

# **The concept of Isaal al-Thawab**

## **Conveying the rewards of good deeds to others**

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A man in the company of Mufti Zafar ad-Din Bihari once claimed that the reward for reciting the Qur'an and then sending this reward does not reach the dead. Mufti Zafar ad-Din replied by asking how he could know this. Who had told him this? Or had he himself gone to the world of Barzakh to find that the reward does not reach those to whom it is sent. So the man asked if Mufti Zafar ad-Din had proof that the reward is gained by the dead. Mufti Zafar ad-Din replied that the sayings of the Holy Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), the sayings of the 'ulema, the agreement of those who have sent the reward and the affirmation of those to whom the reward is sent all prove this concept.

### **Incident 1**

Imam Abu Hafs al-Kabir narrates from Anas (radiyallahu ta'ala anhu) that a person asked Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) that does the reward of Sadaqa, Hajj and Du'a reach the dead? Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said, "Yes, they most certainly reach them. This makes them happy like a man is happy when he receives a gift".<sup>1</sup>

### **Incident 2**

Mulla 'Ali Qari (rahimahullah) writes:

Qadi Abu Bakr bin 'Abdul Baqi al-Ansari (rahimahullah) narrates from his Shaykh Salmah bin 'Ubaid that he said that Hammad Makki said that, "One night I went to the graveyard in Makka. I put my head on one of the graves and fell asleep. I saw the people of the graveyard sitting in a group so I asked them if Qiyamah had begun. They replied in the negative and said that a man had recited Sura al-Ikhlās and sent its reward for us and we have been distributing its reward for a whole year".<sup>2</sup>

If reward does not reach them, then what were they distributing?

In the same book, it is quoted from Imam Nawawi's *Kitab al-Adhkar* that Muhammad ibn Ahmad Marwazi said that he heard Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal say that when a person visits a graveyard, he should recite Sura al-Fatiha, al-Falaq, an-Naas and al-Ikhlās and send its reward to the inhabitants of the graves for it reached them.<sup>3</sup>

### **Incident 3**

It is in the *Maktubat* of Imam ar-Rabbani, the Mujaddid of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi that when he made food, he used to send the reward of his good deeds to Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husain. One night, the Shaykh saw a dream in which Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) came to him but turned his attention away from the Shaykh and says, "I eat in the house of 'Aisha, when you send food for me, you must also send it for 'Aisha. From this the Shaykh understood that he must also include 'Aisha in his prayers. Thereafter,

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<sup>1</sup> 'Ayni, Sharh Hidayah, vol. 2, p.612

<sup>2</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.286

<sup>3</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.281

he would always send the reward to all the wives of the Prophet and all the Ahl al-Bayt and he would then do *Tawassul* (intermediation) through them.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Incident 4**

Shah Waliullah Muhaddith ad-Dihlawi also mentions a narration of sending reward. He mentions the story of his father, Shah ‘Abdur Raheem, that he would cook food for the Isaal al-Thawab of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). One year, he did not manage to cook anything much so he simply ordered some chick peas and distributed them amongst the people and then saw Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) in a dream. Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) had the chick peas before him and was very happy.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Having food is beneficial but not necessary**

From these incidents, it is seen that whether the reward is spiritual (incidents 1, 2) or monetary (incidents 3, 4), or both, it does reach the persons for whom it is intended. It is also seen from the incident of Shah ‘Abdur Raheem that the food that is prepared and distributed for Isaal al-Thawab also reaches the people.

Isma’il Dihlawi writes that any act of worship done by a Muslim can be sent to the deceased. If the deceased has rights over the worshipper, then the results of this conveyance are even greater. Those acts that are prevalent such as *Fatiha*, *Urs*, *Nazr* and *Niyaz*, there is no doubt in their benefit.<sup>6</sup>

In the same book, Isma’il Dihlawi writes that sending reward is not dependant upon the presence of food. If food is available, then this is better but if not, even the recital of Sura al-Fatiha and al-Ikhlās is an enormous reward.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Each recipient receives all the reward**

Imam ibn ‘Abideen Shami writes: “Imam ibn Hajar Makki was asked that if a person recites Fatiha for the deceased, will the reward be divided between them or will they all receive the whole reward? He replied that one group of scholars say that they will all receive the whole reward (without division) and this view is in accordance to the infinite blessings of Allah”.<sup>8</sup>

Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi writes that if one intends to send to one person but includes all believers, then they will all receive the same reward. Indeed the forgiveness of your Lord is vast”.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Maktubat, vol. 2, p.59, Maktub 36

<sup>5</sup> al-Durr al-Thamin fi Mubasharat al-Nabi al-Amin, p.8

<sup>6</sup> Sirat-e-Mustaqeem, p.55

<sup>7</sup> Sirat-e-Mustaqeem, p.64

<sup>8</sup> Radd al-Muhtar, vol. 1, p.845

<sup>9</sup> Maktubat, vol. 3, p.54

## **Isaal al-Thawab is for the living and the dead**

Imam Shaami writes that conveying reward can be to the living as well as the deceased.<sup>10</sup> He quotes from Bahr al-Ra'iq that according to the Ahlus Sunnah, the reward reaches those for whom it is intended. This is also in Bidaya. Whether the act intended for oneself and is later intended for another or whether the act is *fard* or *nafl*, all reward is gained by the people.

So, any act, *fard*, *wajib*, *sunnah*, *mastahab*, *mubah*, spiritual or monetary or both, whether it is done with the intention of benefiting someone's afterlife or not, whether it is done for oneself or for another, whether the intention is made immediately or after some time with the tongue or in the heart and whether it is for the living or the deceased, it all reaches those for whom it is sent.

Now, we shall present 4 methods of Isaal al-Thawab that are outlined in the Qur'an and explain them briefly.

### **Methods of Isaal al-Thawab from the Qur'an**

#### **1. Supplications for forgiveness (du'a al-maghfirah)**

Allah says in the Qur'an:

**“And those who came after them say: Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who were before us in the faith”<sup>11</sup>**

With regards to this verse, various exegetes<sup>12</sup> write that Muslims must pray for those of their brethren who have passed on. Imam Isma'il Haqqi writes that it is *wajib* to pray for their forgiveness, especially for their ancestors and religious teachers.<sup>13</sup>

Ibn abbas narrates from Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) that: “The du'a reaches the dead, so for them it is more beloved than the whole world. Allah sends blessings to their graves equivalent to mountains due to the du'a.”<sup>14</sup>

#### **2. Seeking the mercy of Allah for ones parents**

Allah says in the Qur'an:

**“My Lord! Have mercy on them both as they did care for me when I was little”**

Imam Alusi writes that from this verse, it is seen that it is *wajib* to pray for mercy for ones parents because an order is made in the Qur'an to show the *wujub* (necessity) of an act.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Radd al-Muhtar, vol. 2, p.242

<sup>11</sup> Sura al-Hashr, verse 10

<sup>12</sup> Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 8, p.179, Jumal, vol. 4, p.317, Sawi, vol. 4, p.196

<sup>13</sup> Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 5, p.210

<sup>14</sup> Murtada Zubadi, Sharh Ihya al-'Ulum, vol. 10, p.367

<sup>15</sup> Ruh al-Ma'ani, vol. 3, p.508

### **3. Performing Salah al-Janaza for the deceased**

Allah says in the Qur'an:

**“And pray for them; surely your prayer is a relief to them”<sup>16</sup>**

There are two viewpoints on this verse. One is that Du'a al-Maghfirah is meant, whereby, method 1 is proven, and the second is that the Salah al-Janaza is what is meant.

