

REFUTATION OF THOSE WHO QUESTION

TABARRUK BI AL-ATHAR ("SEEKING BLESSINGS

FROM THE PROPHET'S RELICS")

AS A VALID ISLAMIC PRACTICE

"Tabarruk": deriving blessing from something

once owned or touched by a holy person.

"Athar": relics.

As for those who reject the validity of tabarruk or seeking blessings through the relics of the Prophet, we warn them that Allah Himself mentioned the tabarruk of the Prophet Ya`qub with the relic of his son Yusuf as well as the tabarruk of the Banu Isra'il with the relics of the Family of Musa and the Family of Harun; and that the evidence for the tabarruk of the Companions and the Tabi`in through the Prophet and the saints is innumerable.

· Allah said: "Go with this my shirt, and cast it over the face of my father: he will come to see (clearly)... When the Caravan left (Egypt), their father said: I do indeed scent the presence of Yusuf... Then, when the bearer of glad tidings came, he laid it on his face and he became a seer once more. He said: Said I not unto you that I know from Allah that which ye know not?" (12:93-96).

· And He said: " And their Prophet said unto them: Lo! the token of his kingdom is that there shall come unto you the ark wherein is peace of reassurance from your Lord, and a remnant of that which the house of Moses and the house of Aaron left behind, the angels bearing it. Lo! herein shall be a token for you if (in truth) ye are believers." (2:247)

The Companions' Seeking of Blessings

With the Prophet's Person and His Relics

1. Tabarruk with the Prophet's hair and nails. There are countless hadiths on this.

- Bukhari narrates in his Sahih in the Book of Clothing, under the chapter entitled "What is mentioned about gray hair," that `Usman ibn `Abd Allah ibn Mawhab said: "My family sent me to Umm Salama with a cup of water. Umm Salama brought out a silver bottle which contained one of the hairs of the Prophet, and it used to be that if anyone came under the evil eye or ill health they used to send her a cup of water through which she would pass this hair (for drinking). We used to look into the silver bottle: I saw some reddish hairs."

- Anas said: "When the Prophet shaved his head (after pilgrimage), Abu Talha was the first one to take of his hair." Bukhari.

- Anas also said: "The Prophet threw stones at al-Jamra, then sacrificed, then told the barber to shave his head right side first, then began to give the hair away to the people." Muslim.

- Anas said: "Talha was the one distributing it." Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud.

- He also said: "When the Prophet shaved his head in Mina, he gave me the hair from the right side and he said: Anas! take it to Umm Sulaym [his mother]. When the Companions saw what the Prophet gave us, they began to compete to take the hair from the left side, and everyone was getting a share from that." Ahmad narrated it.

- Ibn al-Sakan narrated through Safwan ibn Hubayra from the latter's father: Thabit al-Bunani said: Anas ibn Malik said to me (on his death-bed): "This is one of the hairs of Allah's Messenger, Allah's blessings and peace upon him. I want you to place it under my tongue." Thabit continued: I placed it under his tongue, and he was buried with it under his tongue."^[83]

- Abu Bakr said: "I saw Khalid [ibn Walid] asking for the Prophet's forelock and he received it. He used to put it over his eyes and then kiss it." It is known that he then placed it in his qalansuwa (head cover around which the turban is tied) and never faced battle again except he won. Narrated by Ibn Hajar in his Isaba. Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani relates that Imam Malik said: "Khalid ibn al-Walid owned a qalansiyya which contained some of the Prophet's hair, and that is the one he wore the day of the battle of Yarmuk."^[84]

- Ibn Sirin (one of the Tabi'in) said: "One hair of the Prophet in my possession is more precious to me than silver and gold and everything that is on the earth and everything that is inside it." Bukhari, Bayhaqi (Sunan kubra), and Ahmad.

- In Sahih al-Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 72, Number 784: `Uthman bin `Abd Allah ibn Mawhab said, "My people sent me with a bowl of water to Umm Salama." Isra'il approximated three fingers indicating the small size of the container in which there was some hair of the Prophet. `Uthman added, "If any person suffered from evil eye or some other disease, he would send a vessel (containing water) to Umm Salama (and she would dip the Prophet's hair into it and it would be drunk). I looked into the container (that held the hair of the Prophet) and saw a few reddish hairs in it."

Hafiz Ibn Hajar in Fath al-bari, Volume 10, page 353, said: "They used to call the silver bottle in which the hair of the Prophet was kept jiljalan and that bottle was in the home of Umm Salama." Hafiz al-`Ayni said in `Umdat al-qari, Volume 18, page 79: "Umm Salama had some of the hairs of the Prophet in a silver bottle. When some people got ill, they would go and obtain blessings from these hairs and they would be healed by means of their blessings. If a person were struck by the evil eye or any sickness, he would send his wife to Umm Salama with a mikhdaba or water-pail, and she would pass the hair through that water and then drink the water and he would be healed, after which they would return the hair to the jiljal."

- Imam Ahmad narrates in his Musnad (4:42) from `Abd Allah ibn Zayd ibn `Abd Rabbih with a sound (sahih) chain as stated by Haythami in Majma` al-zawa'id (3:19) that the Prophet clipped his nails and distributed them among the people.

2. Tabarruk with the Prophet's sweat.

- Anas said: "The Prophet stayed with us, and as he slept my mother began to collect his sweat in a flask. The Prophet awoke and said: O Umm Sulaym, what are you doing? She said: This is your sweat which we place in our perfume and it is the best perfume." Muslim, Ahmad.

- When Anas was on his deathbed he instructed that some of this flask be used on his body before his funeral and it was done. Bukhari.

- Ibn Sirin also was given some of Umm Sulaym's flask. Ibn Sa`d.

