



# The ‘Aqidah of Fada’il A’mal

Refuting Baseless Objections



**Shaykh Muhammad bin Mawlana Harun**

The 'Aqidah of Fada'il A'mal: Refuting Baseless Objections  
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## Compiler's Note

Few years ago, a questioner sent a series of objections against the 'aqidah promoted by *Fada'il al-A'mal* to the Dar al-Ifta' at Madrasah In'amiyyah Camperdown, South Africa. Shaykh Muhammad, senior hadith lecturer and head of the Faculty of Specialty in Hadith Sciences at the *madrassah* responded to the objections raised in a systematic manner against the barometer of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa 'l-Jama'ah. The answers and proofs provided by the Shaykh proves that not only is the 'aqidah of *Fada'il al-A'mal* correct and sound but in fact the existence of *abdals*, the reality of *kashf* and *ilham*, and the inhabitants of the grave having the ability to hear and see the living, are all beliefs upheld by the majority of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa 'l-Jama'ah.

*Fada'il al-A'mal* is that book written by one of the great hadith scholars of recent times and although many have objected to various issues about the book it has been widely accepted by all. Many objections have been answered by Shaykh `Abdullah Ma'rufi, hadith lecturer at Dar al-'Ulum Deoband, in his book *Objection on Fada'il al-A'mal: A Basic Analysis*. His book has been translated to English and is widely available. Shaykh Ma'rufi's book discusses in detail concerning the usage of *da'if* hadith amongst other common objections whilst this treatise exclusively deals with the 3 aspects mentioned previously.

We have simply formatted the original work of Shaykh Muhammad and compiled it under different headings for ease of referencing. Also, at the end we have included a brief introduction to *Fada'il al-A'mal* taken from the book of Shaykh Ma'rufi.

We request you to forward any suggestions or corrections for future editions. We also request you to remember the author of *Fada'il al-A'mal*, and this treatise and all those involved in the service of *din* in your *du'as*.

`Abd Allah bin Muhammad Afriqui  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
19 Muharram 1434 H  
3 December 2012 C

## Introduction

All praise is due to Allah who through his infinite mercy and wisdom revealed the glorious Qur'an for the guidance of mankind. Peace and salutations be showered on Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) who was sent as a practical example of eternal success in this world as well as the hereafter.

It was always the system of Allah that he had chosen his special slaves in every era for the protection, spreading and upliftment of his *din*. Whilst the forces of *batil* (falsehood) would strive to mislead people, Allah chose the great *muhaddithin* (hadith experts), *mufasssirin* (exegetes) and *'ulama* who would make an all out effort to shun away the evil of such misleading people. It is no surprise that even in our present day and age, there are many such people whose sole purpose and object is to confuse, complicate and puzzle the minds of the ordinary masses. They will make big claims and call themselves whatever they wish to, but alas! Their aim and target is to corrupt the beliefs of people, so as to leave them in utter bewilderment. Such beliefs which have been clearly and explicitly expounded by Allah in the Qur'an and which have been explained to us in the ahadith by Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace), but alas! Not only do they deny such beliefs, instead they wish to brainwash the minds of others to fall into the trap that they have been misled into. May Allah guide and save us all. *Amin!*

With regards to the specific question under discussion, there seems to have stemmed a group of people who are trying to mislead everyone into believing that the book *Fada'il al-A`mal* [of Shaykh Muhammad Zakariyyah al-Kandhalwi] entails 'baseless stories' and 'corrupted beliefs'. Written by a great renown research scholar and luminary of our recent times, this is not just an attack on the book itself, but more on us as Muslims and our beliefs.

The objector has extracted 4 quotations from *Fada'il al-A`mal*. Thereafter, the objector, in essence has trounced upon 3 major beliefs, i.e. a) The existence of *abdals*, b) The reality of *kashf* or *ilham*, c) The inhabitants of the grave possessing the ability to see and hear the living. The objector wishes to deceive the public into believing that these are baseless and corrupt beliefs and it is hence deduced there from that *Fada'il al-A`mal* promotes misguidance and deviant stories.

Hereunder, we will discuss each one of these 3 beliefs in detail with proofs from the Qur'an, Hadith and other sources to prove that these are beliefs which have been clearly expounded and supported by the Qur'an, hadith and the great *'ulama* and *muhaddithin*.

We would also expose the fact that many such incidents and quotations have been recorded by other illustrious scholars so as to prove that it was due to ignorance that these objections were made. An Arabic proverb states, "A man always opposes something which he is ignorant of."

## The Objection

We reproduce here the “objections” raised by the objector verbatim:

**QUOTE 1:** Moulana Zakariyah mentions in Fazaail-e-Hajj, “Once one of the Abdaal met Khidr and inquired from him whether he had ever met anyone among the saints whom he considered higher in rank than himself. To this he replied, ‘Yes, I have. I was present once in the Masjid in Medina, where I saw Hazrat Shaikh Abdur Razzak directing Hadeeth to his students. On one side was a young man sitting with his head bent on his knees. I went to him and addressed him thus, ‘do you not see the gathering listening to the words of Rasoolullah. Why do you not join them?’ Without lifting up his head or turning in my direction the youth answered: “Over there you see those who listen to the Hadeeth from the mouth of Abdur-Razzak (the slave of the sustainer), while over here you see him who listens to Hadeeth directly from Ar-Razzak (Allah).” Khidr said to him, “If what you say is true then you should be able to tell me who I am. Who am I?” He lifted up his head and said, ‘If my intuition does not fail me then you are Khidr.’ Hazrat Khidr said, “From that I realized that among the saints of Allah there are such who are so exalted in rank that I cannot recognize them.”

[Fazaail-e-Aamaal, Virtues of Hajj, (Eng. Trans.), Chapter.9, story no.9, p.171, (New Edition 1982, Published by Dini Book Depot - Delhi).]

**NOTE:** The Deobandi translator of Ikhmaalush Shiyaam defines an Abdaal saying, “Abdaal are a class of Awliya whose identities remain concealed. They possess miraculous powers and execute a variety of tasks under Divine Command in various places of the world.” (Astagfir-Allah) [Ikhmaalush Shiyaam (Eng. Trans.) p.59.]

This Deviant Story Promotes that the false belief that someone can receive knowledge directly from Allah without the mediation of the Messenger (sallallahu alaihe wa-sallam) and to receive knowledge from Allah is something specific for the Messengers. This store make this so-called Abdaal equal to Prophet Moosa (alaihi-salam) and our Messenger Muhammed (sallaallahu alaihe wa-sallam) who spoke directly to Allah.