“The janaza prayer is valid and its proof is 9:103”.<sup>17</sup>

This is supported by the verse:

**“And never offer prayer for any one of them who dies”<sup>18</sup>**

Imam Khafaji, commenting on this, writes that, “It is prohibited to perform salah al-janaza for the unbelievers”.<sup>19</sup>

From this verses it is known that to pray for the *kuffar* is prohibited and to do the same for the believers is all allowed.

### **4. Visiting and standing at the grave of the believers**

Allah says in the Qur'an:

**“And do not stand by his grave”<sup>20</sup>**

It was the habit of Rasoolallah to bury the dead and then stand at the grave. Allah then ordered Rasoolallah not to do this for the *munafiqin*.<sup>21</sup>

For the hypocrites, the standing of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) at their graves is worthless due to their *kufir*, but for the Muslims, the order of standing remains because it is beneficial for them.

The aforementioned 4 methods are those highlighted in the Qur'an. The Qur'an does not mention exactly how the supplications or standing at the graves should be done but the general etiquette of offering du'a are those that should be adopted. These are mentioned in detail in Imam Muhammad Naqi 'Ali Khan's (rahimahullah) book *Ahsan al-Wi'a li adab al-du'a* and Imam Ahmad Rida Khan's (rahimahullah) commentary of this book, namely *Dhayl al-Mudda'a li ahsan al-Wi'a*.

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<sup>16</sup> Sura al-Tauba, verse 103

<sup>17</sup> Tafsir Bahr al-Muhit, vol. 5, p.95

<sup>18</sup> Sura al-Tauba, verse 84

<sup>19</sup> Hashiya Khafaji 'ala Baidawi, vol. 4, p.352

<sup>20</sup> Sura al-Tauba, verse 84

<sup>21</sup> Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 4, p.710, Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 2, p.559, Hashiya Qunwa 'ala Baidawi, vol. 4, p.71

## **Methods of Isaal al-Thawab from the Hadith**

### **1. Reciting Sura al-Yasin**

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: “Read Sura al-Yasin over your dead”.<sup>22</sup>

Imam Qurtubi says that this has two meanings: To recite it over those who are nearing death and reciting it at the grave. Imam Suyuti has said the same in *Sharh al-Sudur fi ahwal al-Mawti wa al-Qubur*.<sup>23</sup>

### **2. To kiss the deceased**

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) kissed ‘Uthman bin Madh’un (radiyallahu ta’ala anhu) when he passed away.<sup>24</sup>

‘Aisha narrates that Abu Bakr (radiyallahu ta’ala anhu) came to Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and kissed him (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) between the eyes after Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) had passed away.<sup>25</sup>

Imam ‘Ayni writes that this hadith shows that it is permissible to kiss the deceased.<sup>26</sup>

Mufti Zafar ad-Din writes that perhaps this hadith is the reason why Muslims kiss graves. They would like to kiss the deceased but once they are buried, this is not possible so the next best thing is to kiss their grave.<sup>27</sup>

Hafidh ibn Rajab narrates from Asad bin Musa that the inmate of the grave sees those who visit him like water can be seen in a glass.<sup>28</sup>

To kiss the grave is proven from the practice of the companions. Bilal (radiyallahu ta’ala anhu) travelled from Syria to visit the grave of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and rubbed his face against it.<sup>29</sup>

Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal was asked by his son ‘Abdullah about kissing the grave of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). The Imam replied, *laa ba’sa bihi* (there is no harm in this).<sup>30</sup>

The companions, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, also used to kiss the grave of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). He used to say, “I have come to Rasoolallah, not a stone”.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Abu Dawud, vol. 2, p.89

<sup>23</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.282

<sup>24</sup> Abu Dawud, Tirmidi, ibn Majah

<sup>25</sup> Nasa’i fi baabi taqbeel al-Mayyat

<sup>26</sup> ‘Umdatul Qari, vol. 4, p.16

<sup>27</sup> Nafi’ al-Bashar fi fatawa zafar, p.342

<sup>28</sup> Murtada Zubadi, Sharh Ihya al-‘Ulum, vol. 10, p.367

<sup>29</sup> Wafa’ al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa, vol. 2, p.408

<sup>30</sup> Wafa’ al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa

<sup>31</sup> Wafa’ al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa, vol. 2, p.443

'Ali narrates that Sayyida Fatima went to grave of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and took some dust from the blessed grave and rubbed it on her eyes.<sup>32</sup> Hafidh ibn Hajar says that all things that deserve respect are allowed to be kissed, whether they are human or not.<sup>33</sup>

Imam 'Ayni writes that to kiss blessed places to gain *barakah* is certainly allowed such as kissing the hands and feet of the pious. Abu Huraira kissed Hasan where Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) had kissed Hasan and Thabit Bunani, the *tabi'i*, would continue to kiss the hands of Anas (radiyallahu ta'ala anhu) and would not let go and would say, "These are the hands that touched Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam)".<sup>34</sup>

### **3. To use the clothes worn by a pious person as a shroud (*kafan*)**

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) buried his daughter and ordered his shirt to be placed in her grave.<sup>35</sup>

Imam 'Ayni writes that this hadith is proof of seeking blessings from the relics of the pious.<sup>36</sup> Imam Qastalani and Imam Nawawi write that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) did this to grant her the *barakah* of his blessed clothes.<sup>37</sup>

There are many other narrations such as that of Fatima bint Asad<sup>38</sup>, Ameer Mu'awiya<sup>39</sup> and even the *munafiq* 'Abdullah ibn Ubai<sup>40</sup> that mention the fact that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) offered his blessed clothes to shroud them in or them asking for the clothes.

