

The Ḥadīth “Whoever Visits My Grave...”

by GF Haddad – Sha‘bān 1423 / Ṣafar 1426

Imām al-Dāraquṭnī رحمه الله narrated in his *Sunan* from Ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنهما that the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever visits my grave, my intercession will be guaranteed for him.”

(*Man zāra qabrī wajabat lahu shafā‘atī*)

I. Sourcing (*takhrīj*)

Narrated from Ibn ‘Umar by al-Dāraquṭnī in his *Sunan* (2:278 #194), al-Ṭayālīsī (2:12), al-Dūlābī in *al-Kunā wal-Asmā’* (2:64), al-Khaṭīb in *Talkhīṣ al-Mutashābih fīl-Rasm* (1:581), Ibn al-Dubaythī in *al-Dhayl ‘alā al-Tārīkh* (2:170), Ibn Abī al-Dunyā in *Kitāb al-Qubūr*, al-Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ab al-Īmān* (3:490), al-Hakīm al-Tirmidhī in *Nawādir al-Uṣūl* (p. 148), al-Haythamī (4:2), al-Subkī in *Shifā’ al-Siqām* (p. 12-14), Abū al-Shaykh, Ibn ‘Adī in *al-Kāmil* (6:235, 6:351), al-‘Uqaylī in *al-Du‘afā’* (4:170), al-Bazzār in his *Musnad* with a very weak chain containing ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ghifārī [cf. Ibn Ḥajar’s *Mukhtaṣar Musnad al-Bazzār* (1:481 #822)] with the wording **(1) “Whoever visits my grave, my intercession shall take place for him”** (*ḥallat lahu shafā‘atī*), and Ibn Ḥajar who indicated its grade of *ḥasan* in *Talkhīṣ al-Ḥabīr* (2:266) as it is strengthened by other ḥadīths which both he and al-Haythamī mention, such as:

(2) “Whoever visits me without any avowed purpose other than my visit, it is incumbent upon me to be his intercessor on the Day of Resurrection.” Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Awsaṭ* and *al-Kabīr* with a chain containing Maslama ibn Sālim and by Ibn al-Sakan in his *Sunan al-Ṣiḥāḥ* as stated by al-Shirbīnī in *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj* (1:512).

(3) “Whoever makes pilgrimage then visits me after my death it is as if he visited me in my life.” Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (12:406), al-Dāraquṭnī (2:278), and al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan*, (5:246 #10054-10055) all through Hafṣ ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Qārī, whom only Aḥmad declared passable (*sālih*). Mamdūh said (p. 337-340) it is more *ḍa‘īf* than other weak ḥadīths in this chapter.

(4) “Whoever visits my grave after my death is as those who visited me in my life.” Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Kabīr* (12:406) and *al-Awsaṭ* (1:94) with a chain containing ‘Ā’isha bint Yūnus, whose status is uncertain, and from Hātib by al-Dāraquṭnī (2:278) with another chain which al-Dhahabī said was one of the best chains in that chapter. Mamdūh said (p. 330-334) it is *ḍa‘īf* but not *mawḍū‘*, contrary to the claims of Ibn Taymiyya and his imitators. Abū Ghudda cites a fourth narration:

(5) “Whoever makes pilgrimage and does not visit me, has been rude to me.” Narrated by al-Dāraquṭnī in his *Sunan*. Abū Ghudda said: “It is not forged as Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn Taymiyya said, rather, a number of scholars considered its chain fair, and a number considered it weak.” Mamdūh (p. 344-346) considers it forged. Al-‘Uqaylī in *al-Du‘afā’* (4:170) declared the chains of Ibn ‘Umar’s narration “soft” (*layyina*) as did al-Dhahabī, the latter adding – as did al-Bayhaqī and al-Fattanī in *Tadhkirat al-Mawḍū‘āt* – that they strengthened each other as none contains any liar nor forger, as stated by al-Suyūṭī in *al-Durar al-Muntathira*, al-Munāwī, and al-‘Ajlūnī in *Kashf al-Khaṭā‘* (2:328-329).

The narration **(6) “Whoever visits me in al-Madīna anticipating reward (*muhtasiban*), I shall be for him a witness and an intercessor on the Day of Resurrection.”** Narrated from Anas by al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab* (3:489-490), al-Jurjānī in *Tārīkh Jurjān* (p. 220, 433), Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, Ibn ‘Asākir, al-Jundī, and others, through Abū al-Muthannā Sulaymān ibn Yazīd al-Madanī al-Ka‘bī who was declared weak by al-Dāraquṭnī, Abū Hātim, and Ibn Ḥibbān while al-Tirmidhī considered his narrations fair cf. Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān* (7:481) and *Tahdhīb* (12:242). It was declared fair by al-Suyūṭī in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaghīr* (#8716) and “fair or rather sound through its corroborators” by al-Ghumārī in *al-Mudāwī* (6:290) in confirmation of al-Subkī in *Shifā’ al-Siqām*.

