

LA ILAHA ILLALLAH MUHAMMADUN RASULULLAH

I understood that You would not place next to Your Name but the Most Beloved One of Your creation. Allah said: O Adam, I have forgiven you, and were it not for Muhammad I would not have created you."

It was transmitted through many chains and was cited by Bayhaqi (in *Dala'il al-nubuwwa*), Abu Nu`aym (in *Dala'il al-nubuwwa*), al-Hakim in *al-Mustadrak* (2:615), al-Tabarani in his *Saghir* (2:82, 207) with another chain containing sub-narrators unknown to Haythami as he stated in *Majma` al-zawa'id* (8:253), and Ibn `Asakir on the authority of `Umar ibn al-Khattab, and most of these narrations were copied in Qastallani's *al-Mawahib al-laduniyya* (and al-Zarqani's *Commentary* 2:62).

1. This hadith is declared sound (*sahih*) by al-Hakim in *al-Mustadrak* (2:651), although he acknowledges Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Aslam, one of its sub-narrators, as weak. However, when he mentions this hadith he says: "Its chain is sound, and it is the first hadith of Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd ibn Aslam which I mention in this book"; al-Hakim also declares sound another version through Ibn `Abbas.

2. al-Bulqini declares this hadith sound in his *Fatawa*.

3. al-Subki confirms al-Hakim's authentication (in *Shifa' al-siqam fi ziyarat khayr al-anam* p. 134-135) although Ibn Taymiyya's rejection and criticism of this hadith was known to him and he rejects it, as well as saying that Ibn Taymiyya's extreme weakening of Ibn Zayd is exaggerated.

4. The hadith is also included by Qadi `Iyad among the "sound and famous narrations" in *al-Shifa*, and he says that Abu Muhammad al-Makki and Abu al-Layth al-Samarqandi mention it; Qadi `Iyad says: "It is said that this hadith explains the verse: 'And Adam received words from his Lord and He relented towards him' (2:37)"; he continues to cite another very similar version through al-Ajurri (d. 360), about whom al-Qari said: "al-Halabi said: This seems to be the imam and guide Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn al-Husayn ibn `Abd Allah al-Baghdadi, the compiler of the books *al-Shari`a* devoted to the Sunna, *al-Arba`un*, and others." This is confirmed by Ibn Taymiyya in his *Qa`ida fi al-tawassul*: "It is related by Shaykh Abu Bakr al-Ajurri, in his book *al-Shari`a*."

5. Ibn al-Jawzi also considers it sound (*sahih*) as he cites it in the first chapter of *al-Wafa bi ahwal al-mustafa*, in the introduction of which he says: "(In this book) I do not mix the sound hadith with the false," although he knew of `Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd's weakness as a narrator; he also mentions the

version of Maysarat al-Fajr whereby the Prophet says: "When satan deceived Adam and Eve, they repented and sought intercession to Allah with my name"; Ibn al-Jawzi also says in the chapter concerning the Prophet's superiority over the other Prophets in the same book: "Part of the exposition of his superiority to other Prophets is the fact that Adam asked his Lord through the sanctity (hurmat) of Muhammad that He relent towards him, as we have already mentioned."

6. Suyuti cites it in his Qur'anic commentary al-Durr al-manthur (2:37) and in al-Khasa'is al-kubra (1:12) and in al-Riyad al-aniqa fi sharh asma' khayr al-khaliqa (p. 49), where he says that Bayhaqi considers it sound; this is due to the fact that Bayhaqi said in the introduction to the Dala'il that he only included sound narrations in his book, although he also knew and explicitly mentions `Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd's weakness;

7. Ibn Kathir mentions it after Bayhaqi in al-Bidayat wa al-Nihaya (1:75, 1:180).

8. al-Haythami in Majma` al-zawa'id (8:253 #28870), al-Bayhaqi himself, and al-Qari in Sharh al-shifa' show that its chains have weakness in them. However, the weakness of Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd was known by Ibn al-Jawzi, Subki, Bayhaqi, Hakim, and Abu Nu`aym, yet all these scholars retained this hadith for consideration in their books.

9. Three scholars reject it, such as Ibn Taymiyya (Qa`ida jalila fi al-tawassul p. 89, 168-170) and his two students Ibn `Abd al-Hadi (al-Sarim al-munki p. 61-63) and al-Dhahabi (Mizan al-i`tidal 2:504 and Talkhis al-mustadrak), while `Asqalani reports Ibn Hibban's saying that `Abd al-Rahman ibn Zayd was a forger (Lisan al-mizan 3:360, 3:442).

10. At the same time, Ibn Taymiyya elsewhere quotes it and the version through Maysara and says: "These two are like the elucidation (tafsir) of the authentic ahadith (concerning the same topic)" (Fatawa 2:150). The contemporary Meccan hadith scholar Ibn `Alawi al-Maliki said: "This indicates that Ibn Taymiyya found the hadith sound enough to be considered a witness for other narrations (salih li al-istishhad wa al-i`tibar), because the forged (al-mawdu`) and the false (al-batil) are not taken as witness by the people of hadith"; al-Maliki also quotes (without reference) Dhahabi's unrestrained endorsement of the ahadith in Bayhaqi's Dala'il al-nubuwwa with his words: "You must take what is in it (the Dala'il), for it consists entirely of guidance and light." (Mafahim yajib an tusahhah p. 47).

