



Sacred

KNOWLEDGE

البِشَارَةُ لِمَنْ أَحَبَّ السَّلَامَ وَطَلَبَ الزِّيَارَةَ

Glad Tidings

*For Those Who Affectionately Greet the Beloved Prophet
(Allah grant him peace and blessings)
& Seek His Beautiful Vision*

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By consulting reliable Islamic sources, this paper illustrates how the blessings invoked on the Illustrious Prophet of Islam (Allah give him peace and blessings) reach him in numerous ways and that he physically returns greetings to his *ummah*.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

All praise is for Allah, the Creator of the universe, and may endless peace and blessings descend upon our Beloved Messenger Muhammad, upon his kin and companions

To Proceed:

By the grace of Allah Most Sublime and the special attention of our Noble Prophet Muhammad (Allah shower endless peace and blessings upon him every time people remember him and every moment people are heedless of him) I was approached by a student of this Noble Deen to write a short explanation to some of the important hadiths on invoking blessings on the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) and how they reach him. So I began writing this paper hoping that it will be placed in my *mizan* on the day of judgement and through it I will be entitled to the best intercession of the Beloved Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) and that it may be of guidance to others who are seeking clarity on this matter. In this paper, I have attempted to explain:

- a) There is no real contradiction between ostensibly contradictory hadiths regarding how invoked blessings reach the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings)
- b) The Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) himself hears the blessings invoked on him from near and far and replies to them physically.

☞ There is an Angel at the Blessed Grave of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace & blessings) that Conveys Invoked Blessings to Him

Hadith One

Imam Bukhari narrates the following hadith in his *Tarikh*, Harith in his *Musnad*, Ibn Abi Asim in *Fadl al-Salah*, Uqayli in *al-Duafa al-Kabir* and Tabarani in *al-Mujam al-Kabir*, al-Bazzar in his *Musnad* (as Uqlishi mentioned in *Anwar al-Athar* p. 38), Abu al-Shaykh in *al-Azamah*, Abu al-Qasim al-Asfahani in *al-Targhib*, Ibn al-Jarrah in his *Amali*, Abu Ali al-Hasan ibn Nasr al-Tusi in his *Ahkam*, Ibn Asakir, and Ibn al-Najjar all of which narrate on the authority of Ammar ibn Yasir (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, the Messenger of Allah, Allah give him peace and blessings, said:

“Allah has an angel (*inna lillabi malakan*) whom He has given the faculty to hear sounds of all creatures (and in a variant mentioned by al-Dhahabi in *Mizan al-Itidal*: He has given him the sounds of all people) and **he is standing at my grave**, (Asfahani added: until the arrival of the final hour) none shall recite salutation upon me except that he says: Oh Muhammad! So and so person son of so and so sends you blessings and the Lord, Blessed is He, shall in return give him ten blessings for each salutation.”

Azizi (Ali ibn al-Shaykh Ahmad ibn Nur al-Din) considered this a sound hadith (*hasan*) in *al-Siraj al-Munir*. Sakhawi mentioned in *al-Qawl al-Badee* that the pivot narrator (*madaar*) of this hadith is Ali Nuaym ibn Dhamdham about whom Bayhaqi said some scholars weakened him. The implied sense (*majhum*) of this comment is that the majority of the scholars declared he was trustworthy and al-Hafiz [Ibn Hajar] said: I have not seen any testimony to his accreditation or unreliability except that which Dhahabi mentioned. Mundhiri, in his *al-Targhib*, and al-Sakhawi in his *al-Qawl al-Badee* mentioned there is difference of opinion about him. And Ali narrates this hadith from Imran ibn Himyari who narrates it from Ammar ibn Yasir (may Allah be pleased with father and son), and Imran, Dhahabi mentioned in *Mizan al-Itidal* that he was unknown though Sakhawi to the contrary mentioned he was known and Ibn Hibban mentioned him among the trustworthy *Tabiun*. So the chain is fine (*la-basa bibi insba-Allah*) and the hadith is sound (*hasan*) as Muhammad al-

Hijazi al-Sharani declared.¹

Hadith Two

Ibn Bashkwal narrates the following hadith on the authority of Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him), who said the Messenger of Allah (Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

“He [Allah] has given hearing faculty (*laqqana al-sam*) to three; paradise can hear, hell fire can hear **and an angel at my head** can hear. So whichever person from my ummah says, oh Lord! I ask you for paradise, it says oh lord let him reside within me. Whichever person from my ummah says oh Lord! Save me from hellfire; it says oh Lord save him from me. Whenever someone from my ummah gives salam to me **the angel standing at my head says** oh Muhammad! So and so person is giving you salam so he returns the greetings saying: upon him be peace.”

