SHAFAAT / INTERCESSION

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيْم

Preface

اَلْحَمْدُ للهِ رَبِّ الْمَالَمِيْنَ وَ الصَّلوةُ وَالسَّلاَمُ عَلى رَسُوْلِه شَفِيْعِ الْمُذْنِبِيْنَ وَ آلِه الطَّيِّبِيْنَ الطَّاهِرِيْنَ : اَمَّا بَعْدُ

There is no doubt that intercession forms the basic principle of our faith and there are so many Quranic Ayats, traditions and narrations supporting it. That is why, people who have little knowledge of Quran, the idea of intercession is as clear as the day. But today, in this progressive world, people have pushed back the Quranic ayats and the traditions of the prophet. They look at intercession with doubt. There raise many objections on intercession, for e.g. they think that if it is in Islam, then it favours the people who are real sinners because they think that intercession is a political group. They also presume that intercession is against the judgement of Allah as Allah has made obligatory for Himself to punish the sinners. The reality of intercession is this that they are not punished. Many other objections are also there for intercession. To be free from the punishment, they have introduced this concept. In fact, the relation of intercession is not with sinners but with good doers. Intercession is not to save the sinners from punishment but to raise the position of good doers in heaven. In other words, intercession is there to increase in reward and not to decrease in sins. This is also wrong from Quranic verses and traditions. As intercession is related to sinners and good doers. It does not conclude that the sinners go on committing as many sins as they like on this basis and they may obtain salvation on the day of judgement. If they don't commit sins, the idea of intercession will not come into picture. And the Prophets and their successors will be deprived of giving them intercession.

Looking at this issue, I found it necessary to pen down some words regarding this topic. Readers are advised to go thoroughly so that they can get the right concept of intercession.

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Meaning and concept of intercession

The word intercession is well-known amongst the people and everybody is aware of it. It is the recommendation of great personality by which the errors are forgiven. It is the root of شفع which means pair. The intercessor and his greatness on one hand and the ability and capacity of the other on other hand. The combination of intercessor and the one who is being recommended results in intercession. This concludes that on the day of judgement every sinner will not be forgiven, neither anybody can do intercession. In Islam, the conditions of both are well explained. The people think that on the day of judgement Firaun, Yazeed, Hajjaj ibn Yusuf Saqafi, Changez, etc. will also be forgiven. But those who are 'based ones' who are astrayed and they are deaf to hear the voice of truth and blind to see and dump to speak for them there is nothing in the universe to save them from the fire of hell. In Holy Quran it is mentioned in many places that these people will taste severe punishment. Like this verse:

خَتَمَ اللهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عظِيمٌ

"Allah has set a seal upon their hearts and upon their hearing and there is a covering over their eyes, and there is a great punishment for them."[1]

As per traditions, if there is no life of faith in their hearts, paradise is impossible.

To understand intercession, one must understand the importance of forgiveness. As it enlightens the lamp of guidance of Allah's Mercy. There is no doubt that forgiveness and pardon is based on some conditions, as intercession is also based on some conditions. We will first shed light on this issue with Quranic Ayats, traditions and the view points of some learned scholars.

Intercession in the light of Holy Quran

The word intercession has come in Holy Quran thirty times which itself shows the importance of the subject. Some verses refute and some recommend it so, by going through only one category will not suffice the discussion. We have seen that because of the above mentioned reason, people have not been able to grasp the right concept. As some verses explain the others. As the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) says,

اِنَّ الْقُرْآنَ يَصْدُقُ بَعْضُه بَعْضًا.

"Surely, some verse of Holy Quran attests the other."[2]

Ameerul Momenin, Ali Ibn Abi Talib (a.s.) said:

وَ يَنْطُقُ بَعْضُه بَعْضٍ وَ يُشْهِدُ عَلى بَعْضِه

"Some verse of Holy Quran speaks with the help of other verses and some testifies the other."[3]

In Holy Quran there are seven different types of verses regarding intercession and its explanation.

First category of verses of intercession

The verse which totally refute the intercession:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُواْ أَنفِقُواْ مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُم مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لاَّ بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلاَ خُلَّةٌ وَلاَ شَفَاعَةٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ.

"O you who believe! spend out of what We have given you before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, neither any friendship nor intercession, and the unbelievers — they are the unjust."[4]

(1) The sentence وَ لاَ شَفَاعَةٌ is the proof against those who completely refuse the intercession which will be explained thus:

It is not right to base your opinion because since in other verses of Quran the proof of intercession is found. E.g. Ayatul Kursi

...مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ...

"...who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?..." [5]

(2) It is not the negation of intercession but the false intercession. For e.g. وَلاَ خُلَّةٌ (neither friendship nor relation will count). It is the friendship of the believers but not for the disbelievers. It is evident from the other verses that only friendship of the believers will be useful on the day of judgement and not with the unbelievers. For e.g.

اَلْاَخِلاَّءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌ اِلاَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ...

"The friends shall on that day be enemies one to another, except those who guard (against evil)."[6]

(3) The word انفق 'those who pay zakat' and it is so important that those who deny this payment are termed as unbelievers.

وَالكافِرُوْنَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُوْنَ.

There is no question of intercession with the unbelievers. Therefore, the negation of first part stating that there will be no intercession is meant for those who deny payment of zakat.

Second category of verses of intercession

It is based on those verses which is regarding the believers of the Jews about intercession those two verses from:

وَاتَّقُواْ يَوْماً لاَّ تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ.

"And be on your guard against a day when one soul shall not avail another in the least, neither shall intercession on its behalf be accepted, nor shall any compensation be taken from it, nor shall they be helped."[7]

وَاتَّقُواْ يَوْماً لاَّ تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَن نَّفْسٍ شَيْئاً وَلاَ يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلاَ تَنفَعُهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلاَ هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ.

"And be on your guard against a day when no soul shall avail another in the least neither shall any compensation be accepted from it, nor shall intercession profit it, nor shall they be helped."[8]

It is evident from the presiding and proceeding of the about two verses that Lord addresses the Jews negating their stand of intercession by which they took pried over other tribes and religion, therefore, Almighty addresses them to convince the Muslims of their going astray, thus affirm the truth of Islam.