11. It is furthermore evident that Ibn Taymiyya considers the meaning of the creation of everything for the sake of the Prophet as true and correct, as he declares in his Majmu`at al-fatawa in the volume on tasawwuf (11:95-97):

Muhammad is the Chief of the Children of Adam, the Best of Creation, the noblest of them in the sight of Allah. This is why some have said that "Allah created the Universe due to him," or that "Were it not for him, He would have neither created a Throne, nor a Footstool, nor a heaven, earth, sun or moon." However, this is not a hadith on the authority of the Prophet... but it may be explained from a correct aspect...

Since the best of the righteous of the children of Adam is Muhammad, creating him was a desirable end of deep-seated purposeful wisdom, more than for anyone else, and hence the completion of creation and the fulfilment of perfection was attained with Muhammad, may Allah Exalted bless him and grant him peace... The Chief of the Children of Adam is Muhammad, may Allah Exalted bless him and grant him peace, Adam and his children being under his banner. He, may Allah Exalted bless him and grant him peace, said: "Truly, I was written as the Seal of the Prophets with Allah, when Adam was going to-and-fro in his clay," i.e. that my prophethood was decreed and manifested when Adam was created but before the breathing of the Spirit into him, just as Allah decrees the livelihood, lifespan, deeds and misery or happiness of the slave when He creates the embryo but before the breathing of the Spirit into it.

Since man is the seal and last of all creation, and its microcosm, and since the best of man is thus the best of all creation absolutely, then Muhammad, being the Pupil of the Eye, the Axis of the Mill, and the Distributor to the Collective, is as it were the Ultimate Purpose from amongst all the purposes of creation. Thus it cannot be denied to say that "Due to him all of this was created", or that "Were it not for him, all this would not have been created," so if statements like this are thus explained according to what the Book and the Sunna indicate, it is acceptable.

12. Its latter part is mentioned as a separate hadith in the wording: "Were it not for Muhammad, I would not have created the spheres (al-aflak)." al-`Ajuni said in *Kashf al-khafa'* (#2123): "al-Saghani (d.650) said it is forged. I say: but its meaning is correct." Similarly `Ali al-Qari said in *al-Asrar al-marfu`a* (#754-755): "al-Saghani (in *al-Ahadith al-mawdu`a* p. 7) said: "It is forged," however, its meaning is sound (mi`nahu sahih), as Daylami has narrated on the authority of Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet said: "Gabriel came to me and said: O Muhammad! Were it not for you, Paradise would not have been created, and were it not for you, the Fire would not have been created." And Ibn `Asakir's narration has: And were it not for you, the world would not have been created."

As for Albani's rejection of Qari's use of Daylami in support of the hadith with the words: "I do not hesitate to declare it weak on the basis that Daylami is alone in citing it" (*Silsila da`ifa* #282), it shows exaggeration and deviation from the practice of the scholars concerning Daylami and his book. Ibn Taymiyya said in *Minhaj al-sunna* (4:38): "The fact that Daylami alone narrates a hadith does not indicate that the hadith is sound." Note that he never said: "The fact that Daylami alone

narrates a hadith indicates that it is forged," yet this is what Albani concludes! The reader may compare Albani's method of apriori rejection in lieu of a discussion of the hadith itself, to Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani's reliance on a hadith narrated by Daylami, as is shown by hadith #33 of his Arba`un fi rad` al-mujrim `an sabb al-muslim, although Daylami is alone in citing it. Further in Minhaj al-sunna (4:78) Ibn Taymiyya declared of him and his book: "al-Daylami in his book al-Firdaws mentioned many sound (sahih) hadiths, and also fair (hasan) narrations and forged ones.... He was one of the people of knowledge and religion and he was not a liar."

13. Ibn al-Qayyim in his Bada'i` al-fawa'id went so far as to represent Allah saying to humankind that everything was created for the sake of human beings:

hal `arifat qimata nafsik? innama khalaqtu al-akwana kullaha laka... kullu al-ashiya'i shajaratun wa anta al-thamara

Have you realized your value? I only created all the universes for your sake... All things are trees whose fruit you are.[18]

If Allah created all the universes for the sake of human beings, then how could all humanity be given what the Prophet is grudging, who is better than mankind and jinn put together?

14. Following are some of the hadiths of the mention of the Prophet's name together with Allah on the Throne and in the heavens cited by the hadith masters, as related by Suyuti in al-Khasa'is al-kubra (1:12-14):

a) In Ibn `Asakir from Ka`b al-Ahbar: Adam said to his son Sheeth: "O my son, you are my successor, therefore found my successorship upon godwariness and the Firm Rope, and every time you mention Allah, do mention next to His name the name of Muhammad, for I saw his name written on the leg of the Throne as I was between the spirit and the clay. Then I circumambulated the heavens and I did not see in them a single spot except the name of Muhammad was written upon it, and when my Lord made me inhabit Paradise I saw in it neither palace nor room except the name of Muhammad was written on it. I have seen his name written on the bosom of the wide-eyed maidens of Paradise, on the leaves of the reed-stalks and thickets of the Garden, on the leaves of the Tree of Bliss, on the leaves of the Lote-tree of the Farthest Boundary, and upon the veils and between the eyes of the angels. Therefore, make frequent remembrance of him, for the angels remember him in every moment."