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**QUOTE 2:** Allah says in the Quraan, “Verily! Allah, with Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the womb. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows what land he will die. Verily, Allah is All-Knower, All-Aware.” [Soorah Luqman (31): 34] But the Fazaail Aamal says, “Abul Husain Maliki says that he associated with Shaikh Khair Nurbaaf for several years. The Shaikh said to him, eight days before his death. ‘I shall die on Thursday evening, at the time of Maghrib Salaat, and I shall be buried on Friday after Jumuah Salaat.” Although, he advised me not to forget, but I forgot about it and, on Friday morning, a man told me about the Shaikh’s death. I immediately went to his place... asked people the details of the Shaikh’s experience of death. A person... narrated to me that the Shaikh swooned for a while just before Maghrib Salaat. Then, he recovered somewhat and said to someone in the corner of the room, who was invisible to others, ‘Stop for a while; you have been commanded to do a thing and I have been commanded to do a thing. That which you are commanded to do (viz. to take my life) will not escape you, but that which I am commanded to do (viz. to observe Maghrib Sa-

laat) will escape me. Let me do as I am commanded.” He then called for water, made a fresh Wudhu and performed Maghrib Salaat. After this, he laid himself on the bed, closed his eyes and gave up his life.”

[Fazaail-e-Aamaal, (Eng. Trans.) Virtues of Charity, Chapter.6, p.609, (2nd South African Impression 1414-1993. Published by Waterval Islamic Institute)]

This Deviant Story Promotes that certain individuals know the place and time of their death and even make the Angel of Death wait until they have finished their prayers.

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**QUOTE 3:** Moulana Zakariyah mentions in Fazaail-e-Aamaal, Shaikh Abu Yazeed Qurtabi heard from someone that whoever recited it (the Kalimah: La-ilaha ill-Allah-ho) seventy thousand times he or she would be immune from the fire of the Hell. He completed a course accordingly for his wife and many other courses for himself. There lived a youth nearby who, it was said was ‘a man of Kashf’ and had the foreknowledge of the events of Paradise and Hell. One day it so happened that while sharing a meal with him he suddenly made a loud cry and began to gasp, and exclaimed that his mother had been cast into Hell (burning into the fire of Hell). Shaikh Qurtabi keenly observed the condition of the youth and decided to offer a course for his mother secretly so that the fact that the youth possessed a foreknowledge of the Unseen and the truth of his mother’s sad plight in Hell would be ascertained. The Shaikh said that he did it so secretly that nobody could know it, except the Almighty, Allah. But the youth soon expressed his gratitude and said that now his mother had got rid of the Fire of Hell.

[See, Fazaail-e-Aamaal, (Eng. Trans.), Virtues of Dhikr , Chapter.3 (Part - 3), p.59 (Edt. 1985, Published by Dini Book Depot - Delhi).]

In this Deviant Story, the knowledge of the conditions of Paradise and Hell-Fire and the knowledge of future events is claimed for the so-called ‘man of Kashf’. He is also aware of the matters between Allah and his slaves, and therefore shows gratitude to Shaikh Qurtubi, even though Shaikh Qurtubi “did it so secretly that nobody could know it, except the Almighty, Allah.”

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**QUOTE 4:** “Hazrat Ibn Jalaa relates, “While in Medina I once suffered tremendous hunger. It became so unbearable that I presented myself at the grave of Rasoolullah and said, “O Rasoolullah, I suffer great hunger. I am now your guest.” Thereafter, sleep overtook me and in a vision, I saw Rasoolullah give me a piece of bread. I ate half of it, and when I woke up, I found myself with the other half of that piece of bread still in my hands.”

[Fazaail-e-Aamaal, (Eng. Trans.), Virtues of Hajj, Chapter.9, story no.23, p.178, (New Edition 1982, Published by Dini Book Depot –Delhi)]

Yet in another story, three men fasted for days on end since they could not find food. One of them went to the grave of Rasoolullah and said: “O Rasoolullah hunger has overtaken us.” Soon afterwards ... “a man from Alawi family knocked at the door. We opened the door and found a man with two servants, each one carrying a large basket with many delicious foods.” The man from the Alawi family said before leaving, “You have complained about

hunger to Rasoolullah. I have seen Rasoolullah in a dream and he commanded me to bring food to you.”

[Fazaail-e-Aamaal, (Eng. Trans.), Virtues of Hajj, Chapter.9, p.177, story no.22, (New Edition 1982. Published by Dini Book Depot - Delhi).

Similar stories have been mentioned on p.179 (story no.27) and p.181 (story no.29)]

“Once a group of Arabs went to visit the grave of a very generous person and stayed there for the night. One of them in a dream saw the man of the grave who asked him to sell his camel for his Bakhti camel (Bakhti is a good kind of camel). The man agreed and the man of the grave stood and slaughtered the camel. When the man woke up, he found it bleeding. He slaughtered it and distributed the meat. When the group returned then at a stage, a man came riding a Bakhti camel and enquired whether among them was a man of such and such name. The man who saw the dream came forward and said he was that man. The man related his dream. The camel rider said the man of the grave was his father and he had directed him in a dream to give this camel to him. He gave the animal to the man and went away.”

Fazaail-e-Aamaal, (Eng. Trans.), Virtues of Charity, Chapter.7, story no.16, p.193, (New Edition 1982, Published by Dini Book Depot – Delhi).

These Stories teach that the inhabitants of the graves can help the living. This belief forms the basis for Grave Worshipping. The Fazaail-e-Aamaal promotes all these erroneous beliefs under the guise of virtues and exhortation. Those who expose themselves to the teachings of Fazaail-e-Aamaal which include believing that the engraved can hear, see and help the living, will undoubtedly weaken their Tawheed and establish hope in other than the One, Who Alone has the Power to benefit and harm. Given the claim of the Jamaat Tableegh that it reaches out to people, who are totally unaware of the religion, reading such stories from the Fazail Aamal to them will play havoc with their beliefs and further corrupt their religion.

## The Existence of Abdals

After quoting an extract (quote 1) from the book, *Fada'il al-A`mal*, the objector states:

**Note: The Deobandi translator of Ikhmaalush Shiyaam defines Abdaal saying, Abdaal are a class of Awliyaa whose identities remain concealed. They possess miraculous powers and execute a variety of tasks under Divine command in various places of the world.' (Ikhmaalush shiyaam Eng Trans p.59)**

The objector in his 'note' has quoted the definition of the *abdal* and thereafter refuted it by saying the words, 'Astaghfirullah'.

After realising his ignorance, perhaps, he should repeat the *istighfar*. The presence of the *abdal*, their extraordinary qualities and powers that Allah has availed to them is a fact that has been proven through various ahadith.