Jews who take pride of being the progeny of Prophet Yaqub (a.s.) and are thus free from committing any sins, as they say that our forefathers are capable of barring the burden of our sins, thus intercession is for us. Even the Christians are on the same line as evident from the Quranic verse:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى نَحْنُ أَبْنَاء اللّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ

And the Jews and the Christians say: We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones.[9]

The tradition says that they consider themselves the owner of Heaven and thus nobody can enter it. Quran has stated in:

وَقَالُواْ لَن يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلاَّ مَن كَانَ هُوداً أَوْ نَصَارَى

"And they say: None shall enter the garden (or paradise) except he who is a Jew or a Christian…."[10]

In many places the Quran has expressed clearly their wrong and adamant behaviour and declared that Heaven is not the estate of Jews and Christians. Quran further states thus:

تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُواْ بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ بَلَى مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ وَلاَ خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلاَ هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

"And they say: None shall enter the garden (or paradise) except he who is a Jew or a Christian. These are their vain desires. Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful. Yes! Whoever submits himself entirely to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others) he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for him nor shall he grieve."[11]

It is quiet clear from the above verses in which intercession is refuted is that intercession which the Jews and Christian believe.

Third category of verses of intercession

These are that verses in which it is stated that there will be no intercession for unbelievers and also those who intercede for them will not be accepted, there are three ayats:

يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِن قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَل لَّنَا مِن شُفَعَاء فَيَشْفَعُواْ لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلَ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ قَدْ خَسِرُواْ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُواْ يَفْتَرُونَ

"Do they wait for aught but its final sequel? On the day when its final sequel comes about, those who neglected it before will say: Indeed the apostles of our Lord brought the truth; are there for us then any intercessors so that they should intercede on our behalf? Or could we be sent back so that we should do (deeds) other than those which we did? Indeed they have lost their souls and that which they forged has gone away from them."[12]

إِذْ نُسَوِّيكُم بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَمَا أَضَلَّنَا إِلاَّ الْمُجْرِمُونَ فَمَا لَنَا مِن شَافِعِينَ وَلاَ صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ.

"When we made you equal to the Lord of the worlds; and none but the guilty led us astray; so we have no intercessors, nor a true friend; …"[13]

وَكُنَّا نُكَذِّبُ بِيَوْمِ الدِّينِ حَتَّى أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ فَمَا تَنفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ

"And we used to call the Day of Judgment a lie; till death overtook us. So the intercession of intercessors shall not avail them."[14]

It goes without saying that unbelievers have no effect of faith in them on the strength of which they can do intercession. When there is no relation between them and the Almighty then how can they have relation with the prophets? And how can they expect intercession? And even those who have relation are themselves in hell. Thus all the exegesis (مفسّر) are unanimous that these verses clearly state that there will be no intercession for disbelievers.

Fourth category of verses of intercession

These verses relate intercession of their idols. In the history of illiterate Arabs we find that they prepaid idols of wood and stone and mettles, and they used to worship them so that idols would be pleased with them and may intercede for them. Quran has ridiculed them on many occasions, as lifeless things cannot intercede since they have no شعور in them.

Verses in support are:

وَمَا نَرَى مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءكُمُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاء لَقَد تَّقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنكُم مَّا كُنتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ

"And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind your backs the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom you asserted that they were (Allah's) associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is gone from you."[15]

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللّهِ مَا لاَ يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلاَ يَنفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلاء شُفَعَاؤُنَا عِندَ اللّهِ قُلْ أَتُنَبِّئُونَ اللّهَ بِمَا لاَ يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلاَ فِي الأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

"And they serve beside Allah what can neither harm them nor profit them, and they say: These are our intercessors with Allah. Say: Do you (presume to) inform Allah of what He knows not in the heavens and the earth? Glory be to Him, and supremely exalted is He above what they set up (with Him).[16]

وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُم مِّن شُرَكَائِهِمْ شُفَعَاء وَكَانُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ.

"And they shall not have any intercessors from among their gods they have joined with God, and they shall be deniers of their associate-gods."[17]

أَ أَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِهِ آلِهَةً إِن يُرِدْنِ الرَّحْمَن بِضُرٍّ لاَّ تُغْنِ عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلاَ يُنقِذُونِ.

"What! Shall I take besides Him gods whose intercession, If the Beneficent God should desire to afflict me with a harm, shall not avail me aught, nor shall they be able to deliver me?"[18]

Exegesis says that these words are uttered by Habib Najjar defending the prophets.

Fifth category of verses of intercession

Lord said that only He is authorised and there is no other to recompense.

وَأَنذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَن يُحْشَرُواْ إِلَى رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُم مِّن دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلاَ شَفِيعٌ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ.

"And warn with it those who fear that they shall be gathered to their Lord — there is no guardian for them, nor any intercessor besides Him — that they may guard (against evil)."[19]

وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُواْ دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَذَكِّرْ بِهِ أَن تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِن دُونِ اللّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلاَ شَفِيعٌ…

"And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and an idle sport, and whom this world's life has deceived, and remind (them) thereby lest a soul should be given up to destruction for what it has earned; it shall not have besides Allah any guardian nor an intercessor…"[20]

اللهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ مَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلاَ شَفِيعٍ أَفَلاَ تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

"Allah is He Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods and He mounted the throne (of authority); you have not besides Him any guardian or any intercessor, will you not then mind?"[21]

قُل للهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا لَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

"Say: Allah's is the intercession altogether; His is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, then to Him you shall be brought back."[22]

Irresponsible person may deduce that only Lord can intercede and believe that the prophets, saints and righteous people can intercede is false, their only reply is to refer to the preceding verses.

أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاء قُلْ أَوَلَوْ كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ

"Or have they taken intercessors besides Allah? Say: What! Even though they did not ever have control over anything, nor do they understand."[23]

Sixth category of verses of intercession

These verses lay stress on the Supreme Powers acceptant. On the day of resurrection the total control and status will be His.

...مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلاَّ بِإِذْنِهِ...

"...who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?"[24]

...مَا مِن شَفِيعٍ إِلاَّ مِن بَعْدِ...

"...there is no intercessor except after His permission..."[25]

لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِندَ الرَّحْمَنِ عَهْدًا.

"They shall not control intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the Beneficent God."[26]

يَوْمَئِذٍ لاَّ تَنفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلاَّ مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلاً.

"On that day shall no intercession avail except of him whom the Beneficent God allows and whose word He is pleased with."[27]

وَلاَ تَنفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِندَهُ إِلاَّ لِمَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ

"And intercession will not avail aught with Him save of him whom He permits."[28]

وَلاَ يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلاَّ مَن شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

"And those whom they call upon besides Him have no authority for intercession, but he who bears witness of the truth and they know (him)."[29]

Seemingly the question arises that with few conditions right to intercede other than Almighty is possible and this does not negate the other verses where only Almighty has the right to intercede. Is it possible that some verses of the Quran oppose the other verses?

