”[*lil insān*] has the meaning of “ ‘alā” [upon], such as when

⁷ (Tr)Lit. “encircling the same orbit [*tadūra jamī‘an fī falak wāhid*]

⁸ (Tr) Our own understanding of this statement is as follows: in terms of pure justice Allah will let a deceased believer obtain the rewards of other’s good acts. However, in addition to that, he will reward the believer for the optional exertions of his own.

the Exalted says: “If you did evil, you did it against yourself” [fa lahā], that is, “alayhā” [“against”].⁹ It is also said that he gets nothing except that which he strives but that it is this striving that is the direct cause for the proliferation of descendants and the procurement of faith [by such descendants] so that he becomes among those who will be benefitted by the intercession of the intercessors.

As for the saying of the Prophet, the Salutations and Blessings of Allah be upon him: “When a human being dies, his deeds are cut off except three...” and the discussion around this ḥadīth, there is nothing in this that is contrary to reason because it is only makes a person’s wealth a source of reward for someone else. And Allah, the Exalted, is the One Who makes it reach him, and Who has power over it. Further, this ḥadīth does not specify some acts to the exclusion of others.”¹⁰

An insightful analysis by one of the “*Ṭaḥāwī’s Creed*” commentators

Shaykh Ibn Abil ‘Izz, in his commentary to “*Ṭaḥāwī’s Creed*” discusses the issue of the dead benefitting by the deeds of someone else, of which deceased was not the cause, and agrees that this can occur. He mentions evidence from the Quran, Sunnah, scholarly consensus and analogical deduction in favour of this view and then responds to objections by those who cling to the outward meaning of the verse:

“The *‘ulamā* have answered their objections, which they base on the verse “But that man can have nothing but what he strives for” [Quran 53:39], the best of which are the following two:

(1) That a human being, through his efforts and exertions and excellent relationships with others earns friends, bears children, marries spouses, renders good deeds and is loving and affectionate with people. In turn, they ask Allah to have mercy on him, supplicate for him, and donate the rewards of their acts of obedience to him. This is the outcome of his exertions. Indeed, the entrance of a Muslim into the totality of the Muslim community within the contract of Islam is the greatest cause of his benefitting by them- in this world and after his death. The supplications of Muslims encircle others.

He clarifies this statement thus:

Allah, the Exalted, has made faith a cause by which its possessor benefits by the supplication of his brothers in faith and their exertions. If he attains to faith then he has exerted himself in that which causes the benefit to reach him.

(2) This is a stronger proof than the previous one. It is that the Quran does not nullify a person benefitting by the exertion of another. What it does nullify is his possessing the exertions of another as his own. These are vastly different matters as everyone knows. Allah, the Exalted, is informing us that a person only possesses his own effort. As for the effort of others, they are the possessors of their own exertions. If they so wish they may expend it on others or they may keep it for themselves.

As for Allah, the Exalted, saying: “Namely, that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; that man can have nothing but that what he strives for” [Quran: 53: 38-39]-these are two unequivocal verses that relate to the justice of Allah, the Exalted. The first of the two requires that none is punished for the sin of another or held responsible for an offense committed by them- such as done by the kings of this world. The second requires that none be made eternally happy except by his own actions in order to cut off his ambition

⁹ (Tr) In Arabic the “lam” normally signifies “for” but as used in this context means “‘alā”, meaning “against”. The intent here appears to be that the verse may only apply to a person’s negative actions.

¹⁰ *Tabyīn al Ḥaqāiq Sharḥ Kanzul Daqā’iq* by Shaykh Fakhrudīn ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Alī, better known as, al-Zayla‘ī. Vol.2,p 85.

to be saved [purely] through the actions of his forefathers, righteous predecessors and teachers- as the covetously delusional believe. And He, Glory be to Him, did not say: “He will not benefit except by that in which he exerts himself”.¹¹

“When a human being dies his acts cease...”

Among the most important texts connected the verse discussed above is this famous rigorously-authenticated (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *ḥadīth*: Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him, relates that the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “When a human being dies except from among three: a recurring charity; or knowledge by which is benefitted; or a pious child who prays for him.”¹²

My noble father Imām ‘Alawī ibn ‘Abbās al-Mālīkī al-Ḥasanī, Allah have mercy on him, explained this *ḥadīth* saying:

“When a human being dies...”- Know that the ceasing of actions through death is an evident matter since the deceased does not act nor can he be legally obligated after dying. Rather, the intent of the *ḥadīth* is to show that the effects of some acts continue to benefit [the deceased] even after death, and its reward does not cease since it is recurrent. Therefore, the *ḥadīth* says: “except from among three” – that is, except those having three characteristics. [These are] “a recurring charity”- that is, one that does not cease, such as the digging of a well, or donating a copy of the Quran, or building a mosque or hospice. [The second is] “knowledge by which is benefitted- that is, knowledge of the Sacred Law (*shar‘ī*) by which [people] benefit, the result of which is success through abiding favours and salvation from eternal punishment. The writing and donating of books may also be entered under this category since the intent does not restrict benefit to only being direct or indirect. As for the *ḥadīth* saying: “or a pious child”- that is, a Muslim- “who prays for him”, that is because of what he [the deceased] has earned.¹³ And Allah, the Exalted, has graced the deceased by recording for him an equivalent reward for all the good deeds done by his children, while he has no part of their sins and offenses.

From what has been established, know that there is no limit to these three characteristics. This is because to understand a limit to them has no basis in proof. Or it is because the Prophet, upon whom be Peace and Blessings, notified us of three and then Allah apprised him of more, as a grace and goodness from Him. In this regard, ibn Mājah quotes Abū Hurayrah who said: The Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “ Indeed, of those acts and good deeds of his that join a believer after his death [are the follows]: knowledge which he spreads; a righteous child he leaves behind; a copy of the Quran that he leaves as inheritance; a mosque that he builds, a lodging that he builds for a traveler; a river that he causes to flow; and the charity which he takes out from his wealth when healthy and when alive- [these] will join him after his death.”¹⁴

This *ḥadīth* contains seven characteristics which, when added to the previous three, make ten. Suyūṭī added one more quality and versified them as follows:

“When the son of Adam departs
“None of his qualities journey with him except ten:

¹¹ *Al ‘Aqīdah al-Taḥāwīyyah*, pp38, 39.

¹² Narrated by Muslim in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Kitāb ul Waṣīyah*, *Bāb mā yalḥkul insān min al-thawāb ba‘da wafātihī* (5:73). It is also narrated by Bukhārī in his *Al-Adab ul-Mufrad* in regard to being good to parents after their death with the wording: “When a servant dies”. It is also narrated by Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and Nisā‘ī.

