

# The Role of Intercession (Shafā'ah) in the Perfection of the Soul from the Perspective of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī

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## Abstract

Muslim scholars have presented various responses to the question of the soul's perfection in the Hereafter. Among them, the mystics, drawing on metaphysical principles such as the doctrine of perpetual renewal (tajaddud al-amthāl), do not limit the perfection of human beings and other entities to this worldly domain. One of the elements indicating the soul's posthumous perfection is intercession, which leads to the salvation of sinners and the elevation of the faithful. The present study, using a descriptive-analytical method, explores the relationship between intercession and the soul's perfection in the Hereafter.

Findings: Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, as a Shi'i mystic, believes that intercession emanates from the all-encompassing Divine Mercy and is actualized through the Perfect Human. According to him, the Perfect Human's relationship with both God and the Divine Names on the one hand, and with creation on the other, is the basis for the salvation of sinners in the Hereafter. Other attributes of the Perfect Human—such as vicegerency (khilāfah), ontological governance, and existential comprehensiveness—also play a fundamental role in the realization of intercession. Āmulī further addresses the eligibility of the sinners as a necessary condition for receiving intercession.

Keywords: Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, perfection, soul, intercession, Barzakh, Resurrection.

## Introduction

From the perspective of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī, the rationale behind the establishment of the Resurrection, the Gathering, and the death of the human being lies in their attainment of the perfection destined for them. Just as a chick achieves its completion by breaking out of its egg, so too does the human being reach their full potential through their departure from this world and the corporeal body. Consequently, death is essential for the realization of this perfection. It is for this reason that Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states regarding death: "By God, the son of Abu Talib is more intimate with death than a child with its mother's breast," (Imam Ali (A.S.), 2001) or in another instance: "By God, I care not whether death comes to me or I go to death." (Majlisi, 1983) Hence, Āmulī designates death as a rebirth, believing that true life and human perfection are attained through it. (Amoli, 2006) Furthermore, some narrations introduce death as a gift for the believer and a means of expiation for their sins. Therefore, Sayyid Ḥaydar considers death as a prelude to human Perfection, a perfection expressed as true life, the goodly life, or the abiding after annihilation. (Amoli, 2006)

Based on the author's research in scholarly works, no study specifically addressing the relationship between intercession and the Perfection of the soul from the viewpoint of Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī has been found. The only relevant article discovered is "Intercession and its Relation to the Perfection of the Soul from the Perspective of Transcendent Wisdom" by Hossein Khaleqipour and Nasser Momeni, which examines Mullā Ṣadrā's perspective. Another article, titled "The

Theosophical Foundations of Intercession in Islamic Mysticism" by Mozghan Mahinrousta and colleagues, broadly discusses topics such as the levels of intercession and its mode of realization but does not delve into its connection with the Perfection of the soul or the views of Sayyid Haydar Āmulī. A further article, "A Comparative Study of Intercession" generally examines intercession from Sunni and Shia perspectives without referencing its role in the Perfection of the soul or the viewpoints of mystics.

This present article, employing a descriptive-analytical methodology, seeks to answer the question: What role does intercession play in the Perfection of the soul in the intermediate realm and the Hereafter? Furthermore, what characteristics must the intercessor and the one interceded for possess? To address these questions, the author will first undertake a conceptual analysis of intercession and then proceed to elucidate the role of the Perfect Human in the realization of intercession.

### **Conceptual Analysis**

Etymologically, the term "shaf" signifies the act of something being appended or joined to another. (Ibn Manzur, 1994) In essence, an intercessor joins another individual to accompany them in the attainment of a specific objective. This literal meaning is alluded to in two verses of the Holy Qur'an: the third verse of Surah al-Fajr (Chapter 89) and the eighty-fifth verse of Surah al-Nisā' (Chapter 4). Regarding the latter verse, Rāghib defines shafā'ah as the intercessor joining to aid another person. Naturally, one who intercedes for another must possess a higher station, and the intercession discussed in the context of the Resurrection stems from this very principle. (Raghib, ۱۹۹۱) Therefore, the literal meaning of shafā'ah can be understood as the appending and joining of a superior individual to assist an inferior one, a meaning also indicated in the Qur'an.