b) Ibn `Adi and Ibn `Asakir from Anas: The Prophet said: "When I was taken up to heaven I saw written on the leg of the Throne:

la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah

ayyadtuhu bi `ali."[19]

c) Ibn `Asakir from `Ali: The Prophet said: "The night I was enraptured I saw written on the Throne:

la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah

abu bakr al-siddiq `umar al-faruq

`uthman dhu al-nurayn."[20]

d) Ibn `Adi, Tabarani in al-Awsat, Ibn `Asakir, and al-Hasan ibn `Arafa in his famous volume from Abu Hurayra: The Prophet said: "The night I was enraptured and taken up to heaven I did not pass a heaven except I saw in it my name written: muhammadun rasulullah with Abu Bakr at my side."

e) al-Bazzar from Ibn `Umar: The Prophet said: "When I was taken up to heaven I did not pass a heaven except I saw in it my name written: muhammadun rasulullah."[21]

f) al-Khatib, Ibn `Asakir, and al-Daraqutni in al-Afrad (Reports from a single narrator), from Abu al-Darda': The Prophet said: "The night I was enraptured I saw a green garment on the Throne whereupon was written in letters of light:

la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah

abu bakr al-siddiq `umar al-faruq."

g) Ibn `Asakir from Jabir: The Prophet said: "On the gate of Paradise is written:

la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah."[22]

h) Abu Nu`aym in al-Hilya from Ibn `Abbas: The Prophet said: "There is not in all Paradise one tree with a single leaf but inscribed:

la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah."[23]

i) al-Hakim from Ibn `Abbas, and he graded it sahih (sound): "Allah revealed to `Isa the following: Believe in Muhammad and order all those of your Community who see him to believe in him, for were it not for Muhammad I would not have created Adam, nor Paradise, nor the Fire. When I created the Throne upon the water it shuddered. So I wrote upon it:

la ilaha illallah muhammadun rasulullah

and it became calm." al-Dhahabi said: "Its chain contains `Amr ibn Aws and it is not known who he is." [24]

j) In Ibn `Asakir from Jabir through Abu al-Zubayr: "Between Adam's shoulders is written:

muhammadun rasulullah khatam al-nabiyyin."

Imam Shawkani said in his commentary on al-Jazari's (d. 833) `Iddat al-hisn al-hasin entitled Tuhfat al-dhakirin bi `iddat al-hisn al-hasin (Beirut ed. 1970), p. 37: "He [al-Jazari] said: Let him make tawassul to Allah with His Prophets and the salihin or saints (in his du`a). I say: And exemplifying tawassul with the Prophets is the hadith extracted by Tirmidhi et al. (of the blind man saying: O Allah, I ask You and turn to You by means of Muhammad the Prophet of Mercy) [see below]... as for tawassul with the saints, among its examples is the hadith, established as sound, of the Companions' tawassul asking Allah for rain by means of al-`Abbas the Prophet's uncle, and `Umar said: "O Allah, we use as means to You the uncle of our Prophet etc. [see below]." We cite further below Shawkani's complete and detailed stand on tawassul from his treatise al-Durr al-nadir.

A blind man came to the Prophet and said: "Invoke Allah for me that he help me." He replied: "If you wish I will delay this, and it would be better for you, and if you wish I will invoke Allah the Exalted (for you)." He said: "Then invoke him." The Prophet said to him: idhhab fa tawadda', wa salli rak`atayn thumma qul -- "Go and make an ablution, pray two rak`at, then say: "O Allah, I am asking you (as'aluka) and turning to you (atawajjahu ilayka) with your Prophet Muhammad (bi nabiyyika Muhammad), the Prophet of mercy; O Muhammad (ya Muhammad), I am turning with you to my Lord regarding my present need / I am asking my Lord with your intercession concerning the return of my sight (inni atawajjahu bika ila rabbi fi hajati hadhih -- another version has: inni astashfi`u bika `ala rabbi fi raddi basari) so that He will fulfill my need; O Allah, allow him to intercede (with you) for me (allahumma shaffi`hu fiyya)."

It is related by Ahmad (4:138 #17246-17247), Tirmidhi (hasan sahih gharib -- Da`awat Ch. 119), Ibn Majah (Book of Iqamat al-salat wa al-sunnat, Ch. on Salat al-hajat #1385), Nasa'i (`Amal al-yawm wa al-laylat p. 417-418 #658-660), al-Hakim (1:313, 1:526), Tabarani in al-Kabir, and rigorously authenticated as sound (sahih) by nearly fifteen hadith masters including Ibn Hajar, Dhahabi, Shawkani, and Ibn Taymiyya.

1. The Prophet's order, here as elsewhere, carries legislative force for all Muslims and is not limited to a particular person, place or time; it is valid for all generations until the end of time unless proven otherwise by a subsequent indication from the Prophet himself, Peace be upon him.

2. The Prophet was not physically present at the assigned time of the invocation, since he said to the blind man: "Go and make ablution," without adding: "and then come back in front of me." With regard to physical absence, the living and the dead are exactly alike, namely: absent.

3. Despite the Prophet's physical absence, the wording (sigha) for calling upon his intercession is direct address: "O Muhammad." Such a wording -- "O So-and-So" -- is only used with someone present and able to hear. It should also be noted that Allah forbade the Companions from being forward or calling out to the Prophet in the ordinary manner used with one another (49:1-2). The only way, therefore, that the Prophet, Blessings and peace be upon him, could both be absent and at the same be addressed is that the first be understood in the physical sense and the second in the spiritual.