Answer to this question is that there is no difference between the two verses, as it can be seen that the verses in which the intercession other Almighty is mentioned is only with the condition with His permission only. If it is mentioned that anybody other than Almighty can intercede than this question may arise but it is not so, as none i.e. other can intercede without His permission, and the power of all things lies in His hands. (As mentioned in the earlier verses) وَ لِلهِ الشَّبَاعَةُ جَمِيْعًا and Lord has given the permission to the prophets to intercede on behalf of their Ummat, so that they may intercede for their sins which is their right.

Seventh category of verses on intercession

In these verses not only the existence of the intercessor are mentioned but also their attributes and specialties:

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَانَهُ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ لاَ يَسْبِقُونَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُم بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلاَ يَشْفَعُونَ إِلاَّ لِمَنِ ارْتَضَى وَهُم مِّنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ

"And they say: The Beneficent God has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him. Nay! They are honoured servants. They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act. He knows what is before them and what is behind them, and they do not intercede except for him whom He approves and for fear of Him they tremble."[30]

وَكَم مِّن مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ لاَ تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلاَّ مِن بَعْدِ أَن يَأْذَنَ اللهُ لِمَن يَشَاء وَيَرْضَى

"And how many an angel is there in the heavens whose intercession does not avail at all except after Allah has given permission to whom He pleases and chooses."[31]

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

"Those who bear the power and those around Him celebrate the praise of their Lord and believe in Him and ask repentance for those who believe."[32]

As you have seen in above verses Angels and those who are near to Him seek repentance for believers, the idea of intercession is nothing but the same, that Lord may forgive and envelopes them in His bounty.

Two aspects of intercession in Quran

So far we have seen the different aspect of intercession. We give below the gist, in Quran there are two different types of intercession, (a) Non-acceptable intercession and (b) acceptable intercession.

(a) Non-acceptable intercession

(1) In the eyes of Jews and Christians those person who are in the progeny of the prophets will be forgiven in spite of continues sinning, the prophets will intercede for them, and by giving 'some share' to their Priests will be free from sins. Quran has refuted this concept and rejected this kind of intercession

(2) Intercession of that person who have no relation with Him and also with that intercessor on the day of judgement. Is it possible that anybody can intercede for idol-worshippers, oppressors and tyrants? Quran has stated this clearly that such person will not eligible for intercession.

(b) Acceptable intercession

(1) Only that intercession will be accepted by Him who is by His permission.

(2) Only those persons having faith in Him and His Prophets are eligible. And their sins may not be to such an extent that the link between them is cut off and if it is such then the question of intercession does not arise. If at the time of his death the person repents with pure intention it is possible that Lord by His grace allow on the day of judgement the intercessor to plead his case. (فَإِنَّه تَوَّابُ الرَّحِيْم)

The Prophet of Lord – intercessor on the day of Judgement

Verily among the Muslims there would not be any who does not recognize the prophet as intercessor on the day of Qiyamat, the reason is that Lord Himself has nominated Him for this purpose and selected him.

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَى أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا.

"And during a part of the night, pray Tahajjud beyond what is incumbent on you; maybe your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory."[33]

This status that Lord has given him will be praised by all the prophets, as this position is only allotted to him exclusively. All the exegesists are unanimous on this point that by the word **مقام محمود** is **مقام شفاعت** which is the status of an intercession, is there any position greater than this which will be beneficial on the day of judgement. In Tafsir-e-Majmul Bayaan it is written that prophet will stand with a banner (**عَلَمْ**) and all the prophets will gather around him, and Lord will accept his intercession.

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَى. وَلَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضَى.

"And surely what comes after is better for you than that which has gone before. And soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased."[34]

Most exergists are narrating with reference to Ibne Abbas that he said:

رَضَاهُ اَنْ تَدْخُلَ اَمَّتُهُ الْجَنَّه

Prophet will only be pleased when his nation will enter Paradise.

Prophet has suffered and borne hardship and continuous struggle till his last breath, to save the people from going astray, Lord be the witness that he always prayed for his nation as he is رحمة لِلعَالَمِيْن. But reciprocate in another way by harassing, usurping the rights, lowering their position and tried all means to injure them. By Lord this point is worth contemplating by the intellectuals.

Intercession in the light of traditions

Regarding intercession there are so many traditions that if you collect them they will take a 'book form' that is why the belief in intercession forms a basic peg in Islam. We have taken the support of traditions and narrations from exegesis of Jafar Subhani 'Manshoor Javed'. Forty five traditions are from 'Sehah Sitta' and fifty five are from Shiite sources, but we only relate here ten from Ahle Sunnat and fourteen from 'Shiite' sources. We have taken care that the chosen traditions are complicit, clear and useful; we will first throw light on the tradition of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) from the books of Ahle Sunnah.

Few traditions from the books of Ahle Sunnat

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ دَعْوَةٌ مُسْتَجَابَةٌ فَتَعَجَّلَ كُلُّ نَبِيٍّ دَعْوَتَه وَ اِنِّي اِخْتَبَاتُ دَعْوَتِيْ شَفَاعَةٌ لِأُمَّتِيْ فَهِيَ نَائِلُهُ مَنْ مَاتَ مِنْهُمْ لَايُشْرِكُ بِاللهِ شَيْئًا.

"Lord has made some prayers of Prophets which are answered. All have used them in this world but I have kept my prayer for the intercession of my nation which is only for the true believers of my nation who have not associated anybody with Allah."[35]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

اَعْطَيْتُ خَمْسًا ..... وَ اَعْطَيْتُ الشَّفَاعَةَ فَاِذَ خَرَّتْهَا لِأُمَّتِيْ فَهِيَ لِمَنْ لَايُشْرِكُ بِاللهِ شَيْئًا.

"Allah has blessed me with five superiority one of which is my intercession which I have kept for the believers of my Ummat who have not associated anybody with Allah."[36]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

قَوْلُه عَسيٰ اَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُوْدًا هُوَ الْمَقَامُ الَّذِيْ اِشْفَعْ لِأُمَّتِيْ فِيْهِ.

"This praiseworthy position which is in Surah Bani Israel : verse 79, is that status by which I will do intercession of my nation."[37]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

"اَنَا اَوَّلُ شَافِعٍ وَ اَوَّلُ مُشْفِعٍ"

"The foremost of the intercessor will be myself and my intercession will be accept before everybody."[38]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

اِنَّ شَفَاعَتِيْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لِأَهْلِ الْكَبَائِرِ مِنْ اُمَّتِيْ

"On the day of judgement my intercession will be for those of my Ummat those who have done major sins."[39]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

شَفَاعَتِيْ لِمَنْ شَهِدَ اَنْ لاَ اِلٰهَ اِلاَّ اللهُ مُخْلِصًا يَصْدُقُ قَلْبُه لِسَانَه وَ لِسَانُه قَلْبَه.