However, from a technical perspective within Islamic thought, shafā'ah refers to the removal of base dispositions and veils of darkness from the spirit and soul of a human being, which leads to the soul's perfection. Conversely, perfected souls, such as those of the prophets and the saints who have traversed the stages of perfection and attained their ultimate realization, act as intermediaries between the Divine Reality and subordinate causes. They dispel the dark dispositions of other souls. (Tabatabai, 1996) In other words, the intercessor nurtures deficient souls and accompanies the one being interceded for in their transition from an unfavorable state to a suitable one or in their attainment of a desired condition. (Misbah, 2012) Consequently, shafā'ah can be considered the completion of the potentiality of the one being interceded for. In reality, an individual lacking perfection must receive this perfection from the Origin of Grace, and since they lack the inherent capacity, another person intercedes, elevating them to the necessary level. (Javadi Amoli, 2008)

Shafā'ah is divided into two categories: cosmic or ontological intercession and legislative or juridical intercession. Cosmic intercession refers to the mediation of causes and means in the arrival of divine grace to creatures and the governance of their affairs. Since the origin of every cause and means is God Almighty, and every cause ultimately leads back to Him, in truth, every cause and means is an intermediary between Him and creation, possessing no agency in itself. The meaning of cosmic intercession is precisely this mediation of certain causes between the Divine Reality and creation. Thus, causes and means act as intermediaries in divine attributes such as creation, sustenance, mercy, giving life, and the like, conveying various blessings and graces to needy creatures. (Tabatabai, 1996) Legislative intercession, on the other hand, refers to the mediation of religious means and acts in attracting the mercy and forgiveness of the Divine Reality, as God states: "O you who have believed, fear Allah and seek means [of nearness] to Him and strive in His cause that you may succeed" (Qur'an 5:35).

In the Qur'an, God Almighty has deprived certain individuals of intercession while affirming it for others. Criminals are those for whom intercession will not be effective, but those who have not associated partners with God and possess practical shortcomings are subject to intercession. The second group comprises those whose intercession God Almighty is pleased with and has granted permission for. However, the discussions surrounding the intercessors are more significant and challenging than those concerning the ones interceded for. The question of whether anyone other than God is capable of intercession has generated diverse viewpoints among Muslim scholars. Some Qur'anic verses negate intercession from anyone other than God, while others, such as verse 255 of Surah al-Baqarah, grant permission for intercession to certain intercessors.

### **The Role of Divine Names and Attributes**

The Divine Names serve as the connecting link between the Divine Reality and creation. In other words, theophanies of the Divine Reality are realized through the intermediary of the Names. Although the Divine Reality is effective in whatever He wills, His will and intention operate following the inherent receptivity of things. Therefore, where the attribute of Mercy is necessitated, the attribute of Retribution does not manifest, and where retribution is required, the attribute of mercy does not prevail. However, at times, certain Names, such as the Most Compassionate, intercede with other Divine Names, such as the Avenger. This intercession is also based on wisdom and returns to the inherent potentiality and deservingness that is established in the immutable essence of things. (Qaysari, 1996) Despite the Name the Most Compassionate being comprehensive of all Names and possessing complete encompassing dominion over other Names, it intercedes with the Name the Avenger, which is subordinate and a subset of it. This intercession does not imply any deficiency in the Name of the Most Compassionate. (Amoli, 1973)