The above invocation was also used after the Prophet's lifetime, as is proven by the sound (sahih) hadith authenticated by Bayhaqi, Abu Nu`aym in the Ma`rifa, Mundhiri (Targhib 1:473-474), Haythami, and Tabarani in the Kabir (9:17-18) and the Saghir (1:184/201-202) on the authority of `Uthman ibn Hunayf's nephew Abu Imama ibn Sahl ibn Hunayf: A man would come to `Uthman ibn `Affan for a certain need, but the latter would not pay him any attention nor look into his need, upon which he complained of his condition to `Uthman ibn Hunayf who told him: "Go and make ablution, then go to the mosque and pray two rak`at, then say (this du`a)," and he mentioned the invocation of the blind man, "then go (to `Uthman again)." The man went, did as he was told, then came to `Uthman's door, upon which the door-attendant came, took him by the hand, and brought him to `Uthman who sat him with him on top of the carpet, and said: "Tell me what your need is." After this the man went out, met `Uthman ibn Hunayf again, and said to him: "May Allah reward you! Previously he would not look into my need nor pay any attention to me, until you spoke to him." He replied: "I did not speak to him, but I saw the Prophet when a blind man came to him complaining of his failing eyesight," and he mentioned to him the substance of the previous narration.

It is narrated that `Umar ibn al-Khattab, the second caliph, would pray to Allah for rain during times of drought through the means, the honor and intercession of the uncle of the Prophet, `Abbas ibn `Abd Muttalib by using this supplication: "O Our Lord! Previously, when we had a drought, we used to come to You by means and intercession of Your Prophet. Now we are requesting intercession through the uncle of the Prophet to grant us rain," and it was granted. Bukhari relates it. `Umar added, after making this supplication: "He (al-`Abbas), by Allah, is the means to Allah"

(hadha wallahi al-wasilatu ilallahi `azza wa jall). Ibn `Abd al-Barr relates it in al-Isti`ab bi ma`rifat al-ashab.

The scholars say that `Umar sought the means of al-`Abbas rather than the Prophet in order to show and acknowledge the status of the Prophet's uncle among the people and, more generally, of the Ahl al-Bayt or direct relatives of the Prophet. Kawthari in his Maqalat (p. 411) cites Ibn `Abd al-Barr's commentary in al-Isti`ab that `Umar used al-`Abbas in response to Ka`b's words: "O Commander of the believers, the Bani Isra`il in such circumstances used to pray for rain by means of the relatives of Prophets." It is not, as some have fancied, because the Prophet's means is no longer available that `Umar used al-`Abbas as a wasila. The hadith of `Uthman ibn Hunayf and the words of Malik to al-Mansur show that the Prophet continued to be sought by the Companions and Followers as a means of benefit even after he left this life.

The following is more evidence to this effect:

al-Darimi in the Chapter 15 of the Muqaddima (Introduction) to his Sunan (1:43) entitled: "Allah's generosity to His Prophet after his death," relates from Aws ibn `Abd Allah with a good chain: "The people of Madina complained to `A'isha of the severe drought that they were suffering. She said: "Go to the Prophet's grave and open a window towards the sky so that there will be no roof between him and the sky." They did so, after which they were watered with such rain that vegetation grew and the camels got fat. That year was named the Year of Plenty."

It is clear from the above narrations that the position of the Mother of the Believers `A'isha differs from that of modern-day "Salafis," since she recommended to the people of Madina to use the Prophet in his grave as a means of obtaining blessing and benefit and this remained in use until the Wahhabis took over the Hijaz, while "Salafis" declare this to be unacceptable. Either they know better than the fuqaha' of the Companions or, most certainly, they are peddling misguidance and innovation.

Shaykh Albani, in order to reject the hadith of Darimi, raised some objections which are so full of holes that one can not only see the sky through them, but also the sun, the moon, and the stars. He said in his little book translated under the name Tawassul: Its Types and Its Rulings (p. 130-131) about Darimi's chain of transmission for the report (Abu al-Nu`man from Sa`id ibn Zayd from `Amr ibn Malik al-Nukri from Abu al-Jawza' Aws ibn `Abd Allah from `A'isha):

This chain of narration is weak and cannot be used as a proof due to three reasons:

(i) Sa`id ibn Zayd who is the brother of Hammad ibn Zayd is somewhat weak. al-Hafiz [Ibn Hajar] said about him in al-Taqrīb: "Generally acceptable, but he makes mistakes." Dhahabi said about him in al-Mizan: "Yahya ibn Sa`id said: Weak, and al-Sa`di said: He is not a proof, they declare his ahadith to be weak. Nasa'i and others said: He is not strong; and Ahmad said: He is all right. Yahya ibn Sa`id would not accept him."

However, the above documentation is partial and biased, and this is not surprising since "Salafis" only mention what advances their view while they cover up, rephrase, or declare weak whatever contradicts it. This is especially true of Albani, whose followers claim him as "the leading scholar of hadith of this age"(!) whereas he makes frequent mistakes, innovates in many of his rulings, and is generally unreliable except to those unschooled in the Islamic sciences. It would be more correct for "Salafis" to say: "He is our leading scholar," for in this we would agree with them completely. However, it is a fact that no one who has actual knowledge in hadith and fiqh uses Albani's books except that they check and verify anything they take from them against trustworthy scholars.

The present narration is a case in point, since Albani deliberately omits to mention the authentication of the narrators he seeks to declare weak, hiding basic evidence from his readers in order to mislead them, all because he is dead set against the issue at hand, even if it is authentically reported from the Mother of the Believers! Following is a point-by-point refutation of Albani's claims by the Moroccan hadith scholar `Abd Allah ibn Muhammad ibn al-Siddiq al-Ghumari in his booklet entitled: *Irgham al-mubtadi` al-ghabi bi jawaz al-tawassul bi al-nabi* (The coercion of the unintelligent innovator to the effect that using the Prophet as a means is permissible p. 23-25):

Albani's weakening of Sa`id ibn Zayd is rejected, because Sa`id is one of Muslim's narrators, and Yahya ibn Ma`in declared him trustworthy (thiqa)!