3. Tabarruk with the Prophet's saliva and ablution water. These hadiths are extremely numerous.

- In Bukhari and Muslim: The Companions would compete for whoever would get the remnant of the Prophet's ablution water in order to put it on their faces. Nawawi in Sharh Sahih Muslim said: "In these narrations is evidence for seeking blessings with the relics of the saints" (fihi al-tabarruk bi athar al-salihin).

- The Prophet used to heal the sick with his saliva mixed with some earth with the words: "Bismillah, the soil of our earth with the saliva of one / some of us shall heal our sick with our Lord's permission." Bukhari and Muslim.

Regarding this hadith Ibn Hajar says in Fath al-bari (1989 ed. 10:255-256):

The Prophet's words "with the saliva of one or some of us" indicate that he would spit at the time of using a protective invocation (ruqya). Nawawi said (in Sharh Sahih Muslim): "The meaning of the hadith is that the Prophet put some of his saliva on his forefinger then placed it on some earth and formed some clot with it with which he wiped the place of the ailment or the wound, pronouncing the words of the hadith at the time of wiping." Qurtubi said: "The hadith shows the permissibility of using protective invocations against any and all ailments, and it shows that this was an open and widely-known matter among them." He also said: "The Prophet's placing of his finger on the earth and of the earth on his finger indicates the desirability of doing this when using a protective invocation.... This falls under none other than the heading of obtaining blessing (tabarruk) through Allah's Names and through what His Prophet left us." Ibn Hajar concludes: Protective invocations (ruqa) and those hanged upon oneself (`aza'im) have wondrous effects, the true nature of which boggles the mind.

- The Prophet had everyone in Madina bring their newborn, whom he would read upon and into whose mouth he would do naft and tifi (breath mixed with saliva). He would instruct their mother not to suckle them that day until nightfall. He did the same later in Mecca. Bukhari, Abu Dawud, Ahmad, Bayhaqi (Dala'il), etc.

- The names of over 100 of the Ansar and Muhajirin who received this particular blessing have been transmitted with isnads, and are found in the main books of biographies.

4. Tabarruk with the Prophet's cup.

- Hajjaj ibn Hassan said: "We were at Anas's house and he brought up the Prophet's cup from a black pouch. He ordered that it be filled with water and we drank from it and poured some of it on our heads and faces and sent blessings on the Prophet. Ahmad, Ibn Kathir.

- `Asim said: "I saw that cup and I drank from it." Bukhari.

5. Tabarruk with the Prophet's minbar.

- Ibn `Umar used to touch the seat of the Prophet's minbar and then wipe his face for blessing. (al-Mughni 3:559; al-Shifa' 2:54; Ibn Sa`d, Tabaqat 1:13; Mawsu`at Fiqh `Abdullah ibn `Umar p. 52.)

- From Abu Hurayra, Jabir, Abu Imama, and Malik: The Prophet made it a sunna to swear to the truth on top of his minbar. Nisa'i, Ahmad, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, and others. Bukhari confirms it. Ibn Hajar says: and in Mecca, one swears between the Yemeni corner and Maqam Ibrahim. (Fath al-bari)

6. Tabarruk with money the Prophet gave away.

- Jabir sold a camel to the Prophet and the latter gave instructions to Bilal to add a qirat (1/12 dirham) to the agreed sale price. Jabir said: "The Prophet's addition shall never leave me," and he kept it with him after that. Bukhari.

7. Tabarruk with the Prophet's staffs.

- When `Abdullah ibn Anis came back from one of the battles having killed Khalid ibn Sufyan ibn Nabih, the Prophet gifted him his staff and said to him: "It will be a sign between you and me on the Day of Resurrection." Thereafter he never parted with it and it was buried with him when he died. Narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad (3:496).

- Qadi `Iyad relates in his book al-Shifa', in the chapter entitled "Esteem for the things and places connected with the Prophet," that after Jihjah al-Ghifari took the Prophet's staff from the hands of `Uthman and tried to break it across his knee, infection seized his knee which led to its amputation, and he died before the end of the year.

8. Tabarruk with the Prophet's shirt.

- Jabir says: "The Prophet came after `Abdullah ibn Ubay had been placed in his grave. He ordered that he be brought out. He placed his hands on `Abdullah's knees, breathed (nafth) upon him mixing it with saliva, and dressed him with his shirt. Bukhari and Muslim.

9. Tabarruk with the Prophet's musallas or places of prayer.

- Many chains of transmission: `Utban ibn Malik was one of the Companions of the battle of Badr. After he became blind he said to the Prophet: "I would like you to pray in my house so that I can pray where you prayed." The Prophet went to his house and asked where exactly he would like him to pray. He indicated a spot to him and the Prophet prayed there. Bukhari and Muslim. The version in Muslim has: I (`Utban) sent for the Prophet the message: "Come and lay for me a place for worship (khutt li masjidan)." Imam Nawawi in Sharh Sahih Muslim said: "It means: "Mark for me a spot that I can take as a place for worship by obtaining blessing from your having been there (mutabarrikan bi atharika)... In this hadith is evidence for obtaining blessings through the relics of saints (al-tabarruk bi athar al-salihin)."

- `Umar feared that the taking of the tree of the bay`a to the Prophet as a place of prayer might lead to a return to idol-worship and he had it cut. Bukhari, Ibn Sa`d (1:73). It is known, however, that Ibn `Umar derived blessings even from walking in the same spots where the Prophet had walked and praying exactly where he had prayed both at the Ka`ba and on his travels, and that he watered a certain tree under which Prophet had prayed so that it would not die. Bukhari, Bayhaqi (Sunan 5:245).