Āmulī believes that the Name the Most Compassionate has manifested in two principal loci: firstly, the First Intellect and the First Soul, which is also referred to as the Muhammadan Reality. This constitutes the true spiritual Throne about which God Almighty stated: "God created Adam in the image of the Most Compassionate." Secondly, it manifests in the Empyrean Heaven, which is the beginning of corporeal affairs in the realm of bodies (just as the Intellect is the beginning of spiritual realities in the realm of spirits). Concerning this, the Divine Reality states: "The Most Compassionate established Himself upon the Throne" (Ṭā Hā 20:5). This signifies that God turned His attention to the corporeal Throne after having established Himself upon the spiritual Throne, meaning that the entire cosmos came under His dominion and governance. Therefore, the meaning of the Name the Most Compassionate is none other than the Muhammadan Reality, just as the meaning of the Most Merciful is the Seal of the Saints and the level of the Universal Soul. (Amoli, ۱۹۷۳)

### **The Capability of the One Interceded For**

True faith and the acknowledgment of the prophethood of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) generate a disposition within the soul through which the soul becomes deserving of salvation from punishment and the acquisition of divine mercy. This inherent quality, inseparable from the human being, becomes the cause for attracting the intercession of the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him). (Sadr al-Mutallihin, 1987) In reality, intercession is not accidental; rather, the eligibility for intercession must exist within the individual. This is because eschatological matters are not based on convention but are real and ontological. Consequently, retribution is among the inherent consequences of the soul, and if someone is deserving of punishment, they will not be interceded for without due cause. Based on this, the permission of the Divine Reality for intercession also

originates from a real and intrinsic matter, just as His mercy and forgiveness are real and objective. (Misbah, 2012) Therefore, intercession is the embodiment of one's actions, which are formed in this world based on faith, righteous deeds, and love for the saints of God. Hence, the cause of intercession must be acquired in this world, and to the extent that a person likens themselves to the Perfect Human and the Saint of God, namely the Imam of the Age, and attains greater affinity, to that extent will they benefit more from intercession.

Despite the condition of affinity and the capability of the one interceded for, Āmulī, in a section of his Tafsīr-i Muḥīt, posits that after the intercession of the intercessors, no believer in a divine law will remain in hell. Those who have performed religious acts solely because the Prophet (peace be upon him) commanded them, even if it be as little as a mustard seed, will also be saved through the intercession of the prophets and believers. However, those who have intellectually grasped the concept of divine unity but are not believers in divine law and have not performed any good deeds that are considered obedience to the Messenger will be saved by the Most Merciful of the merciful. He then cites a narration from Uthman ibn Affan: "Whoever dies knowing that there is no god but Allah will enter Paradise." This narration does not mention faith but merely states that whoever knows God's oneness will enter Paradise. Āmulī addresses the objection that Satan also possessed knowledge of God's oneness by arguing that due to his establishment of the tradition of polytheism among humans, the sin of all polytheists is upon Satan, preventing his salvation from hell. However, he also considers the possibility that Satan might die as a polytheist. (Amoli, 2006)

Considering the difference between knowledge and faith or belief, as long as a person does not have a practical commitment to their knowledge and lacks heartfelt belief, they cannot be considered a believer. What is demanded in religious texts is faith, not mere knowledge. Therefore, although knowledge is a prerequisite for faith, it is not sufficient for salvation. Moreover, there are numerous examples in the Qur'an and narrations of those deserving of punishment who possessed knowledge of God's oneness but were condemned because they did not act according to their knowledge. The justification for Satan dying as a polytheist does not seem entirely sound, given that Satan, with knowledge of God Almighty's oneness, established the tradition of polytheism among humans.

### **The Role of the Perfect Human in the Perfection of the One Interceded For**

From the viewpoint of Sayyid Haydar Āmulī, two fundamental and significant concepts in Islamic mysticism are tawḥīd (Monotheism) and the muwaḥḥid (Monotheist) and the Perfect Human is the preeminent embodiment of the muwaḥḥid. (Amoli, 2004) The role of the Perfect Human in intercession is crucial and significant, given their intermediary status between the Divine Reality and creation. By possessing the station of wilāyah and vicegerency, they are entrusted with the station of intercession in the Hereafter. Moreover, God Almighty desires to demonstrate their power and importance in the cosmos through their being an intercessor.