Hafiz al-Suyuti (Allah have mercy on him) has written a complete treatise regarding this topic in which he mentions, "There are several narrations regarding them. Among those are the narrations of:

1. `Umar ibn al-Khattaab,
2. `Ali ibn Abu Talib,
3. Hudhayfa,
4. Anas,
5. `Ubadah ibn Samit,
6. `Abdullah ibn `Abbas,
7. `Abdullah ibn `Umar,
8. `Abdullah ibn Mas'ud,
9. `Awf ibn Malik,
10. Mu'adh ibn Jabal,
11. Wathila ibn al-Asqa',
12. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri,
13. Abu Hurayra,
14. Abu 'l-Darda',
15. Umm Salmah (Allah be pleased with them all)

and many others which are impossible to be enumerated." (*al-Khabaru'd Dal* 2:455 of al-Hawi)

In fact, Hafiz al-Suyuti and others have accepted that the narrations concerning the *abdal* have reached the status of *tawatir* (highest form of authenticity).<sup>1</sup>

Hafiz ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (Allah have mercy on him) and others have also accepted the authenticity of some of the narrations in which the *abdal* are mentioned.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Nazm al-Mutanathir min al-hadithil mutawatir* p.231-2

From the above mentioned narrations, the hadith of Anas (Allah be pleased with him) has been classified as *hasan* (sound) by Hafiz al-Haythami, the hadith of `Ubadah ibn Samit (Allah be pleased with him) and the hadith of ibn `Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) has been classified as *sahih* (authentic) by Hafiz ibn `Arraq, the hadith of `Awf ibn Maalik (Allah be pleased with him) has been classified as *hasan* by ibn `Arraq. (*Tanzih al-Shari'ah* 2:307) and the hadith of `Ali is *hasan* according to al-Suyuti. (*al-La'aliy* 2:332) and Hafiz al-Sakhawi has regarded all its narrators as reliable. (*al-Maqasid al-Hasanah* pg.28)

The following is a list of some of those illustrious *'ulama* and *muhaddithin* that were regarded to be *abdals*, by the scholars of the classical times:

1. Imam `Abd al-Rahman ibn Abi Hatim,<sup>2</sup>
2. Imam Abu Muslim al-Khawlani,<sup>3</sup>
3. Imam Shafi'i,<sup>4</sup>
4. Yazid ibn al-Aswad,<sup>5</sup>
5. Imam Jabir ibn Marzuq,<sup>6</sup>
6. al-Qa'anabiy,
7. Hammad ibn Salamah,<sup>7</sup>
8. `Abd Allah ibn Mubarak<sup>8</sup>

From the above mentioned facts, it is firstly apparent that the existence of *abdals* are authentically proven by various illustrious *'ulama*, let alone in the numerous ahadith. Secondly, like the existence of the sun during broad daylight, similar is the case here with the *abdals*. However, this does not mean that these *abdals* are equal to the *anbiya'* (peace be upon them) as deduced by the objector from the story. The objector states:

**'This story makes this so called Abdaal equal to prophet Moosa (*Alayhis salaam*) and our messenger Muhammad (*Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam*) who spoke directly to Allah.'**

First of all, to be common in one aspect does not necessitate equality in everything. If a person dresses like a prophet, does this make both of them equal? Did any of the prophets fly planes? Today, so many people can fly planes. Does this make them better or more knowledgeable than the prophets? Secondly, there is a world of difference between the *abdals* and the *anbiya'* (peace be upon them) in this very same action of speaking directly to Allah. The manner in which the *anbiya'* (peace be upon them) speak to Allah is far more different from the one that is between the *abdals* and Allah. In fact, in the Qur'an, Allah states, "And your Lord said to the Ant ...." Would any person in his sane mind even dare to irrationally claim that this ant is equal to any of the messengers of Allah?

The details of this will be explained under the discussion of *kashf* (unveiling) and *ilham* (inspiration). In order to finally close the door on this discussion with regards to the *abdal*, we

<sup>2</sup> *Muqaddimah ibn al-Salah* p.421

<sup>3</sup> Khatib al-Baghdadi's *al-Jami'* p.382

<sup>4</sup> *al-Maqasid al-Hasanah* p.28 and *Tarikh Dimashq*

<sup>5</sup> *Tarikh Dimashq* 6:112

<sup>6</sup> Imam al-Bayhaqi's *al-Adab* p.326, hadith 985

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Hajar's *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* 3:13

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

will suffice on quoting just one hadith which will befittingly smash these objections into smithereens.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For a detailed study please view the thesis by Mufti Isma'il Musa of Madrasah In'aamiyyah, Camperdown entitled *Abdals and Aqtabs* [here](#)

## The Reality of Kashf

Hereunder, we discuss the second belief which the objector has trounced upon which is that of *kashf* and *ilham*. *Kashf* refers to divine manifestation whilst *ilham* means a divine inspiration. These are two powers given by Allah to whosoever he desires. This is not within the capacity, ability or choice of any individual. This deviant group of people have trounced the belief of *kashf* and *ilham* claiming that knowledge of the unseen and of future events is something that can only be attributed to Allah alone, not acknowledging the fact that sometimes, Allah can give certain of his special servants the power of foretelling and foreseeing some future events.

After quoting a story (quote 3) from the book, *Fada'il al-A'mal*, the objector and his group of followers state:

'In this deviant story, the knowledge of the conditions of paradise and hell-fire and the knowledge of future events is claimed for the so-called 'man of Kashf'. He is also aware of the matters between Allah and His slaves and therefore shows gratitude to Sheikh Qurtubi, even though Sheikh Qurtubi did it so secretly that nobody could know it, except the Almighty Allah.'

### *Kashf and Ilham according to the Mufassirin*

Allah says in the Qur'an, "(Allah is) the All-Knower of the unseen and he reveals not to anybody of his unseen. Except to a messenger whom he has chosen, then he makes a band of watching guards (angels) to march before him and behind him." (72:27)

We will now look at a brief study of how this verse has been interpreted by the vast majority of renown *mufassirin* (exegete). Almost all commentators of Qur'an have supported, included and explained the belief of *kashf* and *ilham* under this verse.

1) `Allamah Muhammad Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (Allah have mercy on him), a renown scholar and commentator of the 6<sup>th</sup> century states in his famous *Tafsir al-Kabir* that this verse has a special and specific meaning. However, he does not deny the belief of *ilham*. In fact, he openly promotes it where he states, "It must be carefully known that this verse does not mean that nobody else besides the prophets (peace be upon them) are given knowledge of the unseen. This can be supported from various realities (from amongst these realities, one of them as quoted by him is) we see this in the true *ilham* of the *awliya'*." (*Tafsir al-Kabir*, 15:170)

Yet, under another verse of the Qur'an, this very same great *mufassir* clearly explains that; "the meaning of angels befriending the believers is this that the angels cause *ta'sirat* (inspirations) in the souls of these (chosen) believers through *ilham* and *kashf*." Thereafter, he explicitly mentions that; "this is a well known fact experienced by people of *kashf* and *mushahadah* (witnessing)." (*Tafsir al-Kabir*, 14:124)

2) `Allamah `Ala al-Din `Ali ibn Muhammad al-Baghdadi (Allah have mercy on him), yet another known commentator of the seventh century openly declares in his *Tafsir al-Khazin*

under the above mentioned verse, “It is the belief of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa ‘l-Jama’ah that the miracles of *awliya’* are an established reality as opposed to by the Mu’tazilah and that this is *ja’iz* and possible. It is permissible and possible for Allah to give *ilham* (inspire) to some of his *awliya’* about some future events.’ (*Tafsir al-Khazin*, 4319)

