

The Benefits *of* Saints

Taken from the three volume work *Salwat al-anfās wa muḥādathat al-akyās bi man uqbira min al-‘Ulamā’ wa al-Ṣulahā’ bi Fās* (Solace of the breaths and discourse with the intelligent in mention of the scholars and righteous buried in the city of Fes) (Casablanca: Dār al-Thiqāfa 2004), by the hadith scholar and scion of the Prophet’s family ﷺ:

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

 YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT one of the most tremendous of Allah’s bounties upon us, and one of His greatest blessings, is the open presence of saints and their graves in our midst. The benefits and gains of this presence are innumerable.

Some of these benefits include blessings in the land, abundant benefit, and copious provision. Were it not for the saints, the skies would not send down a single drop of rain and no plant would sprout from the earth, and its inhabitants would experience manifold tribulations. This is supported by the raised (*marfūʿ*) hadith found in al-Ṭabarānī’s [*al-Muʿjam*] *al-awsaṭ* from Anas رضي الله عنه: “The earth shall not be bereft of forty men like the Intimate Friend of the All-Merciful (Ibrāhīm رضي الله عنه); it is by virtue of them that you receive rain and are given victory. . . .” The chain of this hadith is good (*ḥasan*). In another wording of this narration, related by Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Tārīkh* from Abū Hurayra رضي الله عنه in a raised form, it says, “The earth shall not be bereft of thirty like Ibrāhīm, the Intimate Friend of the All-Merciful; it is by virtue of them that you receive succor, provision, and rain.” Al-Ṭabarānī also related in [*al-Muʿjam*] *al-kabīr* from ʿUbāda b. al-Ṣāmit in a raised form, “The Abdāl of my nation are thirty in number: by virtue of them the earth is maintained and you receive rain and victory.” In other routes of transmission for this report it reads, “Were it not for bowing servants of Allah, suckling babes, and grazing beasts, tribulation would have befallen you and you would have been piled up together.”

Another benefit of the presence of saints is the fact that they are the beloved of Allah and the elect of His creation. They are the manifestation sites of His lights and secrets, and the foundation of the religion and the world. They are the heirs of the Prophets. When they are acknowledged and someone has a link with them or seeks protection by virtue of their rank, he will inherit from what they inherited, and will triumph with something they gained. This is supported by the hadith found in the collections of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others: “They are a people whose sitting company will not be wretched.”

Another benefit is the fact that the one who loves them, connects with them, and takes them as allies will be among them and merit Allah’s love and entry into Paradise. This is supported by the mass-transmitted hadith: “A person is with whom he loves.” It is also borne out by the hadith of Aḥmad and others with a rigorously authentic chain from ‘Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit in a raised form, who said, “Allah Most High said, ‘My love is merited by those who love one another for My sake; My love is merited by those who maintain relationships for My sake; My love is merited by those who offer advice to each other for My sake; My love is merited by those who visit one another for My sake; and My love is merited by those who strive to help one another for My sake. Those who love one another for My sake shall be on pulpits of light. Their position shall be envied by the Prophets, veracious, and martyrs.’”

This is also supported by the hadith of al-Bukhārī in *al-Adab [al-mufrad]*, Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection, al-Bayhaqī in *Shu‘ab [al-īmān]*, and others, from Abū Hurayra in a raised form, “When a man visits his [sick] brother or otherwise visits him for the sake of Allah, Allah says to him, ‘You have done well; may your walking be well and may you take repose in your home in Paradise!’”

In the book *Badhl al-naṣīḥa*, Sheikh [Aḥmad] Zarrūq رحمته said, “Know that the spirit of Islam is loving Allah, loving His Messenger ﷺ, loving the Hereafter, and loving the righteous among Allah’s servants.” In the commentary upon *Badhl al-naṣīḥa* by the erudite Ibn al-Zakarī it states the following:

It is related from my master ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tha‘ālābī with his chain of transmission up to Imam al-Ṭabarī who said, “A stranger died when we were in Mecca. We took his body to Bāb al-Ma‘lā and sat down to prepare for his burial when suddenly, he rose up and sat upright. We asked ourselves, ‘Did he not die?’ The stranger said, ‘I did, but I returned in order to bring you glad tidings and inform you that the most beneficial thing we have is love for the righteous and closeness with them.’ Immediately after he said that he returned as a corpse.”

In the counsels of my master al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī it states, “And have much love for the righteous, for it is a healing and a remedy.” In another narration, the Prophet ﷺ said, “The servant will be brought on the Day of Ressurrection and made to stand before Allah Most High. Allah will say to him, ‘O My servant! Have you loved a saint for My sake, that I may love you for his sake?’”

Sheikh Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī said, “If you are not from the righteous, see to it that you have love for them, for Allah Most High will look to their hearts, and perhaps He will see you in them and allow you to join them.” In another wording it says, “and perhaps He may look at your name and forgive you.”