Ibn 'Arabī, the one who introduced the term "Perfect Human" in Islamic mysticism, considers them to be the comprehensive locus of all Divine Names. Just as the realities of other cosmic entities are gathered within them, they also possess knowledge of the souls, movements, and quiescence of these other entities. With their comprehensiveness to the Divine Names, the Perfect Human holds dominion over the Names and is capable of affecting them; the Names are subservient to them. (Ibn Arabi, 2003) Therefore, the most important characteristic of the Perfect Human is their comprehensiveness and they're being the locus of manifestation for the Divine Names. Their other attributes, such as vicegerency, the ability to effect change, and spiritual authority, are consequences of their comprehensiveness and manifestation. Sayyid Haydar also considers the

Perfect Human to be perfect in the Divine Law, the mystical path, and the ultimate truth. Indeed, this very perfection enables them to possess knowledge of the illnesses and problems of human souls and to be familiar with the remedies for these ailments. (Amoli, 2007) He believes that just as a pillar is necessary and essential for erecting a tent, the Perfect Human serves as the spiritual pillar for the heavens, and the meaning of the noble verse "without pillars that you [can] see" (Qur'an 13:2) refers to the reality of the Perfect Human. (Amoli, 1973) Given that the Perfect Human is the intermediary between the realm of the unseen and the realm of the visible, they are also considered the isthmus between the two realms of the material and the immaterial. This very characteristic and the vastness of their being cause the bestowal of divine grace to subordinate levels through their mediation. Indeed, if this intermediary did not exist, divine grace would not reach the lower levels, and the most perfect order would not be realized.

### **The Characteristics of the Perfect Human**

The characteristics of the Perfect Human manifest their station in the cosmos, a station that elucidates their relationship with both creation and the Creator and clarifies their role in intercession. In other words, the very one who serves as the intermediary in creation and the flow of divine grace is also the intermediary in divine forgiveness and the arrival of secondary grace to God's servants. The following are some of these characteristics that are involved in intercession.

### **The Perfect Human's Relation to the Divine Reality**

From the perspective of the mystics, humanity is created in the image of the Divine Reality. This means that, aside from essential necessity, every name and attribute that God Almighty possesses has also been bestowed upon humanity, making them the complete and perfect locus of manifestation of the Divine Reality in the cosmos. (Ibn Arabi, 2003) Thus, the sole difference between the Divine Reality and creation lies in their being the manifest and the locus of manifestation, respectively. In other words, the truth of the Names and Attributes belongs to God Almighty, and humanity has manifested these same Names and Attributes within themselves. This meaning is also alluded to in some narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

Considering some narrations that explain the knowledge and recognition of the Perfect Human as being through the Divine Reality, the Perfect Human receives their knowledge of things from God Almighty. In other words, they know things through God. This characteristic establishes the alignment of divine will and intention with the will of the Perfect Human, including in the matter of intercession. In other words, the intercession for sinners on the Day of Judgment is the primary will of God Almighty, realized through the agency of the Perfect Human.

### **The Perfect Human's Relation to the Divine Names**

The manifestation of humanity for the Divine Reality, which was mentioned in the previous discussion, is realized through the appearance of the Divine Names. Since the Perfect Human is the locus of manifestation for all the Divine Names, and these Names are summarized in the Name "Allah," the Perfect Human is the locus of manifestation for the Greatest Name of Allah. (Qaysari, ۱۹۹۶) Thus, the Perfect Human precedes other Names, and the Divine Names are, in reality, the powers of the Perfect Human in their governance and vicegerency.