10. Tabarruk with the Prophet's grave.

- Dawud ibn Salih says: "[The Caliph] Marwan [ibn al-Hakam] one day saw a man placing his face on top of the grave of the Prophet. He said: "Do you know what you are doing?" When he came near him, he realized it was Abu Ayyub al-Ansari. The latter said: "Yes; I came to the Prophet, not to a stone." Ibn Hibban in his Sahih, Ahmad (5:422), Tabarani in his Mu`jam al-kabir (4:189) and his Awsat according to Haythami in al-Zawa'id (5:245), al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (4:515); both the latter and al-Dhahabi said it was sahih. It is also cited by al-Subki in Shifa' al-siqam (p. 126), Ibn Taymiyya in al-Muntaqa (2:261f.), and Haythami in al-Zawa'id (4:2).

- Mu`adh ibn Jabal and Bilal also came to the grave of the Prophet and sat weeping, and the latter rubbed his face against it. Ibn Majah 2:1320, Ahmad, Tabarani, Subki, and Ibn `Asakir.

- Hafiz al-Dhahabi writes in the compendium of his shaykhs entitled Mu`jam al-shuyukh (1:73) in the entry devoted to his shaykh Ahmad ibn `Abd al-Mun`im al-Qazwini (#58): "Ahmad ibn al-Mun`im related to us... [with his chain of transmission] from Ibn `Umar that the latter disliked to touch the Prophet's grave. I say: He disliked it because he considered it disrespect. Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked about touching the Prophet's grave and kissing it and he saw nothing wrong with it. His son `Abd Allah related this from him.

Dhahabi continues: If it is said: "Why did the Companions not do this?" It is replied: "Because they saw him with their very eyes when he was alive, enjoyed his presence directly, kissed his very hand, nearly fought each other over the remnants of his ablution water, shared his purified hair on the day of the greater Pilgrimage, and even if he spat it would virtually not fall except in someone's hand so that he could pass it over his face. Since we have not had the tremendous fortune of sharing in this, we throw ourselves on his grave as a mark of commitment, reverence, and acceptance, even to kiss it. Don't you see what Thabit al-Bunani did when he kissed the hand of Anas ibn Malik and placed it on his face saying: "This is the hand that touched the hand of Allah's Messenger"? Muslims are not moved to these matters except by their excessive love for the Prophet, as they are ordered to love Allah and the Prophet more than they love their own lives, their children, all human beings, their property, and Paradise and its maidens. There are even some believers that love Abu Bakr and `Umar more than themselves...

Don't you see that the Companions, in the excess of their love for the Prophet, asked him: "Should we not prostrate to you?" and he replied no, and if he had allowed them, they would have

prostrated to him as a mark of utter veneration and respect, not as a mark of worship, just as the Prophet Yusuf's brothers prostrated to Yusuf. Similarly the prostration of the Muslim to the grave of the Prophet is for the intention of magnification and reverence. One is not imputed disbelief because of it whatsoever (la yukaffaru aslan), but he is being disobedient [to the Prophet's injunction to the Companions]. Let him therefore be informed that this is forbidden. Similarly in the case of one who prays towards the grave."

- Imam Ahmad's son `Abd Allah said: I asked my father about the man who touches and kisses the pommel of the Prophet's minbar to obtain blessing, or touches the grave of the Prophet. He responded by saying: "There is nothing wrong with it." `Abd Allah also asked Imam Ahmad about the man who touches the Prophet's minbar and kisses it for blessing, and who does the same with the grave, or something to that effect, intending thereby to draw closer to Allah. He replied: "There is nothing wrong with it." This was narrated by `Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal in his book entitled al-`Ilal fi ma`rifat al-rijal (2:492).

- We already mentioned the authentic account whereby in the time of `Umar there was a drought during which Bilal ibn Harith came to the grave and said: "O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah for rain on behalf of your Community."

- We already mentioned `A'isha's account whereby she instructed that the roof be opened over the Prophet's grave in times of drought, and it would rain.

- `Umar sent a message to `A'isha saying: "Will you allow me to be buried with my two companions (the Prophet and Abu Bakr)?" She said, "Yes, by Allah," though it was her habit that if a man from among the Companions asked her that she would always refuse. Bukhari.

11. Tabarruk with the Prophet's jubba (robe or cloak).

- Imam Muslim relates that `Abd Allah, the freed slave of Asma' the daughter of Abu Bakr, the maternal uncle of the son of `Ata', said: "Asma' sent me to Abdullah ibn `Umar saying: "The news has reached me that you prohibit the use of three things: the striped robe, saddle cloth made of red silk, and fasting the whole month of Rajab." Abdullah said to me: "So far as what you say about fasting in the month of Rajab, how about one who observes continuous fasting? And so far as what you say about the striped garment, I heard `Umar ibn al-Khattab say that he had heard from Allah's Messenger: "He who wears a silk garment, has no share for him (in the Hereafter)." And I am afraid

that stripes were part of it. And so far as the red saddle cloth is concerned, here is `Abd Allah's saddle cloth [= his] and it is red." I went back to Asma' and informed her, so she said: "Here is the cloak (jubba) of Allah's Messenger," and she brought out to me that cloak made of Persian cloth with a hem of (silk) brocade, and its sleeves bordered with (silk) brocade, and said: "This was Allah's Messenger's cloak with `A'isha until she died, then I got possession of it. The Apostle of Allah used to wear it, and we washed it for the sick so that they could seek cure thereby." Muslim relates this in the first chapter of the book of clothing. Nawawi comments in Sharh sahih Muslim (Book 37 Chapter 2 #10): "In this hadith is a proof that it is recommended to seek blessings through the relics of the righteous and their clothes (wa fi hadha al-hadith dalil `ala istihbab al-tabarruk bi aathaar al-salihin wa thiyabihim)."