II. Grade (*martaba*)

The ḥadīth **“Whoever visits my grave, my intercession will be guaranteed for him”** is a fair (*ḥasan*) narration as concluded by Imām Abū al-Ḥasanāt al-Lacknawī¹ and his editor ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda in the latter’s notes on the *Muwatta’* in Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan’s narration (chapter 49: On the Prophet’s ﷺ grave) as well as Shaykh Maḥmūd Mamdūḥ,² although some early scholars declared it sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) such as Ibn al-Sakan in *al-Sunan al-Ṣiḥāḥ* and ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Ishbīlī in *al-Aḥkām*, followed by *Shaykh al-Islām* al-Taqī al-Subkī in *Shifā’ al-Siqām* in view of the totality of the chains.³ Other ḥadīth scholars who considered it authentic are Ibn Ḥajar’s student the ḥadīth Master al-Sakhāwī,⁴ the ḥadīth Master of Madīna al-Samhūdī⁵ and Imām Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī in *al-Jawhar al-Munazzam fī Ziyārat al-Qabr al-Mukarram*. Al-Ghassāni (d. 682) did not include it in his recension of al-Dāraquṭnī’s weak narrations entitled *Takhrīj al-Aḥādīth al-Di’āf min Sunan al-Dāraquṭnī*.⁶ Some late scholars, beginning with Ibn Taymiyya, are undecided whether to grade this ḥadīth weak or forged.

Imām al-Lacknawī said about this ḥadīth:

There are some who declared it weak [e.g. al-Bayhaqī, Ibn Khuzayma, and al-Suyūfī], and others who asserted that all the ḥadīths on visitation of the Prophet ﷺ are forged, such as Ibn Taymiyya and his followers, but both positions are false for those who were given right understanding, for verification of the case dictates that the ḥadīth is *ḥasan*, as Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī has expounded in his book *Shifā’ al-Siqām*.⁷

Among those who fall into the category of “Ibn Taymiyya and his followers”:

- Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī who wrote *al-Ṣārim al-Munkī* in violent refutation of al-Subkī’s book on visitation but contradicted his own position in another book of his: he makes much ado about the reliability of ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar al-‘Umarī in *al-Ṣārim al-Munkī*, but relies upon him in another book, *al-Tanqīh*!⁸ Shaykh Maḥmūd Mamdūḥ refuted his weakening of this ḥadīth in great detail⁹ and stated that *al-Ṣārim al-Munkī* is at the root of all subsequent generalizations in weakening the ḥadīths that concern the desirability of visitation.¹⁰
- The late ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Baz who reiterated Ibn Taymiyya’s imprudent verdict: “The ḥadīths that concern the visitation of the grave of the Prophet ﷺ are all weak, indeed forged”;¹¹
- The late Nāṣir al-Albānī,¹² who claimed that the visit to the Prophet ﷺ ranks among the innovations¹³ although himself the Innovator of our time.
- A Nāṣir al-Jadya’, who in 1993 obtained his Ph.D. with First Honors from the University of Muḥammad ibn Sa’ūd after writing a 600-page book entitled *al-Tabarruk* in which he perpetuates the same aberrant claim.¹⁴

Imām al-Sakhāwī said:

The emphasis and encouragement on visiting his noble grave is mentioned in numerous ḥadīths, and it would suffice to show this if there was only the ḥadīth whereby the truthful and God-confirmed Prophet promises that his intercession among other things becomes guaranteed for whoever visits him, and the Imāms are in complete agreement from the time directly after his passing until our own time that this [*i.e.* visiting him] is among the best acts of drawing near to Allāh.¹⁵

¹In *Zafar al-Amānī* (p. 422) and *al-Ajwibat al-Fādila* (p. 155).

²In his *Raf’ al-Mināra* (p. 280 and p. 318).

³As related by Ibn Hajar in *Talkhīṣ al-Habīr* (2:267). Cf. al-Shawkānī in *Nayl al-Awtar* (5:95) and al-Sindī in his notes on Ibn Mājah.

⁴In *al-Qawl al-Badī’* (p. 160).

⁵In *Sa’ādāt al-Darayn* (1:77).

⁶Published at Ryad: Dār ‘Alam al-Kutub, 1991.

⁷Al-Lacknawī, *Zafar al-Amānī* (p. 422).