Shaykh 'Abdul Haq Muhaddith ad-Dihlawi writes that these narrations are proof for some *mureeds* (disciples) seeking their Shaykhs clothes for *barakah*.<sup>41</sup>

### **4. To write a Qur'anic verse, a du'a or the kalimah on the shroud**

Sayyida Fatima instructed 'Ali (radiyallahu ta'ala anhu) to bury her similar to how Kathir bin 'Abbas was buried. On his shroud was written, *Yash'hadu kathir bin 'Abbas anna laa ilaha illallah*.<sup>42</sup>

Imam Tirmidi narrates that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said: "Whoever writes this du'a on a piece of paper and places it on the chest of the deceased under the shroud, the deceased will not suffer from the punishment of the grave neither will he see *Munkar* and *Nakir*. The du'a is: *Laa ilaha illallah wallahu akbar laa ilaha*

<sup>32</sup> Wafa' al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa, vol. 2, p.443

<sup>33</sup> Wafa' al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa, vol. 2, p.444

<sup>34</sup> 'Umdatul Qari, vol. 4, p.607

<sup>35</sup> Bukhari, vol. 2, hadith 349, Muslim, vol. 1, p.139, Abu Dawud, Tirmidi, Nasa'i

<sup>36</sup> 'Umdatul Qari, vol. 4, p.46

<sup>37</sup> Irshad al-Sari Sharh Bukhari, vol. 2, p.215, Nawawi Sharh Muslim, vol. 1, p.205

<sup>38</sup> Wafa' al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa, vol. 2, p.88

<sup>39</sup> ibn 'Adbul Barr, Isti'ab, vol. 1, p.262

<sup>40</sup> Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 4, p.709

<sup>41</sup> Ashiatul Lum'aat Farsi, vol. 1, p.716

<sup>42</sup> Musannaf 'Abdur Razzaq, Mu'ajjam Tabrani, Hilya Abu Na'eem



*illallah wahdahu laa shareeka lahu laa ilaha illallah lahu mulku walahul hamdu laa ilaha illallah wala hawla wala quwwata illa billahil ‘aliyyil ‘adheem.*<sup>43</sup>

Imam Ahmad Rida Khan has written a monograph on this topic named *al-Harf al-Hasan fi al-Kitabah ‘ala al-Kafan*. All the narrations therein are proof for *mureeds* to be buried with the *shajrah* of their shaykh. This is what *Siraj al-Hind* Shah ‘Abdul ‘Aziz says in his fatawa.

## **5. Praising the deceased**

Anas narrates that a janaza was being led by a group of people. It went past the companions of Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and they praised the deceased. So Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said, “It has become *wajib*”. Then another janaza went past but this time the companions mentioned the deceased’s bad qualities and Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said, “It has become *wajib*”. The companions asked what had become *wajib*. Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) replied that for the former, heaven and for the latter, hellfire. You people are the witnesses of Allah on the Earth.<sup>44</sup>

Abu Huraira narrates that if three people bear witness that a deceased from their relatives or neighbours was good, then Allah’s mercy causes the deceased’s bad deeds to be wiped out. Ibn Hibban mentions the witnessing of four people.<sup>45</sup>

## **6. Many participants in the funeral prayer**

Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said that if forty people pray the funeral prayer for a person, then Allah accepts their intercession on his behalf.<sup>46</sup>

In another narration it is mentioned that if three rows of people pray the janaza, then *jannah* becomes *wajib* for the deceased.<sup>47</sup>

## **7. Burying in a holy place or near the pious**

Prophet Musa (‘alaihi salam) asked to be buried at a stone throw from Bait al-Muqaddas.<sup>48</sup>

Imam ‘Ayni writes that this was because Bait al-Muqaddas is the burial place of the pious and being close to them for *barakah* is sought after death as it is in life. From this hadith is derived the fact that being buried in a holy place or near the pious is better.<sup>49</sup>

Similarly, ‘Umar wanted to be buried next to Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and said that nothing was dearer to him than this. Imam ‘Ayni writes that this is

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<sup>43</sup> Nawadir al-Usul

<sup>44</sup> Bukhari, vol. 2, hadith 448

<sup>45</sup> Musnad Ahmad, Abu Ya’la, ibn Hibban fi Sahih

<sup>46</sup> Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawud, ibn Majah

<sup>47</sup> Abu Dawud, vol. 2, p.95, Tirmidi

<sup>48</sup> Bukhari, vol. 4, hadith 619, Muslim, Nasa’i

<sup>49</sup> ‘Umdatul Qari, vol. 4, p.165

because the mercy which descends on the pious will also descend on those near them and when people visit the pious, they will also do du'a for those near them.<sup>50</sup>

Imam Murghinani, author of the *Hidaya*, says that it is *makruh* to take the deceased to be buried at a far place from their place of death unless they are being taken to a holy place or they are to be buried near the pious.<sup>51</sup>

Imam Suyuti writes that people should be buried with good people as they troubled when they are neighboured with bad people.<sup>52</sup>

## **8. A pious person sitting or lying in the grave before burial**

When Fatima bint Asad passed away, Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) gave for her his blessed shirt as her shroud and after her grave was dug, he lied down in the grave and recited a du'a.<sup>53</sup> In another narration it mentions Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) reciting the Qur'an in her grave.<sup>54</sup>

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said that giving my shirt for her to be shrouded in is for *barakah* and my lying in her grave is so that Allah makes it large.<sup>55</sup>

## **9. Spraying water on the grave**

The companions sprayed water on the blessed grave of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).<sup>56</sup> Imam 'Ali Qari writes that 'Allama Tayyibi said that spraying water on the grave is an indication towards the mercy of Allah.<sup>57</sup>

It is narrated that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) ordered water to be sprayed on the grave of Sa'd.<sup>58</sup> Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) also sprayed water on the grave of his son, Ibrahim.<sup>59</sup>

Imam 'Ali Qari writes that ibn Malik said that when it is not raining, it is from the *sunnah* to spray water on the grave so that Allah may make the grave cool.<sup>60</sup> Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) also did this for 'Uthman bin Madh'un.<sup>61</sup>

Shaykh 'Abdul Haq ad-Dihlawi writes that spraying water is to indicate the descent of mercy, the washing away of sins and it is also to save the grave from being destroyed.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> 'Umdatul Qari, vol. 4, p.255

<sup>51</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.375

<sup>52</sup> Sharh al-Sudur fi ahwal al-Mawti wa al-Qubur

<sup>53</sup> Tabrani fi Kabir, ibn Hibban, Hakim

<sup>54</sup> Wafa' al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa, vol. 2, p.89

<sup>55</sup> Wafa' al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa, vol. 2, p.88

<sup>56</sup> Mishkat, p.149

<sup>57</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.278

<sup>58</sup> ibn Majah

<sup>59</sup> Mishkat, p.148

<sup>60</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.377

<sup>61</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.378

<sup>62</sup> Lum'at Hashiya Mishkat, p.149

Imam ibn ‘Abideen Shami writes that it is *mandub* to spray water on a grave.<sup>63</sup>

#### **10. To advise the deceased after burial**

Murtada Zabidi narrates that when Abu Amama Bahili neared his demise, he told Sa’eed bin ‘Abdullah to perform the act which Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) had recommended. That is, a man should stand at his grave and say, “Yaa Fulan bin Fulanah! Remember that belief which you had in this world. Bear witness that Allah is one, Muhammad is His messenger and you are satisfied that Islam is your *deen* and the Qur’an is your guide”. Hearing this, *Munkar* and *Nakir* will move backwards”.<sup>64</sup>