Sakhawi cites this hadith in al-Qawl al-Badee.

Hadith Three

Daylami narrates the following hadith in his Musnad al-Firdaous on the authority of Abu Bakr al-Siddique (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: Allah’s Messenger (Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

“Invoke blessings upon me abundantly (*akthiru al-salata alayya*) as Allah Most High has appointed **an angel at my grave** who says to me every time a person from my ummah invokes blessings on me: Oh Muhammad! Such and such person son of such and such sends you blessings **this very moment.**”

1. This Hadith and its sources and most of the hadiths cited in this paper have been taken from Imam Ahmad Rida Khan’s work in Arabic, titled ‘Inba al-Hay ann Kalamhu al-Masun Tibyan li-kull shay’ (2002: 285-307).

Ali al-Muttaqi also narrated it in Kanz al-Ummal (no. 2181).

↪ Invoked Blessings & the Ummah are Shown to the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) Several Times A Week

Hadith One

In Kitab al-Zuhd, Abdullah Ibn al-Mubaarak narrates from Saeed ibn al-Musayyib (may Allah be pleased with him) who said:

“There is not a day except that **the works of his ummah** are shown to the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) every morning and evening, and he recognises them by their distinctive characteristics (*seemahum*) and works.” (Hadith no: 166)

Hadith Two

In Anwar al-Athar, Abu al-Abbas al-Uqlishi (d. 550AH) quoted the following mursal hadith from Musannaf of Abd al-Razzaq as a mursal hadith, that the Noble Prophet (may Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

“**You are shown to me** (*innakum turadhun alayya*) with your names and distinctive characteristics (*seemaikum*) so beautify the invocation of blessings upon me (*fa-absinnu al-salah alayya*).”

Hadith Three

Bazzar and others narrated the following hadith with an authentic chain (sahih) on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

"My life is a great good for you, you will relate about me and it will be related to you, and my death is a great good for you, **your actions will be presented to me**, and if I see goodness I will praise Allah, and if I see evil I will ask forgiveness of Him for you."

Qadi Iyad cited it in his *Shifa*. Suyuti in *Manahil al-Safa al-Khasais al-Kubra* mentioned it was authentic (sahih) as did Haythami in *Majma al-Zawaid* and Iraqi in *Tarh al-Tathrib* called its chain good (jayyid).

It is obvious that invoked blessings are also an action and are shown to the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) when other works are shown to him. We have another hadith greater than this as it mentions that all of the actions of his ummah were shown to him even those that were non-existent during his life. Imam Ahmad narrates in his *Musnad* and Ibn Majah in his *Sunan* on the authority of Abu Dharr (Allah be pleased with him) who relates the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

“My ummah was shown to me with its works, those good and evil.”

And in fact he (Allah give him peace and blessings) was shown his ummah *repeatedly* as Imam Ahmad Rida explained in *Inba al-Hay* (p. 356-7) providing authentic hadith evidences and commentaries.

🔗 *Invocation of Blessings on Friday*

A number of hadiths found in the hadith literature relate the immense benefit and significance of invoking blessings on the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) on Fridays. Below are some of the important hadiths.

Hadith One

Ibn Majah narrates the following hadith with a rigorously authentic chain (sahih), Tabarani in his al-Mujam al-Kabir, and Numyari from Abu al-Dardaa (may Allah be pleased with him) who said the Messenger of Allah Allah give him peace and blessings, said:

“Invoke blessings on me abundantly on the day of Jumuah as it is witnessed by the angels. Not a single person invokes blessings on me except that **it is shown to me until [heena or hatta] he finishes**. He [Abu al-Dardaa] asked: and even after death? The Prophet replied: and even after death as Allah has forbidden for the earth to consume the bodies of the Prophets. Allah’s Prophet is alive and is given sustenance.”