¹³ Translator: by bringing up the child in this way

¹⁴ Narrated by ibn Mājah in the *Muqaddimat us Sunan*, *Bāb thawāb mu‘alim un nās al khayr* (1/88). It is also found in Abū Nu‘aym’s *Ḥilya* narrating from Anas, Allah be pleased with him (2:344)

Knowledge which is dispersed
 The supplication of offspring
 The planting of palm trees
 Charity which is recurring
 The bequest of the Quran
 Opening a hospice and fortress
 The digging of a well
 Or causing a river to flow
 A refuge built for a stranger
 Or leaving a building that is a place for remembering Allah
 And the teaching of the noble Quran.
 So take these from the *aḥādīth* only.”¹⁵

An explanation of these verses

As for his saying:” Knowledge which is dispersed, the supplication of offspring, charity which is recurring”- all of these are mentioned in the *ḥadīth*: “When a human being dies except from among three: a recurring charity; or knowledge by which is benefitted; or a pious child who prays for him.” As for his saying: “the planting of palm trees, the digging of a well”- these are mentioned in a *marfū’*¹⁶ *ḥadīth* of Anas: “Seven things continue to benefit the servant after he dies and he is in his grave”- and among the seven things mentioned are “the digging of a well or the planting of palm trees.” This *ḥadīth* was narrated by Abu Nu‘aym in his *Hilya*. As for his saying “a place for remembering Allah” this is a mosque. And this has been mentioned in the previously quoted *ḥadīth*: “ Indeed, of those acts and good deeds of his that join a believer after his death...”

Ibn al ‘Izz says in his commentary on the *Aqīdatul Ṭahāwīyyah*

As for their inference [for their argument] from the saying of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, namely: “When a human being dies his acts cease”- such an inference is invalid. For the *ḥadīth* does not say that his rewards will cease but is informing us of the cessation of his actions. As for the [good] acts of another, it belongs to their doer. If the doer wishes to grant them as a gift, then their reward reaches the deceased. It is not as a reward for the deceased’s acts. The analogy that can be used here is that of a debt someone pays on behalf of another. The debtor is then absolved of his debt although he does not possess the payment.”¹⁷

Reciting the Quran upon the deceased and the practice of the pious predecessors [Salaf]

One who obstinately clings to the last remnants of an argument, in his determination to fight every issue and reject anything new, might argue that the pious predecessors did no such thing nor is it proven true that they did such. He will possibly state: “The pious predecessors did not recite Quran for the deceased.”

In reply to this I say:

¹⁵ *Fath ul Taqrīb al-Mujīb ‘alā tahdhīb al tarhīb wal tarhīb* by Imām Sayyid ‘Alawī ibn ‘Abbās al-Mālikī al-Ḥasanī , pp110-111.

¹⁶ i.e. one whose lineage is traceable to the Prophet, the Peace and Blessings of Allah be upon him.

¹⁷ *Sharḥ ‘Aqīdatul Ṭahāwīyyah*, p531.

- (1) This claim is incorrect because it has been ascertained that Ibn ‘Umar recited the Quran upon the dead, al Sha‘bī narrates the practice from the Anṣār and it has been established by Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who was one of the great Imams of the pious predecessors. In the “*Nafḥ ul Tīb fī fawā'id ul muqrī al-kabīr*” he sings to his Shaykh al-Abālī the famous words of ibn al-Rūmī:

*“That doctor, through his medicine and antimony
Kills the living and blinds the seeing
If you pass by you will see groups of those he has made blind
Recite the Quran upon those who are dead”*

From this the presentation of the Quranic recitation to the deceased can be inferred.

- (2) Even if it was established that the pious predecessors did not recite the Quran upon the deceased, this would not constitute evidence against such recitation. Not everything that falls under the category of the non-essential (*furū'*), and which the pious predecessors may not have done, is to be considered harmful. Whoever claims that it is has to bring forth proof for this assertion, for which there is none.
- (3) It is confirmed in a well-authenticated ḥadīth that the deceased is punished when his family members cry for him.¹⁸ The punishment of the deceased in their graves is also confirmed by Allah the Exalted when He says: “In front of the Fire will they be brought morning and evening.”[Quran 40: 46]. It is also confirmed by *ḥadīth* such as one where the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, placed two palm-leaf stalks on two graves and stated: “that the punishment of the deceased will be lessened as long as they [the stalks] remain tender.” This has been narrated by the *Shaykhayn* [Imams Bukhari and Muslim], the compilers of the four *Sunan* [Imams Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Nisā'ī and ibn Mājah] and ibn Ḥuzaymah.¹⁹ Bukhārī in his *Adab ul Mufrad*, Muslim, Abū Dawūd, Nisā'ī and Tirmidhī relate that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “When a human being dies his acts cease except from among three: a recurring charity; a pious child who prays for him; or knowledge which is benefitted by.” There are many *aḥadīth* that have come done mentioning other characteristics whose reward will join a human being after his death. Al-Hāfīz Suyūṭī traced these and reported eleven characteristics, which he versified as previously discussed. Imam Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* relates ibn ‘Abbās transmitting the following saying of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him: “The most deserving of that which you take as a reward is the Book of Allah, the Exalted.”²⁰ The deceased being punished in their graves, suffering by the wrong deeds of their living relatives, their being benefitted by what the living confer on them [by sending the reward

¹⁸ Narrated by Bukhārī in the *Kitāb ul Janā'iz, bābul bakā'a 'indal marīd* (1/227) and by Muslim in the *Kitāb ul Janā'iz, bābul mayyit yu'adhhab bi bakā' i ahlihī* (2/228)

¹⁹ The *ḥadīth* of the two palm leaf stalks has been narrated by Bukhārī in a number of places in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Among these places is the *Kitāb ul wuḍū bāb mā jā'a fī ghushl il bawl* with the wording: “then he took a tender palm leaf stalk and broke it in half” (1:55-56).

²⁰ Narrated by Bukhārī in the *Kitāb ul Ṭibb bāb shurūt fī ruqyah bi fātiḥatul kitāb* (4:16).

for good deeds]- these are things that are not curtailed in the *aḥādīth*²¹ and in the sayings of the pious predecessors. Ibn Kathīr has discussed some of them in his commentary on the verse of Allah, the Exalted: “Indeed, you cannot make the dead hear.” [Quran 30:51]²²