3) Shaykh Abul ‘l-Hasan Ibrahim ibn ‘Umar al-Biqā’i (Allah have mercy on him), a scholar and commentator of the eighth century and a student of Hafiz ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani interprets the relevant verse in his *Nazm al-Durar* as follows’ “(knowledge of the unseen) is taken by an angel and given to whomsoever the angel has been permitted (to by Allah). Sometimes, in the form of *wahi* (divine revelation) to the prophets (peace be upon them) and sometimes in the form of inspiration and *ilham* to the *awliya’*.” (*Nazm al-Durar*, 8:199)

4) In the *tafsir* of Muhyi al-Din Shaykh Zadah which is an explanation to the famous and renowned *Tafsir al-Baydawi*. ‘Allamah Muhammad ibn Muslih al-Din Hanafi, a scholar of the ninth century writes, “The fact that this verse refers to Allah informing his chosen prophets (peace be upon them) of some of the unseen without the intervening of any angel does not deny Allah’s inspiring to the *awliya’* with regards to some of the unseen by means of *ilham*.’ (*Hashiyyah Shaykh Zadah*, 8:371)

The above mentioned commentaries thus far and including the one given hereunder also refute the objectors claim where, after quoting another story (quote 2) from *Fada’il al-A’mal*, he states:

‘The deviant story promotes that the false belief that someone can receive knowledge directly from Allah without the mediation of the messenger (Sallallaahu Alayhi Wasallam) and to receive knowledge from is something specific to the messengers.’

5) ‘Allamah Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Sawi al-Maliki (Allah have mercy on him), a commentator of the twelfth century, states in his famous and most widely accept *Hashiyyat al-Sawi*, an explanation to the great *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, “This verse does not defy the miracles performed by the *awliya’* through the power of *kashf*. This verse relates to Allah’s informing the prophets through *wahi*. This in turn (*wahi*) is far more stronger than Allah’s informing his *awliya’* through *ilham*.” (*Hashiyyat al-Sawi*, 6:185)

6) And, if per chance the above mentioned commentaries happen to coincidentally seem ‘strange’, rare and unknown then who can deny the popularity of *Ruh al-Ma’ani*? ‘Allamah Sayyid Mahmud Alusi al-Baghdadi (Allah have mercy on him) renown *mufassir* of the twelfth century clearly states that’ “this verse does not contradict miracles of the *awliya’* which take place by an angel inspiring knowledge of the unseen into the heart of the person.” (*Ruh al-Ma’ani*, 15:108)

7) Qadhi Shihab al-Din al-Khafaji (Allah have mercy on him), a commentator of the tenth century writes in *Hawashi Tafsir Baydawi* under the verse wherein Allah says; ‘Allah will not disclose to you the secrets of the *ghayb* (unseen), but Allah chooses of his messengers whom he wishes.” (3:179)

He states, "Allah does not inform everyone but he chooses whomsoever he wishes and gives him knowledge of the unseen. This is one of the signs which can be achieved through *firasah* (insight) and through divine inspiration (*ilham*) for some people of *kashf*." (*Hashiyat al-Shihab*, 3:168)

### *Kashf and Ilham in light of the Hadith*

These are 7 widely known and accepted commentaries of the Qur'an written by great researchers and scholars. All of them unanimously support and establish the belief of *kashf* and *ilham* as can be clearly seen. We will now take a brief look at some ahadith of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) that support this belief.

1) This hadith appears in *Sahih Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *Sunan Tirmidhi* and *Sunan Nasa'i*, hence, nobody may dare question its authenticity.

Abu Hurayra (Allah be pleased with him) reports that Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "Most certainly there existed amongst nations of the past such people who were *muhaddathun* (spoken to), if there had to be any such person in my nation, it certainly is 'Umar ibn Khattab (Allah be pleased with him)." (*Sahih Bukhari*, 1:521; *Sahih Muslim*, 2:276; *Sunan Tirmidhi*, 2:210)

The world needs no introduction to 'Allamah Hafiz ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani (Allah have mercy on him), neither can anybody deny the acceptance and popularity of his commentary *Fath al-Bari*. Explaining the above hadith and in particular the word *muhaddathun*, he writes,

"There is a difference of opinion with regards to the interpretation of this word. Most scholars say it refers to *ilham*. They further explain that it refers to such a person who is gifted with true and real thoughts. This means that such a person is inspired via the angels ..."

(*Fath al-Bari*, 7:62)

In his commentary of *Sahih Muslim*, Imaam Nawawi (Allah have mercy on him) a world renowned scholar of the past and present, states under the above mentioned hadith,

"There are different interpretations of this word *muhaddathun*. Ibn Wahb said it refers to *ilham*. Some say it refers to such a person whose thinking is always correct. This means that when such a person thinks, it is as though somebody spoke to him, therefore, he thinks accordingly. Some say it means angels speak to them..." (*Minhaj Sharh Sahih Muslim*, 15:162)

Imaam Tirmidhi (Allah have mercy on him) after narrating the above mentioned hadith quotes Sufyan ibn 'Uyayna (Allah have mercy on him) explaining the word *muhaddathun* to mean *mufahhamun* i.e. one who is made to understand. (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi* 2:210)

The author of the famous *Tuhfat al-Ahwazi*, a commentary on Tirmidhi states under the above mentioned hadith, 'After concurring with the interpretation by Hafiz ibn Hajar (Allah have mercy on him) as quoted earlier on', he adds on further, "Some say it means that angels speak to such people. This can well be supported from a hadith narrated by Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (Allah be pleased with him) that Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him

peace) was asked, ‘How will such people (*muhaddathun*) be spoken to?’ he (Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, ‘Angels will speak from his tongue.’”

It is clear from the above mentioned hadith, looking at the various interpretations by worldly renown scholars that the belief of *kashf* and *ilham* is well established and that in particular, `Umar (Allah be pleased with him), was bestowed with the power of *ilham* by Allah.

### *Kashf and Ilham of the Sahabah*

We will now look at a few incidents during the glorious era of Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the Sahabah. These incidents bear ample testimony to the fact that the belief of *kashf* and *ilham* is not only well established, but more so it is a reality and that some Sahabah were given these powers.

1) `Abd Allah ibn `Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that once a Sahabi (Allah be pleased with him) pitched up his tent on top of a grave, not realising that it was a grave. All of a sudden, this Sahabi began to hear the voice of an inhabitant of that grave reading *Surah Mulk* until he completed the entire *surah*. Thereupon, Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, “*Surah Mulk* is a barrier, it is a protector from the punishment of the grave.” (*Sunan Tirmidhi*, 2:117)

The apparent meaning of this hadith is that this Sahabi (Allah be pleased with him) was blessed by Allah with the power of *kashf* through which he was able to hear the inhabitant of the grave.