It is narrated that when a man is buried, it is *mustahab* to stand near the grave and say, “Oh so-and-so! Say that there is no God but Allah.” Then, the following is said thrice, “Oh so-and-so! Say that my Lord is Allah, my *deen* is Islam and my Prophet is Muhammad (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).<sup>65</sup>

Imam Shami writes that it is the creed of the *Mu’tazila* not to advise the dead. The Ahlus Sunnah believe that the dead are given a new life. Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) is reported to have told his companions to advise the inmate of the grave.<sup>66</sup>

#### **11. Praying for their steadfastness**

‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan narrates that when Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) finished a burial, he would remain at the grave and tell us to pray for our brothers forgiveness and to ask Allah to keep him steadfast because he will soon be questioned.<sup>67</sup>

Ibn Musayyib went to the funeral of the daughter of ibn ‘Umar. Ibn ‘Umar, after the burial, advised his daughter by saying, “*Bismillah wa fi sabeel Allah, Allahumma ajirha min al-shaytan wa min ‘adhab al-qabr*”. Ibn ‘Umar said he heard this from Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).<sup>68</sup>

#### **12. Saying the Adhan after burial**

Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah narrates that when Sa’d ibn Mu’adh had been buried, Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) stood for a long time and said, “*Subhan Allah*” and the companions also did this. Then Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said, “*Allahu Akbar*” and the companions also did this. When Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) was asked why he had first done the *tasbih* then the *takbir*, Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said that this pious man’s grave was made tight but then Allah made it wide and his difficulty was removed.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Radd al-Muhtar, vol. 1, p.838

<sup>64</sup> Sharh Ihya al-‘Ulum, vol. 10, p.368

<sup>65</sup> Sharh Ihya al-‘Ulum, vol. 10, p.369

<sup>66</sup> Radd al-Muhtar, vol. 1, p.696

<sup>67</sup> Abu Dawud, vol. 2, p.102

<sup>68</sup> ibn Majah, Baihaqi

<sup>69</sup> Imam Ahmad, Tabrani, Baihaqi

‘Allama Tayyibi writes that his difficulty was removed due to the collective *Tasbih* and *Takbir*.<sup>70</sup>

Mufti Zafar ad-Din Ridawi writes: This hadith proves that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) continuously recited the words *Allahu Akbar* at the grave and this very *Allahu Akbar* is present in the Adhan 6 times. The Adhan does contain additional words but this is not adverse as all *adhkar* are the cause of the descent of Allah’s mercy. Apart from this, it is proven from the Sunnah and the ahadith<sup>71</sup> to recite *Laa ilaha illallah* to those who are near death and the adhan has these words 3 times. Moreover, *laa ilaha illallah* answer all 3 questions of the *nakirain*.

The adhan begins with the words *Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar, Ash-hadu an-laa ilaha illallah, Ash-hadu an-laa ilaha illallah*. This will help in answering the question, “Who is your Lord?”.

The adhan then continues, *Ash-hadu anna Muhammad ar-Rasoolallah, Ash-hadu anna Muhammad ar-Rasoolallah*. This will help to answer the question, “What did you say about this man, Muhammad?”

The adhan also contains *Hayya ‘alas salah, Hayya ‘alas salah*, this will help to answer the question, “What is your *deen*”?

Hence, saying the Adhan at the grave is in total accordance to the hadith of the Messenger (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).

It is also known that the *Shaytan* interferes in the questioning as narrated by Imam Tirmidi from Sufyan Thawri<sup>72</sup> and from the report of Abu Huraira, it is known that the *Shaytan* runs away as soon as he hears the Adhan<sup>73</sup> and we are ordered to pronounce the Adhan when we feel the presence of *Shaytan*.<sup>74</sup>

So we know that *Shaytan* interferes in the questioning of *Nakirain* and we are ordered to say the Adhan to make *Shaytan* run away. Hence, to say the Adhan at the grave is totally according to the sayings of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). On this topic, Imam Ahmad Rida Khan Bareilwi has written a monograph entitled *Izaan al-Ajr fi adhan al-Qabr* in which he has mentioned 15 proofs for this practice.

Apart from this, some ‘ulema have mentioned that to say the Adhan whilst lowering the deceased into the grave is *Sunnah* and Imam ibn Hajar Makki<sup>75</sup> and ‘Allama Khair ad-Din Ramli<sup>76</sup> (teacher of the author of *Durr al-Mukhtar*) have said the same.

Shah ‘Abdul ‘Aziz Muhaddith ad-Dihlawi has said that it is the practice of our *Masha’ikh* to say the Adhan after burial.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Sharh Mishkat

<sup>71</sup> Imam Ahmad, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidi, Nasa’i, ibn Majah

<sup>72</sup> Nawadir al-Usul

<sup>73</sup> Bukhari, vol. 2, hadith 313, Muslim

<sup>74</sup> Imam Abul Qasim bin Ahmad, Tabrani fi Ausat

<sup>75</sup> In his fatawa

<sup>76</sup> Hashiya Bahr al-Ra’iq

<sup>77</sup> Malfuzat ‘Aziz

So we find that the practice has been continuing amongst the ‘ulema of Ahlus Sunnah for a long time and the ahadith that have been mentioned above are its *asl*. (Here ends the quote of Mufti Zafar ad-Din from *Nafi’ al-Bashar fi fatawa zafar*).

### **13. Placing a branch on the grave**

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas narrates that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) placed a branch into two graves whose inmates were receiving punishment. Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said until the branch was fresh, their punishment would be reduced.<sup>78</sup>

Scholars such as Imam ‘Ayni<sup>79</sup>, Imam Nawawi<sup>80</sup>, Imam ‘Asqalani<sup>81</sup>, Imam Qastalani<sup>82</sup> and Imam Suyuti<sup>83</sup> have said all things do *tasbih*, so until the branch is fresh, the *tasbih* will cause a reduction in punishment.