12. Tabarruk with spots and people the Prophet had touched.

- Suwayd ibn Ghafalah reported: I saw `Umar kissing the Stone and clinging to it, saying: "I saw Allah's Messenger bearing great love for you." This hadith has been narrated on the authority of Sufyan with the same chain of transmitters (and the words are): "He (`Umar) said: "I know that you are a stone, nor would I consider you of any worth, except that I saw Abu al-Qasim bearing great love for you." And he did not mention about clinging to it. [Muslim: 7: 2916]

- Qadi `Iyad relates in his Shifa', in the chapter entitled "Esteem for the things and places connected with the Prophet," that Imam Malik would not ride an animal in Madina and he used to say: "I am too shy before Allah to trample with an animal's hoof on the earth where Allah's Messenger is buried." Imam Malik gave a fatwa that whoever said: "The soil of Madina is bad" be given thirty lashes and jailed. Qadi `Iyad mentions the verses of an anonymous visitor to Madina:

The veil is lifted from us and a moon shines out

to those who look on, banishing all illusions.

When our mounts reach Muhammad, it is forbidden

for us to be found in our saddles.

We are drawing near to the best man ever

to walk on the earth,

So we hold this ground in respect and honor.

`Iyad adds: "One must respect the places... whose soil contains the body of the Master of Mankind and from which the din of Allah and the Sunna of the Messenger spread out... and the first earth that the skin of the Prophet touched after death. Its fragrance should be inhaled and its residences and walls should be kissed." Then he recites:

O Abode of the best of the Messengers...

For you (Madina) I have intense love, passionate love,
and yearning which kindles the embers of my heart.

I have a vow: If I fill my eyes with those walls

and the places where you (O Prophet) walked,

There my turbaned gray hair will be covered with dust

from so much kissing.

Had it not been from obstacles and foes,

I would always visit them,

even if I had to be dragged by my feet. [85]

- al-Tabarani in al-Awsat and al-Kabir (4:16), and Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (5:67-68) with a sound chain as stated by al-Haythami in al-Zawa'id (4:211) narrated through Handhala Ibn Hudhaym that the latter went with his grandfather, Hudhaym, to the Prophet. Hudhaym said to the Messenger of Allah: "I have sons and grandsons, some of whom are pubescent and others still children." Motioning to the young child next to him, he said: "This is the youngest." The Prophet brought this young child whose name was Handhala next to him, wiped on his head, and told him, "barakallahu fik," which means: "May Allah bless you." After that, people started to bring Handhala a person with a swollen face or a sheep with a swollen udder. Handhala would place his hand on that part of his head the Prophet wiped, then touch the swollen part and say Bismillah, and the swelling would be cured.

- Ibn Abi Shayba narrated in his Musannaf (4:121), in the chapter entitled: "Touching the grave of the Prophet" with a sahih chain as judged by Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalani, and Qadi `Iyad in his book al-Shifa', in the chapter entitled: "Concerning the visit to the Prophet's grave, the excellence of those who visit it and how he should be greeted": Yazid ibn `Abd al-Malik ibn Qusayt and al-`Utbi narrated that it was the practice of the Companions in the masjid of the Prophet to place their hands on the pommel of the hand rail (rummana) of the pulpit (minbar) where the Prophet used to place his hand. There they would face the Qibla and supplicate (make du`a) to Allah hoping He would answer their supplication because they were placing their hands where the Prophet placed his while making their

supplication. Abu Mawduda said: "And I saw Yazid ibn `Abd al-Malik do the same." This practice of the Companions clarifies two matters. The first is the permissibility of asking Allah for things by the Prophet (tawassul) after his death since by their act the Companions were truly making tawassul. Likewise it is permissible to ask Allah for things by other pious Muslims. The second is the permissibility of seeking blessings (baraka) from the objects the Prophet touched.

- The Tabi`i Thabit al-Bunani said he used to go to Anas Ibn Malik, kiss his hands, and say: "These are hands that touched the Prophet." He would kiss his eyes and say: "These are eyes that saw the Prophet." Abu Ya`la narrated it in his Musnad (6:211) and Ibn Hajar mentions it in his al-Matalib al-`aliya (4:111). al-Haythami declared it sound in Majma` al-zawa'id (9:325).

- According to Bukhari in his Adab al-mufrad, `Abd al-Rahman ibn Razin related that one of the Companions, Salama ibn al-Aku`, raised his hands before a group of people and said: "With these very hands I pledged allegiance (bay`a) to the Messenger of Allah," upon hearing which, all who were present got up and went to kiss his hand. Another version of this hadith was also related by Ahmad.

- Abu Malik al-Ashja`i said that he once asked another Companion of the Tree, Ibn Abi Awfa, "Give me the hand that swore bay`at to the Messenger of Allah, Peace be upon him, that I may kiss it." Ibn al-Muqri related it.

- Bukhari in al-Adab al-mufrad also relates that Suhayb saw Sayyidina `Ali kiss both the hand and feet of the Prophet's uncle al-`Abbas, and that Thabit kissed the hand of Anas because it had touched the Prophet's hand.

- al-Shurunbali al-Hanafi in the book of Pilgrimage of his manual of Fiqh entitled Nur al-idah (as translated by Muhammad Abul Quasem under the title Salvation of the soul and Islamic devotions) said (p. 225): "It is praiseworthy to enter into the Holy House [Ka`ba]. The person who enters it should seek the place where the Prophet performed his ritual prayer. This place is in front of him when his back faces the door, so that there is the distance of three cubits between him and the door in front of him. He will perform ritual prayer in it. If he performs it near the wall, he will put his cheek on it, and pray to Allah for forgiveness and praise Him."

13. Tabarruk with the soil and vegetation of Madina.

The merits of Madina, of prayer in Madina, of visiting the Masjid al-Nabawi, of living in Madina, of not cutting its trees, etc. are all based on the fact that the Prophet is there. The fact that it is a sanctuary (haram) and a preserve (hima) is well documented in numerous ahadith. It is even strongly recommended not to enter Madina except on foot, and many Companions, Tabi`in, and Tabi` al-Tabi`in never entered it except on foot, in respect for the Holy Presence of the Prophet.