2) `Abd Allah ibn `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that once on the day of Jumu’ah, whilst `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) was delivering the *khutbah* (sermon), he (swerved off the topic and) suddenly said, “O Sariyyah! Hasten towards the mountain.” He said this three times and then continued with the *khutbah*. The people were confused and astonished at this. Later on, when he was asked as to what had transpired, he said, “I could see that the Muslim army was about to be defeated and at that time, they were walking past a mountain. If they had passed the mountain, the enemy would have defeated them but if they took to the mountain, they would have had one side covered and only one way to fight. So, I called out to the *amir* (leader) of the army (Sariyyah) that they should take the mountain.” After one month, the army returned victorious explaining that they had heard the words of `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) on that very same day clearly. In other narrations, `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) is reported to have said, “I saw the army fighting near the mountain...” Another narration mentioned that the distance between `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) and the army was the distance of one month’s journey. (*Dala’il al-Nubuwwah*, 2:579)

Hafiz ibn Hajar and Hafiz ibn Katheer have regarded these narrations as authentic.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> See *al-Isabah*, 3:5 and *Hayat al-Sahabah*, 3:562-4

The above mentioned incident is a clear proof of *kashf*. It explicitly shows that Allah had blessed `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) with the power of *kashf* through which he was able to see and visualise the battlefield from a distance as far as a month's journey.

3) Abu Dawud Mazni (Allah be pleased with him), who was a Sahabi, that participated in Badr says, "On the day of Badr, I was chasing one of the enemy to kill him when all of a sudden, his head fell off even before I could reach him. I then realised that someone else (angels) killed him." (*Dala'il al-Nubuwwah*, 2:472)

4) Sahl ibn Sa'ad (Allah be pleased with him) narrates that Abu Usayd (Allah be pleased with him) said to him after he had lost his eyesight, "Had you been with me now at Badr, and Allah restored my sight, I will certainly show you the mountain pass from where the angels came out so clearly without any doubt." (*Majma' al-Zawa'id*, 6:84)

5) Irbadh ibn Sariyyah (Allah be pleased with him) was an elderly Sahabi and he reached a stage where he yearned for death. He used to make the following *du'a*, "O Allah, I am old, my bones are weak so take my soul away." Thereafter, one day whilst sitting in the *masjid* in Damascus (he says) a very handsome young man appeared wearing green robes. He asked me why are you making such a *du'a*? I replied, "how should I make *du'a*?" he said, "Say, O Allah, make me do good (and continue to do good) until the appointed time comes." I asked him, "Who are you?" he replied, "I am Riba'il (the angel) who removes grief from the hearts of the believers." (*Majma' al-Zawa'id*, 10:184)

The above are just a few of the various incidents from the lives of the Sahabah from which we can see clearly that they too, at times were blessed with the power of *kashf* which enabled them to see the angels, which are a part of the unseen as well. In fact, the books of hadith are full of such incidents where the Sahabah saw angels fighting and capturing the enemy in Badr and helping them in Uhud and Khandaq. 'A'isha (Allah be pleased with her) and 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) saw Jibra'il (peace be upon him). Angels used to make *salam* to Imran ibn Husayn (Allah be pleased with him). All these are clear indications that the belief of *kashf* is a well established belief that is apparent not only in the Qur'an and hadith but in the lives of various Sahabah a reality that nobody can deny.

#### *From the words of the `Ulama*

Finally, we will take a look at what the great renown *'ulama* of the past have to say about this belief.

1) Shaykh al-Islam `Allamah Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyah (Allah have mercy on him). In his famous *Majmu' al-Fatawa* states, "miracles (of the *awliya'*) sometimes occur by a person hearing something that others can't, sometimes a person sees something that others don't whilst awake or in a dream, sometimes a person is given knowledge of something which others don't know about through *wahi* (revelation) or *ilham* (inspiration)... this is called *kashf* and *mushahadah* (witnessing)..." (*Majmu' al-Fatawa li Ibn Taymiyyah*, 11:173)

2) Mulla `Ali al-Qari (Allah have mercy on him), a great scholar of the 10th century, who needs no introduction, writes in his famous commentary on *Fiqh al-Akbar*, "There are 3

types of *firasah* (insight). The first type is *imani firasah*, this is a *nur* (special light) that Allah places in the heart of his chosen slave.” Thereafter quoting `Allamah Abu Sulayman Darani he says, “this type of *firasah* is visualising of the unseen. This is a special status of *iman*.” (*Sharh Fiqh al-Akbar*, p.80)

3) Hafiz `Allamah Jalal al-Din Suyuti (Allah have mercy on him) in his famous *al-Hawi li'l-Fatawi* quotes many examples from the lives of the Sahabah, one of which was quoted earlier on, i.e. the story of `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) calling out to Sariyyah (Allah be pleased with him) and how Allah had blessed him with the power of *kashf*. (*al-Hawi li'l-Fatawi*, 2:482)

The above are three world renown scholars that have made in-depth research and authored great works in almost every branch of knowledge. Suffice to take note of the fact here, that all three of them have openly and explicitly supported and promoted the belief of *kashf* and *ilham*.

The abovementioned facts bear ample testimony to this fact that the belief of *kashf* and *ilham* is something that has been clearly explained by and established in Qur'an, hadith and by the great *'ulama* and *muhaddithin* of the past. Furthermore, numerous incidents of such nature have been recorded in various other books besides *Fada'il al-A'mal*, the details of which will be discussed towards the end of this treatise.

## Life of the Inhabitants of the Grave

After quoting three stories (quote 4) from *Fada'il al-A`mal*, he makes the following deductions and claims:

'These stories teach that the inhabitants of the grave can help the living. This belief forms the basis for grave worshipping. The Fadhaail-e-Aamal promotes all these erroneous beliefs under the guise of virtues and exhortation. Those who expose themselves to the teachings of Fadhaail-e-Aamal which include believing that the engraved can hear, see and help the living will undoubtedly weaken their Tawheed and establish hope in other than the one, who Alone has the power to benefit and harm.'

In essence, there are three parts to this, i.e. for the inhabitants of the grave to, a) see, b) hear, and c) help the living. We will discuss the first two parts here and thereafter, the third.

It is a fundamental belief of the vast majority of *'ulama* that the inhabitants of the grave are able to hear and see those that visit them.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Proof from authentic sources*

Hereunder are but some of the authentic proofs that substantiate this viewpoint:

1) Buraydah (Allah be pleased with him) reports that Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) would teach the Sahabah that, "When they enter the graveyard, they should address its inhabitants with the following words, 'Peace Be upon you the believers among those in the graves, and surely through the will of Allah, we will soon join you. We ask Almighty Allah for eternal comfort for us and for you.'" (*Sahih Muslim*, hadith no 2254)

Hafiz ibn Qayyim (Allah have mercy on him) says, "it is impossible that we be instructed to make salaam to things that cannot hear us ... this is in fact a greeting and an address to something which can hear and perceive." (*Kitab al-Ruh*, p.15)

Hafiz ibn Kathir (Allah have mercy on him) has also mentioned this analogy in his *tafsir*.

2) `Abd Allah ibn `Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) reports that Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, "Whenever any of you passes by the grave of his Muslim brother whom he knew in his lifetime, and you make *salam* to him, Allah then returns his soul to his body so that he may reply to the *salam*."<sup>12</sup>

3) Abu Talha (Allah be pleased with him) reports that after the battle of Badr, Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) addressed some of the disbelievers who were killed. The Sahabah enquired as to how could some lifeless bodies hear what he was saying. At this, he remarked, "You are not hearing more than they are (i.e. they can hear just as you can)."