The editor of Ghumari's text, Ghumari's student Hasan `Ali al-Saqqaf says on the same page as the above:

Albani has adduced worthless proofs as is his habit when embellishing falsehood. He cited whatever fit his whim from Ibn Hajar's Taqrīb, leaving out his mention that Sa`id ibn Zayd is one of Muslim's narrators in his Sahih. Beware, therefore, of this tadrīs (concealment) on his part!... He added Dhahabi's notice on Sa`id ibn Zayd in the Mizan, and this is another deliberate cover-up, for he faithlessly omitted to mention what Ibn Hajar reported in Tahdhib al-tahdhib (4:29) from those who declared Sa`id ibn Zayd trustworthy, in addition to his being one of Muslim's narrators:

- Bukhari said: "Muslim ibn Ibrahim narrated to us: Sa`id ibn Zayd Abu al-Hasan narrated to us, and he is reliable and a memorizer of hadith (saduq hafiz)."

- al-Duri said on the authority of Ibn Ma`in: "Sa`id ibn Zayd is trustworthy (thiqa)."

- Ibn Sa`d said: "He was trustworthy."

- al-Ujli said: "He is from Basra, and he is trustworthy."

- Abu Zur`a said: "I heard Sulayman ibn Harb say: Sa`id ibn Zayd narrated to us, and he was trustworthy."

- Abu Ja`far al-Darimi said: "Hibban ibn Hilal narrated to us: Sa`id ibn Zayd narrated to us, and he was a memorizer of hadith and he was reliable."

- Ibn `Adi said: "There is no denounced narration from him except someone else also narrates it, and I consider him one of those in the reliable category."

In addition to the above remarks it is noteworthy to mention that Albani cited Ahmad's grading of Sa`id ibn Zayd as *la ba'sa bihi* which his translator rendered as "he is all right," but neither the author nor the translator seems to know that in Imam Ahmad's terminology *la ba'sa bihi* is identical with *thiqa*, which means "trustworthy" and is among the highest gradings of authentication! Ibn Salah in his *Muqaddima* (p. 134), Dhahabi in *Lisan al-mizan* (1:13), Sakhawi in *Fath al-mughith*, Ibn Hajar in *Hadi al-sari*, Abu Ghudda in his commentary to Lucknawi's *Raf`* (p. 222 n. 3), as well as the editor of Nawawi's *al-Taqrib wa al-taysir* (p. 51) have indicated that the equivalency of saying "There is no harm in him" with the grade of trustworthy (*thiqa*) obtains for many early authorities of the third century such as Ibn Ma`in, Ibn al-Madini, Imam Ahmad, Duhaym, Abu Zur`a, Abu Hatim al-Razi, Ya`qub ibn Sufyan al-Fasawi, and others.

Albani continues in his list of reasons for weakening Darimi's narration:

(ii) It is mawquf (stopping at the Companion), coming only from `A'isha and not from the Prophet, and even if the chain of narration up to `A'isha were authentic then it would not be a proof since it is something open to personal judgment in which even the Companions are sometimes correct and sometimes incorrect, and we are not bound to act upon that (!).

To this claim it is easy to reply that not only is the narration sound and authentic, but also that there is no objection related from any of the Companions to the act recommended by the Mother of the Believers, just as there was no objection on their part to the istisqa' made by the man who came to the grave of the Prophet in the narration of Malik al-Dar cited below. This shows ijma` on the matter on the part of the Companions, and such ijma` is definitely binding in the sense that no one can declare unlawful or innovative something which they have tacitly declared lawful or desirable. As for the following the opinion of the Companions we say what Imam al-Shafi`i said as related by Ibn Qayyim in A`lam al-muwaqqi`in `an rabb al-`alamin (2:186-187): "Their opinion for us is better than our opinion to ourselves."

Albani listed the following as his last reason for weakening Darimi's narration:

(iii) Abu al-Nu`man... was originally a reliable narrator except that he deteriorated at the end of his life. The hadith master Burhan al-Din al-Halabi mentions him among those who deteriorated in later life in his book al-Muqaddima (p. 391) and he says: "The ruling about these people is that their narrations are accepted if reported from them by people who heard from them before they deteriorated. But narrations reported from them by those who heard from them after they deteriorated, or narrations reported from them by people about whom we do not know whether they heard from them before they deteriorated or after, then these narrations are to be rejected."

I say: We do not know whether this report was heard by Darimi from him before or after his memory deteriorated, it is therefore not acceptable and cannot be used as evidence. [Footnote:] Shaykh al-Ghumari missed this weakness in Misbah al-zujaj (p. 43), just as it was ignored by another in order to give the impression to the people that this report is authentic(!).

Ghumari said regarding these claims about Abu al-Nu`man:

His weakening of Abu al-Nu`man is invalid, because Abu al-Nu`man's deterioration did not affect what is narrated from him! al-Daraqutni said [as cited by Dhahabi in Mizan al-i`tidal (4:81)]: "He deteriorated at the end of his life, and no denounced hadith issued from him after his deterioration whatsoever, and he is trustworthy (thiqa)." As for what Ibn Hibban said, that "Many denounced things occurred in his narrations after his deterioration," then al-Dhahabi refuted it when he said

(4:8): "Ibn Hibban was unable to cite a single denounced narration from him, and the truth is just as Daraqutni said."