- (4) The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, has ordered us to recite the Quran upon the deceased. Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his Musnad, Abū Dāwūd, Nisā’ī and ibn Ḥibbān- who regards it as well-authenticated- relate the following *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him: “Recite Yā Sīn upon your dead.” Nawawī, Allah be pleased with him, in his book *Al-adhkār* states: “The scholars of *ḥadīth*, *fiqh* and others say that it is permissible and recommended to act upon weak *aḥādīth* that enunciate virtues, awakens longing, or causes fear as long as they are not fabricated.”²³ [I say:] Imām Abū Dāwūd refrained from grading this *ḥadīth* as weak, suggesting that it was “satisfactory” [*ṣāliḥ*] and that others [like it] were not far off the grade of ‘good’ [*ḥasan*]. The least that can be said regarding it is that it beneficial to act according to it, thus rebutting those who oppose and invalidate this practice. This is especially the case given the fact that legal scholars [*fuqahā*], of both the pious predecessors and the subsequent generations, and in many regions, have acted upon this *ḥadīth* and it became a widespread practice among the people. Shaykh ibn ul Qayyim in his *Kitāb ul Rūḥ* has confirmed that this practice- as we will see later- have come from the pious predecessors. A weak *ḥadīth*, if it is acted upon, becomes strengthened and [the performance of the act] is encouraged. It becomes an act whose performance is privileged over its non-performance and to which the high ranking experts of Islamic law (*ahl ul ‘itibār wal nadhr*²⁴) become accustomed. They pride themselves in acting in accordance with it and consider it as entering under the rubric of the Prophetic Sunnah. They refrained from invalidating the practice, or applying the rulings of “innovation” [*bid‘ah*], “misguidance” [*ḍalālah*] or “in opposition to the Sunnah” [*mukhālafah*] to it. There are many evidences for such caution in the noble books of the Sunnah. Imam Tirmidhī was among those who devoted themselves to the issue. On many occasions in his book “Sunan” he classes a *ḥadīth* as “weak” (*ḍa‘īf*) and then says: “But a group among the scholars have acted upon it.” He states this with regard to the *ḥadīth* of Abū Sa‘īd concerning the supplication made at the beginning of prayer [*Istiftāḥ*] (to be found in the chapters on prayer: the chapter on what is said at the beginning of prayer volume 1 page 276). He also classifies a *ḥadīth* on the inheritance of brothers from the mother as weak but says: “The scholars have generally acted upon this *ḥadīth*.” (to be found in the book of inheritance, the chapter on the inheritance of brothers volume 4 page30). He also stated with regard to the *ḥadīth* of Tamīm Dārī concerning the inheritance of a polytheist who became a Muslim at the hands of a Muslim- namely, that he has to be given preference: “ The *ḥadīth* regarding this is weak but some of the scholars have acted according to it” (volume 4, page 38). He stated with regard to the *ḥadīth* of Anas ibn

²¹ Some of these *aḥādīth* have been mentioned. Among them is one contained in Daylamī where ‘Ā’ishah, Allah be pleased with her, narrates that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Indeed the deceased is harmed in his grave by what harms him in his house.”

²² *Tafsīr ibn Kathīr* 3:437

²³ Introduction to the *Al-Adhkār*, p23.

²⁴ [Tr.] This is a synonymous term for *mujtahidūn*.

Mālik concerning performing prayer on a beast when on water or clay- a *ḥadīth* which is weak- that: “The scholars consider that one can act on this *ḥadīth*” (to be found in the chapters on prayer, the chapter on what has come down concerning prayer on a beast in clay and in a dump-site volume 1, page 421). He has similarly said with regard to the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah in making up the two missed cycles of *Fajr* prayer after the rising of the sun- a *ḥadīth* which is also weak: “The scholars consider that one can act on this *ḥadīth*” (chapter on what has come down concerning its reparation after the rising of the sun Volume 1, page 433).

The conclusion is that it is fine to act upon this *ḥadīth* [“Recite *Yā Sīn* upon your dead”] and that it is an acceptable practice in this area.

In his *Musnad* Imam Aḥmad also said: “Abū Mughīra told us that “Ṣafwān, that is ibn ‘Umar, told me that Mashīkhah told me that they visited Ghusayf bin al-Ḥārith al-Thamālī when he was at the point of death. So he asked: “is there any of you who will read the *Yā Sīn*?” So Ṣāliḥ ibn Shurayḥ al Sakūnī read it and when he reached the fortieth verse he closed it.” He said: “They used to say: If it (that is *Yā Sīn*) is read on the deceased then his passage is made easier because of it.”²⁵

The author of *Musnadul Firdaws* traces it to Abul Dardā with the following wording: “There is no deceased upon whom the *Yā Sīn* is recited except that Allah, the Honoured, the Glorious, makes it easy for him.”²⁶

Muḥibbuddīn al-Ṭabarī said: “By this is meant the deceased whose soul has already been separated from his body. To say that it applies to a person on the verge of dying is a statement that has no proof.”

Ibn Ḥajar transmits Jundub bin Abdullah as saying: “The Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “*Al-Baqarah* is the hump and peak of the Quran. Each of its verses descended with eighty angels. And “Allah, there is no god but He, the Living, the Self-Sustaining” was extracted from beneath the Throne and they arrived with it. And *Yā Sīn* is the heart of the Quran- there is none that reads it desiring Allah and the Hereafter except that his sins are forgiven. And read it upon your dead.”²⁷

²⁵ In the *Fath ul Rabbānī* (18/253) it is said that Ghusayf was a Companion. It is also said that he was a Follower (*tābi‘i*) but the correct position is the first. This is also said in the *‘Iṣābah*. Ḥāfidh says in the *‘Iṣābah* after mentioning the *ḥadīth*: “It is a *ḥadīth* that has a good (*ḥasan*) isnād.” In his *Dār ul Manthūr* Suyūfī traces it Ibn Sa‘d as well (8:39).

²⁶ *Musnad ul Firdaws* (4/32). In the *Dār ul Manthūr*, in the commentary on *Sūrah Yā Sīn*, it is traced to ibn Mardawiyah (7/38).

²⁷ Transmitted in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of ibn Ḥibbān in connection with the virtues of *Sūrah Baqarah*. It is similarly transmitted in Haythamī’s *Mawārid ul Dhamān* (5:396). It is narrated by Aḥmad in the *Musnad* from Ma‘qal bin Yasār (5/62). Haythamī says in the *Majma ‘ul Zawā‘id*: “Aḥmad narrates and it contains a narrator that is not named and the remaining narrators are sound ones” [2:311].

The statements of the Imams of the schools of law (*madhāhib*)

In his *Ghāyatul Maqṣūd* the very learned Ḥanbali jurist Shaykh ‘Abdallah ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd- Allah have mercy on him- compiled a special section containing statements from scholars of all the schools of law regarding the reward of any good act done by a living person being gifted to and reaching the deceased- such as the reward stemming from *Hajj* charity, sacrifice, ‘*Umrah* and the recitation of the Quran. There can be no doubt that under this category fall litanies (*adhkār*) of *tahlīl*²⁸, *takbīr*²⁹ and sending salutations and greetings of peace upon our Leader Muhammad, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. All of these are good acts for which their doer is rewarded. If he gifts their reward to the deceased Allah accepts that of him and sends it to the deceased. When it reaches, the deceased is benefitted thereby through the grace, generosity and goodness of Allah.

