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The Third Spurious Argument: Visiting the Shrines of the Prophets, Imams, and Saints

Some people accuse the Shias of believing that it is permissible to visit the shrines of the Prophets, Imams and saints, building them, to seek blessings through them, to pray and make supplications around them whereas it is prohibited to consider tombs as mosques or to build mosques upon tombs.

The Answer

There is no prohibition on visiting tombs in any of the traditions, rather the Wahhabis prohibited it. We have discussed this matter in our book *Al-Jami' li Baraa'in Usul ul-I'tiqadaat*. We hereby, refer to the same discussion that is recorded on pages 413–416 of that book:

The Wahhabis prohibited setting out to visit the tomb of the Prophet (s) to say nothing of the graves of others as well. Al-Qastalani, in his book *Sharh Sahih ul-Bukhari*, and Ibn Hajar, in his book *al-Jawhar ul-Munazzam*, recorded that Ibn Taymiyyah, a model for the Wahhabis, prohibited visiting the Prophet's shrine. Mulla Ali al-Qari says in his book *Sharhu sh-Shafa*, vol. 2:

Ibn Taymiyyah the Hanbalite was extreme when he prohibited setting out to visit the tomb of the Prophet (s). Others were even more extreme when they said that visiting is definitely a pious act in religion, and denying this is condemned as infidelity. Perhaps the second point was nearer to being correct, because (of the rule that says) prohibiting that which, according to the consensus of the ulama, is considered as recommended (mustahhab) is considered as unbelief, for here prohibition supercedes something that was permissible by unanimous agreement in this case.

Proving the Legitimacy of Visiting the Prophet's Shrine

There are four evidences showing the legitimacy and the merits of visiting the tomb of the Prophet (s), as

it is recorded in the book titled Kashf ul-Irtiyab p. 362–372:

The First Evidence

The first evidence is found in the Holy Qur'an. Allah says,

And had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Apostle had (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-Returning (to mercy), Merciful. (Qur'an 4:64)

As-Samhudi, in his Wafa'ul-Wafa' vol. 2 p. 411, records:

The ulama understood from this Qur'anic verse that it applied in general to the two cases of life and death. They ruled that it is recommendable for everyone who visits the tomb (of the Prophet) to recite that verse.

The Second Evidence

The second evidence is the Sunna. There are many prophetic traditions in this regard. They are mentioned by as-Samhudi in his book Wafa'ul-Wafa' vol. 4 p. 394–403, as well as by many others. We will hereunder report some of them as recorded by as-Samhudi and omit other narrators upon the subject. At any rate, as-Samhudi has made sufficient reference to such narrators.

1) Ad-Darqutni in his book as-Sunan and other books, al-Bayhaqi, and others mentioned a certified Prophetic tradition narrated by Musa bin Hilal al-Abdi, from Ubaydullah bin Umar, from Nafi', from Ibn Umar that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: He who visits my tomb deserves my intercession.

2) Al-Bazzar narrated from Abdullah bin Ibrahim al-Ghifari, from Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd, from his father, from Ibn Umar that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: He who visits my tomb deserves my intercession.

3) At-Tabarani in his books (al-Mu'jam) al-Kabir and al-Awsat, ad-Darqutni in his book al-Amali, and Abu Bakr bin al-Muqri in his Mu'jam mention a tradition narrated by Maslama bin Salim al-Juhani, from Ubaydullah bin Umar, from Nafi', from Salim, from Ibn Umar that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him –and his family–) said, He who comes to visit me, having no other desire than that of visiting me, of a surety I will be an intercessor for him on the Day of Judgement.

He commented: It was mentioned in ibn ul-Muqri's Mu'jam, For him who comes to visit me, it will be incumbent upon Allah to make me an intercessor for him on the Day of Resurrection.

He also commented that ibn us-Sakan mentioned this prophetic saying in his book as-Sunan as-Sihah under the subject of Allah's reward for visiting the Prophet's shrine. He said that this Prophetic saying

was unanimously confirmed to be right by the ulama. This tradition includes, in general, visiting the Prophet during his life and after his death.

4) Ad-Darqutni and at-Tabarani in his books al-Kabir and al-Awsat mention a tradition narrated by Hafsa bin Dawud al-Qari, from Layth, from Mujahid, from Ibn Umar that the Prophet Muhammad (s) said: He who goes on pilgrimage to Mecca and visits my tomb after my death will be regarded the same as those who had visited me during my life.

