

## **Intercession: A Divine Favour**

- By Syed Nadeem Ahmed Jafri.

### **In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.**

*A birth of a child can explain to us many things. A child is born through his mother and for the initial 2 to 3 years of his life remains in her protective care. A child cries if he is taken away from her, thus **his mother is the constant source of security for him. She protects him and feeds him when he is unable to even speak or express himself.** Thus a mother provides security to her child and she is the means for her child to reach Allah's Mercy and Care.*

*Once the child is around 4 to 5 years of age, his parents send him to school so that he acquires education and knowledge. Here, the parents decide which school is best for their child as they are the best caretakers appointed by Allah for him on this earth; while the school is the means for a child to acquire education and knowledge.*

*Once he grows up he earns his livelihood by using the knowledge and education which he has acquired. His occupation becomes the means for him to earn his livelihood.*

*→ Thus it can be said that a child **without his mother** remains **deprived of Allah's Mercy in his childhood.** If he is unable to attend school **he remains deprived of knowledge and education.** Without knowledge and education **he is unable to earn and hence remains deprived of a healthy livelihood** which Allah has promised. Thus to have access to Allah's Mercy or to gain knowledge or to earn livelihood there are separate means which should be approached otherwise a person remains deprived of them.*

Without approaching the right means nothing can be gained; this is a universal truth which is applicable in every aspect of life. That is why Quran instructs us to strive in this direction and says:

- “Ae Imaandaro Khuda se darte raho aur Uss ke (takarrub (kareeb hone) ke) zariye ki joostaju main raho aur Uss ki raah main jihad karo taake tum kamiyaab ho jao.” – (Surah-e-Maida, ayah 35)

*“(O ye who believe! Do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive with might and main in his cause: **that ye may prosper.**)”*

The above ayah instructs us to constantly strive to seek the means of approaching Him. It means that though Allah (SWT) is Omnipresent He is not accessible without approaching the right means. And if we don't do this we might never be able to please Him and would remain unsuccessful in this world and hereafter.

In order to further understand the importance of this let us see one more ayah:

- “Ae Rasool (SAW) un logon se tum kehdo ke main iss tabligh-e-risaalat per tum se kuch mazdoori to maangta nahin hoon magar tamanna ye hai ke **jo chaahe apne Parvardigar tak pahonch ne ki raah pakad le.**” – (Surah-e-Furqaan, ayah 57)

*“(Say: “No reward do I ask of you for it but this: that each one who will may take a (straight) Path to his Lord.”)”*

As per the above ayah **the best reward the Muslim Ummah** can give to our beloved Prophet (pbuh&p) for his hard work of 23 years **is to take the path that reaches Allah (SWT).**

➔ The ayah of *Surah-e-Maida* instructs us to seek **the means of approaching Allah (SWT)** while in the ayah of *Surah-e-Furqaan* Allah (SWT) instructs our holy Prophet (SAW) to ask us **to take the path that reaches Allah (SWT)** as a reward of his Prophethood. Both the ayahs convey similar messages. This explains that Allah (SWT) **must have created a right path that reaches Him.** And if we wish to be successful in a true sense we need to find it.

The pious presence of our beloved Prophet (SAW) has guided us to the light of ‘*tawheed*’ and has given us the holy Quran. And thus **the holy Prophet (SAW) is the right means** that has **enlightened us by Allah (SWT)’s message** and made us true believers. So let us understand his importance in our lives. As the Quran says:

- *“Aur Ae Rasool (SAW) Hum ne tum ko tamam alamon ke liye rehmat hi karke bheja hai”.* – (Surah-e-Ambiya, ayah 107)

*“(And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.)”*

Allah (SWT) has created our holy Prophet (SAW) as **a mercy to the worlds**. A person who wishes to seek Allah (SWT)’s Mercy should come to the holy Prophet (SAW), ignoring he would remain deprived of the Divine Mercy. Thus **the holy Prophet (SAW) is the means** that needs **to be approached to seek Allah (SWT)’s Mercy.**

The above result can be explained further in the light of the following ayah from *Surah-e-Nisa*:

- *“Aur (Rasool (SAW)) jab unn logon ne (nafarmani karke) apni jaanon per zulm kiya tha agar tumhare paas chale aate aur Khuda se maafi maangte aur Rasool (SAW) (tum) bhi unnki maghferat chahte to beshak wo log Khuda ko badaa tauba qubool karne wala Meharbaan paate.”* – (Surah-e-Nisa, ayah 64)