Imam ibn Hajar Makki says this hadith makes it *masnun* for all people to place branches in the graves.<sup>84</sup>

Imam ‘Ali Qari writes that this hadith is the *asl* for reciting the Qur’an at graves because the recitation of the Qur’an to reduce punishment is better than the *tasbih* of the branch.<sup>85</sup> Imam ‘Ayni says the same.<sup>86</sup>

Imam Shafi’i says there is no harm in reciting the Qur’an at the grave and Imam Nawawi and ‘Allama Shams ‘Asqalani (teacher of ibn Hajar) have said the same.<sup>87</sup> The Shafi’i, Maliki, Hanbali and the majority of the Hanafi scholars also hold this view.<sup>88</sup>

Another point derived from this hadith is placing flowers at the shrines of the saints. Imam ‘Ali Qari quotes ibn Hajar Makki saying that placing flowers the graves is *sunnah* and its *asl* is the hadith aforementioned.<sup>89</sup> Imam Qastalani says this hadith shows that anything that is wet and fresh can be placed on the grave, whether it is grass or flowers.<sup>90</sup>

It is from Fatawa Alamgiri (Fatawa Hindiya) that to place flowers on graves is better. Kanz al-‘Ubbad and Fatawa Ghara’ib say that it is *hasan* to place flowers on graves.<sup>91</sup>

Mufti Zafar ad-Din Ridawi says that these sayings of our scholars are the reason why it is common to place flowers at the graves of the saints. The *tasbih* is not only to

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<sup>78</sup> Bukhari, vol. 2, hadith 460, Muslim, Abu Dawud, Tirmidi, Nasa’i, ibn Majah

<sup>79</sup> ‘Umdatul Qari, vol. 1, p.874

<sup>80</sup> ‘Umdatul Qari, vol. 1, p.874

<sup>81</sup> Fath al-Bari, vol. 1, p.223

<sup>82</sup> Irshad al-Sari, vol. 2, p.371

<sup>83</sup> Sharh al-Sudur fi ahwal al-Mawti wa al-Qubur

<sup>84</sup> Fatawa Hadithiya, p.200

<sup>85</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 1, p.286

<sup>86</sup> ‘Umdatul Qari, vol. 1, p.874

<sup>87</sup> Sharh Ihya al-‘Ulum, vol.10, p.369

<sup>88</sup> Sharh Ihya al-‘Ulum, vol.10, p.369

<sup>89</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.382

<sup>90</sup> Irshad al-Sari, vol. 2, p.371

<sup>91</sup> Tashih al-Masa’il, p.20

reduce punishment, it is to invite the mercy of Allah, and all graves are needy of this.<sup>92</sup>

#### **14. Reciting Sura al-Fatiha and the end of Sura al-Baqarah after burial**

‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar used to advise people to recite Sura al-Fatiha and the end of Sura al-Baqarah (verses 285 and 286) after burying the deceased.<sup>93</sup> Tabrani has a similar narration.<sup>94</sup> Imam Baihaqi also narrates it from Mishkat.<sup>95</sup>

#### **15. Remaining at the grave for as long it takes to sacrifice a camel and distribute the meat**

‘Umro ibn al-‘Aas told his son ‘Abdullah to stay at his grave for as long as it takes to sacrifice a camel and distribute its meat so that he could gain peace from his son’s presence.<sup>96</sup>

Imam ‘Ali Qari writes that gaining peace is from peoples du’a, their *dhikr*, their Qur’anic recitation and their *Istighfar*.<sup>97</sup> Imam Nawawi writes that this hadith shows to wait for this period is *mustahab* and it also shows that the dead hear those near their grave.<sup>98</sup>

#### **16. Inmates of the grave gain peace from those who visit them**

Imam Taqi ad-Din Subki<sup>99</sup> and Imam Suyuti<sup>100</sup> write that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said that the inmate of the grave is most happy when someone they knew comes to visit them.

Ibn Abi al-Dunya narrates from ‘Aisha that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said, “The inmate of the grave gets peace from those who visit him and when the visitor leaves, the inmate replies”.<sup>101</sup> Abu al-Shaykh and Dailami narrate the same.

It is in Sharh Ihya al-‘Ulum that one must especially visit ones parents and that neighbouring graves also benefit from visitors.

#### **17. Visiting the graveyard in the last part of the night**

‘Aisha narrates that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would go to the graveyard of Baqi’ and say, “Peace be upon you, that which has been promised to you will happen soon and we are to meet with you. Oh Allah! Forgive the people of Baqi’”.<sup>102</sup> Imam Nawawi comments on this hadith by writing that it shows the

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<sup>92</sup> Nafi’ al-Bashar fi fatawa zafar, p.379

<sup>93</sup> Qurtubi fi Tadhkira

<sup>94</sup> Sharh Ihya al-‘Ulum, vol.10, p.370

<sup>95</sup> Shu’b al-Iman

<sup>96</sup> Muslim, Mishkat

<sup>97</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.381

<sup>98</sup> Sharh Muslim, p.76

<sup>99</sup> Shifa’ al-Siqam

<sup>100</sup> Sharh al-Sudur fi ahwal al-Mawti wa al-Qubur

<sup>101</sup> Kitab al-Qubur

<sup>102</sup> Muslim

benefits of visitation in the last part of the night and also shows the merits of visiting the people of Baqi'.<sup>103</sup>

### **18. Visiting graves of parents and pious people on Thursday and Friday**

Muhammad bin Wasi' would visit the graveyard on Friday. Someone asked, "Would it not be better to delay this till Monday?" He replied that a hadith had reached him which says that the deceased recognise their visitors on Friday, a day before it and a day after it.<sup>104</sup> The 'ulema say visitation can be done on any day but these 3 days are superior.<sup>105</sup>

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said that whoever visits their parents' graves on a Friday or one of their graves, their sins will be forgiven and they Allah will include them amongst the pious.<sup>106</sup>

### **19. Visiting the deceased each and every year**

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would visit the martyrs of Uhud at the beginning of each year and would offer prayers for martyrs thus: "*Salam 'alaykum bima sabartum fa ni'ma uqbad dar*". Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman would do the same.<sup>107</sup>

Imam Fakhr ad-Din Razi writes that the four rightly guided khulafa would do the same.<sup>108</sup> Imam Shami says the same.<sup>109</sup>

Mufti Zafar ad-Din Ridawi writes: These narrations are the *asl* for the annual '*Urs* of the pious saints of Islam. People gather at the shrines of the *awliya* and offer salam, du'a, istighfar, recitation of the Qur'an, Sadaqa and the distribution of sweets and foods.

'Abdul Hakeem Siyalkoti's objection to the practice was refuted by Shah 'Abdul Aziz Muhaddith ad-Dihlawi thus: "This objection has been raised due to a lack of understanding. No one considers the '*Urs* to be *fard*. Indeed, it is *mustahsan* and from the good acts to gain blessings from the graves of the pious and to recite the Qur'an, do du'a and to distribute food so that the reward may be conveyed for the saint. A date is fixed for the '*Urs* because that is the day when the saint went from this world to the next so that the date is not forgotten. In truth, these good deeds can be done on any day of the year. It is *wajib* for the *khalaf* to do these good deeds for their *salaf* as it is in the hadith that the pious progeny are those that pray for their predecessors."<sup>110</sup>

Thereafter, Shah 'Abdul Aziz quotes from Imam Suyuti's *Sharh al-Sudur* and narrates the hadith of visiting Uhud from ibn Mandhar and ibn Mardawiya.