He commented, Ibn Al-Jawzi related this tradition in his book Muthir ul-Gharam us-Sakin according to the same chain of narrations, but he added to the tradition, 'Öand accompanied me.' The same tradition was also mentioned by Ibn Adiy in his book al-Kamil with the same series and addition, and by Abu Ya'la with the same series, but without the addition.

In some narratives, the hadith was related in the following way: He who goes on pilgrimage and visits me will be regarded the same as those who had visited me during my life.. At-Tabarani mentions this tradition in his books al-Kabir and al-Awsat narrated by "Aa'isha bint Yunus Layth's wife, from Layth bin Abu Sulaym, from Mujahid, from Ibn Umar that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him –and his family–) said, He who visits my tomb after my death is as if he had visited me during my life.

Comentary: As-Suyuti, in his book al-Jami'us- Saghir, mentions the hadith in the same manner as the first narration, from Ahmad in his Musnad, Abu Dawud, at-Tirmidhi and an-Nassa'i, from al-Harith.

5) Ibn Adiy mentions in his book al-Kamil a tradition narrated by Muhammad bin Muhammad bin an-Nu'man, from his grandfather, from Malik, from Nafi', from Ibn Umar that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him –and his family–) said, He who visits the Holy Kaaba but does not visit me is turning away from me." As-Sabki said: Ibnu-Jawzi mentions, in al-Mawzu'at, something like that.

6) Ad-Darqutni, in his book as-Sunan, mentions a tradition narrated by Musa bin Harun, from Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Jili, from Abdur-Rahman bin al-Mubarak, from Awn bin Musa, from Ayyub, from Nafi', from Ibn Umar that the Prophet (s) said: For him who visits me in Medina, I will be a witness and an intercessor for him on the Day of Judgment.

7) Abu Dawud at-Tayalissi mentions a tradition narrated by Siwar bin Maymun abul-Jarrah al-Abdi from a man of Umar's family that Umar said: I heard the Prophet (a) saying: For him who visits my tomb óor visits meó, I will be an intercessor and a witness for him.

8) Abu Ja'far al-Aqili mentions a tradition narrated by Siwar bin Maymun, from a man of the family of al-Khattab that the prophet (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: He who visits me intentionally will be my neighbor on the Day of Resurrection.

9) Ad-Darqutni and others mention a tradition narrated by Harun bin Qaz'a, from a man of Hatib's family, from Hatib that the Prophet (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: He who visits me after my death

is as if he had visited me during my life.

10) Abul-Fat'h al-Azdi mentions a tradition narrated by Ammar bin Muhammad, from his uncle Sufyan, from Mansur, from Ibrahim, from Alqama, from Abdullah that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him – and his family–) said: He who performs the hajj, visits my tomb, participates in Jihad, and prays in Jerusalem, will not be asked by Allah about his religious duties on the Day of Judgment.

11) Abul-Futuh mentions a tradition with his own series of narrators, narrated by Khalid bin Yazid, from Abdullah bin Umar al-Umari, from Sa'id al Maqbari, from Abu Hurayra that the Prophet (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: He who visits me after my death is as if he had visited me when I was alive, and whoever visits me I will be a witness and an intercessor for him on the Day of Judgment.

12) Ibn Abu-Dunya mentions a tradition narrated by Isma'il bin Abu Fudayk, from Sulayman bin Yazid al-Ka'bi, from Anas bin Malik that the Prophet (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: For him who visits me in Medina, I will be a witness and , according to another traditionó an intercessor for him on the Day of Resurrection. The same was mentioned by al-Bayhaqi with the same series of narrators, but in other words: He who sets out to Medina to visit me will be my neighbor on the Day of Resurrection.

13) Ibnu-Najjar in his book Akhbar ul-Medina mentioned a hadith related to Anas that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: He who visits me after my death will be as if he had visited me when I was alive, and whoever visits my tomb will deserve my intercession.

14) Abu Ja'far al-Aqili mentioned a hadith related to ibn Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him – and his family–) said: He who visits me after my death will be as if he had visited me in my life, and for him who visits me until he reaches my tomb, I will be a witness (or he said: an intercessor) for him on the Day of Resurrection.

15) Some muhadditheen in the time of Ibn Mundah mentioned a tradition narrated by ibn Abbas that the Prophet (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: He who goes on pilgrimage to Mecca and goes to visit me in my mosque will be granted (the reward of) two admitted pilgrimages.” He commented: This tradition is recorded in Musnad ul- Firdaus.