Imam Subki after quoting this hadith in Shifa al-Siqam mentioned that the invoked blessing is shown to the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) right after it is recited without delay on the basis of both variants in the hadith. Imam Ahmad Rida pointed that in fact the salutation is shown to him as the blessing is being invoked and the showing ends when the invocation ends on the basis of the variant containing *hatta* in place of *heena* as it is used in the Arabic language to assert the ending of something (*intiha al-ghayah*). Subki noted that the blessing is presented to the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) after his demise as it was presented to him during his lifetime. Ahmad Rida (2002: 294) mentioned that the grammar of the hadith shows that it includes blessing invoked by anyone, near or far on the ground that when an indefinite noun is preceded by negation it is unrestricted in its meaning (*al-nakirah fi biyaz al-nafy ta’umm*).

Hadith Two

In al-Sunan al-Kubra, Bayhaqi narrated the following hadith with a sound (hasan) chain of transmission and Ibn Asakir with a good chain (*sanad jayyid*) and Subki mentioned that Makhul Shaami also narrated it on the authority of Abu Umaamah, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah, Allah give him peace and blessings, said:

“Invoke blessings abundantly upon me every Friday, **as the blessing of my ummah is shown to me every Friday**, so whoever recites it abundantly from among them

shall be the nearest to me in place.”

In al-Qawl al-Badee, Sakhawi mentioned that Saeed ibn Mansur narrated this too on the authority of Khalid ibn Madan from the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) as an interrupted (mursal) hadith.

Hadith Three

Numayri narrated the following hadith through Ibn al-Shihab al-Zuhri from the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) who said:

“Invoke blessings upon me abundantly on the shining night and bright day [i.e. Friday], **as these** [the night and day] **convey it from you**, and the earth cannot consume the bodies of Prophets.” (Qadi Iyad mentioned this with the following variant at the end: “Not a single Muslim invokes blessings on me **except that an angel carries it** and names the person saying so and so says so and so”).

This variant however is not in the narration of Numayri as Sakhawi noted in al-Qawl al-Badee and the latter said that Qadi Iyad did not mention its source (*min ghayr ashy*). Ahmad Rida Khan mentioned that perhaps this part belongs to another hadith which Qadi Iyad has attached to this one here as he has done this with several other hadiths in Kitab al-Shifa (2002: 293).

Hadith Four

Tabarani, Ibn Udayy, and Abu al-Qasim Asfahani in al-Targhib on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him), Ibn Abi Shaybah, Tabarani in al-Mujam al-Awsat (no. 243), Ibn Marduwyah and Bayhaqi in Shuab al-Iman on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), Saeed Ibn Mansur in his Sunan from Hasan and Khalid ibn ma’adan as an interrupted (mursal) hadith; all narrate from the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) who said:

“Invoke blessings upon me abundantly in the shining night and bright day [i.e. Friday], **as your blessing is shown to me.**”

In al-Durr al-Mandud, Haythami mentioned that though its chain was originally weak it is strengthened on the basis of its corroborants.

Hadith Five

Hakim narrated the following hadith and authenticated it, Bayhaqi in Shuab al-Iman and Hayat al-Anbiya, Ibn Abi Asim in Fadl al-Salah all narrate on the authority of Abu Masud Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (may Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

“Invoke blessings on me abundantly on the day of Jumuah, as there is not a single person who invokes blessings on me on Friday **except that his blessing is shown to me.**”

Hadith Six

Abu Dawud, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Ahmad in his Musnad, Ibn Abi Shaybah, Darami, Ibn Khuzaymah in his Sahih, Ibn Hibban, Hakim in al-Mustadrak, Tabarani in al-Mujam al-Kabir, Daraqutni, Ibn Abi Asim in Fadl al-Salah, Bayhaqi, Dhiya in al-Mukhtarah, Abu Nuaym, Hafiz Abd al-Ghani, Imam al-Nawawi in his Adhkar, Abu al-Khattab Ibn Dihya and Mundhiri who claims it is fair and Hakim who asserts it is rigorously authentic narrate from Auws ibn Auws al-Thaqafi (may Allah be pleased with him) who said, the Messenger of Allah, Allah give him peace and blessings, said:

“The most virtuous of your days is Friday. On it Adam was created and on it he died. On it the trumpet will be blown (the first time) and on it the trumpet will be blown (the second blow). **So invoke blessings on me abundantly as your blessing is shown to me.** The companions asked: Oh Messenger of Allah! How will our blessings be presented to you when you shall have become dust? To which he

replied: Allah has forbidden the earth to consume the bodies of the Prophets.”