*“(If they had come to you after wronging themselves and asked forgiveness of God, and you had also asked forgiveness for them, they would surely have found God forgiving and merciful.)”*

Here the above ayah has shown us the method of invoking Allah (SWT)’s Mercy and Forgiveness. As per the ayah the Muslims who wronged themselves if they wished to seek Allah (SWT)’s Forgiveness and Mercy needed to approach the holy Prophet (SAW) and pray to Allah (SWT) for His forgiveness. But Allah (SWT) still **did not guarantee His Forgiveness** to them **unless the holy Prophet (SAW) also wished so.**

This clarifies that in order to **reach Mercy of Allah (SWT) intercession of the holy Prophet (SAW) is required without which Allah’s Mercy can never be invoked.** Does this mean that the holy Prophet (SAW)’s intercession would work for Muslims in every situation? Let us see the following ayah:

- “(Ae Rasool) khwah tum unn (munafiqon) ke liye maghferat ki dua maango ya unnke liye maghferat ki dua na maango (unnke liye barabar hai) **tum unnke liye sattaar bar bhi bakhshish ki dua maango ge to bhi Khuda unko hargiz na bakhshega** ye (sazaa) iss sabab se hai ki **unn logon ne Khuda aur usske Rasool ke saath kufr kiya** aur Khuda badkaar logon ko manzil e maqsud tak nahin pahonchaya karta.” – (Surah-e-Tawba, ayah 80)

“(Ask forgiveness for them or do not ask forgiveness for them; **even if you ask forgiveness for them seventy times, Allah will not forgive them**; this is because **they disbelieve in Allah and His Apostle**, and Allah does not guide the transgressing people.)”

The above ayah refers to the hypocrites who accepted Islam in public but remained infidel in their hearts. **Allah has denied them with His Mercy since they disbelieved in Allah and the holy Prophet (SAW)**. And the ayah further says that even if the holy Prophet (SAW) interceded on their behalf for 70 times Allah would not forgive them. This shows the amount of dislike Allah has for the hypocrites (*Munafiq*).

During the time of the holy Prophet (SAW) the *Munafiq* led a life of a normal Muslim in public and followed Islamic rituals, in such a situation it became difficult to identify him and separate him from a true believer. But it was important to recognize him and hence the holy Prophet (SAW) has given us a **parameter to recognize and identify him** which can be implemented even today:

- He has said: **“Ya Ali your love is Imaan and your hatred is Nifaaq.”**

Mawla Ali (A.S) has further explained the above *hadith* to separate a *Munafiq* from a *Momin*. He has said that:

- “By the Lord who created! no doubt Prophet made an oath that **none will love me except a Momin**; and **none will have grudge** for me **except a Munafiq**.” (Ref: Sahih Muslim narration 240, Sunan tirmidhi; 849/3736, Sunan Nisai; 8/116/5033, Masnad Ahmed; 1/83/642 and 95/731 and 128/1062; and 6/292/27040, Mishkaat; 2/503/6088 and many more)

Jabir and Abu Dharr, the well known companions of the holy Prophet (pbuh), used to say:

- "During the lifetime of the Prophet **we used to distinguish a Munafiq by his enmity to Ali.**"

(Ref: Ibn Abd Al Bir: "al Istiab Part 2, pp 474, 477. Ahmad Ibn Hanbal: Al-Musnad Vol 1, pp 54, 77, 138 Vol 5, pp 350, 366. Sawaiq Al Mohriqa, Chapter 9, Fasl 2. Yanabi al Mawadda Chapter 6 P 74. Kanz Al Ummal Vol 6 P 390)

**Thus the enmity towards Mawla Ali (A.S) is the parameter to identify a Munafiq from a Momin.** It means that however devout a Muslim seems to be If he hates Mawla Ali (A.S) he would never be considered as a *Momin* and would be deprived of Allah’s Mercy forever.