"My intercession will be exclusively for those who bear witness of His oneness with a pure heart of whose tongue testify the heart and vise versa."[40]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

اِنَّ اللهَ يَخْرُجُ قَوْمًا مِنَ النَّارِ بِالشَّفَاعَةِ.

"Surely one group will be extracted from hell by intercession."[41]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

يَشْفَعُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ اَلْاَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْعُلَمَاءُ ثُمَّ الشُّهَدَاءُ.

"On the day of judgement first to do intercession will be the prophets, learned people and then martyrs."[42]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said to attendant:

قَالَ لِخَادِمِه مَا حَاجَتُكَ؟

"Do you have any need?"

حَاجَتِيْ اَنْ تَشْفَعَ لِيْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

"He said my need is that you do intercession on the day of judgement."

وَ مَنْ دَلَّكَ عَلٰي هٰذَا؟

"Prophet asked from whom you have learnt to seek intercession from me?"

قَالَ رَبِّي

He replied: From my Lord.

اَمَّا فَاَعِنِّيْ بِكَثْرَتِ السُّجُوْدِ.

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said: "Then you help me in my intercession by your prostration."[43]

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

مَنْ صَلّي عَلٰي مُحَمَّدٍ وَ قَالَ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَنْزِلْهُ الْمَقْعَدَ الْمُقَرَّبَ عِنْدَكَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ جَبَ لَه شَفَاعَتِيْ.

"One who sends blessing on Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and prays to Lord to appoint you (Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)) on the position near to You and my intercession becomes obligatory. (one should bear in my, that blessing on me will be complete only when he sends blessings on my progeny too.)" [44].

The above traditions are mostly from the companions of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) now we quote below few traditions from the reliable books of the Shias on the subject of intercession.

Few traditions from the books of Shias

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

اِنِّي لَاَشْفَعُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَاُشْفَعُ وَ يَشْفَعُ عَلِيٌّ فَيُشْفَعُ وَ يَشْفَعُ اَهْلُ بَيْتِيْ فَيُشْفَعُوْنَ.

"Undoubtedly I will intercede on the day of judgement and it will be accepted, Hazrat Ali (a.s.) will also intercede and it will be also accepted, and my progeny will also intercede and it will be also accepted." [45].

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

اِنَّ مِنْ اُمَّتِيْ مِنْ سَيَّدٍ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ الْجَنَّةَ بِشَفَاعِتِه اَكْثَرُ مِنْ مُضِرٍّ.

"There are such people in my Ummat, by whose intercession persons more than the Tribe of Mazhar (the biggest tribe of Arabia) will enter Heaven." [46].

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) said:

لَنَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَ لِاَهْلِ مَوَدَّتِنَا شَفَاعَةٌ.

"We will do intercession and also those who love us will intercede." [47].

Ameerul Momeneen Ali Ibn Abi Taalib (a.s.) narrates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

ثَلَاثَةٌ يَشْفَعُوْنَ اِلٰي اللّٰهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ فَيُشْفَعُوْنَ اَلْاَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْعُلَمَاءُ ثُم الشُّهَدَاءُ.

"There are three groups who will intercede and it will be accepted: (a) Prophets, (b) Learned man of religion and (c) Martyrs (who have laid their lives on the path of Lord." [48].

Imam Ali (a.s.) has advised his son Mohammad bin Hanafia thus:

اِقْبَلْ مِنْ مُتَنَصِّلٍ عُذْرَه فَتَنَالُكَ الشَّفَاعَةُ.

"Accept the excuse of those who plead so that, intercession for you will be accepted." [49].

It is clear from the saying of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) one who will not forgive the faults of brother in faith in spite of his asking forgiveness that person's intercession is not possible, the reason being that if he does not forgive the fault of others how can he expect the Lord to forgive him on the day of judgement. Perhaps even Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) must have mentioned thus:

"مَنْ لَاَيَرْحَمْ لَاَيُرْحَمْ"

"Those who withhold mercy, mercy will not be showered on them."

Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has narrated from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) thus:

اِذَا قُمْتُ الْمَقَامَ الْمَحْمُوْدَ تَشَفَّعْتُ فِيْ اَصْحَابِ الْكَبَائِرِ مِنْ اُمَّتِيْ فَيَشْفَعْنِيْ اللّٰهُ فِيْهِمْ وَ اللّٰهُ لاَ تَشَفَّعْتُ فِيْمَنْ اَذَيٰ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ.

"When I will be placed on Maqamul Mahmud (مقامو المحمود) I will intercede that person of my nation who has committed greater sins. Surely Lord will not accept my intercession for those people who have harassed and inflict my progeny." [50].

Imam Husain (a.s.) narrates that when he left Madina for Karbala he saw the prophet in his dream who said:

حَبِيْبِيْ يَا حُسَيْنُ كَاَنِّي اَرَاكَ عَنْ قَرِيْبٍ مُرَمَّلاً بِدِمَائِكَ مَذْبُوْحًا بِاَرْضِ كَرْبَلَآءَ عَلٰي اَيْدِيْ عِصَابَةٌ مِنْ اُمَّتِي وَ اَنْتَ مَعَ ذٰلِكَ يَرْجُوْنَ شَفَاعَتِيْ لاَ يَنَالُهُمْ وَ اللّٰهُ شَفَاعَتِيْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

"My dear Husain I see you bathed in your blood and a group of my Ummat has slaughtered you in a state of thirst, in spite of this they hope for my intercession (no my son) Lord will never accept my intercession for them on the day of judgement." [51].

Forth Imam Zainul Aabedin narrates in one of his dua,

فَاِنِّيْ لَمْ آتِكَ ثَقَتْ مِنِّيْ بِعَمَلٍ صَالِحٍ قَدَّمْتُه وَلاَ شَفَاعَةِ مَخْلُوْقٍ رَجَوْتُه اِلاَّ شَفَاعَةَ مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ اَهْلِ بَيْتِه عَلَيْهِ وَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَلَاْمُكَ.

"I come not before Thee trusting in a righteous work I have sent ahead, nor in the intercession of any creature in whom I have hope, except the intercession of Muhammad and the Folk of his House(upon him and upon them be Thy peace)."

And in another dua he says,

صَلِّ عَلٰي مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ آلِه وَاجْعَل تَوَسُّلِيْ بِه شَافِعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ نَافِعًا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ اَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ.