Shaykh Muhammad ibn `Alawi al-Maliki said in his book *Shifa' al-fu'ad bi ziyarat khayr al-`ibad* (p. 152):

Abu al-Nu`man's deterioration neither harms nor is detrimental to his reliability, since Bukhari in his *Sahih* narrated over one hundred hadiths from him, and no narration was taken from him after his deterioration, as Daraqutni said.... The chain of transmission is all right, in fact I consider it good. The scholars have cited as evidence many chains that are like it or less strong than it.

Following are Saqqaf's further comments, beginning with Albani's charge against Shaykh al-Ghumari:

We know full well that it is Albani who betrays scholarly trust and deliberately misinforms the people, even if he accuses others of disinformation.... In weakening Abu al-Nu`man he has again acted faithlessly. His quotation from al-Burhan al-Halabi's book *al-Ightibat bi man rumiya bi al-ikhtilat* (p. 23) is designed to pull the wool over the eyes of his followers and those who only read his works! For it is necessary to also know that those who are branded as suffering from deterioration in the aforementioned book are divided among those whose narrations were unaffected by their deterioration and those whose narrations were affected. Abu al-Nu`man belongs to the first group, and al-Dhahabi made this clear in *al-Mizan* (4:8). Therefore our reply to Albani is: Shaykh al-Ghumari did not miss anything concerning this matter of deterioration, because he is a hadith scholar and a master memorizer (hafiz), however, it is you who have missed it, O slandering backbiter!

As for Albani's quotation of Ibn Taymiyya's claim in his *al-Radd `ala al-Bakri* (p. 68-74) whereby "a clear proof that it is a lie is the fact that no such opening existed above the house at all in the whole of the life of `A'isha"(!) then it is a weak objection which is no sooner brought up than cast out. Surely Imam al-Darimi and the scholars of the succeeding generations would know of such a detail better than latecomers. As for the authorities among the latter, then the hadith scholar and historian of Madina Imam `Ali al-Samhudi (d. 922) did not so much as look at Ibn Taymiyya's objection, rather he confirmed the truth of Darimi's narration by saying, after citing it in his *Wafa' al-wafa'* (2:549): al-Zayn al-Miraghi said: "Know that it is the Sunna of the people of Madina to this day to open a window at the bottom of the dome of the Prophet's room, that is, of the blessed green dome, on the side of the Qibla." I say: And in our time, they open the door facing the noble face (the grave) in the space surrounding the room and they gather there."

So much for the claims of naysayers regarding istisqa' through the Prophet.

· The act of the Mother of the Believers `A'isha in the narration of Darimi is explicitly confirmed by Abu Talib's famous line of poetry concerning istisqa' through the Prophet as related in the book of istisqa' in Bukhari's Sahih:

`Abdullah ibn Dinar said: "I heard Ibn `Umar reciting the poetic verses of Abu Talib:

A fair-skinned one by whose face rainclouds are sought,

A caretaker for the orphans and protector of widows.

`Umar ibn Hamza said: Salim narrated from his father (Ibn `Umar) that the latter said: "The poet's saying came to my mind as I was looking at the face of the Prophet while he was praying for rain -- and he did not get down till the rain water flowed profusely from every roof-gutter:

A fair-skinned one by whose face rainclouds are sought,

A caretaker for the orphans and protector of widows.

One sub-narrator added: "These were the words of Abu Talib."

Note that in his translation of Bukhari (2:65), Muhammad Muhsin Khan alters the wording of the hadith to read: "A white person who is requested to pray for rain" in place of "by whose face rain is sought," and Allah knows best the reason for this grave betrayal of the translator's trust in the most important Islamic source after the Qur'an.

al-Bayhaqi relates with a sound (sahih) chain: It is related from Malik al-Dar, `Umar's treasurer, that the people suffered a drought during the successorship of `Umar, whereupon a man came to the grave of the Prophet and said: "O Messenger of Allah, ask for rain for your Community, for verily they have but perished," after which the Prophet appeared to him in a dream and told him: "Go to `Umar and give him my greeting, then tell him that they will be watered. Tell him: You must be clever, you must be clever!" The man went and told `Umar. The latter said: "O my Lord, I spare no effort except in what escapes my power!" Ibn Kathir cites it thus from Bayhaqi in al-Bidaya wa al-nihaya and says: isnaduhu sahih;[25] Ibn Abi Shayba cites it in his Musannaf with a sound (sahih)

chain as confirmed by Ibn Hajar who says: rawa Ibn Abi Shayba bi isnadin sahih and cites the hadith in Fath al-bari.[26] He identifies Malik al-Dar as `Umar's treasurer (khazin `umar) and says that the man who visited and saw the Prophet in his dream is identified as the Companion Bilal ibn al-Harith, and he counts this hadith among the reasons for Bukhari's naming of the chapter "The people's request to their leader for rain if they suffer drought." He also mentions it in al-Isaba, where he says that Ibn Abi Khaythama cited it.[27] This hadith is discussed again further below with respect to Albani's claim: " We do not accept that this story is authentic..."