Shaykh ibn Ḥamīd transmits the statements of the leaders and jurists of the Hanafis such as : Shaykh Burhānuddīn ‘Alī bin Abū Bakr al-Marghīnānī in his book *Al-Hidāyah*, the chapter on performing *Hajj* on behalf of another; Shaykh Shamsuddīn Abul ‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abdul Ghanī al-Sirwījī in his book *Nafahāt ul Nasamāt fī wuṣūl ihdā’il thawāb lil amwāt*; Badrul ‘Aynī in the commentary on the *Kanz*, the chapter on performing *Hajj* on behalf of another; ibn ‘Ābidīn in the *Raddul Muḥtār ‘alā Durriḥ Mukhtār*; the author of the *Fatāwā al Hindīyyah*, the chapter on performing *Hajj* on behalf of another; the author of the *Hidāyah*, in explaining the rules on performing *Hajj* on behalf of another; and Shaykh ‘Alī Qārī in the commentary of the *al-Mansak al-Mutawassit*.

He transmits the statements of the leaders in Mālikī jurisprudence, its jurists and the guardians (*huffāz*) of the Mālikī school in this subject such as: Imam ibn Rushd in his *Nawāzil*; the very learned Shihāb al-Qarafī [in his book *al-Furūq*] in the section: the 172nd difference] ; Ibn al-Ḥajj in his first volume of the *Madkhal*; Shaykh Abū Zaid al-Fāsī in the chapter on performing *Hajj* on behalf of another and al-Hattāb in his commentary on the *Khalīl*.

Then he mentions the statements of the major Imams from among the Shāfi‘īyyah such as: the very learned al-Shirbīnī in his book *al- Sirāj ul Munīr*; Nawawī in his *Rawḍat ul Ṭālibīn* and his commentary on *Muslim*; Suyūṭī; Subkī; ibn Ṣalāḥ in the “*Fatāwā*”; Shaykh Abul Ma‘ālī ‘Alī ibn Abī Sa ‘ūd, better known as al-Suwaydī, in his book *Al ‘Aqd al thamīn fī bayān masā’il il dīn*; ibn Naḥawī in the *Minhāj*; and Shaykh ul Islām Abū ‘Abd Allah al-Qayātī in the *Rawḍah*.

He then mentions the statements of the leaders and guardians of the Ḥanbalī school. He begins with the words of Imām Aḥmad: “Every good act such as prayer, charity and so forth reaches the deceased.” Then he provides a long, valuable quote from Al Muwaffaq ibn Qudāma. He then says in the introduction to the commentary on the *‘Umdah*: “As for the recitation of the Quran and the gifting of its reward to the deceased there is, in

²⁸ (Tr): “There is no god but Allah”

²⁹ (Tr): “Allah is the greatest”

actuality, consensus on its being done and no rejection of the practice. There is an authentic *ḥadīth* which states: “The deceased is punished by the sobbing of his family”. Allah, Glory be to Him, is more honorable than sending punishment while withholding reward.”

I [Shaykh ibn Ḥamīd] say: The following saying of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, is indicative in this regard: “No person is killed unjustly except that the first son of Adam shares responsibility for his blood since he was the first to introduce murder.”³⁰ If this is the case with torment and punishment then grace and reward is more deserving and appropriate to be given.³¹

Testimonies from the legal texts of *madhāhib* in this field

(1) Testimonies from the Hanafi school

Imām Marghīnānī in the *Hidāyah*, in the first part of the chapter on performing *Ḥajj* for another, writes: “The basic principle in this area, in the view of the *Ahl Sunnah wal Jamā‘ah* [People of the Sunnah and Congregation], is that a human being can give the reward for his good act to another- whether prayer, fasting, charity and so on. This is due to what had been narrated from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, (namely) that he sacrificed two rams, predominantly white in colour, one for himself and the other for those of his *ummah* (people) who affirm the Oneness of Allah and bear witness to Him through proclamation.”³²

On this issue the researcher Kamāl ibn Humām has written some very lengthy comments in the *Fath ul Qadīr*. In sum, it states that the Mu‘talizis hold a contrarian view in all acts of worship. That is, they deny the reaching of reward [to the deceased] by another. He mentions their doubts, answers these and brings forth many reports that point to the permissibility of conveying reward to another. Then he writes: “These reports, and what went before it, and the many similar reports in the Sunnah around the issue- namely, that whoever does a good deed for someone else, the latter is benefitted thereby- if combined reach the degree of multiple, continuous chains of transmission (*tawātur*).”³³

In his commentary on the *Kanz ul Daqā‘iq*, in the chapter concerning performing *Ḥajj* on behalf of another, Allāma ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Alī al-Zayla‘ī al-Hanafī writes: “The basic principle on this topic, in the view of the *Ahl Sunnah wal Jamā‘ah*, is that a human being can gift the reward of his good deeds for another, whether it be prayer, fasting, *Ḥajj*, charity, the recitation of the Quran, litanies and so forth from among all types of pious acts. These reach the deceased and the latter benefits thereby.”³⁴

³⁰ Narrated by Ahmad from ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (1/430)

³¹ *Ghāyatul Maqsūd ‘alā awhām ibn Maḥmūd* by Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd, p 430

³² *Al Hidāyah fī Sharḥ bidāyatil Muḥtadī* by Shaykh Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Abī Bakr ibn ‘Abd il Khalīl al-Rushdānī al-Marghīnānī (Volume 1, p183). This has also been transmitted and confirmed by Shaykh ibn ‘Ābidīn in the *Majmū‘atul Rasā‘il*, Volume 1, P160.

³³ *Sharḥ Fath ul Qadīr* by Imām Kamāluddīn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdul Wāḥid, better known as ibn Humām al Ḥanafī.

³⁴ *Tabyīn ul Haqā‘iq Sharḥ Kanzil Daqā‘iq* by Al Zayla‘ī, Volume 2, p.83

Al-Allāmah Zaynuddīn, better known as Ibn Nujaym, and famously honoured as “Abū Ḥanīfah the Second”, and “the Scribe of the School”, says in his *Baḥr ul Rā’iq* in the chapter on performing Ḥajj on another’s behalf: “This is due to the fact that performing Ḥajj on behalf of another is like the observance of another act. The basic principle in this area is that a human being can gift the reward of his good deeds for another, whether it be prayer, fasting, charity, the recitation of the Quran, litanies, *tawāf*, Ḥajj, ‘Umrah and so forth. This is the view of our colleagues as based upon the Quran and Sunnah. As for the Quran, Allah the Exalted says: “And say: Oh my Lord, bestow on them Your mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.”³⁵ And Allah, the Exalted, informs us about His angels as follows: “And they seek forgiveness for those who believe”. And He, the Exalted, gathers all their utterances together when the Quran says:” Our Lord, Whose Mercy and knowledge encompass all, forgive those who repent and follow Your Way...” until “And preserve them from all ills.”³⁶

As for the Sunnah, there are many *aḥadīth* on this topic some of which are in Bukhārī and Muslim.” He then mentions the relevant *aḥadīth*.³⁷

Badr ul ‘Aynī, in his commentary on the *Kanz*, the chapter on performing Ḥajj on behalf of another, authoritatively states that a human being can gift the reward of his good deeds for another, whether it be prayer, fasting, Ḥajj, charity, the recitation of the Quran, litanies and so forth from among all types of pious acts. All of these reach the deceased according to the *Ahl Sunnah wal Jamā’ah*. Allāmah Sa’d ud-dīn al-Dīrī, who passed away in 867 ah, wrote a book entitled: *Al-Kawākib al-Nayyirāt fī wusūl thawāb al ṭā’āt ilā al- amwāt* [*The glittering stars concerning the reaching of the reward for acts of obedience to the deceased*]. In it he follows the same line of argument as Sirwījī and adds much more to this.