"O Lord sends blessing on Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) and is progeny (a.s.), and on the day of judgement accept recommendation of intercession which will be beneficial to me, surely You are most Merciful."

Imam Mohammad Baqir (a.s.) narrates:

يَشْفَعُ الرَّجُلُ فِيْ الْقَبِيْلَةِ وَ يَشْفَعُ الرَّجُلُ لِاَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ وَ يَشْفَعُ الرَّجُلُ لِلرَّجُلَيْنِ عَلٰي قَدْرِ عَمَلِه فَذٰلِكَ الْمَقَامُ الْمَحْمُوْدُ.

"Every person (believer) will do intercession for others on the strength of his good action it is possible that he alone can intercede for a tribe, or for his family members or for a single person and the right to intercede is termed "مقام محمود" (as referred in Quran)." [52].

A Tradition relates that a person named Abu Aiman came to Imam Baqir (a.s.) and said that few people from deviate the others saying that will be receive the intercession of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) on the day of judgement (and will be forgiven) but the fact is every body will receive punishment or reward according to their actions. Imam became angry and the expression on his face changed and he said,

وَيْحَكَ يَا اَبَا اَيْمَنْ اَغَرَّكَ اِنْ عَفَّ بَطْنُكَ وَ فَرْجَكَ اَمَاْ وَاللّٰهِ لَوْ قَدْ رَاَيْتَ اِفْزَاعَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَقَدِ احْتَجْتَ اِلٰي شَفَاعَةِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَيْلَكَ وَهَلْ يَشْفَعُ اِلاَّ لِمَنْ قَدْ وَجَبَتْ لَهُ النَّارُ؟

"Woe be unto you, O Abu Aiman! Do you think that by saving yourself from the sins of hunger and lust your become proud. By Allah when you witness the intensities and the calamites of day of judgement you will really know the importance of the Prophet's intercession (and you will need his intercession), woe on you will anybody who deserve hell can except to get intercession?"

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (a.s.) narrates:

وَ اللّٰهُ لَنَشْفَعَنَّ لِشِيْعَتِنَا وَ اللّٰهُ لَنَشْفَعَنَّ لِشِيْعَتِنَا حَتّٰي يَقُوْلَ النَّاسُ فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِيْنَ وَلَاْصَدِيْقٍ حَمِيْمٍ.

"By Allah he will intercede for our Shias, by Allah we will surely intercede for our Shias, till that extent (our enemies) they will shout that there is nobody to do our intercession or help us." [53].

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

لِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ خَمْسُ سَاعَاتٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَشْفَعُ فِيْهَا.

"On the day of judgement five hours are fixed for a believer so that he can intercession for others." [54].

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

مَنْ اَنْكَرَثَلاَ ثَةَ اَشْيَاءٍ فَلَيْسَ مِنْ شِيْعَتِنَا اَلْمِعْرَاجَ وَ الْمَسَائِلَةَ فِي الْقَبْرَ وَ الشَّفَاعَةَ.

"One who refutes this three things he is not from our Shias: (1) Ascension (Meraj) of our Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), (2) Questioning in the grave and (3) Intercession."

Imam Ali al-Reza (a.s.) narrated from Ameerul Momineen Ali (a.s.) that he said that:

مَنْ كَذَبَ بِشَفَاعَةِ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ صَلّي اللهُ عَلَهْه وَ آلِهِ وَ سَلَّمُ لَمْ تَنِلْه.

"Person who negates the intercession of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) he will never be interceded."

Two important points regarding above mentioned traditions

It is evident that the concept of intercession is not the idea of a particular sect but is found in the all Muslim Ummat.

This is also evident from the above traditions that everybody has not the right to do or receive intercession, but with special conditions. One must not deduce that a person becomes careless in committing sins as there will be no punishment for the sin, definitely it is not as the think but those who have faith in intercession, their faith is well-founded and his helplessness and hopelessness is change into hope, thus he take the step not towards evil but towards good. So let us examine those personalities who are a termed as "Intercessor of the day of judgement"

Two types of intercession

According to the traditions there will be two categories of interceder:

(1) Those intercessor who have bodies and soul and who have an esteem position in His eyes and who are termed as intercessor.

(2) Those who do not possess body and soul cannot be termed as interceder but have a few characteristic by which they can be termed as interceder, we only termed below six such interceder which are very important and acceptable.

Deeds eligible for intercession

(1) Fast:

As Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

اَلصِّيَامُ وَ الْقُرْآنُ يَشْفَعَانِ لِلْعَبْدِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

"Fasts and recitation of Quran will intercede us on the day of judgement for those people."[55]

(2) Namaaz and His obedience:

Said by Maula Ali (a.s.) in Nahjul Balagah:

فَاجْعَلُوا طَاعَةَ اللهِ شَفِيْعًا لِدَرْكِ طَلِبَتِكُمْ.

'"For your needs make His obedience as your interceder.

(3) Forgiveness and excuse for sins:

Maula Ali (a.s.) said in Nahjul Balagah:

لاَ شَافِعَ اَنْجَحُ مِنَ الْاِعْتِذَارِ.

"No interceder more worthy than those who plead."

(4) Trustworthiness:

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said one out of six deeds will be trustworthy.[56]

(5) Sending greetings on Mohammad (s.a.w.a.) and His progeny (a.s.):

Imam Ali Ibn Husain (Imam Sajjad) (a.s.) in his dua no. 31 of Sahife Sajjadia:

وَ صُلِّ عَلٰي مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ آلِه صَلٰوةً تَشْفَعُ لَنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ يَوْمَ الْفَاقَةِ اِلَيْكَ.

"O Lord! Send blessing on Mohammad (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny (a.s.) such blessings which will do our intercession on the day of judgement."

(6) Qur'an:

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

تَعَلَّمُوْا الْقُرْآنَ فَاِنَّه شَافِعٌ لِاَصْحَا بِه يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

"Learn the Holy Qur'an as it will act as intercessor on the day of judgement for those who are intimate with Qur'an."

Interceding personalities

(1) Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.):

The status of our Prophet is such that the creation and existence of World and its end depends on him. Allah (s.w.t.) has addressed him in Surah Zoha : verse 5

وَ لَسَوْفَ يُعْطِيْكَ رَبُّكَ فَتَرْضٰي.

"And soon will your Lord give you so that you shall be well pleased."

In Surah Bani Israel : verse 79,

عَسٰي اَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَحْمُوْدًا.

"Maybe your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory."

In Surah Nisa, Verse 63 and Surah Maryam, Verse 78, Surah Zukhruf, Verse 86, Surah Munafequn, Verse 5, it is evident from above verses that Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is the intercessor on the day of judgement.