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<sup>103</sup> Nawawi Sharh Muslim

<sup>104</sup> ibn Abi al-Dunya, Baihaqi fi Shu'b al-Iman

<sup>105</sup> Sharh Ihya al-'Ulum, p.336

<sup>106</sup> Tabrani fi Saghir, Kitab al-Qubur, Shu'b al-Iman

<sup>107</sup> ibn Abi Shayba, Wafa' al-Wafa, vol. 2, p.133, ibn Mandahr, ibn Mardawiya, ibn Jarir

<sup>108</sup> Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 5, p.295

<sup>109</sup> Radd al-Muhtar, vol.1, p.843

<sup>110</sup> Zubda al-Nasa'ih fi Saa'il al-Dhaba'ih, p.42

(Here ends the quote of Mufti Zafar ad-Din from *Nafi' al-Bashar fi fatawa zafar*).

## **20. Reciting the Kalima 70,000 times and conveying the reward**

Shaykh Muhyuddin ibn 'Arabi says that a hadith reached me which mentioned that whoever recites *Laa ilaha illallah* 70,000 times, he will be forgiven and the person for whom it is read will also be forgiven. The Shaykh recited it 70,000 times without any intention. Later, he went to a dinner where a young man began crying because he saw his mother being punished. The Shaykh then intended the reward of his recitation for this woman. Immediately, the young man became happy and said now he sees his mother in a good state. From this the Shaykh got to know the authenticity of this hadith.<sup>111</sup> There is a similar narration about Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi.<sup>112</sup>

Sayyid Jalal ad-Din Makhdum Jahaniyan mentions reciting the Kalima 100,000 times.<sup>113</sup> He says that after recitation a du'a should be made. He also says that in Madina al-Munawwara, 100 prayer beads each with 1000 stones, is placed in a box and given to 100 men. They recite the Kalima and convey the reward to the dead.

Qasim Nanotwi writes the incident of Shaykh Junaid Baghdadi when the Shaykh conveyed the reward of reciting the Kalima 125,000 times.<sup>114</sup>

Mufti Zafar ad-Din Bihari writes: These ahadith and narrations are the *asl* for the practice of the Muslims to gather on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> day after the demise to recite the Qur'an and *Laa ilaha illallah* 70,000 times or 100,000 times.<sup>115</sup>

## **21. Reciting the Qur'an and conveying the reward**

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said that even if a person recites one letter of the Qur'an, he will be rewarded tenfold. *Alif* is one letter, *Laam* is one letter and *Meem* is another. So, reciting *Alif Laam Meem* will earn 30 rewards.<sup>116</sup>

It is better to go to the grave and recite the Qur'an such as when Imam Shafi'i went to the grave of Laith bin Sa'd and recited the Qur'an there and praised him. Imam Shafi'i prayed that this act would continue forever.

Whenever someone died from the Ansar, they would go to the grave and recite the Qur'an there.<sup>117</sup>

Anything may be recited from the Qur'an but some chapters and methods have been mentioned especially by Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) such as al-Ikhlās 11

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<sup>111</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.102

<sup>112</sup> Maktubat, vol. 2, p.27

<sup>113</sup> Malfuzat, vol. 1, p.167

<sup>114</sup> Tahdhir al-Naas, p.38

<sup>115</sup> Nafi' al-Bashar fi fatawa zafar, p.391

<sup>116</sup> Tirmidi, Hakim, Bukhari fi Tarikh, Kanz al-'Ummal, vol. 1, p.130

<sup>117</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.382



times<sup>118</sup>, the beginning and end of al-Baqarah<sup>119</sup>, al-Fatiha, al-Ikhlās and al-Takathur<sup>120</sup> and al-Yasin<sup>121</sup>

## **22. Performing Salah and Sawm for the deceased**

Imam ibn ‘Abideen Shami writes that it is Daruqutni that Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said that when one’s parents pass away, goodness with them is offering Salah for them when one offers it and fasting for them when one fasts.<sup>122</sup>

Qadi Thana’ Allah Pani Patti writes that it is in ibn Abi Shayba that Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said that goodness with parents is to offer Salah, fasting and Sadaqa for them.<sup>123</sup>

## **23. Digging a well on behalf of the deceased**

Sa’d bin ‘Ubada asked Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) about which Sadaqa would benefit his dead mother the most. Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said water. So, Sa’d dug a well and said, “This is for the mother of Sa’d”.<sup>124</sup>

Mufti Zafar ad-Din Bihari writes: This hadith is the *asl* for the practice of Muslims to send utilities to mosques for people to perform *wudu* with. The reward is then intended for the deceased.<sup>125</sup>

Also, Sa’d stood at the well and then made his verbal intention. This is proof for placing food before oneself when making *du’a* and reciting the Qur’an.

## **24. Giving Sadaqa on behalf of the deceased**

A man came to Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) and asked if Sadaqa would benefit his dead mother. Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) said it would so the man made Rasoolallah (sallallahu ‘alaihi wasallam) a his witness that a garden that he owned was a Sadaqa on behalf of his mother.<sup>126</sup> There is a similar narration in Bukhari and Muslim.

Imam Nawawi writes that these ahadith show that Sadaqa is beneficial to the deceased. There is *Ijma’* (consensus) amongst the ‘ulema on this matter.<sup>127</sup> Imam ‘Ayni writes that giving Sadaqa benefits the deceased.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Daruqutni, ‘Ayni Sharh Hidayah, vol. 2, Radd al-Muhtar, vol.2, p.243

<sup>119</sup> Baihaqi fi Shu’b al-Iman

<sup>120</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.382

<sup>121</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.382

<sup>122</sup> Radd al-Muhtar, vol. 2, p.243

<sup>123</sup> Risala Tadhkira al-Mauta wa al-Qubur, p.36

<sup>124</sup> Abu Dawud, Nasa’i, Mishkat, p.169

<sup>125</sup> Nafi’ al-Bashar fi fatawa zafar, p.396

<sup>126</sup> Tirmidi

<sup>127</sup> Sharh Muslim, p.324

<sup>128</sup> ‘Umdatul Qari, vol. 4, p.246

Shaykh ‘Abdul Haq ad-Dihlawi writes that it is *mustahab* to give Sadaqa on behalf of the deceased. Some narrations mention that the souls come to their worldly homes and see whether someone is offering Sadaqa for them.<sup>129</sup>

Someone may question that food that is prepared for Isaal al-Thawab is consumed by both the rich and the poor. This is Sadaqa so it should only be for the poor. The answer is that this Sadaqa is not *wajib*, which would make it only for the poor. It is Sadaqa *nafilah*, so both the rich and poor can eat from it. It is in Mishkat in the Chapter of Miracles (Baab al-Mu’jizat) that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) himself partook in the eating the food for the deceased. If it was a bad thing, then Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would never have eaten from it.