There is no contradiction between the hadiths on the showing of invoked blessings to the Beloved Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) other days of the week and hadiths that mention the presentation on Friday. Hadiths relating to Friday do not negate the presentation on other days as the invoked blessing is presented to the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) every other day of the week as we have seen above. However, on Friday the invoked blessing is shown in a special way, with greater honour and esteem for him that we cannot comprehend. In fact, this is the only day that both its day and night directly convey the blessing to the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) as mentioned in hadith three. From this we learn that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) is given the blessings several times through presentation (*ardh*) and conveyance (*ada*).

❧ Can the Prophet (Allah give him peace & blessings) Himself Hear the Invoked Blessings?

Before presenting hadith evidences to our position in reply to this question, it would be useful to understand how meanings are understood from proof-texts. There are two simple ways by which a meaning is expressed in the Quran and Sunnah. Either that the purpose is explicitly expressed in the wording (*mantuq*) or that it is indicated to through what is being mentioned and this is what we may call the implied sense (*mafhum*). There are several examples as to how the Quran expresses certain matters by wording and establishes something greater through its implied sense and indicative meaning. Observe for example how the Quran prohibits children from grumbling (*tafi*) before parents but is silent on hitting them or insulting them. That mentioned in the words of the verse makes it obvious to the reader that if grumbling is impermissible then insulting them and physically abusing them are obviously prohibited. Similarly, the Quran mentions that martyrs are alive in their graves and is silent in regards to the lives of the Prophets. Other examples include an explicit verse on the infallibility of the angels without mentioning that of the Prophets and a verse

on the excellence of this ummah over all other previous nations without mentioning explicitly the excellence of the Noble Leader and Prophet of this ummah over all previous Prophets (Allah give him and all of them peace and blessings). Life of the Prophets in their graves, their infallibility and the excellence of our Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) over all others is obviously understood from these texts. Hence using both the expressed wording (mantuq) and implied sense (mafhum) is a permitted way of giving evidence.

When the reader understands this introduction, it becomes easier for him to understand that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) can hear the invoked blessings of his ummah. We have observed in the authentic hadiths quoted in the beginning of this paper, there is an angel standing at the noble grave of the Blessed Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) that hears the sounds and languages of all creatures and people and conveys blessings invoked on the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) to him. It becomes obvious that if the servant appointed to serve the Blessed Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) has this quality, the Prophet himself must also have it. This was the view many scholars held and those I would particularly like to mention here are two: Shaykh Anwarullah Farouqi, founder of the world-renowned Majlis Dairah al-Ma'arif in India, who expressed this view with great detail and commentary in *Anwar-e-Ahmadi* and Imam Ahmad Rida Khan who dealt with this issue in several works, the best among them I have come to know of are two: *Inba al-Hay* which I have mainly relied upon in writing this paper and *Saltanat al-Mustafa fi Malakut Kull al-Wara* which remains a manuscript and is his main and best work on this topic. Readers should note that Shaykh Anwarullah of Hyderabad Deccan (India) was a mureed and khalifah of Haji Imdadullah Makki and the latter endorsed his work twice in Arabic and Urdu, after listening to it recited entirely before him, saying: “every sentence and passage in it supports the school and source of the people of truth and invites towards the truth” and said: “this is my view and this is the basis of my way” (*hadha madhabi wa-alayhi madaaru mashrabi*).

Below are some hadiths on this topic:

Tabarani narrated the following hadith in al-Mujam al-Awsat:

“Whoever invokes blessings on me, **his blessing reaches** me and I return the greeting to him and ten rewards besides that one are written for him.”