(2) Testimonies from the Malikis

In his commentary on the *Saḥīḥ* of Muslim, Imām Qādī Abul Faḍl ‘Iyāḍ writes concerning the *ḥadīth* of the palm leaf stalks where the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, states “that perhaps the punishment will be lightened as long as the stalks remain moist”:

The scholars infer from this that the recitation of the Quran [upon the deceased] is recommended since if the palm leaf stalks’ glorifying of God (*tasbīḥ*) has the effect of lightening punishment- and these are plants!- then the Quran has an even greater right in this sphere.³⁸

Allāmah Shihāb al-Qarāfī, in [his book *al- Furūq*] in the section: the 172nd difference summarizes [the views] as follows:

The schools of Abū Ḥanīfah and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal are of the view that the deceased obtain the rewards for the Quran that are recited upon them. If it is recited at the grave the deceased obtains the reward of the listener. Those who differ with them say that the

³⁵ Quran 17:24

³⁶ Quran 40-7-9

³⁷ *Al Baḥr ul Raqā’iq Sharḥ Kanz ul Daqā’iq* by Ibn Nujaym v.3 p.59

³⁸ *Sharḥ ul Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Khalīfah al Abbī ‘alā Saḥīḥ ul Muslim* v.2 p.125

deceased obtains the blessings [*barakah*] of the Quran, not its reward- like they obtain the blessings of a pious person who was buried near them or in the proximity of whom they were buried. What is necessary for a human being is not to overlook this the issue because perhaps the truth is that it will reach the deceased. These are issues that are hidden from us and there is no difference concerning it in [any legal ruling] The difference indeed exists surrounding the fact whether it occurs or not. Similarly, the *tahlīl* which today has become a custom among the people it is necessary that we work and depend upon that for the grace of Allah through every means possible. And from Allah is this goodness and generosity. This is most suitable for the servant.³⁹

Shaykh ibn al-Hāj, in the first volume of his *Madkhal*, writes: “If it is recited in the house and then gifted [to the deceased] it reaches him. The way it reaches is that when the recitation is complete then he gifts its reward to the deceased. Or he says: “Oh Allah: Send its reward to him.” This is indeed a supplication for the reward [to be given] since it [can] reach his brother- and a supplication can reach, there being no difference of opinion concerning this.”

Shaykh Abū Zayd al-Fāsī writes in an answer in the chapter on performing *Hajj* on behalf of someone else: “The deceased benefits by the recitation of the Quran and this is the correct position. The difference of opinion concerning the issue is well known and [in our view] reward for him is possible. And Allah knows best.” The jurist Kunūn al-Fāsī [the annotator of Abdul Bāqī] transmits this from him.⁴⁰

Towards the end of the *Nawāzil* ibn Rushd responds as follows to a question concerning Allah, the Exalted, saying: “But that man can have nothing but what he strives for”: “If a man recites the Quran and gifts the reward of his recitation to the deceased then that is permitted. And the deceased will obtain its reward.”

Ibn Hilāl in his *Nawāzil* says: “According to ibn Rushd’s judgment, and more than one of our leaders [of the *madhhab*] in Andalusia, the deceased benefits by the recitation of the Quran, its benefit reaches him, and he obtains its reward when the reciter gifts it to him. And the Muslims of the East and West hold fast to this practice and they have dedicated endowments for it. And this practice has been in vogue since the time of the Righteous Predecessors [*Salaf*].

In discussing the verse “And say: my Lord, have mercy upon them as they cherished me when I was little” Allāmah Hāfīz Shaykh Abdur Raḥmān al-Tha‘ālabī in his Quranic commentary *Al-Jawāhir ul Ḥisān* quotes from Shaykh Abdul Ḥaqq al-Ishbīlī’s *Al-Āqibah* as follows:

Know that the deceased is like the living in what is given and gifted to him. Indeed, the deceased has even more right in this sphere. The living might undervalue and disdain what is given to him. But a deceased will never disdain any of that, even if it is the length of a fly’s mosquito’s wing or has the weight of an atom, because the deceased knows its value. He had the ability to have used his opportunity but has now lost it. The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “When a human being dies his deeds end except from among three: a recurring charity; or knowledge by which is benefitted; or a

³⁹ *Al Furūq* by Imām Allāmah Aḥmad ibn Idrīs al-Qarāfī v.3 p192

⁴⁰ *Is‘āf ul Muslimīn wal Muslimāt* by our Shaykh Allāmah Shaykh Muḥammad al ‘Arabī al Tibbānī

pious child who prays for him.” This is a supplication of a child that reaches his parent and by which the latter benefits. Similarly, the Prophet, Salutations and Peace be upon him, ordered sending greetings upon, and praying for, those in the graves. There can be no other reason for this except that these prayers and greetings reach them. And Allah knows best.

It is narrated that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “The deceased is like a drowned person waiting for a supplication from his child, brother or friend to reach him. And when it does reach him, it is more beloved to him than the world and what is in it.” There are many narrations in this field.”

Then Tha ‘ālabī says: “In his *Muwatta* Mālik transmits from Yahyā ibn Sa‘īd quoting Sa‘īd ibn Musayyib, Allah be pleased with him, as follows: “Indeed a man is elevated in rank by the supplication of his child he left behind.” And he pointed with his hand to the heavens.” Al Ḥāfīz Abū ‘Umr ibn ‘Abdil Barr said: “This has been transmitted to us through a sound chain. Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him, narrates that the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Allah will elevate the rank of his servant. His servant will ask: “Oh my Lord! Why have I been given this rank?” It will be said: “Due to your son seeking forgiveness for you.” [From the *Tamhīd*].