(2) Hazrat Ameerul Momeneen Ali (a.s.):

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said thus,

اِنِّيْ لَاَشْفَعُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَاُشْفَعُ وَ يَشْفَعُ عَلِيٌّ فَيُشْفَعُ.

"Without doubt on the day of judgement I will intercede and it will be accepted, Ali (a.s.) will do intercession and it will also be accepted."

Imam Ali (a.s.) himself has said:

لَنَا شَفَاْعَةٌ وَلِاَهْلِ مُوَدَّتِنَا شَفَاعَةٌ.

"Surely we will intercede and also those who love us will intercede."

(3) Hazrat Fatemah Zahra (s.a.):

She will be the third personalities who will intercede as the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

اَيُّمَا اِمْرَاَةٌ صَلَّتْ فِيْ الْيَوْمِ وَ الْلَيْلِ خَمْسَ صَلَوَاتٍ وَ صَامَتْ شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ وَ حَجَّتْ بَيْتَ اللهِ الْحَرَامِ وَ زَكَّتْ مَالَهَا وَ اَطَاعَتْ زَوْجَهَا وَ وَالَتْ عَلِيًّا بَعْدِيْ دَخَلَتِ الْجَنَّةَ بِشَفَاعَةِ ابْنَتِيْ فَاطِمَةُ.

"Whichever lady prays five times a day, and fast for the Month of Ramazan, performs Hajj, pays Zakaat and obeys her husband and loves Ali after my death she will enter Heaven by my daughter Fatemah Zahra (s.a.)."[57]

(4) Progeny of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said

وَ يَشْفَعُ اَهْلُ بَيْتِي فَيَشْفَعُوْنَ.

"My progeny will intercede and their intercession will be accepted."

He also said:

اَلشُّفَعَاءُ خَمْسَةٌ ... وَ نَبِيُّكُمْ وَ اَهْلُ بَيْتِ نَبِيِّكُمْ.

"Intercession is of five types …… Firstly your prophet and secondly progeny of your prophet will also intercede."

(5) Prophets (a.s.):

Following verses from Quran indicate their intercession Surah Ambiya : verses 26-28, Surah Zukhruf : verse 86, even Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

يَشْفَعُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ فِي كُلِّ مَنْ كَانَ يَشْهَدُ اَنْ لاَّ اِلَهَ اِلاَّ اللهُ مُخْلِصًا.

"All the prophets will intercede for those who have borne witness with sincerity there is no god but Allah."

(6) Angels:

It is also proved from Holy Quran e.g. Surah Najm : verse 26, traditions from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

يَشْفَعُ النَّبِيُّوْنَ وَ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ.

"The prophets and angels will intercede."

And there are many traditions regarding the intercession of angels.

(7) Martyrs of Islam:

Those people who have offered their lives on the path of Allah (s.w.t.) surely Lord will give them right to intercede. Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said thus:

يَشْفَعُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ اَلْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْعُلَمَاءُ ثُمَّ الشُّهَدَاءُ.

"On the day of judgement first the prophets, then the learned man and then the martyrs will intercede."[58]

At some other place he (s.a.w.a.) said:

يَشْفَعُ الْشَّهِيْدُ فِي سَبْعِيْنَ اِنْسَانًا مِنْ اَهْلِ بَيْتِه.

"A martyr will intercede for seventy persons from among his relatives."[59]

(8) Learned persons of religion:

Those scholars who have given up every thing to raise the Islam to its position, and scarified themselves to give light to the people, surely they have right to intercede. As Hazrat Ali (a.s.) has narrated from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that he said:

ثَلاَثَةٌ يَشْفَعُوْنَ اِلَي اللهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ فَيُشْفَعُوْنَ اَلْأَنْبِيَاءُ ثُمَّ الْعُلَمَاءُ ثُمَّ الشُّهَدَاءُ.

"Three types of people who will intercede will be first Prophets, second learned people, third martyrs."[60]

There are many traditions but we quote here only one,

اِذَا كَانَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ بَعَثَ اللهُ الْعَالِمَ وَ الْعَابِدَ فَاِذَا وَ قَفَا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ قِيْلَ لِلْعَابِدِ اِنْطَلَقَ اِلَي الْجَنَّةِ وَ قِيْلَ لِلْعَالِمِ قِفْ تَشْفَعْ لِلْنَّاسِ بَحُسْنِ تَأْدِيْبِكَ بِهِمْ.

"On the day of judgement Lord will summon the learned and the pious He will order the pious to go and enter Heaven and than He will address learned to wait and do intercession for others, as he you have brought them up well in the world."[61]

(9) Quran – those who learn, memorize and act on it:

Maula Ali (a.s.) narrates with reference to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) that:

مَنْ قَرَاءَ الْقُرْآنَ فَاسْتَظْهَرَه فَاَحَلَّ حَلاَلَه وَ حَرَّمَ حَرَاْمَه اَدْخَلَهُ اللهُ بِهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَ شَفَعَه فِيْ عَشْرَةٍ مِنْ اَهْلِ بَيْتِه كُلُّهُمْ قَدْوَجَبَتْ لَهُ النَّارُ.

"Person who learns Quran, memorize it and understands its lawful as lawful and unlawful as unlawful and also act on it, then God will make them enter Heaven and give them right to intercede for ten of his relatives who deserved to receive His punishment."[62]

(10) Even Lord Himself intercedes:

We read in tradition that Lord Himself will intercede and free them from fire of hell. Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) narrates that

يَشْفَعُ النَّبِيُّوْنَ وَ الْمَلاَئِكَةُ وَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ فَيَقُوْلُ الْجَبَّارُ بَقِيَتْ شَفَاعَتِيْ.

"Prophets, angels and the believers will do intercession Lord will say now My intercession is remaining for those who have yet not being interceded."[63]

It is difficult to comprehend how Lord can do intercession, we can see from this line of supplication of Imam Sajjad (a.s.)

حُبِّيْ لَكَ شَفِيْعِيْ اِلَيْكَ.

"My love towards Thee, is my interceder."[64]

At another place, he (s.a.w.a.) said,

لاَ شَفِيْعَ لِيْ اِلَيْكَ فَلْيَشْفَعْ لِيْ فَضْلُكَ.

"In Thy presence there is no interceder of mine, therefore make Your grace and mercy my intercessor."[65]

In Surah Zumar: verse 44 Allah (s.w.t.) said that,

قُلْ للهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيْعًا.

"Say: (O messenger!) Allah's is the intercession altogether."

Intercession for whom

It is evident from the Quranic verses and the traditions of the infallibles that on the day of judgement intercession is only for those who have faith with a pure heart and for those who harbour no enmity towards the progeny of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.).