- Narrated Ali ibn Abu Talib: The Prophet said: "Madina's fresh grass is not to be cut, its game is not to be driven away, and things dropped in it are to be picked up only by one who publicly announces it, and it is not permissible for any man to carry weapons in it for fighting, and it is not advisable that its trees are cut except what a man cuts for the fodder of his camel. [Abu Dawud, 10: 2030]

- Narrated Abu Hurayra: When the people saw the first fruit (of the season or of plantation) they brought it to Allah's Apostle. When he received it he said: "O Allah, bless us in our fruits; and bless us in our city; and bless us in our sa's and bless us in our mudd (i.e. in every measure). O Allah, Ibrahim was Thy servant, Thy friend, and Thy apostle; and I am Thy servant and Thy apostle. He (Ibrahim) made supplication to Thee for (the showering of blessings upon) Mecca, and I am making supplication to Thee for Madina just as he made supplication to Thee for Mecca, and the like of it in addition." He would then call to him the youngest child and give him these fruits. [Muslim, 7: 3170]

As the Prophet asked Allah's Blessings on the city, its fruits, and in their measures, then it must be full of blessing as his supplication is a du`a' mustajab or answered prayer. Therefore, it is common practice for pilgrims to purchase the dates of Madina for the blessings, and to bring them back home to share among those who could not make the pilgrimage. And it is said that there yet remain living some of the date palms from those planted by the Holy hand of the Most Noble Messenger himself, blessings and peace be upon him. Wallahu a`lam.

14. Tabarruk with his Blessed Hand and His Feet.

- The first hadith Imam Ahmad related from Anas ibn Malik in his Musnad Anas is: "The whole Community of the people of Madina used to take the hand of the Prophet and rush to obtain their need with it." [86]

- Narrated `A'isha the Mother of the Believers: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, when he had a complaint, would recite the last three suras of Qur'an, over himself

and blow." She said, "When his pain was great, I would recite it over him and wipe him with his right hand hoping for its blessing." [87]

- Usama ibn Sharik narrates: "I came to see the Prophet while his Companions were with him, and they seemed as still as if birds had alighted on top of their heads. I gave him my salam and I sat down. [Then Bedouins came and asked questions which the Prophet answered.] ... The Prophet then stood up and the people stood up. They began to kiss his hand, whereupon I took his hand and placed it on my face. I found it more fragrant than musk and cooler than sweet water." Narrated by Abu Dawud (#3855), Tirmidhi (2038 -- hasan sahih), Ibn Majah (3436), al-Hakim (4:399), and Ahmad (4:278). al-hafiz Imam Bayhaqi cites it in Branch 15 of his *Shu`ab al-iman* entitled: The Fifteenth Branch of Faith, Namely A Chapter On Rendering Honor To The Prophet, Declaring His High Rank, And Revering Him (al-khamis `ashar min shu`ab al-iman wa huwa babun fi ta`zim al-nabi sallallahu `alayhi wa sallama wa ijralihi wa tawqirih) Vol. 2 p. 200 (#1528).

- Narrated `Abd Allah ibn `Umar: Ibn `Umar was sent with a detachment by the Apostle of Allah. The people wheeled round in flight. He said: I was one of those who wheeled round in flight. When we stopped, we said: What should we do? We have run away from the battlefield and deserve Allah's wrath. Then we said: Let us enter Medina, stay there, and go there while no one sees us. So we entered the city and thought: If we present ourselves before Allah's Apostle, and if there is a change of repentance for us, we shall stay; if there is something else, we shall go away. So we sat down (waiting) for the Apostle of Allah before the dawn prayer. When he came out, we stood up to him and said: We are the ones who have fled. He turned to us and said: No, you are the ones who return to fight after wheeling away. We then approached and kissed his hand, and he said: I am the main body of the Muslims. (Abu Dawud, Book 14 [Jihad], Number 2641.) This hadith is also found in al-Abhari; in the book of al-hafiz Ibn Muqri on standing up and kissing the hand out of respect; in the *Adab al-mufrad* of Imam Bukhari (Chapter on Kissing the Hand and Chapter on Kissing the Foot), in Ibn Majah (*Adab*), in Bayhaqi's *Dala'il an-Nubuwwa*, and in the *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

- Ibn `Umar told a story and said: "We then came near the Prophet and kissed his hand." It is related in Ibn Maja's *Sunan*, Book of *Adab*, Chapter on kissing by a man of another man's hand; in Abu Dawud's *Sunan*, Book of *Adab*, Chapter on kissing the hand; and in the *Musannaf* of Ibn Abi Shayba through two different chains.

- Umm Aban, daughter of al-Wazi` ibn Zari` narrated that her grandfather Zari` al-`Abdi, who was a member of the deputation of `Abd al-Qays, said: "When we came to Medina, we raced to be first to dismount and kiss the hand and foot of Allah's Apostle... (to the end of the hadith)" [Abu Dawud, 41: 5206.] Bukhari relates from her a similar hadith in his *Adab al-mufrad*: We were walking and someone said, "There is the Messenger of Allah," so we took his hands and feet and kissed them.

- Burayda narrated that one of the Bedouin Arabs who came to the Prophet, Peace be upon him, asked: "O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to kiss your head and your hands," and he received it. In another version, he asks permission to kiss the head and the feet. Narrated in Ghazali's Ihya' and the version mentioning the feet is in Hakim's Mustadrak and in Ibn Muqri. Both al-Hakim and al-'Iraqi declared the latter's chain authentic.

- From Safwan ibn `Asal al-Muradi: "One of two Jews said to his companion: Take us to this Prophet so we can ask him about Musa's ten signs... [the Prophet replied in full and then] they kissed his hands and feet and said: we witness that you are a Prophet..." Narrated by Ibn Abi Shayba (Book of Adab, Chapter entitled A Man Kissing Another Man's Hand When He greets Him), Tirmidhi (Book of Adab) who declared it hasan sahih, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah (Book of Adab), and al-Hakim who declared it sahih.