The *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* informs us that: “A man from the Banū Salamah said: Oh Messenger of Allah! “Are there any good deeds left through which I can honour my parents after they die?” He replied: “Yes. Sending salutations upon them, asking forgiveness on their behalf, to execute the promises they have made, to tie the bonds of kinship which cannot be linked but for them, and to honour their friend.”⁴¹

(3) The testimony of Nawawi as evidence for the Shāfi‘i position

Imām Nawawī says: “It is recommended that the one visiting the grave sends greetings upon the burial places and supplicates for the one who visits them as well for all the people of the graveyard. The best is that his greetings and supplications be of the form that are confirmed in the *aḥādīth*. It is recommended that he recite from the Quran what is easy and supplicates for them following that. Imām Shāfi‘ī has written this and it is agreed upon by our colleagues in the *madhhab*.”⁴²

(4) Testimonies from the texts of the Hanābilah

Imām Muwaffaq ud Dīn ibn Qudāmah al Ḥanbalī says:

Any act of goodness which is done and whose reward is gifted to the deceased Muslim will benefit him, if Allah wills. As for supplicating, seeking forgiveness, giving charity and the fulfillment of obligations [for the deceased] I know of no scholarly disagreements in this regard- if the law allows such obligations to be deputized for by somebody else. Allah, the Exalted, says: “And those who come after them say: “Oh our Lord! Forgive us and our fellows who preceded us in faith!”

⁴¹ *Is ‘āful Muslimīn wal Muslimāt* by our Shaykh Allāmah Shaykh Muḥammad al ‘Arabī al Tibbānī

⁴² *Al Majmū’ Sharḥ ul Muḥadhdhab* v.5 p286

And Allah, the Exalted, says: “And seek forgiveness for your sin, and for the believing men and women.” The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, supplicated for Abū Salamah when he passed away. He supplicated for the deceased upon whom he performed the funeral prayer, as communicated in the *ḥadīth* of ‘Awf ibn Mālik. (In fact), he supplicated for every deceased upon whom he performed the funeral prayer.

A man asked the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him: “Oh Messenger of Allah. “My mother has died. Will she benefit if I give charity on her behalf?” He replied: “Yes.” Narrated by Abū Dāwūd on the authority of Sa‘ad ibn Ubādah.

A woman came to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and said: “Oh Messenger of Allah. My father who is very old is obliged to perform *Hajj* but cannot sit on a camel [due to his age]. Can I perform *Hajj* on his behalf?” He replied: “If your father had a debt would you not pay it on his behalf?” The woman said: “Yes.” He then said: “The debt to Allah is more worthy of being fulfilled.” He also said to the one who asked: “My mother died and owes one month of fasting, should I fast it on her behalf?” He said: “Yes”

These *aḥādīth* are rigorously authenticated and indicate that the deceased benefits by all manner of good deeds since fasting, *Hajj*, supplication and seeking forgiveness are bodily acts of worship and Allah sends their benefit to the deceased. The same applies to the already mentioned *ḥadīth* regarding the reward of reciting *Yā Sīn* and Allah’s alleviation of the deceased’s condition through its recitation.

‘Amr bin Shu‘ayb narrates from his father who narrated from his grandfather that the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said to ‘Amr bin ‘Ās: “If you father was Muslim and you free a slave or give charity or perform *Hajj* on his behalf then that will reach him.”

If this applies in general to voluntary *Hajj* and other such acts because they are acts of goodness and obedience, then the benefit and reward of compulsory charity, fasting and reward must also be obtained. Imām Shāfi‘i is of the view that only the obligatory charity, supplication and seeking forgiveness can be done for the deceased and only the reward for these will reach him due to the Exalted saying: “But that man can have nothing but what he strives for” and the saying of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him: “When a human being dies his acts come to an end except from among three: a recurring charity; or knowledge by which is benefitted; or a pious child who prays for him.”

This is because the benefit [of other than these acts according to Imām Shāfi‘i] cannot go beyond the one who does them, so neither can its reward.

One of them [the Shāfi‘yyah] said: “If the Quran is recited near the deceased, or if the reward for this recitation is gifted to the dead person, that reward will [also] accrue to the reciter and the deceased will be made as if present at the recitation and it will be as an anticipated means of mercy for him.

Our view, already mentioned, is the consensus of the Muslims which is that in every time and clime they have gathered together, recited the Quran and gifted its reward to their dead without that being stopped. It is also because of the rigorously authenticated *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him: “The deceased is punished by the sobbing of his family”. Allah, Glory be to Him, is more honoured than sending punishment for disobedience to a person while withholding his reward.

It is also because the conveyor [*Mūṣil* i.e. Allah] of the reward [of that] which they (the opponents) accept [for example, the supplication of a child for his parent] is also capable of [sending] [conveying the] reward [of] that which they [the opponents] prevent [from being a means of reward for the deceased. And the verse [But that man can have nothing except that which he strives for] is restricted by what they have accepted [can be conveyed to the deceased].

Whatever we disagree upon as to the meaning [of the *ḥadīth* “When a human being dies...], we draw analogies based upon it. There is no basis in the reports for those who use it as a proof [i.e. the opponents], for it points to actions coming to an end [not rewards]. So there is no indication [in this *ḥadīth*] for their view.

If there was an indication in it (for what they argue) then it would be specified by that which they accept, and in its meaning is then also that which they prevent by means of the

specification of analogy. Further, their interpretation of the *ḥadīth* is incorrect for the extension of reward [*thawāb*] is not branch of the extension of benefit [*naḥ*]. [If this were the case] it would also be void with regard to fasting, supplication and *Ḥajj* [where the evidence is clear that *reward* is donated the deceased and thus the issue of benefit is a separate one].⁴³ There is no clearly no basis for holding such. And Allah knows best.⁴⁴

Imām Shamsuddīn Muhammad bin Mufliḥ al-Maqdisī in his book *Al-Furu'* said:

“Every *qurba* done by a Muslim whose reward he gifts to another Muslim, the latter benefits thereby and obtains the reward. These are acts such as supplication, seeking forgiveness, fulfilling the obligations of another where deputyship is allowed, voluntary charity and, equally, the freeing of a slave. The Qāḍī⁴⁵ and his companions have mentioned this as a principle (*aṣṣan*). It has also been mentioned by Abul Ma'ālī, our Shaykh as well as the author of *al-Muharrar*.⁴⁶ This also applies to voluntary *Ḥajj*. The *Mujarrad*⁴⁷ states: Whosoever performs a voluntary *Ḥajj* on behalf of someone else, this will be valid even without the permission of the latter. The same applies to the recital of the Quran, *ṣalāh* and fasting.”