<sup>11</sup> See Ibn Qayyim's *Kitab al-Ruh*, p.12

<sup>12</sup> Classified as *sahih* by Hafiz ibn `Abd al-Barr; *ibn Kathir* 3:575 and Hafiz `Abd al-Haqq al-Ishbili – refer *al-Ahkam al-Wusta'*, 2:152

Imam Qatadah (Allah have mercy on him) – a famous *tabi'i* – says, “Allah gave them life so that they may hear what Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) said.” (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, hadith no. 3976)

4) Hafiz ibn Taymiyyah (Allah have mercy on him) states that, “The deceased are able to speak and at times even hear those that address them. This has been established authentically from Allah’s Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) that they can hear the footsteps of those who visit them.” (*Majmu’ al-Fatawa li Ibn Taymiyyah*, 4:168)

The hadith that Hafiz ibn Taymiyah has referred to is recorded by Imam Bukhari in his *al-Sahih* (1:178; hadith no. 1338)

In fact, Imam Bukhari (Allah have mercy on him) was also of the same view (that the deceased can hear the footsteps). He named a chapter in his *al-Sahih* as follows, ‘The Chapter on that the deceased can hear the footsteps (of those present).’ (*Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1:178; Chapter no.67)

5) Imam Abu Bakr ibn Abi Shaybah (Allah have mercy on him) has recorded from Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas (Allah be pleased with him) that when he used to pass by the graves of the martyrs, he would make *salam* to them, then he would say to his companions, “Why don’t you make *salam* to them so that they may reply to you.” (*Musannaf ibn Abi Shaybah*)

For various other narrations similar to these, refer to ibn Rajab al-Hanbali’s *Ahwal al-Qubur* (p.141-6; 132-4) and ibn Qayyim’s *Kitab al-Ruh* (p.11-26).

Based on the above mentioned traditions, it can be clearly understood that through the will and power of Allah, it is possible for the inhabitants of the grave to see or hear the living.

As mentioned earlier, this is accepted by the vast majority of the scholars such as:

1. Hafiz ibn ‘Abd al-Barr,
2. Hafiz ibn Kathir,
3. Hafiz ibn Qayyim,
4. ‘Allamah Shawkani (Allah have mercy on them) and others.

It, thus, becomes abundantly clear that ignorance of the above proven fact had led to such baseless and irrational objections.

The third aspect is of the inhabitants of the grave helping the living. The objector, after quoting a few stories claims,

**These stories teach that the inhabitants of the graves can help the living.**

Firstly, we would have to clear this point. It is not our belief, neither is it the author’s belief that the inhabitants of the grave can assist the living. Our belief, the belief of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa ‘l-Jama’ah, the belief of the author of *Fada’il al-A`mal* is clear and that is, that undoubtedly the inhabitants of the grave cannot assist the living.

Secondly, the objector has made a tremendous blunder in making such an absurd claim. Nowhere in the entire book, *Fada'il al-A`mal*, did the author ever say or support such a claim. The objector was being biased and hence he searched for a few stories here and there from which he quickly jumped to conclusions. Such irrational claims are of no avail in front of justice. If this was the case, then any person can make any deduction from any book to suit his own whims and desires. Let alone any book, even the Qur'an. Take for example, the verse wherein Allah states, 'Your wives are a tilt for you, so approach your tilt as you wish'. Speaking about how a husband may have intercourse with his wife. Now any person can quickly come to a deduction here that it is permissible for a husband to have anal intercourse with his wife, whereas this is prohibited and unlawful. Likewise, the objector's claims were irrational. He did not understand the object of the story, hence, he took the meaning that suited his own desires, made a false allegation and wishes to mislead everyone else into believing his fabricated lie. We, thus, place on record that this allegation is a lie and that the author never said that, neither did he intend the false meaning that is being portrayed by the objector.

This brings us to end of the three major issues that were raised by the objector. The information mentioned above were all based on clear facts with references and explicit proofs from the Qur'an, hadith, incidents of the noble companions of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and the verdicts of the great *'ulama* and *muhaddithin* of the past. The above mentioned facts and proofs are more than sufficient for one who reads with an open mind and does not have a biased attitude. However, we wish to further elucidate the fact that stories and incidents of this nature (as appears in *Fada'il al-A`mal*) are replete with in other authentic and world renown books. Hereunder, we will mention but a few:

Hasan ibn Sufyan Nasawi (Allah have mercy on him) was once with his friends in Egypt out in search for ahadith. Their provisions became exhausted to such an extent that three days passed by without a morsel of food. They were forced to beg. Hence, they drew lots to see who from amongst them will go out to beg. Hasan ibn Sufyan's name came up and consequently, he took to one corner of the *masjid* and performed two *rak'ah* of *salah* after which he made *du'a* crying and begging unto Allah. When he finished, he saw a young handsome man who had just entered the *masjid* and remarked, "Where is Hasan ibn Sufyan?" he replied, "I am here". The young man then said, "The King (Tulun) conveys his *salam* to you and he apologises for his shortcomings towards your service. Here is one hundred dinars for every one of you." When Hasan and his friends asked the young man as to how the King had come to know of them, the young man said, "The King saw a dream in which a rider flew to him in the air. The rider was holding a spear with which it entered his home and pierced the King in his hip and said – wake up! Go and see to Hasan ibn Sufyan and his friends. Go! Wake up – Go. Wake up because they are starving for 3 days in the *masjid*. The King asked, 'Who are you?' the reply was, 'I am Ridhwan, the door-keeper of Jannah' The King woke up and his hip was in severe pain. Thus, he sent these coins to you." (*Siyar A'lam al-Nubala'*, 14:161)

Now, look at the above mentioned incident. The objector quoted a similar incident from *Fada'il al-A`mal* in which ibn Jala' relates that he saw in a vision Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) giving him a piece of bread. He ate half of it and after he woke up, the other half was in his hand. The objector quotes this story and then (out of ig-

norance) boldly states that the book *Fada'il al-A`mal* promotes erroneous beliefs. Yet, we see a similar incident quoted by `Allamah Dhahabi (Allah have mercy on him)? Such a great scholar and *muhaddith* who is world-renown and unanimously accepted for his in-depth knowledge and research on ahadith – he has narrated this incident, has he deviated?