- When we were with Allah's Messenger on an expedition, a Bedouin came and asked for a miracle. The Prophet pointed at a tree and said to the Bedouin: "Tell that tree, Allah's Messenger summons you." The tree swayed and brought itself out, and came to the presence of the Prophet saying: "Peace be upon you O Messenger of Allah!" The Bedouin said, "Now let it return to its place!" When Allah's Messenger ordered it, the tree went back. The Bedouin said, "let me prostrate to you!" The Messenger answered: "No one is allowed to do that [ie it is Haraam]." The Bedouin said, "Then I will kiss your hands and feet." The Prophet permitted him that. Narrated by Qadi `Iyad in al-Shifa' (1:299) and al-Bazzar in his Musnad (3:49).

Remarks on Kissing the Hand from a recent interview of Mawlana Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani

INTERVIEWER. Beside Ikhlas and love, what else do you emphasize in your teachings?

SHAYKH NAZIM. Respect. There must be respect. Without respecting each other, it is impossible to do anything. Allah Almighty ordered His servants to have respect among themselves. Respect brings good understanding. Good understanding brings love. Love brings everything.

INT. As others see you, perhaps they might say that your followers practically worship you.

SN. Those who say that are so foolish. They do not know what is worship and what is respect.

INT. So, you do not encourage your followers...?

SN. This is shaytanic teaching that they are propagating. We are Muslims. We say: La ma`buda illa Allah. That means no one is worthy of worship except Allah Almighty. But they are such square-headed people, and their heads are like footballs, empty! And what if someone respects a person that we have been ordered to respect? Man lam yuwaqqir kabirana wa lam yarham saghirana fa laysa minna. [Whoever does not revere our elders or show mercy to our little ones is not one of us.]* This is tawqir al-nas, giving honor to people, as it has been ordered: anzilu al-nasa manazilahum, "Give everyone their own station."** This is an order from the Shari`a.

* Hadith of the Prophet narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad (5:323), al-Hakim declared it sahih in al-Mustadrak (1:122) and al-Dhahabi agreed with him.

** Hadith of the Prophet narrated by Muslim without chain in the introduction to his Sahih. Sakhawi said in al-Jawahir wa al-durar this is a fair (hasan) hadith, and al-Hakim said it is sahih in Ma`rifat `ulum al-hadith and he said Ibn Khuzayma narrated it.

But those people want to put everyone on the same level, like communism. No! Allah Almighty ordered: "Preserve one another's honor": wa la tansaw al-fadla baynakum (2:237). And He said: inna akramakum `indallahi atqakum [The most honorable of you in Allah's sight are the most Godwary] (49:13). If we find someone that should be respected because of his taqwa, then we may respect him. We must not hold him as an ordinary person, no.

Those who criticize this are not following Madhhabs [Islamic schools of law]. They are a Fifth Madhhab. We are following the Four madhhabs, and in our madhhabs kissing hands is Okay, but through their madhhab: no. They may kiss their women's. . . [genitals] according to their madhhab, but not hands. I must say this. It is not haram for them to do such a thing, but kissing the hand of a person is?! How can that be, when all the Sahaba were kissing the Prophet's hand, and so many hadiths confirm it in their own printed books. They were kissing the Prophet's hands and feet.

What happens if I kiss my mother's hands and feet? Is this Haram? With which proof? They are saying this, only because they are trying to break the relationship between believers and their teachers. al `ulama' warathatu al anbiya'. [Scholars of knowledge are the inheritors of Prophets.]* We must give them our highest respect. I don't like for a fifteen-year-old or a young person to come in and make this with his hand [handshake gesture] to a shaykh. What is this? That is the American style. No. We, too, have `urf [customs]. We have traditional adab, traditional manners coming from the Prophet, and we know that up to this day kissing hands is a gesture of respect, not worship.

* Hadith of the Prophet narrated by Bukhari in his Sahih in mu`allaq form, Ahmad (5:196), Tirmidhi, Darimi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Hibban, Ibn Majah, Bayhaqi in the Shu`ab and others.

If I kiss my mother's feet, am I worshipping her? These people are given knowledge but no wisdom. Allah said: *yu'ti al-hikmata man yasha', wa man utiya al-hikmata utiya khayran kathiran* [He gives wisdom to whomever He will, and whoever is given wisdom, he has been given an immense goodness] (2:269). Allah Almighty never gave everyone wisdom. So many people, in American universities, are learning Islamic knowledge, but they are not mu'mins [believers]. They haven't been given wisdom. They are only reading books. Wisdom is the sum of knowledge. Without wisdom knowledge is dead!

INT. I agree, but in terms of the respect that we show, are we carrying it very far... to be perceived... you are perceived as interceding for your followers -- making shafa`a -- so that in Akhira [hereafter] you will be interceding on their behalf...

SN. Is it prohibited to make du`a? If I am asking for something on behalf of my brother bi zahr al-ghayb [in his absence], is it wrong? There are so many hadiths advising us to make such du`a for each other.* It does not matter if it is going to be intercession. If I say: "Oh my Lord, give my brother a good life" or, if someone kisses my hand, if I say: "Allah bless you". Is it haram? Is that intercession now? There is no need to call it intercession. *Allahu fi awn al-`abd ma kana al-`abdu fi `awni akhihi* [Allah helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother].** That means we must try to help each other in any way we can: by hand, by word, and by praying. What is wrong with that?

* E.g. Sahih Muslim, book of Du`a, chapter on making du`a for a brother in his absence.