Kamāl⁴⁸ narrates a story about a man who performed some good deeds of *ṣalāh*, charity and so forth and donated half [of their reward] to his mother and father, saying: “I hope this is accepted.” He [Kamāl] said: “Everything of goods deeds such as charity, prayer and so forth reaches the deceased.”⁴⁹

Imām Burhānuddīn Muhammad ibn Abd-Allah bin Mufliḥ says in his book *Al-Mubdi'* [commenting on this]:

“Every *qurba* done by a Muslim”, that is, of supplication, seeking forgiveness, seeking forgiveness, prayer, fasting, *Ḥajj*, recitation of the Quran and so forth. “Whose reward he gifts to another Muslim”- Imām Aḥmad says: “Rewards of all acts of goodness can reach the deceased due to texts that have come down regarding this and because in every clime Muslims gather, recite the Quran and gift its reward to the deceased without any prevention of this. Thus there is consensus [on the issue]. The same applies to supplication and seeking forgiveness. Even if the rewards of these are gifted to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, it will be permitted and the reward will reach him. Majd⁵⁰ said this.”⁵¹

Imām Abul Ḥasan 'Alī bin Sulaymān al-Mardāwī says in his book *Al-Inṣāf* with regard to his saying: ““Every *qurba* done by a Muslim whose reward he gifts to another Muslim, the latter benefits thereby”

⁴³ [Tr] Whereas Allah, the Mūsīl, cannot be restricted in such a way.

⁴⁴ *Al Mughnī* by ibn Qudāmah v.2 p425

⁴⁵ [Tr] In the Hanbali madh-hab this refers to Qadi Abū Ya'lā Muhammad b. Husayn d. 458 A.H.

⁴⁶ [Tr] According to the book *Kashf al-Zunūn* this is Ibn Taymiyyah.

⁴⁷ [Tr] Perhaps this book is *Al-mujarrad fī fadā'il al-Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal* by Abul Husayn Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Farrā al-Hanbalī d. 527 A.H.

⁴⁸ [Tr] Possibly, Kamāl bin Humām, the Hanafī authority

⁴⁹ *Al Furū'* by ibn Mufliḥ v.2 p307

⁵⁰ This is Ibn Taymiyyah's name that he is sometimes referred to, as it appears in *Siyar a'lam al-nubalā* by al-Dhahabī

⁵¹ *Al Mubdi'* by ibn Mufliḥ v.2 p279

This is the established position of the *madhhab*. The majority of its scholars are of this opinion. Many of them have positively asserted it and it has been incorporated into the technical vocabulary of the madhhab. Qāḍī says in the *Al-Mujarrad*: “Whoever performs a voluntary *Hajj* on behalf of another it is valid even if the latter’s permission is not obtained.”

Shaykh ul Islām Taqī ud dīn Muḥammad ibn Ahmad al Futūhī al-Ḥanbalī says: “It is a *sunnah* to do something that will lighten the burden of the deceased, even if it is to plant a tender palm-stalk on the grave. And the *dhikr* and the recital of the Quran for him, and any act of goodness which is done by a Muslim and whose reward he sends to another Muslim, whether living or dead, will reach him even if the doer did not know him. And the gifting of the reward for an act of goodness is a recommended practice.⁵²”

Allāmah Shaykh Mansūr al Bahūtī said: Every act of goodness done by a Muslim and whose reward is gifted to another Muslim, dead or living, is permitted and the latter benefits thereby.” And then he mentioned a number of deeds, among them being the recitation of the Quran.⁵³

An important statement by Ibn Qayyim

Anyone who says that no one among the *Salaf* [conveyed the reward of good deeds to the deceased] has said something without knowledge. It is an argument for the denial [of a practice] that he cannot know [happened or did not happen]. He cannot know if the *Salaf* carried out the practice or witnessed it among those in their presence. The knowledge of especially their intent and objectives is with the Knower of the Unseen. The intent of the gifting [of the reward] through wording is, furthermore, not imposed as a condition- as previously discussed. The essence [*sirr*] of the matter is that reward is the wealth of the doer [of a good deed] and if he releases and gifts it to his brother Muslim, Allah makes it reach the latter. So what can specify the reward which comes from the recital of the Quran and hinder the servant from conveying it to his brother?!

He continues:

As for the reason why this practice was not evident among the *Salaf* was because they had no encounters with whosoever recited and gifted to the deceased. They [also] did not specify the practice with any certainty. They did not go to graves to recite as people do today. And none of the people who attended their circle attested to them saying: “the reward of this recitation- is for so and so. Indeed, they did not [even] say that the reward of this act of charity and fasting is for so and so.”

The response to this claim is as follows: “If you strive to transmit even one of the *Salaf* saying: “Oh Allah! Send the reward of this fasting to so and so...” you would be unable to do that. They were the most avid of people in hiding acts of goodness. It was not apt for them to openly display [to others], in the sight of Allah, the reward of their good deeds reaching their deceased.⁵⁴”

⁵² *Muntahā al Irādāt* by al Futūhī v.1 p171

⁵³ *Kashshāf ul Qīnā*’ by al-Bahūtī, v.2, p170

⁵⁴ *Kitāb ul Rūḥ* by Shaykh ibn Qayyim

Summary

Our Shaykh, Imam Allama Muhammad al-'Arabi al Tibbani al-Makki said⁵⁵:

In summary, the scholars agree, and there is consensus upon this, that the reward of four deeds reach the deceased. These four are: charity, supplication, seeking forgiveness and the fulfilling obligations that can be deputized for by another- such as paying the debt of the deceased. It is also correct to fast for the deceased and convey to the latter its reward- according to the earlier [qadīm] position of Imam Shāfi'i, Abū Thawr and the erudite ones among the *muḥaddithīn*. This is due to the general statement in the *ḥadīth* that 'Āisha, Allah be pleased with her, narrates from the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, who said: "Whosoever dies and has outstanding fasts, his guardian [*walī*] fasts for him."⁵⁶

It has also been proven that the pious predecessors used to recite the Quran for the deceased- as indicated by ibn Qudāmah and others who have transmitted [this] from the old Imams of the People of Tradition (*Ahl ul Athar*), such as Khallāl and others. It has also been proven that Muslims East and West have unceasingly engaged in this practice. Muslims have instituted endowments for the practice as stated in ibn Rushd's legal verdict and by Suyūṭī the Shāfi'i, transmitting from ibn 'Abdul Wāḥid al Maqdisī the Hanbali and others. This has also been stated by ibn Qudāmah in his *Mughnī* and ibn ul Qayyim in his book *Al-Rūḥ*. Indeed ibn Qudāmah and ibn 'Abdul Wāḥid al Maqdisi, according to what Suyūṭī narrates from them declared the consensus [*ijmā'*] of Muslims on the matter. The latter [al Maqdisī] even penned a book on the issue as did the two Hanafīs, Al-Sirwijī and Sa'duddīn al-Dīrī, and others.