⁸Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī, *Tanqīh* (1:122) cf. Mamdūḥ, *Raf’ al-Mināra* (p. 12).

⁹In *Raf’ al-Mināra* (p. 280-318).

¹⁰In *Raf’ al-Mināra* (p. 9).

¹¹In his annotations on Ibn Hajar’s *Fath al-Bārī* (1989 ed. 3:387), echoing the exact words used by Ibn Taymiyya in his *Minhāj* (1986 ed. 2:441) and *Fatāwā* (27:119).

¹²In his *Irwa’ al-Ghalīl* (4:337-338) in which he imitated Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī.

¹³In *Talkhīṣ Ahkām al-Janā’iz* (p. 110) and elsewhere in his writings.

¹⁴Nasir al-Jadya’, *al-Tabarruk* (p. 322). Note that all these books are presently available in print, but not *Shifā’ al-Siqām*!

¹⁵Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Qawl al-Badī’* (p. 160). He contradicts himself in *al-Maqāṣid al-Hasana* (p. 413) where he adopts al-Dhahabī’s opinion that “the chains of the ḥadīth of visitation are all ‘soft’ (*layyina*) but strengthen each other because none of them contains any liar.”

There is no contest among the jurists of the Four Schools as to the probative force of the narration of Ibn ‘Umar, as it is adduced time and again by the jurists to support the strong desirability of visiting the Prophet ﷺ in Madīna, especially among Ḥanbalī sources early and late: al-Mardāwī, Ibn Hubayra, and others stated that the entirety of the early and late authorities in the Ḥanbalī *Madhhab* stipulate the desirability (*istihbāb*) of visiting the grave of the Prophet ﷺ in Madīna, most especially after *Hajj*, and/or travelling to do so.¹⁶ Ibn Muflīh, al-Mardāwī, and Mar‘ī ibn Yūsuf in *Ghāyat al-Muntahā* stated the Sunnī character of visiting the graves of the Muslims and the permissibility (*ibāḥa*) of travelling to do so. Mar‘ī reiterates this ruling in his unpublished monograph on the ethics of graves and visitation, *Shifā’ al-Ṣudūr fī Ziyārat al-Mashāhid wal-Qubūr*.¹⁷

There are many additional sound texts illustrating the visit to the Prophet ﷺ, among them that of the Companion Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ al-Ḥabashī ؓ all the way from Damascus with the expressed intention of visiting the Prophet ﷺ to greet him and, upon arrival, his rubbing his face against the Prophetic grave in tears before proceeding to raise the *adhān* upon the request of the two grandsons of the Prophet ﷺ, upon them peace.¹⁸ See also the Companions’ practice of seeking the Prophet ﷺ as a means for their needs by visiting his grave, such as Bilāl ibn al-Ḥārith al-Muzanī, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, ‘Ā’isha, and Fāṭima ؓ.¹⁹ And Allāh knows best.

¹⁶ Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī* (3:117, 3:297, 5:465), *al-Muqni’* (1:466), *al-Kāfī* (1:619); Ibn Muflīh, *al-Mubdi’ fī Sharḥ al-Muqni’* (3:259); al-Buhūtī, *Kashshāf al-Qinā’* (2:514-515; 5:36), *al-Rawḍ al-Murba’* (1:522); Ibn Dawyān, *Manār al-Sabīl* (1:256); Shams al-Dīn ibn Muflīh, *Furū’* (3:523); al-Hajjāwī, *Iqnā’* (1:395); ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Ba’lī, *Kashf al-Mukhaddarāt* (p. 193); Mar‘ī, *Ghāyat al-Muntahā* (1:418), *Dalīl al-Talīb* (p. 88); Ahmad al-Ba’lī, *al-Rawḍ al-Nadī* (p. 190); Bahā’ al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (p. 209); Ibn al-Najjār, *Muntahā al-‘Irādāt* (1:286); Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Madhhab al-Aḥmad* (p. 68); Shams al-Dīn Ibn Qudāma, *al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr* (3:494); al-Kawladhānī, *Ḥidāya* (p. 105); Ibn Hubayra, *Iṣāḥ* (1:297), al-Mardāwī, *Inṣāf* (4:53).

¹⁷ Zāhiriyya ms. cf. Ibn Muflīh, *Mubdi’* (2:107), Mar‘ī, *Ghāya* (1:258), al-Mardāwī, *Inṣāf* (2:317).

¹⁸ Narrated by Ibn ‘Asākir (7:137) with a good chain (*sanad jayyid*) as stated by al-Shawkānī in *Nayl al-Awtar* (5:180), at the conclusion of *Kitāb al-Manāsik*.

¹⁹ All as cited in the sections on *Tawassul* and *Visitation* in the *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine*.