

the like⁴⁴⁸ are all considered martyrs of the hereafter. This means that they are washed and shrouded like a non-martyr but given the same promised reward of the martyr in the hereafter.

It is important to understand the above definitions of who is considered a martyr, as the necessity of believing that martyrs are alive, provided for by their Lord, in accordance with the verse of the Qur'an, «Do not think of those who have been killed in God's way as dead. They are alive with their Lord, well provided for» [3-169] is specifically for the first category, that is, the martyr of this world.

It must also be noted that even though we may fail to comprehend how the martyrs are kept alive, we must believe that this life is real and complete, and cease from delving into the unknown.⁴⁴⁹

THE INTERCESSION [SHAFĀ'Ā] OF OUR PROPHET MUHAMMAD ﷺ

Linguistically, the word *shafā'a* means: a means [*wasīla*] or a request [*ṭalab*]. In customary usage, it is to ask for goodness from another for another.⁴⁵⁰ Theologically, it means: to believe that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ will beseech Allah ﷻ to grace certain people with His mercy on the Day of Judgement,⁴⁵¹ and that his intercession will be accepted by Allah⁴⁵² and he will be the first to intercede before any other Prophet, angel or pious person.

There are numerous traditions which speak about the intercession of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In a Hadith related by Muslim, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is reported to have said: "I am the first to intercede on the Day of Judgement and the first person whose intercession will be accepted."⁴⁵³

⁴⁴⁸ There are many things that can make one attain the reward of being a martyr. Their number according to some, like al-Suyūṭī is around thirty, some said forty, whilst others said fifty.

[*Radd al-Muḥṭār* (Ibn 'Ābidīn), 3:153-154

⁴⁴⁹ *Sharḥ al-Ṣāwī 'alā Jawhara al-Tawḥīd*, p. 407

⁴⁵⁰ *Hāshiya al-'Aqabāwī*, p. 29; *Tuḥfa al-Murīd* (al-Bājūrī), p. 305

⁴⁵¹ That is, he ﷺ is *al-Shafī'*.

⁴⁵² That is, he ﷻ is *al-Mushaffā'*.

⁴⁵³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 4:1782:2278

In another Hadith related by Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd and others he ﷺ said: “My intercession is for the people of my nation who have committed grave sins.”⁴⁵⁴ These Hadith are just a few from many traditions that have been narrated on this topic. In reality, these Hadith have reached the level of *tawātur* and thus it is impossible to deny the existence of the concept of the intercession. Imam al-Nawawī states:

Qāḍī ‘Iyāḍ said: “There are traditions that, as a whole, reach the level of *tawātur* with regards to the reality of the intercession for sinful Muslims; and both the early and later generations and those after them from *Ahl al-Sunna* have agreed upon it.”⁴⁵⁵

The Types of Intercession

The intercession of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is not of one type, but rather it has many forms. Many of the scholars have categorized his intercession into five different categories:⁴⁵⁶

I. *The Supreme Intercession [al-Shafā'a al-Kubrā]*

This, as mentioned previously, is when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ will intercede on behalf of all of creation to end the torment of the plain of resurrection and begin the reckoning. This is specific for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; that is, no one other than the Messenger of Allah will be given this privilege and honour.

II. *Entering Certain Believers into Paradise without any Reckoning*

After the Messenger of Allah ﷺ prostrates to Allah ﷻ and is granted intercession according to one narration, he will say: “My nation my Lord, my nation my Lord.” It will be then said to him ﷺ: “O Muhammad, enter into paradise from your nation, for whom there is no reckoning, through the gate of *Ayman* from the gates of paradise.”⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, 4:625:2435, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, 7:119:4739

⁴⁵⁵ *Sharḥ Muslim lil-Nawawī*, 3:35

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 4:1745:4435

The above two categories of intercession are specific for the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.⁴⁵⁸

III. Preventing Believers deserving Hellfire from Entering into it

On the authority of 'Abdullah b. 'Amr b. al-'Ās رضي الله عنه, who said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: 'People of this *qibla* [i.e., Muslims], only Allah تعالى knows their number, those who disobeyed Allah, had the audacity to sin and violated His commands, will enter the Hell-fire. And so, I will be given the permission to intercede [on their behalf].'"⁴⁵⁹ Al-Subkī states:

The sinful [*fāsiq*] Muslim who has died is under the will of Allah تعالى; he is either punished and then entered into paradise, or he is forgiven by the pure grace of Allah or by way of intercession.⁴⁶⁰

Al-Maḥallī, commentating upon the word "intercession" then states: "by the Messenger ﷺ."⁴⁶¹ The *Mu'tazila* denied this type of intercession and believed that the sinful believer who died without repenting will remain forever in hell fire, and that to pardon or intercede on his behalf is impermissible.⁴⁶²

IV. Removing believers from Hellfire

According to another narration, after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is granted intercession, he will say: "O my Lord, my nation, my nation." And so it will be said: "Go and take out from it whosoever has in his heart faith the weight of a barleycorn." And so he ﷺ will go and do [it] and then return and praise Him ﷻ with those [same] praises and fall down in prostration before Him. Then it will be said: "O Muhammad, raise your head and speak, you will be listened to, and ask, you will be granted [what you request and intercede, for your intercession will be accepted]." He ﷺ will say: "O Lord, my nation! My nation!" It will

⁴⁵⁸ *Umda al-Murīd* (al-Laqqānī), 4:1678;

Al-'Aqīda al-Islāmiyya (al-Ḥabannaka), p. 570

⁴⁵⁹ *Al-Mu'jam al-Ṣaghīr* (al-Ṭabarānī), 1:80:103

⁴⁶⁰ *Jam' al-Jawāmi'* (al-Subkī), 4:397

⁴⁶¹ *Sharḥ Jam' al-Jawāmi'* (al-Maḥallī), 4:397

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*