Abu Idris Madini (Allah have mercy on him) narrates, “Once a person from Madinah by the name of Ziyad came to us and joined us in a battle that we fought. We laid siege to one city and the 3 of us; myself (Abu Idris), Ziyad and another person were all together. One of us went to search for food whilst all of a sudden a catapult was shot up which landed close to Ziyad and injured him. He fell down unconscious. We gathered around him for the entire day, but he never moved an inch. Thereafter, all of a sudden he laughed to the extent that he opened his mouth wide enough for us to see his teeth. Then he cooled down. Then he began to cry until he even shed tears. Then he regained consciousness and sat up in bewilderment saying, ‘What am I doing here?’ We explained to him, ‘Don’t you remember the catapult that hit you?’ He was quite confused. We asked him about what had transpired because of which he laughed. He said, ‘Let me tell you. after I lost my conscious, I was taken to a room made out of rubies and chrysolite and in there, I was taken to luxuries and comfortable bed which was steadily made from woven pearls of gold and rubies upon which lay the choicest of cushions. When I sat upon it, I heard the sound of jewellery from my right side. A beautiful young woman appeared before me, I do not know whether she was more beautiful or her robes or her jewellery. She welcomed me saying, ‘Welcome to the harsh person who never used to ask Allah for (great bounties like) us. We are not like his wife.’ When she said this, I smiled after which she came and sat next to me on my right side. I asked her, ‘Who are you?’ She said, ‘I am your young beautiful wife’. When I stretched my hand to touch her, she said, ‘Hold on! Not now, you will come to me at the time of *Dhuhr*.’ I cried until she finished speaking. Then I heard a sound to my left and the exact same thing happened. A young beautiful woman appeared and the same thing transpired between us, as previously. Abu Idris Madini says that this person, Ziyad, was sitting and talking to us. When the *mu`addin* called out the *Dhuhr adhan*, he passed away.” (*Man asha ba`dal mawt*, p.82)

Now, look at the above mentioned incident. The objector quotes an incident from *Fada'il al-A`mal* in which Shaykh Khayr Nurbaaf knew the exact time of his death. The objector, after quoting the incident says that this story is deviant. Furthermore, the objector quotes other stories in which certain people saw paradise and hell after which he refutes *kashf*. Here is a perfect example of both *kashf* and also the fact that this person, Ziyad, knew that he is going to die at the time of *Dhuhr*. This incident has been recorded in a book called *Man asha ba`dal mawt*, written by the great *muhaddith* ibn Abi Dunya (Allah have mercy on him). He is a renown personality especially amongst all other great *muhaddithin*. Will the objector say that his books too are promoting corrupt beliefs?

Another incident of a similar nature is mentioned in the very same book where once a person fell ill. He became so ill that he stopped all movement. So, the people shut his eyes and prepared him – took off his clothes, etc. so as to give him *ghusl*. All of a sudden, he woke up and showed signs of movement. The people said, ‘Glory be to Allah, we thought you passed away!’ He said, ‘Yes I had passed away and I was taken to my grave at which I saw a handsome young man with a sweet smelling fragrance. He put me in my grave and covered me up with leaves. Therein, an ugly evil odoured woman appeared saying, ‘You did this and that

and she counted a few things of which I was put to shame. I said, 'I swear by Allah that you should leave me alone.' She said, 'Lets go, we will challenge you.' We went to a wide spacious sweet smelling house at which there was an outdoor side bench made from silver. In one corner, stood a person performing *salah*. He was reciting *Surah Nahl* and he got stuck repeating the same verse over and over again. The woman then corrected the man. Thereafter, the man then lifted up a pillow nearby under which lay a piece of paper which he removed. He looked at it but before he could say anything, the ugly woman spoke out, 'This man did this and that'. The young handsome man said, 'But he did this and this and this...' enumerating all the good. The man said, 'This is a servant who has wronged himself but Allah has forgiven him. His time is not yet up. He will die on Monday. This person then explained to the people around him, 'Look, if I die on Monday, then I hope to get what I've seen and if I don't die on Monday then these were just imaginary thoughts.' The man passed away on Monday after Asr. (*Man asha ba'dal mawt*, p. 127). It is clear from this incident also that this person knew the time of his death and also had the power of *kashf* which obviously was afforded to him by Allah alone.

Once during the era of `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) there was a drought. A person came to the grave of Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace) and said, 'O Allah's Messenger (Allah bless him and grant him peace)! Seek rain for your Ummah because they are about to be destroyed.' This person saw in a vision a voice telling him, 'Go to `Umar (Allah be pleased with him), convey *salam* to him and inform him that very soon it will rain.' Also, tell him to be alert and watchful. The man went to `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) and related this to him. `Umar (Allah be pleased with him) began to cry and thereafter he said, 'O my Lord! I do not leave out except that which I am incapable of doing.'

*Subhan Allah*, look at the above mentioned incident. The objector has quoted various incidents of this nature from *Fada'il al-A`mal* and thereafter claims that this is 'grave worship' and further he claims,

**Reading such stories from Fada'il al-A`mal to them will play havoc with their beliefs and further corrupt their religion.**

Will the objector then make his concocted deduction here too and say that this story promotes grave worship? look, this was done in the time of such a great Sahabi like `Umar (Allah be pleased with him). There were so many other Sahabah around at that time. Even when this was brought to the awareness of `Umar (Allah be pleased with him), neither himself nor anyone else had any objections. When Sahabah had no objections, who are we to do so?

Now, let us have a look at the source of this incident. Firstly, this incident is recorded in *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah* of Imam al-Bayhaqi (7:47). This book is world renown and unanimously accepted. Imam al-Bayhaqi needs no introduction, suffice to say that he has written great works on ahadith upon which the whole world is dependent upon. Will the objector lay his false blatant allegation of 'grave worship' on Imam al-Bayhaqi, just because he mentioned such an incident in his book? Secondly, this incident is also recorded in *Musnad al-Faruq* by ibn Kathir (1:223). Thirdly, it has also been recorded by the world renown scholar Hafiz ibn Hajar (Allah have mercy on him) in his *al-Isabah* (6:216). One wonders how on

earth would the objector lay such a foolish allegation of grave worship on these great scholars. What's even better is this that the incident has also been recorded in *Fath al-Bari* (2:629) which is the most accepted commentary of the most authentic book after the Qur'an – *Sahih al-Bukhari*. That's not all, Imam Bukhari (Allah have mercy on him) himself has made indication towards this incident in his *Tarikh al-Kabir* (7:304). The objector should cover his face quickly out of shame because both ibn Kathir (Allah have mercy on him) and ibn Hajar (Allah have mercy on him) have classified this incident as authentic. (*Musnad al-Faruq*, 1:223; *Fath al-Bari*, 2:629). This clearly proves that the objector is being biased and wishes to attack the book *Fada'il al-A`mal* for no reason whatsoever. Why does the objector not lay his blatant lie against all these books: *Dala'il al-Nubuwwah*, *Fath al-Bari*, *Ial-Isabah*, *Tarikh al-Kabir* and *Musnad al-Faruq*? Why doesn't he say that these books promote grave-worship?

Like these, there are numerous other such incidents that have been authentically recorded by the illustrious scholars of Islam. This further establishes the fact that the objectors were led to these types of ignorant and baseless objections due to their lack of Islamic knowledge and the true understanding of Islam. The wise people have rightly stated, "Objecting is a sign of a man's ignorance."