The legal inference here is not from the dream, because although the dream of seeing the Prophet is truthful, a dream cannot be used to establish a ruling (hukm) due to the possibility that the person who saw it makes an error in its wording. Rather, the inference from this hadith is based on the action of the Companion Bilal ibn al-Harith. The fact that Bilal came to the grave of the Prophet, called out to him, and asked him to ask for rain is a proof that these actions are permitted. These actions fall under the rubric of asking the Prophet for help (istighatha), seeking him as a means (tawassul), and using his intermediary (tashaffu`), and none of the Companions reprimanded him, and therefore it was understood that such actions are among the greatest acts of drawing near to Allah.

In his edition of Ibn Hajar, the Wahhabi scholar Bin Baz rejects the hadith as a valid source for seeking rain through the Prophet, and brazenly condemns the act of the Companion who came to the grave, calling it munkar (aberrant) and wasila ila al-shirk (a means to associating partners to Allah).[28] We seek protection from Allah from ignorance and error.

The Prophet said: "My life is a great good for you: you will relate about me and it will be related to you; and my death is a great good for you: your actions will be presented to me (in my grave) and if I see goodness I will praise Allah, and if see other than that I will ask forgiveness of Him for you."

Haythami says in Majma` al-zawa'id (9:24 #91): "al-Bazzar relates it and its sub-narrators are all men of sound hadith." Qadi `Iyad cites it in al-Shifa (1:56 of the Amman edition) and Suyuti said in his Manahil al-safa fi takhrij ahadith al-shifa (Beirut 1988/1408) p. 31 (#8): "Ibn Abi Usama cites it in his Musnad from the hadith of Bakr ibn `Abd Allah al-Muzani, and al-Bazzar from the hadith of Ibn Mas`ud with a sound (sahih) chain." He says the same in his al-Khasa'is al-kubra. It is confirmed by al-Khafagi's and al-Qari's respective commentaries on al-Shifa'. al-`Iraqi said in Tarh al-tathrib: "Its chain is good" (isnaduhu jayyid).

It is cited in Shaykh al-Islam al-Taqi al-Subki's Shifa' al-siqam fi ziyarat khayr al-anam (The healing of the sick concerning the visit of the Best of Creation), where he mentions that Bakr ibn Abd Allah al-Muzani reported it, and Ibn al-Jawzi mentions it through Bakr and then again through Anas ibn Malik

in the penultimate chapter of the penultimate section of al-Wafa, both huffaz without giving the isnad. However, Ibn al-Jawzi specifies in the introduction of his book that he only included sound traditions in it. He also mentions the version through Aws ibn Aws: "The actions of human beings are shown to me every Thursday night preceding Friday." See also Fath al-bari 10:415 and 11:385, al-Mundhiri's al-Tarhib wa al-tarhib 3:343, and Musnad Ahmad 4:484.

The former Grand Mufti of Egypt Shaykh Hasanayn Muhammad Makhluḥ wrote in his Fatawa shar`iyya (Cairo: Dar al-`itṣam, 1405/1985, 1:91-92):

The hadith means that the Prophet is a great good for his Community during his life, because Allah the Exalted has preserved the Community through the secret of the Prophet's presence from misguidance and confusion and disagreement, and He has guided the people through the Prophet to the manifest truth; and that after Allah took back the Prophet, our connection to the latter's goodness continues uncut and the extension of his goodness endures, overshadowing us. The deeds of the Community are shown to him every day, and he glorifies Allah for the goodness that he finds, while he asks for His forgiveness for the small sins, and the alleviation of His punishment for the grave ones: and this is a tremendous good for us. There is therefore "goodness for the Community in his life, and in his death, goodness for the Community."

Moreover, as has been established in the hadith, the Prophet is alive in his grave with a special "isthmus-life" (hayat barzakhīyya khassa) stronger than the lives of the martyrs which the Qur'an spoke about in more than one verse. The nature of these two kinds of life cannot be known except by their Bestower, the Glorious, the Exalted. He is able to do all things. His showing the Community's deeds to the Prophet as an honorific gift for him and his Community is entirely possible rationally and documented in the reports. There is no leeway for its denial; and Allah guides to His light whomever He pleases; and Allah knows best.

We cite more hadiths on tawassul in section c) below.

al-`Utbi said: "As I was sitting by the grave of the Prophet, a Bedouin Arab came and said: "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah! I have heard Allah saying: "If they had only, when they were unjust to themselves, come unto thee and asked Allah's forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah indeed Oft-returning, Most Merciful" (4:64), so I have come to you asking forgiveness for my sin, seeking your intercession with my Lord. Then he began to recite poetry:

O best of those whose bones are buried in the deep earth,

And from whose fragrance the depth
and the height have become sweet,
May I be the ransom for a grave which thou inhabit,
And in which are found purity, bounty and munificence!

Then he left, and I dozed and saw the Prophet in my sleep. He said to me: O `Utbi, run after the Bedouin and give him glad tidings that Allah has forgiven him."

The report is mashhur (well-known) and related by Nawawi, Adhkar, Mecca ed. p. 253-254, al-Majmu` 8:217, and al-Idah fi manasik al-hajj, chapters on visiting the grave of the Prophet; Ibn Jama`a, Hidayat al-salik 3:1384; Ibn `Aqil, al-Tadhkira; Ibn Qudama, al-Mughni 3:556-557; al-Qurtubi, Tafsir of 4:64 in Ahkam al-Qur'an 5:265; Samhudi, Khulasat al-Wafa p. 121 (from Nawawi); Dahlan, Khulasat al-Kalam 2:247; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir 2:306, and al-Bidayat wa al-nihayat 1:180; Abu al-Faraj ibn Qudama, al-Sharh al-kabir 3:495; al-Bahuti al-Hanbali, Kashshaf al-qina` 5:30; Taqi al-Din al-Subki, Shifa' al-siqam p. 52; Ibn al-Jawzi, Muthir al-gharam al-sakin ila ashraf al-amakin p. 490; al-Bayhaqi, Shu`ab al-iman #4178; Ibn `Asakir, Mukhtasar tarikh Dimashq 2:408; Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, al-Jawhar al-munazzam [commentary on Nawawi's Idah]; Ibn al-Najjar, Akhbar al-Madina p. 147. A similar report is cited through Sufyan ibn `Uyayna (Shafi`i's shaykh), and through Abu Sa`id al-Sam`ani on the authority of `Ali.