In al-Durr al-Mandud, Ibn Hajar Haythami mentioned that this had a reliable chain (*la-basa bihi*) and Mundhiri mentioned that it had a fair chain (isnad hasan). In al-Durr, Haythami mentioned that Tabarani narrated the following Hadith (in al-Mujam al-Kabir and al-Awsat) with a fair chain (hasan) on the authority of Sayyiduna al-Hasan ibn Ali (may Allah be pleased with both):

“Wherever you are (*haythuma kuntum*) invoke blessings on me as **your blessing reaches me** (*tablughuni salatuhu*).”

Imam Nawawi narrated a similar hadith in al-Adhkar and declared it authentic. Ibn Abi Shaybah narrated similar hadith which Haythami cited in al-Durr al-Mandud and Sakhawi in al-Qawl al-Badee and mentioned it was sound (hasan):

“Send salam upon me (*sallimu alayya*) as your **greeting reaches me from wherever you are.**”

Ismail al-Qadi narrated a similar hadith which Sakhawi and Haythami cited in their works:

“Invoke blessings on me as your blessing and greeting **reach me from wherever you are.**”

Uqlisihi mentioned this hadith in Anwar al-Athar quoting Musnaff Ibn Abi Shaybah on the authority of Sayyiduna Ali (may Allah be pleased with him). Ahmad also narrated it in his Musnad and Asqalani mentioned it in al-Matalib al-Aaliyah. Subki mentioned that Abu Dawud narrated it in his Sunan without “salam” in it on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him).

The specific manner in which invoked blessings reach the Noble Prophet (Allah give him

peace and blessings) is not qualified in these hadiths. We know that the angel at the grave presents it to the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) as we mentioned above, and the following hadith shows that angels roam and collect the invocations and convey them to the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings). Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, Nasai, Darimi, Hakim in his Mustadrak who declared the narration authentic, Ibn Hibban in his Sahih, Bayhaqi in Shuab al-Iman and al-Sunan al-Kubra, Bazzar, Abu Nuaym, Khalai, Ismail al-Qadhi, Abu al-Shaykh and Tabarani all narrate on the authority of Abdullah Ibn Masud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

“Allah has **angels roaming that convey the greetings** of my ummah to me.”

Imam Subki and others mentioned this hadith has several authentic chains. In al-Kamil fi al-Duafa al-Kabir, Ibn Udayy also narrated a similar hadith on the authority of Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him).

Is there contradiction between the hadiths relating angels convey the blessing to the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) and the one mentioning an angel at the grave who hears it and conveys it? There is no contradiction in these as each of them conveys a single salutation to the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) which means that a single salutation reaches the Noble Prophet through different angels. Imam Ahmad Rida asserted (2007: 287) that in fact each single salutation reaches the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) ten times on the basis of the different narrations. Above we have seen three different ways in which a single blessing reaches the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings): 1) through an angel standing at the blessed grave who hears all sounds, 2) through roaming angels that carry the blessings, 3) through the day and night of jumuah that convey it. In Shifa al-Siqam, Imam Subki also affirmed that the blessings reach the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) several times so there is no contradiction between the hadiths.

In addition to these hadiths, the following hadith explicitly mentions that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) hears the invoked blessing himself. The Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

“There is not a servant who invokes blessings upon me except that his **voice reaches me** (*balaghani sawtuhu*) wherever he is (*haythu kana*).”

Ibn Hajar Haythami mentioned in al-Durr al-Mandud and al-Jawhar al-Munazzam and Sakhawi in al-Qawl al-Badee that Tabarani narrated this hadith (in al-Mujam al-Kabir). Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah quoted this hadith from Tabarani in Jala al-Afham on the authority of Abu al-Darda (may Allah be pleased with him) and added: “we [companions] asked: and after your demise too? He [the Prophet] replied: and after my demise too as Allah has forbidden for the earth to consume the bodies of the Prophets”.

Is there contradiction in this hadith and those before mentioning that the invoked blessing is shown to the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) or conveyed to him by the angels? As we have noted before, invoked blessings reach the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) in several ways so there is no contradiction here. Similarly, we have many authentic hadiths relating that angels show Allah the deeds of people on particular days and times which do not at all suggest that Allah the All-Knowing is not already aware of the works of His people. If someone argues that there is a hadith contrary to the quoted hadith of Tabarani that Ibn Hajar declared its chain good (sanad jayyid) in Fath al-Bari, which is:

"Whoever greets me at my grave, I hear him and whoever invokes blessings on me from afar it is conveyed to me (*ublightuhu*).”