## Appendix: Introduction to Fada'il al-A'mal

By Shaykh Mawlana `Abd Allah Ma'rufi

The world renowned book *Fada'il al-A'mal* written by Shaykh al-Hadith Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyyah al-Kandhalwi does not require any introduction. It is a collection of nine books:

1. *Stories of the Sahabah*
2. *Fada'il al-Salah*
3. *Fada'il al-Tabligh*
4. *Fada'il al-Dhikr*
5. *Fada'il al-Qur'an*
6. *Fada'il al-Ramadan*
7. *Fada'il al-Durud*
8. *Fada'il al-Sadaqah*
9. *Fada'il al-Hajj*

The book is an encyclopaedia of knowledge and lessons for a blissful life. It creates love and value for the Shari'ah in the heart and soul. It is a chandelier for the *da'i*, a radiant lamp lighting up the path ahead and making obstacles pass with ease in the *da'wah*. For an *'alim*, besides providing him with an extensive amount of references for each subject, it is also an aid in understanding more difficult narrations. Each and every word has been written with sincerity and devotion. Whosoever tasted it, even once, fell in love immediately. It is an indisputable fact that this book has changed the hearts of millions of people.

`Allamah Sayyid Abu 'l-Hasan `Ali al-Nadawi said:

"If one were to say, after looking at the spiritual benefits of this book, that thousands of people have attained sainthood through this book, then it will not be an exaggerating."

There are some reasons for this:

1. This book has been translated in to 31 languages of the world.
2. 145 *'ulama* from 23 countries such as Saudi Arabia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, England, Africa, America, Canada, Turkey, Japan, Zambia, Sri Lanka, France, Philippine, Cambodia, Kenya, Portugal are engaged in the study, verification and translation of *Fada'il al-A'mal*.
3. In the Indian subcontinents alone it is published by 74 different publication companies.
4. In addition, it can be said that more than a million copies of this book are available in different languages.

### Brief History of Fada'il al-A'mal

*Fada'il al-A'mal* is not the only book that was written on this subject. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> century after Hijri books on *adab* (ethics), *akhlaq* (character), *zuhd* (abstinence), *fada'il* (virtues) and *targhib* (encouragement) were already written, whereas most of the hadith books were still not written or incomplete. A few of these books were:

1. *Kitab al-Zuhd* of Imam `Abd Allah Ibn Mubarak (d. 181 H)
2. *Fada'il al-Qur'an* of Imam Shafi'i (d. 204 H)
3. *Fada'il al-Qur'an* of Abi Ubayd (d. 224 H)
4. *Kitab al-Zuhd* of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 241 H)
5. *Al-Adab al-Mufrad* of Imam Bukhari (d. 256 H)
6. *Kitab al-Adab* of Imam Bayhaqi (d. 458 H)
7. *Kitab al-Zuhd* of Imam Bayhaqi (d. 458 H)
8. *Fada'il al-Awqat* of Imam Bayhaqi (d. 458 H)
9. *Al-Tarhib Wa 'l-Tarhib* of Ibn Shahin (d. 385 H)
10. *Al-Tarhib Wa 'l-Tarhib* of al-Isfahani (d. 535 H)
11. *Al-Tarhib Wa 'l-Tarhib* of Hafiz al-Mundhiri (d. 656 H)
12. *Amal al-Yawm Wa 'l-Laylah* of Imam Nasa'i (d. 303 H)
13. *Amal al-Yawm Wa 'l-Laylah* of Ibn Sunni (d. 364 H)
14. *Kitab al-Du'a* of Imam Tabrani (d. 360 H)
15. *Al-Da'wat al-Kabir* of Imam Bayhaqi (d. 458 H)
16. *Al-Adhkar* of Imam Nawawi (d. 676 H)

Concerning the virtues of *durud* and its different forms, Hafiz Shams al-Din Sakhawi's (d. 902 H) *al-Qawl al-Badi' fi'l-Salah 'ala al-Habib al-Shafi'* is most famous. In this golden chain of literature, the compilation of Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyyah's *Fada'il al-A'mal* is unique in gathering all these branches in one book and providing a commentary along with it.

### *The Compilation of Fada'il al-A'mal*

The entire book which is famously known as *Tablighi Nisab* or *Fada'il al-A'mal* was not written all at once by Mawlana Muhammad Zakariyyah. Each section is a separate book that was written at different times at the request of various illustrious personalities. The elders of the Tabligh Jama'ah selected this book for the *dini* education and reformation of those going out in the path of Allah. Therefore some publishers printed it with the title of *Tablighi Nisab*. However, after a long duration and consideration it was printed as *Fada'il al-A'mal* as per the subject matter of the book.

Herewith details of the various books:

1. *Fada'il al-Qur'an*: Writing of this book began in Dhu 'l-Hijjah 1348 H and was completed before the end of the same month. It was written on the request of Mawlana Yasin Naginwi who was a *khalifah* of Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi.
2. *Fada'il al-Ramadan*: Written on the request of his uncle, Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas in Ramadan 1349 H.
3. *Fada'il al-Tabligh*: Also written on the request of Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas in Safar 1350 H, within a short space of time.
4. *Stories of the Sahabah*: In Safar 1357 H during a journey to Ajarah, in Mirath Mawlana Zakariyyah's nose started bleeding severely and continuously due to blisters that had burst. Doctors advised him to stop any kind of mentally strenuous activity

for a few months. Shaykh `Abd al-Qadir Raypuri had been appealing him for the past four years to write a book on the stories of the Sahabah. Mawlana writes, "I took this sickness as a blessing and in fulfilment of Mawlana Raypuri's wishes while resting I began to write until I finished on 12 Shawwal 1357 H."

5. *Fada'il al-Salah*: Also written on the request of Mawlana Ilyas and completed on 7 Muharram 1358 H.
6. *Fada'il al-Dhikr*: Also written on the request of Mawlana Ilyas and completed on 26 Shawwal 1358 H.
7. *Fada'il al-Hajj*: This book was written on the earnest appeal of Mawlana Muhammad Yusuf. It was written whilst residing in *markaz* of Nizam al-Din, Delhi between 1366 H and 1367 H.
8. *Fada'il al-Sadaqah*: Mawlana Ilyas emphasised with great importance that this book be written and in accordance to this writing began whilst at the *markaz* and completed in Saharanpur in Safar 1368 H.
9. *Fada'il al-Durud*: Mawlana Yasin Naginwi requested this book be written and left a bequest for this before he passed away in Shawwal 1360 H. The book was completed in Dhu 'l-Hijjah 1384 H.

There is no need to describe how Allah has accepted these works. Supporters and critics alike are forced to admit that no other worldly book is read as much as *Fada'il al-A'mal*.

The way of the world is such that stones are thrown at every fruit laden tree, the sun with all its radiance lights up the entire world yet its scorching temperatures cannot be endured. In this manner, many factions have raised objections on this book and expressed their disapproval. I am not denying the fact that beside the book of Allah no other book is free from fault. Many great scholars might have erred in some way or the other but these errors pale in comparison to the multitude of good that their works entail and neither did any faction pay much heed to these errors.

*Objection on Fada'il al-A'mal: A Basic Analysis*