16) Yahya bin al-Hasan bin Ja'far al-Husayni óin Akhbar ul-Madinaó mentions a hadith narrated by Imam Ali (a) that the Prophet Muhammad (s) said: He who visits my tomb after my death will be as if he had visited me in my life, and whoever does not visit me is turning away from me.” Ibn Asaakir mentioned a hadith narrated by Imam Ali (a) saying, He who visits a prophet's tomb will be in the neighborhood of the Prophet Mohammad (s).

17) Yahya, too, narrated by someone, from Bakr bin Abdullah that the Prophet (peace be upon him –and his family–) said: He who comes to Medina visiting me will deserve my intercession on the Day of Resurrection.

These were the prophetic traditions that as-Samhudi has mentioned. Although they are quite numerous, they confirm each other. They are also confirmed by the other hadiths that will be mentioned although we do not need them for proving our claim, the definitive conduct and the actions of Muslims proves this to the level of its necessity.

The Third Evidence

The third evidence is consensus. Since the time of the Prophet (s) and his Companions, Muslims, in their words and actions have been unanimous upon visiting the Prophet's tomb and no one has departed from this way except the Wahhabis. In fact, visiting the graves of the prophets, pious men and those of all Muslims is a recommended act. All the Believers, the legitimacy of the act, as well as consensus have made this tradition a necessary one among the Muslims.

The Muslims have continued with this practice from the time of the Prophet Muhammad (s), down to that of his Companions, then to the time of their disciples, and to their followers, as well as to all the Muslims in every age and every clime, learned or ignorant, young or old, men or women. To deny this is only to enter into a conflict with that which is self-evident and to deny the inevitable.

As-Samhudi quoted in his book *Wafa'ul-Wafa'*, from as-Sabki that Ayyadh said: Visiting the Prophet's tomb is a tradition among Muslims and a recommended virtue.

As-Sabki said: All of the ulama have agreed upon the recommendation for men to visit the graves. The Zahirites have also said that it was obligatory. But they have had different opinions concerning women visiting the graves. The holy Prophet's shrine has been distinguished (from other graves) for special reasons, so I would say that there would be no difference between men and women in this regard.

The Fourth Evidence

The fourth evidence is the intellect. The intellect decides that the glorifying of those whom Allah has glorified is something to be preferred. Visiting the shrine of the Prophet (s) is a glorification of such a kind. The glorifying of the Prophet, by means of visiting his tomb or by any other means, is the glorification of the Islamic rites and the defeat of the enemies of Islam.

As for visiting other people's tombs, it was proved that the Prophet Muhammad (s) used to visit the graveyard of al-Baqi' and the martyrs of (the battle of) Uhud. Ibn Maja mentioned a prophetic tradition saying: Visit the graveyards because they remind you of the Afterlife." He mentioned another relation, narrated by "Aa'isha, that Prophet Muhammad (s) had said: I had forbidden you to visit the graves, but henceforth visit them, because they make you turn away from this life and remind you of the Afterlife.

The same narration was related by Muslim who also recorded it up to the Prophet's saying, (visit them.) An-Nasa'i mentioned a prophetic tradition saying: I had forbidden you to visit the graves but now whoever wants to visit them let him do so." In as-Sindi's *Al-Hashiya*, it is mentioned that this tradition

was narrated by reliable people according to the reference book of Az- Zawa'id-

The Prophet Muhammad (s) visited his mother's grave although opponents have claimed that she was a polytheist. Muslim, Ibn Maja and an-Nassa'i mentioned a prophetic saying narrated by Abu Hurayra that the Prophet (s) visited his mother's tomb, wept, and caused all those who were around him to weep. He then said, I asked my Allah to permit me seek His forgiveness for my mother, but He did not permit me. I asked Him to permit me to visit her tomb and He permitted. So, you visit the graves for they remind you of death. An-Nawawi, in his book titled Sharh Sahih il-Bukhari, said: It is a true Hadith, no doubt.

Muslim mentioned that whenever the turn of "Aa'isha came for the Prophet (s) to spend that night with heró, he used to go out at the end of night to the cemetery of al- Baqi' and say: Peace be upon you, the inhabitants of this house of believers. May Allah grant you what He has promised. He (s) taught "Aa'isha what to say after she had asked him what to say. He (s) said: Say: Peace be upon the people of the abodes; believers and Muslims). Muslim has recorded this hadith.

Although we believe that all the forebears of the Prophet were believers according to the true Hadiths and we do not accept the claim that the Prophet's mother was a polytheist, we have quoted this Hadith to raise an objection to those who forbid the visiting of graves.

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