** Hadith of the Prophet narrated by Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, Ahmad, and others.

I may help someone who cannot help himself or herself. I might go to the Sultan in order to help him. This is intercession, but it is in Shari`a. It is an honorable job because we are helping people who cannot help themselves. It is lawful, and Allah orders us: *wa ta`awanu `ala al-birri wa al-taqwa* [Help one another in righteousness and piety] (5:2). It is a command that we must help each other for good things. How are they blaming me for making du`a for them and accusing me because of making intercession? Intercession in akhira should be only in the divine presence. If Allah gives me intercession, I may say for these people: O my Lord, those people are no-mind people, send them with the animals!

INT. Nevertheless, is this very clear to those who are following you? That you are not going to intercede on their behalf?...

SN. They are clear. They are not idiots, like those people. They are clever. They may teach them a lesson. My followers are Doctors and Professors. Those people may take lessons from my followers. My followers are not cheated ones. They are all Europeans and Americans. Let those people bring one of the Germans, or one of the English, or one of the Americans to Islam. Our people are all educated people, I cannot cheat them!

INT. Sometimes, in meetings, you are introduced as "the perfect one." But people believe that there is only one perfect one, and that is the Prophet.

SN. But from him there are so many models coming...

INT. So do you say that that is a right introduction for a human being?

SN. Prophets are the first models. They are ma`sum -- innocent. Others, all of them, are not going to be innocent, but through their mujahada [striving], by fighting with their nafs [ego], whoever will be able to control their nafs, that one will become a model to help the others how to control their ego. Because every evil comes from uncontrollable people. I am not saying that I am a perfect model of the Prophet, sallallahu `alayhi wa sallam; but I am trying to step in his steps. I am not stepping after shaytan or evil -- no.

INT. Then, if you were to tell your followers not to address you the perfect one, not to kiss your hands and feet -- and they say that in meetings even women come and kiss your hands, and the Prophet would never allow that... I want your comments on that?

SN. No. They are always untrue people. They are always changing things from their real light. They are liars. They make iftira' [fabrications] and backbiting, because they are hasud -- jealous, envious people. I never say to my followers that I am "a perfect one." But until they find a perfect one, I am only training them. I never said that I am a 100% perfect trainer but I am a good opportunity; while I am here, I only try to do my best with people. Like a doctor who is not a specialist, but still he must treat his patients. Should he say: I cannot touch you because I am not a specialist?

I never said to anyone: "I am a 100% perfect person and I am training you: Come and kiss my hands!" I am not so foolish as these people. They are thinking that I say to people come and kiss my hand!

INT. They say that it is a necessary part of your training...

SN. No, never. My training is written in my books and the associations I hold, but they are not reading my books because shaytans are so proud. Can they find it anywhere that I say: Kiss my hand, kiss my feet? But I may enter through a crowd and without doing anything, people are completely unable to remain seated, they will stand up. I am not saying to them to do it. It is something granted to me, from the greatness of Allah, called haybat [dignity]. They can't stop. When I pass, they stand up and rush to me. I am not telling them to.

Once I was in Madina praying, facing Qibla. As I was finishing, one of these people said to me: "O shaykh! Why did you bring all these people behind you!" I was surprised. My eyes were closed and I was making du`a without sound, only what I may hear. But I looked around and I saw 100 people behind me. I said I am no one, I am an ordinary person, a visitor here. I do not know them. Why are you telling me this? Tell those people to go away!

Prophets have a magnetic power called jazba [attraction]. That makes people run to that person. I have some of that which I received through our spiritual way. I am not an empty one, like those people. But they are hussad [enviers], just as there were so many hussad among the Jewish people in front of the Prophet. It doesn't matter. They can't do anything.

What happens if my followers kiss my hand? The Prophet kissed the Stone, and all Sahaba kissed the Stone. All the Hujjaj [pilgrims] kiss the Stone, and the Ka`ba. It is not haram to kiss the Ka`ba. Is the Ka`ba more honored than Man? No.

INT. But the Ka`ba has a special place in their hearts.

SN. We have a special place also. We have been granted this specialness to be khalifatullah [Allah's representatives]. The Ka`ba is baytullah [Allah's House], we are khalifatullah. Are we less honored than the Ka`ba? Never. We have been honored. Angels asked for this honor but they were not given it. We have been granted it. How can you say not? One man was sitting with his back to the Ka`ba, and another said: What are you doing? He said: What? I am more than this Ka`ba in the Divine presence. The Ka`ba cannot do sajda, but I am making sajda. The Ka`ba was built by Sayyidina Ibrahim, while I was created by Allah.

15. Tabarruk From the Prophet's Blessed Skin.

- Narrated Usayd ibn Hudayr: `Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Layla, quoting Usayd ibn Hudayr, a man of the Ansar, said that while he was given to jesting and was talking to the people and making them laugh, the Prophet poked him under the ribs with a stick. He said: Let me take retaliation. He said: Take retaliation. He said: You are wearing a shirt but I am not. The Prophet then raised his shirt and the man embraced him and began to kiss his side. Then he said: This is what I wanted, Apostle of Allah! (Abu Dawud, Book 41, Number 5205.)

- Ibn `Abd al-Barr relates, in his *Isti`ab fi Ma`rifat al-ashab* (p. 673), that the Prophet, after forbidding two or three times the use of *khaluq* (a kind of perfume mixed with saffron), and finding that Sawad ibn `Amr al-Qari al-Ansari was wearing it, nudged him in the mid-section with a palm-tree stalk (*jarida*) and scratched him. The latter asked for reparation; when the Prophet bared his own belly to him, he jumped and kissed the Prophet's belly.

- Ibn Ishaq's version in the *Sira* mentions that Sawad was standing in the ranks of the Companions of Badr at the time of this incident. The Prophet was arranging the ranks with his switch (*miqra`a*) and he nudged Sawad's belly with it, scratching him inadvertently, with the words: "Align yourself with the others." Sawad said: "Ya Rasulallah, you hurt me, so give me reparation." The Prophet handed him the switch and said: "Take reparation." Sawad approached him and kissed his belly. The Prophet said: "What made you do that, O Sawad?" He replied, "Ya Rasulallah, the time has come for what you see, and I loved for my last action in this dunya to be touching you."