→ Allah (SWT) would bestow His Mercy upon a Muslim only if the holy Prophet (SAW) also wishes so but in every situation Allah (SWT) would keep the hypocrites (*Munafiq*) deprived of His Mercy. The hypocrites can be identified by their hatred towards Mawla Ali (A.S), thus we can say that **Allah (SWT) would never forgive those who hate Mawla Ali (A.S)**. Hence **love for Mawla Ali (A.S) is the path to reach Allah (SWT)'s Mercy.**

We just saw that love for Mawla Ali (A.S) is the path to reach Allah (SWT)'s Mercy. This means that Mawla Ali (A.S) can also intercede and be a means for our salvation. Let us confirm this with Quran. We would see the following two ayahs for this purpose:

- “*Aur Jis shakhs ke liye wo ijaazat ata farmaye uske siva kissi ki sifarish us ki bargaah main kaam na aayegi.*” - (Surah-e-Saba, ayah 23)

***“(No intercession can avail in His Presence, except for those for whom He has granted permission)”***

As per the ayah Allah (SWT) would not consider any intercession valid **except of those who are granted permission to intercede by Him**. In the light of the above ayah let us contemplate on the following ayah from *Surah-e-Baqra*:

- “*Aur logon main se Khuda ke bande kuch aise hain jo Khuda ki (khushnudi) haasil karne ki gharaz se apni jaan tak bech daalte hain aur Khuda aise bandon per bada hi shafqat wala hai.*” – (Surah-e- Baqra, ayah 207)

***“(And among men is he who sells himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Affectionate to the servants.)”***

The ayah from *Surah-e-Saba* talks about those **who are given permission of intercession** while the above ayah from *Surah-e-Baqra* is referring to an individual who has sold himself to purchase **Allah (SWT)'s Pleasure** (مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ). There is a huge difference between permission and pleasure. **When you permit someone it is a command and is always conditional**; a person would have to follow the rule and regulations and **would have to behave according to the permission granted**. But **when you are pleased with someone the pleasure is unconditional and you are happy about his actions in totality.**

Imam Ghizali in his *Tareekh-e-Khamees* writes that the above ayah of *Surah-e-Baqra* was revealed appreciating **the sacrifice of Mawla Ali (A.S)** when **he slept on the bed of the Holy Prophet (SAW) during the night of ‘Hijrat.’** Similar tradition is also mentioned by Imam Hakim on the authority of Ibn-e-Abbas in his *Mustadrak*. (Ref: *Tareekh e Khamees, Imam Ghizali, Mustadrak, Vol 3 Page 4, Imam Hakim*).

The selflessness of Mawla Ali (A.S) and his loyalty towards Islam and the holy Prophet (SAW) was so appreciated by Allah (SWT) that **Allah gifted Mawla Ali (A.S) with His Pleasure**. So whatever pleases Mawla Ali (A.S) pleases Allah (SWT). By contemplating on both the above mentioned ayahs we can infer that the power of intercession would be given to a person whom Allah (SWT) permits but Mawla Ali (A.S) owns Allah's Pleasure hence **not only Mawla Ali himself but even a person whom Mawla Ali permits would be able to intercede successfully.**

➔ The holy Prophet (SAW) has been created as Mercy to the Worlds and Muslim *Ummah* would be bestowed upon with Allah (SWT)'s Mercy because of the holy Prophet (SAW)'s intercession. Mawla Ali (A.S) has got Allah (SWT)'s Pleasure so **this Mercy would be bestowed upon only those whom Mawla Ali (A.S) allows.**

The household of the holy Prophet (SAW) is purified by Allah (SWT) as per the ayah (33:33) and the holy Prophet (SAW) has said that in the love for *Ahlulbait* lies the foundation of Islam. So let us see an ayah which refers to this exalted household:

- *“Wo Qandeel un gharon main roshan hai jinki nisbat Khuda ne hukm diya hai ke unki taa’zim kijaae aur unmain Uska naam liya jaae jin main subah wa sham wo log Uski tasbih kiya karte hai.”* – (Surah-e-Noor, ayah 36)

*“(The Light is lit) in houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His name may be remembered in them; there glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings)”*

In the above ayah Allah (SWT) says that His **Light is lit in certain houses where His name is glorified mornings and evenings**. He **appreciates the inhabitants** of these houses and **has liked the way they have glorified Him so much so that He has permitted these houses to be exalted.**

Sala’bi has quoted Anas Ibn-e-Malik and Buraida, that when the holy Prophet (SAW) recited this verse, Abu Bakr stood up and asked pointing towards **the house of Ali (A.S) and Fatema (A.S)**, whether that house was included in the houses referred to? The holy Prophet (SAW) replied saying **“Yes, and it is better than other houses that are referred.”** (Ref: *Durr-e-Mansur, Vol 5, P 50*)