Evidently, al-`Utbi's account of the Arab's tawassul for forgiveness at the Prophet's grave is found in many books on the subject of ziyara (visiting the Prophet's grave in Madina) or manasik (rites of pilgrimage) by the many scholars of the Four Schools, none of whom have rejected it or declared it weak. See, for example, the translations of Ibn al-Jawzi, Nawawi, and Ibn Jama`a in the last section of this book. Those of the contemporary "Salafi" scholars who choose to contest this report of its established grade of mashhur, do not measure up to the reliability of a single one of the sources named above. As for the "Salafis'" recourse to the isolated opinions of Ibn Taymiyya or Ibn `Abd al-Hadi who have cast aspersions on the authenticity of the report, in the words of Ibn Jama`a: no attention is paid to it.

The sources also relate the report of Ibn Abi Fudayk, one of the early scholars of Madina and one of Shafi`i's shaykhs, who said: "I heard one of the authorities whom I have met say: "It has reached us that whoever stands at the Prophet's grave and recites: "Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet..." (33:56) and then says: "May Allah bless you, O Muhammad" (sallallahu `alayka ya Muhammad) seventy times, an angel will call him saying: May Allah bless you, O So-and-so; none of your needs will be left unfulfilled."" Ibn Jama`a related it in Hidayat al-salik 3:1382-1383, Ibn al-Jawzi in Muthir al-gharam p. 487, Qadi `Iyad in al-Shifa', and Bayhaqi in Shu`ab al-iman (#4169).

The muhaddith al-Samhudi and others also relate the account of the Arab who sought the Prophet's means at his grave:

al-Asma`i said: I saw a Bedouin stand at the Prophet's grave and say: "O Allah, here is Your Beloved, and I am Your servant, and Satan is Your enemy. If You forgive me, Your Beloved will be happy, Your servant will attain victory, and Your enemy will be angry. If You do not forgive me, Your Beloved will be sad, Your enemy will be satisfied, and Your servant will be destroyed. But You are more noble, O my Lord, than to allow Your Beloved to be sad, Your enemy to be satisfied, and Your servant to be destroyed. O Allah, the highborn Arabs, if one of their leaders die, release one of their slaves over his grave in his honor, and this is the leader of the worlds: therefore release me over his grave, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!" al-Asma`i said: "I said to him: O brother of the Arabs! Allah has surely forgiven you and released you for the beauty of this request." [29]

al-Hafiz Ibn al-Jawzi relates in *Kitab al-Wafa* (p. 818 #1536): (al-hafiz) Abu Bakr al-Minqari said: I was with (al-hafiz) al-Tabarani and (al-hafiz) Abu al-Shaykh in the Prophet's Mosque, in some difficulty. We became very hungry. That day and the next we didn't eat. When it was time for `isha, I came to the Prophet's grave and I said: "O Messenger of Allah, we are hungry, we are hungry" (ya rasullallah al-ju` al-ju`)! Then I left. Abu al-Shaykh said to me: Sit. Either there will be food for us, or death. I slept and Abu al-Shaykh slept. al-Tabarani stayed awake, researching something. Then an `Alawi (a descendant of `Ali) came knocking at the door with two boys, each one carrying a palm-leaf basket filled with food. We sat up and ate. We thought that the children would take back the remainder but they left everything behind. When we finished, the `Alawi said: O people, did you complain to the Prophet? I saw him in my sleep and he ordered me to bring something to you.

Imam Bukhari said that he wrote his biographical book on the subnarrators of authentic hadith *al-Tarikh al-kabir* by the Prophet's graveside, under the light of the moon. It is related by Ibn al-Jawzi in *Sifat al-safwa* (4:147) and al-Subki in *Tabaqat al-shafi`iyya al-kubra* (2:216).

Musnad Ahmad, Imam Ahmad's compilation of 30,000 mostly sound narrations from the Prophet, was held in such high reverence that it was read in the sixth century by a society of devout hadith scholars from cover to cover in fifty-six sittings before the grave of the Prophet in Madina. [30] Where is such devotion to the Prophet found today?

Ibn Hajar said in Sulayman ibn Sunayd ibn Nashwan's biographical notice in his *al-Durar al-kamina* that he performed forty pilgrimages. On the fortieth he was seized by fatigue and fell asleep by the side of the Noble Grave. Thereupon he saw the Prophet who told him: "O So-and-so, how many times have you come, and you have received nothing from me? Give me your hand." He gave him

his hand, and the Prophet wrote upon it something against fever after which, if ever he suffered from it, he would be cured by Allah's permission. This invocation is: "I have sought refuge with a Master who never judges unjustly nor leads to other than victory. Go out, O fever, from this body, nor does pain of any sort follow this." Ajluni mentions it in *Kashf al-khafa* (#1175).