Sayyid Haydar articulates the instances of the Perfect Human thus: "The intended meaning of the Perfect Human is the Prophet, then the Messenger, then the Saint, then the Successor [of the

Prophet], then the complete and perfected Gnostic." (Amoli, 1973) Based on this, the Muhammadan Reality (as the preeminent instance of the Perfect Human), according to universal wilāyah, is the locus of manifestation for the Name al-Raḥīm, and from the perspective of prophethood, it is the locus of manifestation for the Name al-Raḥmān. Because it possesses the station of comprehensiveness, it is the locus of manifestation for the Name Allah. It is for this reason that Sayyid Haydar, citing a narration, considers the recourse of all divine prophets, from Adam to Jesus, to the Seal of the Prophets (peace and blessings be upon him) for the intercession of people on the Day of Judgment. (Amoli, 2006) According to this narration, the opening of the gate of intercession and the permission for intercession granted to the angels, prophets, and saints of God is through the noble Prophet of Islam. Therefore, he is the leader of humanity on the Day of Judgment. Thus, just as he is the comprehensive locus of all the Divine Names, granting every possessor of a right their due and bestowing grace upon them according to the exigency of the immutable essences of things, he is both the intermediary in the origination of realities and possesses the station of complete intercession. In other words, the beings of the cosmos receive grace from him at the beginning and the end of creation.

Of course, every station that is established for the Muhammadan Reality also exists for the leader of the successors and his progeny. In reality, the acts of governance of the Perfect Human, which occur through the Greatest Name, are due to the station of universal wilāyah, a station with which the Ahl al-Bayt of the noble Prophet of Islam is also endowed. (Ashtiani, 1996)

Sayyid Haydar mentions more than once that the intercession of the intercessors is, in reality, the manifestation of the Rahmaniyyah of God Almighty. This is because God Almighty instills this mercy and compassion in the hearts of the intercessors. Even regarding those whose intercession is not accepted by God Almighty, Sayyid believes that this does not diminish their status; rather, God intends to clarify the status of those whose intercession is accepted through this action. Ultimately, the vastness of divine mercy will cause those who were not saved by the intercession of the intercessors to be saved from hell through the intercession of God Himself. (Amoli, 2006)

### **The Perfect Human's Relation to Creation**

Given that the Perfect Human is the First Emanation and the Primordial Manifestation, divine grace flows through them into the realm of existence. They are the intermediary of grace for all creatures. Consequently, the acquisition of grace and perfection by creatures is contingent upon the existence of the Perfect Human, and all aid and succor in this world and the Hereafter reach creatures through their mediation. It is important to note that this mediation of grace is exclusively vested in the Perfect Human, a concept readily found in the writings of the mystics.

Based on this, the Perfect Human possesses maximal knowledge and comprehensive awareness of the actions and behaviors of creatures. Not only do creatures receive grace and perfection from them in the descending arc of being, but the Perfect Human also plays a role in the ascending arc and the Perfection of potentialities. This is because there is no fundamental difference between the initial acquisition of perfections by potentialities in the descending arc and the attainment of secondary perfections in the ascending arc; in both instances, the Perfect Human serves as the intermediary of grace. Considering that intercession is also regarded as a Perfectionary process in the ascending arc of humanity, the mediation of the Perfect Human, who is the exclusive path to perfection, becomes clear.

Following other mystics, Sayyid Haydar considers the Perfect Human as the microcosm and the cosmos as the macrocosm. (Amoli, 2004; Ibn Arabi, n.d.; Nasafi, 2007; Ibn Turka, 1999; Khwarazmi, 2000) This designation is due to the Perfect Human possessing all the realities of potentialities and the cosmos in a concise and unified manner. The difference between the Perfect Human and the cosmos lies solely in their being concise and detailed, respectively. Based on this mystical understanding, although the Perfect Human appeared in this world after other creatures, they were the ultimate purpose of the Divine Reality, and the cosmos was created for their sake. (Amoli, 2004; Ibn Arabi, n.d.; Qunawi, 2010; Jundi, 2005)

For this reason, one of the wisdoms behind intercession in the Hereafter is the recognition of the Perfect Human's station. In this regard, Sayyid Haydar believes that the Perfect Human is the goal of all human beings in their spiritual journey and ascent, and the closer humans become to them, the more perfection they acquire. (Amoli, 2004) Moreover, this very nearness and affinity of individuals with the Perfect Human provides them with the capacity for intercession.