Allah (SWT) **has appreciated the selfless devotion of the family of Mawla Ali (A.S) and Janaba Fatema (S.A)** in the above ayah and hence He has also permitted their house to be exalted. Their house is the best which has glorified Allah (SWT). Now let us see the following ayah and in the light of the above mentioned ayah we would then contemplate on both these ayahs:

- *“Us din kisi ki sifarish kaam na aayegi magar jis ko Khuda ne ijazat di ho aur us ka bolna pasand kare.”* – (Surah-e- Taha, ayah 109)

*“(On that day shall no intercession avail **except of him whom the Beneficent Allah allows and whose word He is pleased with.**)”*

The above ayah says that **no intercession would** work on the day of Judgment except of those **who are allowed by Allah (SWT) and He is pleased by their words**. Now in the previous ayah from *Surah-e-Noor* Allah (SWT) has acknowledged the glorification and selfless prayers of the family of Mawla Ali (A.S). **Thus He has liked their prayers and hence we can say that their words of glorification are appreciated by Him. Allah (SWT) has also allowed their house to**

**be exalted** which shows His love for them. Hence we can infer that **the intercession of the family of Mawla Ali (A.S)** i.e. of Mawla Ali (A.S) himself, Janaba Fatema (S.A), Imam Hasan (A.S), Imam Hussain (A.S) and their other children and Imams from their lineage **is valid and would hold true on the day of Judgement.**

That is the reason our beloved Prophet (SAW) has said:

- “**Acknowledgment of Aal-e-Mohammed** (the children of Mohammed (SAW)) means **salvation from the Fire**, and **love of them** is a **passport for crossing the Bridge of Sirat** and **obedience to them** is a **protection from Divine Wrath.**” (Ref: “*Shifa*” by Qazi Ayaz, Part 2, Pg 40)

→The Holy Prophet (SAW) is **Mercy to the worlds**. Mawla Ali (A.S) has earned **Allah (SWT)’s Pleasure** and **Panjetan Paak (A.S) are the valid intercession** on the day of Judgment. If we love them we can be assured of our salvation.

We have seen earlier in the article that *Munafiq* are kept away from Allah (SWT)’s Mercy and no prayers for their forgiveness would ever be accepted by Allah. Faithful *Momins* are the one Allah (SWT) loves and He would definitely hear their prayers so let us see now what Allah (SWT) says about *Momins*:

- “*To phir samajhlo ke Khuda ke siwa koi Ma’bud nahin aur (Hum se) apne aur Imandar mardon aur Imandar aurton ke gunah ki maafi maangte raho aur Khuda tumhare chalne phirne aur thaharne se (khub) waqif hai.*” – (Surah-e-Mohammed, ayah 19)

“(Know then, therefore, there is no God but **He, and ask forgiveness for your sins and those of believing men and women.** God knows your wanderings and your destination.)”

In the above ayah Allah (SWT) has ordered a believer **to pray for his forgiveness along with the forgiveness of fellow believer men and women.** This clearly means that in this world Allah (SWT) has not only accepted intercession of believers for their believer brothers and sisters but instructed them to do so regularly. So when He has considered intercession of a *Momin* valid for the other *Momins* in this world can we say that same would hold true on the Day of Judgment?

Now Mawla Ali (A.S) is *Amir-ul-Momineen* (Commander of Faithfuls) and from various *ahadith* we have known that a *Momin* cannot be defined other than his love for Mawla Ali (A.S). That is the reason the holy Prophet (SAW) has said that:

- “The **preface of a Momin’s treatise of deeds** is the **ardent love for Ali (A.S).**” (Ref: *Sawaifa Mohraika, P 120, Tarikh ibn-e-Asakir, vol 42, P 7, Tarikh al Baghdad, P 177*)

When we relate the above *hadith* with the above mentioned ayah we can infer **that a true believer is the lover of Mawla Ali (A.S) and his prayers seeking forgiveness for the other believers is accepted by Allah (SWT) in this world.** And if that is the case then can the lover of

Mawla Ali (A.S) and Imams from his lineage intercede on behalf of other *Momins* for their salvation on the Day of Judgment? Would this intercession be accepted by Allah (SWT)?

- “*Us din yeh (gunehgaar) log sifaarish per bhi qadir naa honge magar haan jis shakhs ne Khuda se sifaarish ka iqraar le liya ho.*” – (Surah-e-Maryam, ayah 87)

“(They shall not control intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the Beneficent Allah.)”