Its reply is as follows:

- a) Conveyance (*iblagh*) does not negate the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) listening to the invoked blessings himself. It is possible that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) hears the blessings from afar and it is also conveyed to him as we have shown above that a single salutation reaches him several times. Take for example the hadith mentioning an angel at the grave that conveys the greetings of the visitor to the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and

blessings) as well as he himself hears it. Bayhaqi narrates it in Shuab al-Iman on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) said:

“Not a single person greets me at my grave except that Allah **appoints an angel that conveys it to me** that suffices his affairs of this world and the hereafter and I shall be his witness and intercessor on the day of judgement.”
(No. 4156)

In al-Jawhar al-Munazzam, Ibn Hajar Haythami says: “the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) hears the greetings and salutations at his grave without any means and the angel also conveys them to him as a sign to his unique speciality and giving special attention to his grandeur”. As there is no contradiction between this hadith, which relates an angel conveys the greeting of the visitor, and the one in question above (which is also narrated by Bayhaqi in Shuab al-Iman Hadith no. 1583 and mentions that the Prophet himself hears the greeting of his visitor) likewise there is no contradiction in the hadiths on the conveyance of blessings from far (*iblagh*) and the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) himself hearing the blessings invoked from far.

- b) Based on the explanation in point (a), we can give the following interpretation to the hadith in question: the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) listens to the greeting of his visitor at his grave with attention and heartiness greater than that he gives to the one who invokes blessings from afar as we know that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) was gentle and extremely kind with his visitors and particularly those who came from afar bearing the pains of travel and in fact gave special attention to anyone who spoke with him directly as known in his blessed Shamail. The meaning of hearing in this hadith in question is thus similar to when a person praying says “Allah hears the one who praises him” (*sami Allahu li-man hamidah*) at the time of lifting his head up from ruku as Allah hears everyone and all those praising him outside prayer but there is greater acceptance for the one praising him in prayer.

- c) Another reply to this hadith is that it is also possible that this was how the invocations reached the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) before he was given the excellence of hearing them directly as he is always increasing in his excellence and station. Such an answer is a valid one as we have examples of scholars in the past that gave similar replies to conciliate between hadiths and even verses of the Quran. Imam Ahmad Rida presented six such examples in *Inba al-Hay* (2002: 299).

Supporting Evidence from the Statements of the Scholars

One may argue that Imam Subki and Haythami mention in *Shifa al-Siqam* and *al-Durr al-Mandud* that the Noble Prophet (Allah give peace and blessings) hears the greetings at his grave and other greetings are conveyed to him through the angels. Its reply is as follows: In *al-Durr al-Mandud* (p. 157), Imam Haythami, whilst discussing the evidence of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) having the quality to 'return' greetings invoked from far, argued that the view that he only returns greetings to the one who greets him at his grave is inaccurate on the basis of the generality of the hadiths (*umum al-hadith*) and on the basis of an authentic hadith that "not a single person that passes the grave of his deceased brother in faith and gives him greetings except that he recognises him and returns the greetings" (narrated by Khatib in his *Tarikh* and others). Haythami argued: if the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) only returns greetings to his visitor he would not be unique in this as others also share this quality. Thereafter he presents the saying of Abu al-Yumn Ibn Asakir that "if it is possible for him (i.e. the Noble Prophet) to return the greetings of those near his grave, it is possible for him to return the greetings sent to him from his entire ummah from all over the world".

This unworthy servant and needy of Allah says: subhanAllah! Look at how this great Imam is using the hadith on the greeting of the deceased person to argue that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) returns greetings to all those who send him greetings from near and afar but a passage before asserts (p. 156) that when the blessings are invoked from afar, the angels convey them to him and when recited near him he directly hears them without means. Though this does not at all suggest that Haythami is 'denying' the Noble

Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) hears the greetings sent from far yet it seems that it did not occur to him here that the speciality of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) was not merely in that he returns the greetings of those far but also that he hears the greetings of those far and returns them too. The very hadith he is using to reply to his opponent is evidence to this for the following reason: the deceased person only returns greetings after he hears them from his visitor and likewise the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessing) returns the greetings after he hears them, so how would the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) be unique in this aspect as he would be sharing the same quality of hearing only the visitor at his grave? The uniqueness of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) and excellence over other deceased people is only established if it is held that he not only hears those near but also those far. The hadith “there is not a servant who invokes blessings upon me except that his **voice reaches me** (*balaghani santubu*) wherever he is (*haythu kana*)” which Imam Haythami himself quoted on the same page (156) supports this view.