Minimum requirements for intercession are three

(1) Tauheed – Having complete faith in unity of Allah.

(2) Nabuwat – believe the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) as the seal of the prophets

(3) Love towards Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) progeny and aversion towards their enemy.

Beside these there are other sins which make intercession invalid we will list below group of such unfortunate persons.

No intercession for unbeliever and polytheist

The proof are the following verses of Quran, namely in Surah Aaraaf : verse 53, Surah Shoaraa : verses 98-101, and also from the traditions. Quoting an incident Imam Husain (a.s.) narrates that one day a group of Jews came to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) with a few questions, when the question of intercession arose the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

وَ اَمَّا شَفَاعَتِيْ فَفِيْ اَهْلِ الْكَبَائِرِ مَا خَلاَ اَهْلُ الشِّرْكِ وَ الظُّلْمِ.

"As far as the question of my intercession is there my intercession will also be there for the great sinners, but not for polytheist and the tyrants."[66]

No intercession for tyrants and oppressor

In Surah Aaraaf : verse 18 the Holy Quran says :

مَا لِلظَّالِمِيْنَ مِنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَلاَ شَفِيْعٍ يُطَاعُ.

"The unjust shall not have any compassionate friend nor any intercessor who should be obeyed."

This verse should be read by those persons who favour Yazid, (who is the greatest despot) who write and say in his favour. Even Lord has cursed the tyrants on many places as it is recommended to favour the oppressed it also recommended to curse the oppressor.

No intercession for the enemies of the progeny of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

There are numerous traditions regarding this topic, but we only quote one tradition.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

لَوْ اَنَّ الْمَلاَئِكَةَ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ وَالْاَنْبِيَاءَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ شَفَعُوْا فِيْ نَاصِبٍ مَّا شَفَعُوْا.

"If (it is just an imagination) even sacred angels and prophets intercede for the enemies of the progeny of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) Allah (s.w.t.) refute or reject their intercession."[67]

No intercession for those who harass the progeny of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

اِذَا قُمْتُ الْمَقَامَ الْمَحْمُوْدَ تَشَفَّعْتُ فِيْ اَصْحَابِ الْكَبَائِرِ مِنْ اُمَّتِيْ فَيَشْفَعْنِيْ اللهُ فِيْهِمْ وَاللهِ لاَ تَشَفَّعْتُ فِيْمَنْ آذيٰ ذُرِّيَّتِي.

"When I will be placed on a lofty status of intercession then I will intercede for the greater sinners of my nation and Lord will even accept my intercession, by Allah He will not intercede for those persons who have harassed and troubled my progeny."[68]

No intercession for who do not believe in the successorship of Ameerul Momeneen (a.s.) and his infallible sons

There are many traditions but we only quote here one. Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) quotes from his father and he from his father and so on, the main source being Hazrat Ali (a.s.) who has heard from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) who said that persons eligible, who are of four types.

No intercession for those who do not believe in intercession

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

مَنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِشَفَاعَتِيْ فَلاَيْنَا لُه شَفَاعَتِيْ.

"Those who do not have faith in my intercession will be deprived from it."[69]

Imam Ali Reza (a.s.) has also said:

مَنْ كَذِبَ بِشَفَاعَةِ رَسُوْلِ اللهِ لَمْ يَنِلْهُ.

"Those who do not believe in the intercession of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) they will not be interceded."[70]

No intercession for people who usurp the trusts

Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said:

مَنْ غَشَّ الْعَرَبَ لَمْ يَدْخُلْ فِيْ شَفَاعَتِيْ.

"Those who cheat the Arab they will not receive my intercession."[71]

(In this tradition the word "Arab" is only for an example) otherwise to cheat any Muslim or to digest his trusts is such a great sin by which there will no intercession for him.

No intercession for those who take Namaz lightly

We only quote here one out of many traditions on this topic. Imam Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

لاَ يَنَالُ شَفَاعَتُنَا مَنِ اسْتَخَفَّ بِالصَّلٰوةِ.

"Those who consider namaz as a trifle affair will not receive our intercession."[72]

Those sins which delay intercession

It is evident from the traditions that there are certain sins by which intercession will be prolonged and due to this they will have to bear the punishment for longer time and then only they will be interceded for e.g. Fornication, the intercession will be delayed for the believer. Imam Sadeq (a.s.) said thus:

فَوَ اللهِ لاَ تَنَالُ شَفَاعَتُنَا اِذَا رَكَبَ هٰذَا (يَعْنِي اَلزِّنَا) حَتَّي يُصِيْبَه اَلَمِ الْعَذَابِ وَ يَرَيٰ هَوْلَ جَهَنَّمٍ.

"By Allah (s.w.t.) our intercession for a fornicator will not be up to that time till he has not tasted grievous punishment. Beside this other sins like, interest, false narration, backbiting, having attraction towards base action, and to be infatuated towards music, will not be easily interceded."[73]

Those actions which expatiate intercession

There are such few good action by virtue of which there is no delay in his intercession. We quote below a few deeds so that the readers may be inclined to do such actions by which they will be eligible for intercession.

(1) Belief in His unity with a pure heart

It goes without saying that the soul of good action is a pure heart, one who has it his small action will be sufficient for his salvation, therefore Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

يَسْتَحِقُّ النَّاسُ بِشَفَاعَتِيْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ قَالَ لاَ اِلٰه اِلاَّ اللهُ خَالِصًا مِنْ قَلْبِه.

"Those person who utter لا اله الا الله *from the bottom of the heart they will be the first to receive my intercession on the day of judgement."*[74]

(2) Long prostration in His presence

By this, believers will be eligible for a quick intercession by the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). A person asked the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) for a promise to intercede to which Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replied that

فَاَعِنِّي بِكَثْرَةِ الْسُّجُوْدِ.

"If you want my quick intercession then help me with your long prostration."[75]

(3) To send blessing on Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his progeny (a.s.)

We quote here one out of many traditions from Musnud Ibn Ahmed, vol. 4, p. 108, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said that:

مَنْ صَلَّي عَلٰي مُحَمَّدٍ وَّ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَ جَبَتْ لَه شَفَاعَتِيْ.

"Those who send blessings on me and my progeny (a.s.) it will be incumbent on me to intercede for him."

(4) To dole out the services to a brother in faith

Although to help mankind in general is a good act but the status of one who helps his fellow brother is something greater. We only relate one out of many traditions, Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) has said: There will be a queue for the people of heaven, the people of hell will be make to pass by, a person among the hell will address to the person from the heaven O the son of "so an so" don't you remember that when your were thirsty I quenched your thirst, he will say yes I remember, to which the person of hell will ask him towards his intercession and Lord will also accept it. This incident throws the light on the importance of service to a believer, and to help him in all possible way makes him eligible for intercession. We hope after reading this, you will not shirk from helping a believer.