The following lines have been attributed to Imam al-Shāfi‘ī رحمته:

*Though not from them, the righteous I love
That I might earn their intercession
Those who trade in disobedience I abhor
Even if I am equally tried with rebellion*

Another benefit of the presence of saints is that through seeing them and sitting in their presence, hearts are purified, sins are effaced from them, and the hearts are made to work in earnest pursuit of the good pleasure of the Beloved. The Saints are the cause for humanity's felicity in this life and the Next. The author of *al-Maqṣad al-warīf* said:

Never does a person's eye fall upon a saint who is not known save that Allah forgives that person, his parents (if they were believers) and for seventy members of his family. That is with respect to the one who does not know the saint, so what say you about the one who knows him in the sense of inheritance and taking? That is according to what Allah has apportioned for His servant.

The author of *Jawāhir al-ma'ānī* said:

I asked Sheikh Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Tijānī رحمته, “O master! What is more virtuous, supererogatory prayers and remembrance and the like, or sitting with the sheikhs?” He replied, “Of course, sitting with the sheikhs is more virtuous and nothing rivals it. Your sitting in the presence of a saint is better than the world and all it contains. . . .”

It is mentioned in *Tuḥfat al-ikhwān* that the Sheikh and knower of Allah, Sayyidī Qāsim b. Raḥmūn, was once overcome with a spiritual state and said after swearing a solemn oath thrice, “One glance in the face of Mawlay al-Ṭayyib [al-Wazzānī] is better than thirty years of worship!” And the Sheikh and knower of Allah, Sayyidī al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Abd al-Shakūr al-Bakrī al-Ṭā’ifī, buried in Medina the Illumined, said:

*So sit with them and imbibe their state
Do so and become felicitous in life and death
Keep their company in a way that pleases them
Do so and you will be an upright servant*

Another benefit of the presence of saints is that they are the rallying point of the fearful and the source of repose for the disobedient and sinful. Unto them every person in difficulty seeks refuge, and in them every saddened person seeks consolation. Those who are suffering from problems go to them and ask Allah through their rank, because they are Allah's door on the earth.

Another benefit is that they are a source of security for the lands and the servants, and a mercy from Allah, the Generous and Giving. It is reported in a hadith *qudsī* that Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, said, "They are those who, when I desire to punish the inhabitants of the earth and I mention them, I avert the punishment from them."

Another benefit is that in the Hereafter they will intercede according to their rank with Allah, the Exalted and Sublime. It is reported that the Prophets, Messengers, angels, scholars, martyrs, saints, and members of the Prophetic household (*Āl al-Bayt*) will all intercede on the Day of Resurrection. In fact, it is related that "there is not a single believer save that he will have an intercession [he can make]." Ibn al-Najjār reported in his *Tārīkh* from Anas in a raised form: "Gather as many brethren as you can, for each believer shall have an intercession on the Day of Resurrection."

Imam al-Murābī related in *al-Tuḥfa*, as did Ibn al-Zakārī in *Sharḥ al-ṣalāt al-mashīhiya*, and others, that a person of righteousness beheld a man in a dream and asked, "What did Allah do with you, and what did you encounter?" The man replied, "After I entered the grave, the angels of torment came to me and wanted to drag me to the Hellfire, but I said to them, 'Do you not recognize me?' One of them replied, 'Who are you?' I said, 'I am the servant of Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī.' He said to his companions, 'Leave him until we see Abū Yazīd. If he is who he claims to be we will leave him be, and if he is not we will seize him. They went to Abū Yazīd and said, 'This man claims that he keeps company with you.' Abū Yazīd said to them, 'I don't know him; he is not who he

says he is.’ The man cried out, ‘Glorified is Allah! How quick man is to forget! Don’t you remember the day when you were leaving the mosque and you had a garment folded under your arms? You wanted to put your shoes on but found it difficult because of the garment, and so you gave the garment to me to hold while you put your shoes on!’ Abū Yazīd replied, ‘Yes,’ and so they left the man alone and went on their way.”

Al-Zakarī said after relating this incident, “So the least form of ascription to them and the most miniscule act of kindness toward them is of the utmost benefit, even shaking their hands and meeting them.” May Allah aid the one who said:

*I grasped their hands, seeking blessings with their palms;
When they grasp a palm it is an honor
Perhaps it will suffice the lover to justify it
With their effects, and consider them spoils.*

The author of *Ithmid al-‘aynayn fī manāqib al-akhawayn* and others mention:

On the Day of Ressurrection, a saint will be in his procession, going to Paradise, when he will look upon one of the disobedient people being dragged into the Hellfire—and Allah’s refuge is sought—and he will stop and go to him and ask, “Did you ever see me in the world?” The man will say, “No,” and then the saint will ask, “Did you ever visit me?” The man will say, “No,” and then the saint will ask, “Have you ever heard of me?” The man will say, “Yes. I used to hear the people say, ‘Master So-and-so.’” The saint will then say, “Proceed to Paradise, for not even those who heard my name in the worldly abode shall enter the Hellfire!” After this, a call shall be made from the Creator Most High, “Leave him be,” and he will proceed with the saint to Paradise.

The author of *al-Maqṣad al-warīf* said:

It is related that a tailor from the companions of Abū Yazīd [al-Biṣṭāmī] died. He was beheld in a dream after his death and was asked, “What came of you?” The man replied, “After I was buried the two angels came and asked me questions, so I said to them, ‘How can you ask me questions when I had sewn the garments of Abū Yazīd?’ whereupon they left me.”