Another point understood from the terms microcosm and macrocosm is the reciprocal relationship between the Perfect Human and the cosmos. Whatever exists in the macrocosm is reflected in the microcosm, and the Perfect Human possesses knowledge and comprehensive awareness of the inner dimension of the cosmos. Given that the Perfect Human's awareness encompasses the immutable essences of things and human beings, they intercede based on these immutable essences, the desires of human beings, and, of course, the divine will.

### **The Vicegerency of the Perfect Human**

Attaining the station of divine vicegerency is superior to annihilation in God and the comprehension of the unity of existence: "The supreme goal and the ultimate perfection for humanity is reaching the station of pure unity. As for attaining the station of divine vicegerency, it is the exalted station and the transcendent goal." (Amoli, 2004) In other words, humanity's vicegerency and deputyship on behalf of God Almighty is the very desired perfection for which humanity was created. This vicegerency necessitates the manifestation of the attributes of the one being represented in the vicegerent. For this reason, God Almighty, from the very beginning, acquainted His vicegerent with the Divine Names so that, like the full moon reflecting the light of the sun, they might manifest and display the attributes of the Divine Reality. (Ibn Arabi, n.d.)

One of the concomitants of the Perfect Human's vicegerency is their governance in the cosmos. God Almighty has entrusted them with governance over His dominion, and humanity, in truth, exercises this governance in the cosmos through the "Hand of God." Sayyid Haydar attributes the Perfect Human governance to the ḥadīth-i qudsī of the supererogatory acts. (Amoli, 2015) Based on this, the actions of the Perfect Human acquire a divine hue and fragrance, and their extensive governance in the cosmos is justified, such that this governance continues in the Hereafter and includes the intercession for sinners. Since the Perfect Human's governance in the cosmos is by divine permission, their intercession is therefore an instance of the noble verse that excludes those intercessors who have permission: "Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission?" (Qur'an 2:255) or "And they do not intercede except for whom He approves" (Qur'an 21:28). Sayyid Haydar employs an argument a fortiori to establish the Perfect Human's governance, stating that angels and jinn appear in whatever form they will, and since all of them

prostrated before the Perfect Human, the Perfect Human is superior to them and has a greater claim to such governance. (Amoli, 2004)

By establishing the vicegerency and governance of the Perfect Human's overall potentialities and realms of existence, the subjugation of the cosmos to the Perfect Human also becomes clear. Sayyid Haydar considers the Perfect Human's station as the vicegerent of God to be the reason for the cosmos's subjugation. This is because the Perfect Human is obedient to God, and therefore, God has made the cosmos obedient to them. (Amoli, 2006) Following Ibn 'Arabī, he believes that the Perfect Human is the spirit of the cosmos, and just as the human body is under the dominion of the spirit, the cosmos, with all its beings, is under the control and subjugation of the Perfect Human. (Amoli, 2006; Ibn Arabi, 1946) Of course, some have also argued for the Perfect Human's dominion and the cosmos's subjugation to them based on the dominion of the Greatest Name over other Names. Thus, the loci of manifestation of the Names, which encompass all potentialities, are under the subjugation of the Perfect Human. (Khwarazmi, 2000)

### **The Comprehensiveness of the Perfect Human**

The Perfect Human is the locus of manifestation of the Five Divine (the Presence of the Absolute Essence, the Presence of Unity, the Presence of Pure Intelligence, the Presence of Imagination or the Intermediate Realm, and the Presence of the Sensible World or the Realm of Dominion). (Amoli, 2006) Being the locus of manifestation in this context signifies that all the perfections of the other Presences are gathered within the Perfect Human. Consequently, corresponding to each of these Presences, there exists a specific cognitive faculty within the Perfect Human. For instance, their intellectual faculties correspond to the realm of pure intelligence, their imaginative faculty to the imaginal realm, and their external senses to the sensible world. (Jili, 1997) Therefore, the Perfect Human encompasses within themselves all the realities of other cosmic realms, and for this reason, they are referred to as the "Comprehensive Being."