My inference of evidence from the argument of Imam Haythami to his opponent is permitted according to the standards of scholarly discourse. Using the life of the martyrs as evidence Imam Subki argued in *Shifa al-Siqam* (2005: 221), for example, that Prophets are alive in their graves on the grounds that how could it be that those lower in their ranks have a degree of merit greater than the Prophets (Allah give all of them peace and blessings)? The same can be said here that how could it be that the serving angel at the blessed grave of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) has a virtuous quality which the Beloved Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) whom he serves be devoid of, namely, the hearing of all sounds from near and far? The reader shall notice that I have shown how the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) hears the greetings sent to him and invoked blessings from near and far using the discourse of Imam Subki and Haythami themselves. This is what appeared to me after looking into the hadith-texts and their commentaries and if it is incorrect I seek Allah’s forgiveness and if this is accurate then all praise is for Allah alone. Besides this, there are a number of rigorously authentic hadith evidences pointing that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) has a hearing faculty like no other creation including hadiths from *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim* which I have not quoted to keep as close as possible to the hadiths directly related to

the invocation of blessings. The evidences quoted above should be sufficient.

❧ Does the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace & blessings) Physically Reply to the Greetings?

Hadith One

Abu Dawud, Bayhaqi in his Shuab al-Iman, Ibn Bakshkawal in al-Qurbah and Abu Nuaym in Tarikh Asbahan all narrate the following hadith on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (Allah be pleased with him):

“There is not a single person who greets me except that **Allah returns my soul** unto me (*alayya*) so **I return his greeting.**”

Hadith Two

Bayhaqi, Ahmad in his Musnad and Tabarani in al-Mujam al-Awsat narrate the following variant of the latter hadith:

“There is not a single person who greets me except that **Allah returns my soul** in me (*ilayya*) so **I return his greeting.**”

Imam Haythami declared its chain sound (hasan) and mentioned that Imam Nawawi declared it rigorously authentic (sahih) in al-Adhkar. Haythami mentioned that the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) is alive at all times as it is habitually impossible (muhal aadi) that no one sends him greetings and invokes blessings on him for a moment in a day or night. We have shown hadiths in our discussion on invoking blessings on Fridays where the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) mentioned that Prophets are alive in their graves. Haythami mentions that there is consensus of the entire Sunni scholarship on this. He then explains the various meanings of ‘returning of the soul’ every

time blessings are invoked saying “so he is alive at all times but this does not mean he is always speaking [returning the greeting], so his speaking ability (*nutq*) is given to him every time a greeting is received”. Clearly Haythami is asserting that the word soul in this hadith is referring to speech, hence the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) physically returns the greeting. He mentioned (p. 160) that a group (*jama’ah*) of scholars gave this interpretation to the hadith.

Haythami (p. 160) also quoted the well known interpretation of Imam Bayhaqi that the soul of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) was returned to him right after his burial so that he could return the greetings of those greeting him. He also presented the explanation of Imam Subki that it could mean that the soul of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) is busy in the presence of his Lord and attends the person greeting him every time he is greeted but this does not mean he is always attending people greeting him for the whole time and issues like this one cannot be comprehended by human reason.² Thereafter, Imam Haythami presented a number of various quotations mentioning how some of the great friends of Allah actually heard the physical response of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) with their ears (p. 162-3). Shaykh Abdullah Siraajud-Din from Halab (Aleppo) mentioned a number of such stories in his excellent work on the virtues of invoking blessings titled ‘al-Salah ala al-Nabiy’ some of which are:

- During the days of Harrah (during the era of Yazid), when the Noble Prophet’s (Allah give him peace and blessings) masjid was closed, Saeed ibn al-Musayyib (the companion who remained inside pretending he was insane, may Allah be pleased with him) would know it is time for prayer as he would hear a hum from the grave of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him abundant peace and blessings) at the time of each prayer. This was narrated by Darami in his Musnad.
- Ibrahim ibn Shayban said: “I once went to the blessed grave and greeted the Messenger of Allah (Allah give him peace and blessings) and heard him reply from