Ibn ul Qayyim said: "This [recitation of the Quran upon the deceased] has been practiced by all people- even its nullifiers- in all times and climes without it being rejected by the scholars."⁵⁷

Its practice is traced to the majority of the pious predecessors and Imam Ahmad and its non-practice to innovators from among scholastic theologians. Similarly, Suyūṭī, the majority of the Salaf and three Imams [Abū Hanīfa, Mālik and Ahmad] have confirmed the *wuṣūl* ["arrival" of the reward]. Allāmah Marghinānī al-Ḥanafī says: "In the view of the People of the Sunnah and Congregation, a human being can give the reward for his good act to another- whether prayer, fasting, charity and so on." Similarly, al- Badr ul 'Aynī al-Ḥanafī says: "A human being can gift the reward of his good deeds to another, whether it be prayer, fasting, *Ḥajj*, charity, the recitation of the Quran, litanies and so forth from among all types of pious acts." There are many traditions that point to an individual benefitting by the acts of another." Allāmah al Muḥaqqiq al Kamāl ibn Humām states: "The reports [around the issue]- namely, that whoever does a good deed for someone else, the latter is benefitted thereby- if combined, reach the degree of multiple, continuous chains of transmission (*tawātur*)."

Al Ḥāfiẓ al Suyūṭī says: "They [the majority] infer from the concept of "arrival" [the validity of other types of good deeds] via analogy with supplication, charity, fasting, *Hajj* and emancipation. They also infer it from the following *aḥādīth*." He then mentions these. (He mentions these in the *Sharḥ us Ṣudūr*, narrating from al-Khallāl and others). He then says: "If they [*the aḥādīth*] are [individually] weak then as a whole they point to the essential validity of the practice and that Muslims in every age have unceasingly gathered and recited the Quran for their dead without this practice being rejected. Therefore, there was consensus on the issue."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *Is 'āf ul Muslimīn wal Muslimāt bi jawāz il qirā'ah wa wuṣūl thawābihā ilal amwāt* pp62-69

⁵⁶ Narrated by Aḥmad from 'Āishah (v.6, p69). Also narrated from her by Bukhārī (1/334) and Muslim (3/155).

⁵⁷ *Al Rūḥ* by Ibn ul Qayyim, p409

⁵⁸ *Sharḥ ul Maṣḍar* by Suyūṭī. pp310-311

As for Allah the Exalted saying: “But for man is that which he strives for”- this constitutes no proof for the negation of the practice because the verse has been made specific by the many [other] evidences of the Quran and Sunnah that point to a person benefiting by the actions of someone else, [or (the verse) is implied to mean – that which the doer does not gift to him [i.e. the deceased].

Imām Ḥusayn ibn Faḍl, Allah be pleased with him, was asked about this [verse] and the Exalted's saying: “And Allah multiplies for whomsoever He wills”. He replied: “Nothing comes to [a person] through divine justice except what he strives for, but through divine generosity he obtains whatever Allah wishes him to obtain.”⁵⁹

[Addendum]⁶⁰ The confirmation of Shaykh ibn Taymīyah in this subject

Shaykh Taqī ud dīn Abul ‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn Taymīyah writes:

Whosoever believes that a human being does not benefit except through his own actions has gone against the consensus on the issue. The view is void on many grounds:

- (1) A person benefits by the supplication of another- which is benefitting by the act of another.
- (2) The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, will intercede for the people on the Plain during the Reckoning, then for the people of *Jannah* for them to enter therein, and for the people who have committed major sins in order to free them from the Fire- [all of] this is benefitting by the act of another.
- (3) Every Prophet and pious person will be able to intercede for others and this is benefitting by the act of another.
- (4) The angels supplicate and seek forgiveness for those on earth- which is benefitting by the act of another.
- (5) The Exalted will, purely through His Mercy, take people who have never done any good out of the Fire- which is their benefitting without any good deeds on their part.
- (6) The children of believers will enter *Jannah* through the deeds of their fathers- which is benefitting purely through the act of another.
- (7) Allah the Exalted says with regard to the two orphaned youths: “And their parents were righteous” [18: 82]. Thus they benefitted by the goodness of their parents, not due to their own exertions.
- (8) The deceased benefits by charity given for him and by the ransoming of slaves [on his behalf] as known through explicit texts of the *Sunnah* and the consensus on the issue- these are the acts of someone else.
- (9) The deceased is absolved of his obligation to perform *Ḥajj* when his guardian undertakes it in his place- which is benefitting by the act of someone else.
- (10) The deceased is absolved of the *Ḥajj* or fasting he has vowed falls if this is done by someone else, as known through the explicit texts of the *Sunnah*. This is benefitting by the act of another.
- (11) The deceased in debt upon whom the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace be upon him, refused to pray until his one debt was settled by Abū Qaṭādah and another person whose debt was settled by ‘Ali bin Abī Ṭālib, benefitted from the prayer of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and his skin was soothed through the settlement of his debt. This is benefitting by the act of another.
- (12) The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said to a man praying alone :_Isn’t there someone who wants to give charity to this person by praying with him? The man obtained the benefits of group praying through the act of another.
- (13) A human being is absolved of his debt to others when someone settles it on his behalf – which is benefitting by the act of another.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p310

⁶⁰ [Tr]This is our own description, as it brings this part of the discussion in the Sayyid’s book to a close.

- (14) One stricken with responsibilities and tribulations is relieved when these are solved for him - which is benefitting by the act of another.
- (15) The good neighbor benefits both the living and the dead, as is known through the traditions – which is benefitting by the act of another.
- (16) The one who attends a gathering of *dhikr* is shown mercy by being present, even if he is not one of the circle and is there in order fulfill a need that he has. And actions are judged by intentions. This is benefitting by the act of another.
- (17) In being prayed over and supplicated for, there is benefit for the deceased through the pray of the living- and this is benefitting by the act of another.
- (18) The Friday congregational prayer is made valid by the gathering of a number of people, and so too the group prayer. This is a case of the benefitting of some by others.
- (19) Allah, the Exalted, says to his Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him: “But Allah was not going to send them a penalty while you were among them.” [8:33] Allah, the Exalted, says: “Had there not been believing men and believing women” [Allah would have allowed you to force your way] [48:25] and “And had Allah not checked one people by means of another” [the earth would have been full of mischief] [2:251]. Thus Allah checks calamity on some people by means of others- which is benefitting by the act of another.
- (20) The *Sadaqatul Fitr* [‘Īd charity] is compulsory on the minor and others who a man provides for. Thus those other than him benefit [due to its reward] thereby due to no exertion of his own.
- (21) *Zakāh* is compulsory on the wealth of the minor and the insane. They gain its reward with no need of striving on their behalf.

Whoever cogitates the knowledge will find will find that human beings benefit by that which they do not do in ways that almost cannot be counted. So how can the verse be explained in a manner that is in clear disparity with the Book, the Sunnah and the consensus of the *ummah*. And what is meant by “man [*insān*]” are people in general.”⁶¹



⁶¹ Look at the *Ghāyatul Maqṣūd* in informing about the fancies of ibn Maḥmūd by Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥamīd, p101