The above ayah says that no one would be able to control intercession except a few who have made a covenant with Allah (SWT). This further confirms that there would be people on the Day of Judgment whose intercession would provide salvation to others.

The prominent Islamic commentators have written that ‘Made a Covenant with Allah’ is ‘The Promise of loving and following the Imams from the household of the holy Prophet (SAW)’ which believers have made with Allah (SWT). (Ref: *Tafseer Dhur Mansoor, Vol 4, Sawaiq-e-Mohriqa and many more*)

→ A true believer is the one who loves and follows Mawla Ali (A.S) and Imams from his lineage. This love for the Imams is the covenant he has made with Allah (SWT) and in return of this covenant Allah (SWT) has granted a believer to control intercession on the Day of Judgment. **Yes, a believer can also provide salvation to other believers on that day.**

In the initial section of this article we went through the ayah where Allah (SWT) has ordered us to seek the means that approaches Him. In another ayah from *Surah-e-Furqaan*, as a reward for the holy Prophet (SAW)’s Prophethood Allah (SWT) wants the Muslims to take the Path that leads to Him. We then also inferred that loving the holy Prophet (SAW) and his holy Progeny (pbut) is the covenant we have made to Allah (SWT) and hence they are the means of salvation and through their intercession only we can expect to get rewarded. **It means that they are the means to approach Allah (SWT) and they are the path that reaches Him.**

Thus the best reward a Muslim can give to the holy Prophet (SAW) is to take the path that reaches Allah (SWT) in the light of earlier discussed ayah of *Surah-e-Furqaan* (ayah no. 57) and this path is the love for the holy Prophet (SAW) and his Progeny (pbut). And that is why the Quran says:

- “*Ae Rasool (SAW) tum kehdo ke main apni tableegh-e-risalat ka **apne karabatdaron ki mohabbat** ke siwa tumse koi sila nahin maangta*” – (Surah-e-Shura, ayah 23)

(‘Say: I do not ask of you **any reward** for it but love for my near relatives’)

By consensus of opinions of prominent commentators and writers the above-mentioned ayah refers to the Prophet’s kith and kin and the word “*al qurba*” refers to **Ali (A.S) & Fatema (A.S)**

**and their children** (Ref: Sa'labi, Suyuti, Baidhavi, Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmed ibn Hambal, Allama Zamkhashri Vol 3, P 68).

The holy Prophet (SAW) and his holy Progeny (pbut) are the Divine Favour Allah (SWT) has bestowed upon us as they are the valid intercession and path for us to approach Allah (SWT) and seek salvation. In order to better understand this let us see the *hadith* of Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (A.S) before we finally conclude the article:

- Imam Al-Sadiq (PBUH) said:

"Allah created us in beautiful forms. **He created us to be His Eye on His servants, His Spoken Words to all mankind, His Giving Hand that bestows mercy and sympathy upon His servants, His Face by which He is worshiped, His Gate that leads to Him and His treasurers on earth and in the skies.** By us, trees gave its fruits, crops were harvested and rivers flowed. By us, skies rain and seeds grow. **By our worshiping, Allah is worshiped and if it wasn't for us, Allah would have never been worshiped.**"

(Ref: Al-Kafi Vol 1 Page 144, Al-Mohatazir Page 154, Al-Tawheed Page 151, Al-Bihar-ul-Anwar Vol 24 Page 197, Al-Saqlain Noor Tafseer Vol 1 Page 650)

➔ Thus coming to the conclusion we can say that Allah (SWT) has created the holy Prophet (SAW) as mercy to the worlds. Hence his presence in our lives is similar to the presence of a caring mother. When a child obeys his parents and goes to a school he gains knowledge and education but if he disobeys he remains ignorant ('*Jahil*') similarly if a Muslim does not obey the holy Prophet (SAW) and does not love his Progeny (pbut) he remains ignorant and deprived of salvation. The above conclusion can be substantiated in the light of the hadith of the holy Prophet (SAW) which is recorded in the prominent books like *Sahih Bukhari, Musnad Ibn Hambal* and others, which says "***He who dies without knowing the Imam of his time dies the death of (the days of) ignorance (Jahilya).***" But we don't have to worry as we are fortunate that Allah (SWT) has guided us to His true path. So let us thank Him and pray to Him that may He always keep us steadfast and bless us with successes of both the worlds. Aamin