- Narrated Buhaysa al-Fazariyya: My father sought permission from the Prophet. Then he came near him, lifted his shirt, and began to kiss him and embrace him out of love for him... (Abu Dawud, Book 9, Number 1665.)

16. Tabarruk with places the Prophet visited

- Narrated Abu Burda: When I came to Medina. I met Abdullah bin Salam. He said, "Will you come to me so that I may serve you with *sawiq* (i.e. powdered barley) and dates, and let you enter a (blessed) house in which the Prophet entered?"... (Bukhari, Volume 5, Book 58, Number 159)

17. The Prophet's sandals

- Bukhari and Tirmidhi narrate from Qatada: "I asked Anas to describe the sandals of Allah's Messenger and he replied: Each sandal had two straps"; and from `Isa ibn Tahman: "Anas took out a pair of shoes and showed them to us. They did not have hair on them." (The remark refers to the Arabian practice of not removing the hair from the leather from which shoes were made.) Bukhari, Malik, and Abu Dawud relate that `Ubayd ibn Jarir said to `Abd Allah ibn `Umar: "I saw you wear tanned sandals." He replied: "I saw the Prophet wearing sandals with no hair on them and perform ablution in them, and so I like to wear them."

al-Qastallani in his *Mawahib al-laduniyya* said that Ibn Mas`ud was one of the Prophet's servants and that he used to bring for the Prophet his cushion (*wisada*), his tooth-stick (*siwak*), his two sandals (*na`layn*), and the water for his ablution. When the Prophet rose he would put his sandals on him; when he sat he would carry his sandals in his arms until he rose.[88]

Qastallani mentions the following from one of the greatest Tabi`in:

Abu Ishaq (al-Zuhri) said: al-Qasim ibn Muhammad (ibn Abu Bakr al-Siddiq) said: Of the proven blessing of the likeness of the Prophet's sandal is that whoever has it in his possession for *tabarruk*, it will safeguard him from the sedition of rebels and the mastery of enemies, and will be a barrier against every recreant devil and the evil eye of the envious. If the pregnant woman holds it in her right hand at the time of labor, her delivery will be easier by Allah's change and His might.

al-Qastallani also said that Abu al-Yaman ibn `Asakir wrote a volume on the image of the Prophet's sandal, and so did Ibn al-Hajj al-Andalusi. He relates the account of a pious shaykh by the name of Abu Ja`far Ahmad ibn `Abd al-Majid:

I cut the pattern of this sandal for one of my students. He came to me one day and said: "I saw a wonder yesterday from the blessing of this sandal. My wife was suffering from a pain which almost took her life. I placed the sandal on the spot of her pain and said: O Allah, show me the blessing of the owner of this sandal. Allah cured her on the spot." [89]

al-Munawi and al-Qari mentioned in their commentary on Tirmidhi's al-Shama'il that Ibn al-`Arabi said that the sandals are part of the attire of Prophets, and the people only left them due to the mud in their lands. He also mentioned that one of the names of the Prophet in the ancient books is sahib al-na`layn or "The wearer of the two sandals."

Shaykh Yusuf al-Nabahani recited about the Prophet's sandals:

wa na`lun khada`na haybatan li waqariha

fa inna mata nakhda`u li haybatiha na`lu

fa da`ha `ala a`la al-mafariqi innaha

haqiqataha tajun wa surataha na`lu

A sandal to whose majestic nobility we submit

For by submitting to its majesty do we rise:

Therefore place it in the highest spot for it is

In reality a crown, though its image is a sandal.

And when Imam al-Fakhani first saw the Prophet's sandals he recited:

wa law qila li al-majnuni layla wa wasluha

turidu am al-dunya wa ma fi zawayaha

laqala ghubarun min turabi ni`aliha

ahabbu ila nafsi wa ashfa li balawaha

And if Layla's Madman were asked: do you prefer

Union with Layla, or the world and its treasures?

He would answer: "Dust from the earth of her sandals

Is dearer to my soul, and its most soothing remedy."

Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Muqri wrote a book on this which he named Fath al-muta`al fi madh al-ni`al (The opening of the Most High in the praise of the Prophet's sandals).

Ashraf `Ali al-Tahanawi the Deobandi shaykh wrote a treatise entitled Nayl al-shifa' bi na`l al-mustafa (Obtaining remedy through the sandals of the Elect One) found in his book Zad al-sa`id (Provision for the fortunate).[90]

The muhaddith of India Muhammad Zakariyya Kandhalwi said in his translation of Tirmidhi's Shama'il:

Maulana Ashraf `Ali Thanwi Sahib has written in his book Zaadus Sa`eed a detailed treatise on the barakat and virtues of the shoes of Rasulullah Sallallahu `Alayhi Wasallam. Those interested in this should read that book (which is available in English). In short, it may be said that it [the Prophet's sandal] has countless qualities. The `ulama have experienced it many a time. One is blessed by seeing Rasulullah Sallallahu `Alayhi Wasallam in one's dreams; one gains safety from oppressors and every heartfelt desire is attained. Every object is fulfilled by its tawassul (means, petition, request). The method of tawassul is also mentioned therein.[91]

We see by all the above evidence that tawassul and tabarruk are an intimate and integral part of the practice of the Companions, that it is Sunna, and that no one denies it except those who deviate from the Sunna and who harbor the disease of ignorance and suspicion in their heart. May Allah protect us from their designs, and may He keep all Muslims unswervingly on the path of Ahl al-Sunna and that of the true Salaf. We declare ourselves clear and innocent of the innovations of those who have attacked, rejected, or questioned the validity of tawassul. And Allah knows best.