2. Readers should also study Shaykh Abdullah Siraajud-Din’s ‘al-Salah ala al-Nabiy’ (pp. 138-148) for a first rate commentary to this hadith.

his grave saying: “and upon you be peace”.³

- Sayyid Nur al-Din ibn Afif al-Anji also heard the greetings returned by the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) at his blessed grave in the words: “my son, and upon you be peace”.⁴

The readers will find the following story particularly fascinating. Shaykh Salih Farfour (Damascus, Syria) mentioned in the biography of his shaykh, the greatest muhadith of the world in his era, Shaykh Badrud-Din al-Hasani (p. 74) that when he used to study *al-Mawahib al-Laduniyah* on the seerah and shama'il of the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) at his house situated in Naqqaashaat (Damascus) between maghrib and isha, once the Messenger of Allah was mentioned and the shaykh asked the students: “when you greet the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings), do you hear his reply?” The students replied in the negative to which Shaykh Badrud-Din remorsefully remarked: “la-hawla wa la-quwwata illa billah!” Shaykh Farfour thereafter remarked: “our Shaykh used to say: there are people that if the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) ever disappeared from them, they would die!” If this is the hearing power and status given to some members of this ummah, one can imagine the rank of the Most Beloved of Allah (Allah give him abundant peace and blessings). Ibn Ata'illah al-Sikandari mentioned in *Lataif al-Minan* (p. 78) that Shaykh Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili once returned from Haj and told al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam that the Noble Messenger (Allah give him peace and blessings) gave him greetings after which he and all those around him stood in rapture! In the same work he mentioned (p. 93) that Shaykh Abu al-Abbas Mursi once said: “had the Messenger of Allah (Allah give him peace and blessings) ever disappeared from me for even a single moment, I would not count myself among Muslims!”⁵

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3. Ibn al-Najjar narrated this with a chain to Ibrahim in his *al-Durrah al-Thaminah fi Tarikh al-Madinah*.
 4. All 3 incidents were also mentioned by Sakhawi in *al-Qawl al-Badee* and Ibn Hajar Haythami in *al-Durr*.
 5. *Lata'if al-Minan*, Cairo: Dar al-Maarif.

Shaykh Yusuf al-Nabhani mentioned that Shaykh Abu al-Hasan al-Shadhili and Sayyidi Ali Wafa met with the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) whilst awake (in Wasail al-Wusul ila Shamail al-Rasul) and said nothing prevents such a meeting as the veil between the friends of Allah and the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) is removed. In the explanation of the hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim: “whoever sees me in his dream, shall see me whilst awake”, Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani and Ibn Abi Jamarah mentioned (in their commentaries on the former) that a group of scholars mentioned they met with the Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) whilst awake after seeing him in their dreams and they even spoke to him about some of their concerns and took his advice! Similarly, Imam al-Ghazali, in *al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*, said: “People with great hearts witness angels and souls of the Prophets whilst awake; they hear their sounds and benefit from their speech”. There are mass-reports (mutawatir) confirming the Noble Prophet (Allah give him peace and blessings) met with many people whilst awake and Hafiz Jalalud-Din al-Suyuti wrote a work on this topic titled ‘*Tanwir al-Halak fi Imkan Ru’wyat al-Nabi wa al-Malak*’ that is published in his *Fatawa* for those seeking further explanation. The night journey (isra) and the Noble Prophet’s meeting and praying salah with the Prophets and Messengers (Allah give them all peace and blessings) in Palestine, those that passed away before him, is a single shining evidence for the one who seeks clarity as to how they have permission to travel in the earths after their demise and meet those alive.

Oh Allah Most Kind! Send heavenly peace and sublime blessings on the Final Messenger, the Truthful and Trustworthy, the Generous and Affectionate, the Mercy to Mankind, whose support and intercession we seek on the day when feet shall slip and tongues shall bear witness, He with whom we seek union when all loved ones separate, and upon his Pure Family and Chosen Companions, in a quantity that corresponds to the number of your creatures, particles of sand, petals and leaves and drops of rain.

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