When the Perfect Human comprehends this station of comprehensiveness, they attain knowledge of the realities of things and their principles, the inner dimension of affairs becomes clear to them, and the immutable essences of things become known to them. (Amoli, 2006) In truth, when the Perfect Human attains the level of annihilation in God and subsistence through God, they acquire the highest degree of detachment or the level beyond detachment, and through this station, they gain complete dominion and comprehensive awareness over the cosmos. Moreover, the Perfect Human's immediate knowledge of the cosmos can also be inferred from the relationship between the soul and the body, as described by the mystics for these two.

One of the ramifications of the Perfect Human's comprehensiveness is its existential vastness. Through their vicegerency, God bestows upon them an existential expansiveness that encompasses all things, and the governance of the cosmos is established for them through divine ordination, and this station is not intrinsic to them. (Jundi, 2005) Utilizing the ḥadīth qudsī: "My earth and My heaven cannot contain Me, but the heart of My believing servant contains Me," Sayyid Haydar believes that the Perfect Human, at whose head stands the Noble Prophet (peace be upon him), possesses such existential vastness as to be receptive to the Divine Reality. (Amoli, 2015) Since the Divine Reality encompasses all beings, and the Perfect Human is the "Real the Created," they will possess this same encompassing and sustaining concomitance over things.

Therefore, the comprehensiveness of the Perfect Human is a prerequisite for the realization of intercession in the eschatological realms from two perspectives: firstly, from the viewpoint of knowledge, and secondly, from the aspect of existential encompassing and the presence of other cosmic realms before the Perfect Human. Thus, the Perfect Human first has knowledge of the immutable essences of human beings and is aware of their inherent desires and immutable realities, and intercession occurs to that extent. Secondly, they possess complete encompassing awareness of other realms, and with divine permission, they utilize their existential vastness to intercede for sinners.

### **Intercession and Perfection**

One of the means of the soul's Perfection after death is intercession. However, the spirit of the one being interceded for must possess the capacity to be interceded for. In other words, the recipient of intercession must have the potential for Perfection and attain perfection by seeking aid from the saints of God. Alternatively, intercession is predicated upon someone having already developed a certain degree of perfection within themselves and, through intercession, reaching a superior or secondary perfection. Therefore, both someone deserving of punishment who is saved and a believer who ascends to a higher station through intercession have cultivated a capacity within themselves that makes them eligible for intercession.

Whether for someone condemned to punishment who is saved or for a believer who ascends from their current station to a higher one, intercession is considered a form of Perfection. Given that potency and potentiality are specific to the material realm, and in the Intermediate Realm and the Hereafter, matter and potentiality do not exist, and movement is defined as the transition from potentiality to actuality, philosophers have resorted to different approaches to explain human Perfection in the Barzakh and the Hereafter.

Some believe that the soul is a potentially existent entity and will be the subject of potency and potentiality in whatever realm it exists. (Sadr al-Mutallihin, 1975) Therefore, if it is in the material realm, movement occurs within the context of the material realm, and in the higher realms, movement occurs within those very realms. In other words, just as the soul utilized the material body for Perfection in the material realm, it utilizes the imaginal body for perfection in the Barzakh and the Hereafter. According to this view, the soul in the Barzakh becomes the locus and subject of ethical dispositions; in other words, the soul possesses manifestations that are its ethical dispositions.

Another group believes that in the eschatological realms, creation occurs through origination ex nihilo, and eschatological creatures come into existence instantaneously. Based on this, eschatological perfections are also created instantaneously and do not require movement or the existence of matter in the eschatological realms.