(5) Be prompt in forgiveness

World is aware of the saying, "you will reap as you sow". So, be prompt in forgiveness if you want a prompt intercession. Hazrat Ali (a.s.) advised his son Mohammad bin Hanafia,

اِقْبَلْ مِنْ مُتَنَصِّلٍ عُذْرَه فَتَنَالُكَ الشَّفَاعَةُ.

"Forgive promptly the one who asks forgiveness from you so that Lord may accept your intercession immediately."[76]

Besides this, there are other good deeds too, by virtue of which your intercession will be accepted. Below we quote a few, viz.:

a) To propagate the education of Holy Quran

b) To make public the recognition of the progeny of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.)

c) To strengthen the relation between the fellow believers

d) To help the poor and the needy as per your capacity

e) To bear the calamities with patience and perceiveness.

f) To behave nobly towards neighbours and people in vicinity.

Lastly we lay stress on the most important point i.e. never be careless towards the laws laid down by the Lord. Remember that your actions will be your first intercessor to help you from the grave to the day of judgement, do not let your lethargic behaviour can deprive you from intercession.

Faith in intercession generates hope in humans and lightens the path towards optimism. To obtain perpetual happiness one must never forget that intercession creates in him hope of His grace and mercy and thereby enters heaven ——— our last abode.

Shafa'at

Distribute free of charge seeking Allah's pleasure.

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[1] Surah Baqarah (2): Verse 7.

[2] Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 41, pg. 59, Chap. 106, Tr. No. 1.

[3] Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 129.

[4] Surah Baqarah (2), Verse 254.

[5] Surah Baqarah (2), Verse 255.

[6] Surah Zukhruf (**43**), Verse 67.

[7] Surah Baqarah (2) Verse 48

[8] Surah Baqarah (2) Verse 123

[9] Surah Maidah (5) : Verse 18

[10] Surah Baqarah (2) Verse 111

[11] Surah Baqarah (2) Verses 111 & 112

[12] Surah Aaraaf (7) verse : 73

[13] Surah Shurah (26) verses : 98-101

[14] Surah Muddassir (74) verses : 46-48

[15] Surah Anaam (6) : verse 94

[16] Surah Yunus (10) : verse 18

[17] Surah Rom (30) : verse 13

[18] Surah Yaasin (36) : verse 23

[19] Surah Anaam (6) : verse 51

[20] Surah Anaam (6) : verse 70

[21] Surah Sajdah (32) : verse 4

[22] Surah Zumar (39) : verse 44

[23] Surah Zumar (39) : verse 43

[24] Surah Baqarah (2) : verse 255

[25] Surah Yunus (10) : verse 3

[26] Surah Maryam (19) : verse 87

[27] Surah Ta Ha (20) : verse 109

[28] Surah Sabah (34) : verse 23

[29] Surah Zukhruf (43) : verse 86

[30] Surah Ambiya (21) : Verses 26-28

[31] Surah Najm (53) : Verse 26

[32] Surah Momeen (40) : Verse 7

[33] Surah Bani Israel (17) : Verse 79

[34] Surah Zoha (93) : Verse : 4-5

[35] Refer Sonan Ibn Maajah, vol. 2, p. 1440; Musnad Ibn Ahmad, p. 281, Muta Malik, p. 166, Sunan Tirmizi, vol. 5, p. 238; Sahih Muslim p. 31; Sahih Bhukhari, vol. 8-9, p. 170.

[36] Musnad Ibn Ahmad, vol. 1, p. 1301 and vol. 4, p. 246; Sunan Sanai, vol. 1, p. 172; Sahih Bhukhari, vol. 1, p. 92 and p. 119.

[37] Musnad Ibn Ahmad, vol 2, p. 528; Sunan Tirmizi, vol. 4, p. 325.

[38] Sunan Tirmizi, vol. 5, p. 238; Sunan Dareme, vol. 1 p. 126 and p. 67.

[39] Sunan Maajah, vol. 2, p. 441.

[40] Musnah ibn Ahmad, vol. 6, p. 428.

[41] Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, p. 122; and Sahih Bhukhai, vol. 8, p. 143.

[42] Sunan Ibn Maajah vol. 2, p. 1443.

[43] Musnad Ibn Ahmad, vol. 3, p. 500.

[44] Musnad Ibn Ahmad, vol. 4, p. 108.

[45] Manaqib Ibn Shahar Aashub, vol. 2, p. 15; and Majmul Bayaan, vol. 1, p. 104

[46] Majmul Bayaan, vol. 1, p. 392

[47] Khesaal-e-Suduq, p. 624

[48] Khesaal-e-Suduq, p. 156

[49] Manla Yazharal Faqhi, vol. 4, p. 279

[50] Aamali-e-Suduq, p. 177

[51] Makatebul Aimah, vol. 2, p. 41

[52] Usoole Kafi, vol. 8, p. 101

[53] Manaqib Ibn Shahar Aashub vol. 2, p. 14

[54] Sifaat us-Shia by Shaikh Saduq, p. 181

[55] Musnad Ibn Ahmad, vol. 2, p. 274.

[56] Manaqib Ibn Shahar Aashub, vol. 2, p. 14

[57] Amaali-e-Suduq, p. 291

[58] Jaameus Sagheer, vol. 1, pg. 434.

[59] Kanzul Ummaal, vol. 4, pg. 405.

[60] Mizaanul Hikmah, vol. 2, pg. 1474.

[61] Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 8, pg. 56, Tr. No. 66.

[62] Sunan-e-Tirmizi, vol. 4, pg. 245.

[63] Saheeh Bukhaari, vol. 9, pg. 160.

[64] Sahifah Sajjaadiyyah.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Khesaal-e-Suduq, p. 355

[67] Mahaasin of Barqi, p. 184.

[68] Amaali of Shaikh Sadooq (a.r.), pg. 370.

[69] Amaali-e-Suduq, p. 5

[70] Ayoone Akhbaar-e-Reza, vol. 2, p. 66

[71] Musnad-e-Ahmad, vol. 1, pg. 72.

[72] Usool-e-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 270

[73] Usul-e-Kaafi, vol. 5, pg. 469.

[74] Sahih Bukhaari, vol. 1, pg. 36.

[75] Behaarul Anwaar, vol. 22, pg. 87, Tr. No. 39.

[76] Manla Yazharal Faqih, vol. 4, p. 279.