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) once performed the janaza of a man. The man’s wife informed Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) that food has been prepared. Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) went along with his companions to her home and ate of the food.<sup>130</sup>

Imam ‘Ali Qari writes that this hadith is a clear refutation of those who say that it is *makruh* to prepare food on the first and third days and after a week.<sup>131</sup>

Thereafter, Imam ‘Ali Qari reconciles the common opinion amongst the Hanafi *fuqaha* that it is *makruh* to prepare food on behalf of the deceased. It is only *makruh* if the family of the deceased feed the people because they feel shame. It is also *makruh* where some of the inheritors from the deceased are not adults or are not present or they do not agree to feeding the people or if a certain person does not pay for the food with their own money.<sup>132</sup>

It is in Hidayah in the Chapter of Sadaqa that feeding the rich is sometimes for their pleasure and this is done for reward.<sup>133</sup>

It is in Majma’ al-Bahar that Sadaqa is that which is given to the poor meaning most of the recipients are of the poor. Otherwise, giving to the rich is also permissible and is a means of reward.<sup>134</sup>

It is a hadith that all good acts are Sadaqa, and it is obvious that feeding the rich is not something bad but a good act.

Mufti Zafar ad-Din writes: These are the reasons why it is common for the Muslims to perform Isaal al-Thawab for the deceased by cooking food and feeding the poor and sometimes the rich may even be fed.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ashi’atul Lum’aat, vol. 1, p.763, Baab Ziyarah al-Qubur

<sup>130</sup> Abu Dawud, Baihaqi fi Dala’il al-Nubuwwah

<sup>131</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 5, p.482

<sup>132</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat

<sup>133</sup> Hidayah, vol. 3, p.490

<sup>134</sup> Majma’ al-Bahar, vol. 2, p.238

<sup>135</sup> Nafi’ al-Bashar fi fatawa zafar, p.400

## **25. Offering Qurbani on behalf of the deceased**

Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) offered Qurbani of a goat and made the intention that it is from Muhammad and his *ummah*.<sup>136</sup>

Imam 'Ali Qari writes that 'Allama Tayyibi said that this is so to include the *ummah* in the reward because one goat is not sufficient for more than one person. He then writes that all his *ummah*, whether living or dead, may be the recipients of the reward.<sup>137</sup>

'Ali offered two sacrifices and said that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) ordered him to make a sacrifice on his behalf.<sup>138</sup>

Imam 'Ali Qari writes that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would also offer two sacrifices so after his blessed demise, 'Ali did the same. Ibn Malik says that this hadith is proof for offering Qurbani for the deceased.<sup>139</sup>

Imam Shami writes that the deceased receive the reward for the Qurbani.<sup>140</sup>

### **Isaal al-Thawab of the Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), Sahaba and Ahl al-Bayt**

The dear Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would visit the grave of his uncle Hamza (radiyallahu ta'ala anhu) annually. This practice was continued by the Khulafa ar-Rashidin and the beloved daughter of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), Sayyida Fatima (radiyallahu ta'ala anha) would also visit Hamza. She would perform Salah their, cry and make du'a.

Imam Ghazali writes that Imam Ja'far Sadiq narrates from his father Imam Baqir that Sayyida Fatima (radiyallahu ta'ala anha) would visit the grave of Hamza ibn 'Abdul Muttalib and would perform Salah their and cry.<sup>141</sup>

'Allama Murtada Zabidi writes that Baihaqi in *Shu'b al-Iman* narrates from Waqidi that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would annually go to the graves of the martyrs of Uhud and say Salam upon them in a loud voice. Thereafter, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and Sayyida Fatima (radiyallahu ta'ala anhum) would do the very same. Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas would also do this and would tell his companions, "Why do you not Salam upon those who will reply to you?"<sup>142</sup>

Murtada Zabidi continues to write that ibn Abi Shayba narrates from Abu Ja'far that Fatima bint Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would go to the grave of Hamza (radiyallahu ta'ala anhu) and build and restore it. She would place a stone their to identify the grave. She did this till her demise.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Muslim, vol. 2, p.156

<sup>137</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.261

<sup>138</sup> Abu Dawud, Tirmidi

<sup>139</sup> Mirqat Sharh Mishkat, vol. 2, p.365

<sup>140</sup> Radd al-Muhtar, vol. 5, p.220

<sup>141</sup> Ihya al-'Ulum

<sup>142</sup> Sharh Ihya al-'Ulum

<sup>143</sup> Sharh Ihya al-'Ulum, vol. 10, p.346

So it is seen that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), the Khulafa ar-Rashidin, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (with his companions), Sayyida Fatima would annually visit the martyrs of Uhud.

Mufti Zafar ad-Din writes: The saying of Sa'd to his companions that they should say Salam to those who answer is supportive of the hadith of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) about the martyrs of Uhud that: "Oh Allah! Your slave and Prophet bears witness that these people are martyrs. Whosoever visits them till the day of judgement and says Salam upon them, they will reply to it.

Imam Baihaqi writes in Dala'il an-Nubuwwah that the maternal aunt of 'Ataf bin Khalid went to Uhud and sent Salam upon the martyrs. She heard their reply and also heard them say that they recognise her as they recognise one another.

Fatima Khaza'iyah says that she and her sister said Salam to Hamza (radiyallahu ta'ala anhu) and heard the reply, *'Alaikum assalam wa rahmatullah*. She says that no other person was near us.<sup>144</sup>

These incidents all show that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), his Sahaba and Ahl al-Bayt and those that came after them would do Isaal al-Thawab for the martyrs of Uhud.

### **Isaal al-Thawab for Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam)**

Shah Sharf ad-Din Ahmad Yahya Muniri writes: "After the demise of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), the Sahaba could not agree who should be the Khalifa. This disagreement lasted 9 days and on each of these days, one of the wives of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) would prepare food on the name of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). It was then decided that Abu Bakr is the Khalifa and a further two days elapsed. On the 12<sup>th</sup> day, Abu Bakr prepared so much food for the soul of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) that it was enough for the whole of Madina. The people asked about the food and Abu Bakr said, *Al yawma 'urs Rasoolallah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam, al yawma 'urs Rasoolallah sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam*. So the 12<sup>th</sup> day became known as the day of 'Urs."<sup>145</sup>

From this it is known that the wives of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) did Isaal al-Thawab for the dear Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). Not once, but 9 times. Moreover, Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (radiyallahu ta'ala anhu) also did Isaal al-Thawab and 'Urs and fed the whole of Madina.

Imam Shami refutes the claim that it is impermissible to do Isaal al-Thawab for Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). He writes that Imam Taqi ad-Din Subki clearly refuted ibn Taymiya. Also, after the demise of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, till his own demise, performed 'Umrah for Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and ibn Mawaqqaf performed 70 Hajj for Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), ibn Siraj recited the Qur'an over 10,000

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<sup>144</sup> Wafa' al-Wafa bi akhbar dar al-Mustafa, vol. 2, p.112

<sup>145</sup> Makh al-Ma'ani, p.111

times for Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and did a similar number of Qurbani's for Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).<sup>146</sup>

Whenever someone does Isaal al-Thawab for others, they first do Isaal al-Thawab for Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam). Then, by the *wasila* of Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), they do Isaal al-Thawab for others. Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi advises the same method.<sup>147</sup>

Also, reciting *Salawat* has always been the pride of the Muslims. This is a form of Isaal al-Thawab and so is the du'a after the Adhan.