From the perspective of some others, the meaning of Perfection is any kind of ascent to higher stages and is not exclusive to movement in the sense of the transition from potentiality to actuality. According to this view, practical Perfection does not exist in the eschatological realms, but cognitive or epistemic Perfection is possible in those realms, and many religious cognitions will become clear to humans in the Barzakh and the Hereafter. (Javadi Amoli, 2012) According to this latter view, intercession will mean seeking aid from the saints of God to attain cognitive perfection.

However, all three views face challenges. The first view contradicts the immateriality of the afterlife from potency and potentiality. The second solution, which proposes the instantaneous existence of ascent, is in clear conflict with the philosophers' definition of movement as a gradual transition from potentiality to actuality. In the third view, the separation between knowledge and action in gradual movement lacks justification.

As previously mentioned, the mystics, with their belief in the renewal of instances, do not face any of the aforementioned challenges. This is because, based on the renewal of instances, all realms and potentialities are in a state of change and transformation, and this change is not exclusive to the material realm. Moreover, this movement is intensifying and perfecting, and at every moment, potentialities receive grace from the Divine Reality. The reception of perfection from the boundless Origin has no limit, and potentialities receive this perfection and grace according to their capacity. Based on this, intercession, which is considered a type of eschatological Perfection, in the shadow of the renewal of instances and the constant renewal of beings, causes the perfection of the sinful human being and their salvation from punishment or elevates a believer of a lower degree to higher levels. The intermediary of this grace and perfection is the Perfect Human, who is authorized by the Divine Reality. This is because intercession is the manifestation of the Name al-Raḥmān through the Perfect Human, and the will of the Divine Reality manifests in the will and action of the Perfect Human.

### **Conclusion**

In the discussion of intercession, it is crucial to first recognize that the exigency of the Divine Names, such as al-Raḥmān (the Most Compassionate) and al-Raḥīm (the Most Merciful), necessitates the arrival of God's vast mercy to His servants. One of the prominent manifestations of these Names occurs in the Hereafter and the form of intercession. However, intercession does not encompass everyone; in other words, it is not a random occurrence. Rather, a certain affinity and capability must exist in the one being interceded for intercession to befall them.

In the discourse on intercession, the intercessor, whose preeminent instance is the Perfect Human, plays a fundamental role. The Perfect Human's relationship with the Divine Reality and their complete being the locus of manifestation for the Divine Names and Attributes lead to their governance in the cosmos. This is because they are the locus of manifestation for the Name "Allah," which governs the remaining Names. In reality, the Divine Names become the powers of the Perfect Human in their vicegerency and governance. The Perfect Human's dominion over the Divine Names both establishes their influence at the beginning of creation and elucidates their causality in the ascending arc and the Perfection of potentialities, particularly human beings in the Hereafter. In other words, the Perfect Human is the intermediary of grace both in the emanation and manifestation of potentialities and in their ascending journey and Perfection.

The Perfect Human's vicegerency also establishes their governance in the cosmos, such that it is among the concomitants of vicegerency that the attributes of the one being represented manifest in the vicegerent. This very fact leads to their dominion and governance over the Divine Names. In truth, the Perfect Human, based on the ḥadīth-i qudsī of the supererogatory acts, exercises their governance with the "Hand of God," and their actions acquire a divine hue and fragrance. Therefore, if they intercede for someone, in reality, God Almighty has interceded for them, just as

He stated concerning the Noble Prophet: "And you did not throw when you threw, but it was Allah who threw" (Qur'an 8:17).

The comprehensiveness of the Perfect Human over the other Divine Presences also enables them to, firstly, possess complete encompassing awareness and comprehensive knowledge of the cosmos from a cognitive standpoint. This very fact is a prerequisite for intercession to befall those servants who have acquired the capacity to intercede. Based on this, the Perfect Human attains knowledge and comprehensive awareness of the immutable essences of human beings and, based on their inherent desires and divine pleasure, intercedes for them. Secondly, considering their complete encompassing awareness of other Presences and the vastness of their being, they utilize this power for intercession.

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Accepted Article