### **Isaal al-Thawab by the Mujtahid Imams**

Before his demise, Imam Abu Hanifa (radiyallahu ta'ala anhu) advised his son of 20 matters. This will of Imam Abu Hanifa has been collected by Shaykh Dia ad-Din Mustafa and about it Imam Abu Hanifa said that if these points are remembered and always acted upon then success in this world will surely ensue.

Point 13 in the will is that the Qur'an must be recited daily and its reward must be conveyed to Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), ones parents, teachers and all Muslims.<sup>148</sup>

The will that he left for his student, Imam Abu Yusuf, has been recorded by Imam Zain ibn Nujaim, author of the *Bahr ar-Ra'iq*. Imam Abu Hanifa advised that death must always be remembered, and Du'a al-Maghfirah must always be performed for ones teachers. The Qur'an must be recited in abundance visitation of the graves and of the Shuyukh and of Holy places must be done regularly.<sup>149</sup>

The books of *Fiqh* are full of methods of performing Isaal al-Thawab.

It is the grace of Allah that the issue of Isaal al-Thawab has been explained according to the Qur'an, the ahadith, the precious pearls of our scholars. The act of Isaal al-Thawab is one that Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) himself participated and his blessed companions also followed in the blessed footsteps of their beloved Prophet (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam).

### **Denying Isaal al-Thawab is the Madhab of the Mu'tazila**

It is from Sharh 'Aqaid Nasafi that to do du'a and to give Sadaqa for the dead benefits them. The Mu'tazila are against the Ahlus Sunnah on this. They believe that deeds performed by the living are of no use to the dead. Their proof is that destiny cannot be changed and each person will receive the reward for their own deeds. The proof of the Ahlus Sunnah are the numerous ahadith that call towards praying for the deceased, especially those that mention the Salah al-Janaza which was performed by the Salaf and the Khalaf. If there was no benefit for the deceased in it, then what use is it to offer this prayer? Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) said that if 100 people

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<sup>146</sup> Radd al-Muhtar, vol. 1, p.845

<sup>147</sup> Maktubat, vol. 3, p.55

<sup>148</sup> Jami' al-Usul fi al-Awliya' wa anwa'ihim, p.153

<sup>149</sup> Al-Ishbah wa al-Naza'ir, p.603

perform the funeral prayer and each of them prays for the forgiveness of the deceased, then their du'a will surely be accepted. Also, the hadith of Sa'd when he dug a well for his mother. Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) also said that du'a removes difficulties and Sadaqa extinguishes the anger of Allah. Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) also said that when a scholar or a student of religion passes through a town, then Allah lifts 40 days of punishment from its cemetery and there are many ahadith and sayings to support our view.<sup>150</sup>

### **Why did they not do it? – The Concept of Bid'a**

Some may question that why did Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) and his companions, who were more pious than us and came before us, not do these acts? This questioning is now futile because not only were these acts found in the early days of Islam, they were existent in the era of and practiced by the Khulafa ar-Rashidin themselves.

Imam Bukhari narrates a hadith from Zaid ibn Thabit in his Sahih:

Abu Bakr sent for me owing to the large number of casualties in the battle of Al-Yamama, while 'Umar was sitting with him. Abu Bakr said (to me), (Umar has come to me and said, "A great number of Qaris of the Holy Qur'an were killed on the day of the battle of Al-Yamama, and I am afraid that the casualties among the Qaris of the Qur'an may increase on other battlefields whereby a large part of the Qur'an may be lost. Therefore I consider it advisable that you (Abu Bakr) should have the Qur'an collected." I said, "How dare I do something which Allah's Apostle did not do?" 'Umar said, "By Allah, it is something beneficial." 'Umar kept on pressing me for that till Allah opened my chest for that for which He had opened the chest of 'Umar and I had in that matter, the same opinion as 'Umar had." Abu Bakr then said to me (Zaid), "You are a wise young man and we do not have any suspicion about you, and you used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah's Apostle. So you should search for the fragmentary scripts of the Qur'an and collect it (in one Book)." Zaid further said: By Allah, if Abu Bakr had ordered me to shift a mountain among the mountains from one place to another it would not have been heavier for me than this ordering me to collect the Qur'an. Then I said (to 'Umar and Abu Bakr), "How can you do something which Allah's Apostle did not do?" Abu Bakr said, "By Allah, it is something beneficial." Zaid added: So he (Abu Bakr) kept on pressing me for that until Allah opened my chest for that for which He had opened the chests of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and I had in that matter, the same opinion as theirs.

So I started compiling the Qur'an by collecting it from the leafless stalks of the date-palm tree and from the pieces of leather and hides and from the stones, and from the chests of men (who had memorised the Qur'an). I found the last verses of Sura al-Tauba: "Verily there has come unto you an Apostle (Muhammad) from amongst yourselves..." (9.128-129) from Khuzaima or Abu Khuzaima and I added to it the rest of the Sura. The manuscripts of the Qur'an remained with Abu Bakr till Allah took him unto Him. Then it remained with 'Umar till Allah took him unto Him, and then with Hafsa bint 'Umar.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> p.107

<sup>151</sup> Sahih Bukhari, vol. 9, hadith 301

This incident and this hadith have opened a pathway for the believers that to determine whether an act is good, do not become stuck on whether Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) did it or not, instead look at whether it contains any benefit. If it beneficial, then even if Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) or the Sahaba did not do it, we must do it.

When Zaid questioned Abu Bakr and 'Umar as to why they were doing something not done by Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam), they did not say that innovations are allowed for us but not for future Muslims, instead they said that eventhough Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) did not do this, we must do it as it is of benefit. Then the Sahaba agreed on this and the Qur'an was gathered in one volume.

In the same manner, Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) ordered the Salah to be prayed upon the dead. However, when Rasoolallah (sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam) passed away, other methods Isaal al-Thawab became needed. The 'ulema and shuyukh then taught ways from the Qur'an and Sunnah whereby Isaal al-Thawab could be performed.

May Allah accept this small effort, *Amin bi jahi sayyidil mursalin sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam.*

Muhammad Aqdas  
4 July, 2005

Mufti Zafar ad-Din Qadri Bihari (rahimahullah), also known as Malil al-'Ulema, wrote a monograph on the subject of Isaal al-Thawab in 1354 AH as an answer to Sayyid Muhyuddin Tamanna. The monograph is present in Mufti Zafar ad-Din's *fatawa* entitled *Nafi' al-Bashar fi fatawa zafar* which have been collected by 'Allama Sahil Sahsarami (may Allah preserve him).

This article is a reduced and translated version of Mufti Zafar ad-Din's lengthy monograph which is spread over 100 pages. All the material present in this article has been drawn from pages 320-420 of the monograph.

May Allah shower abundant blessings on the grave of Malik al-'Ulema, *Amin bi jahi sayyidil mursalin sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam.*