

**SYAFA'AT (INTERCESSION) IN AL-QUR'AN PERSPECTIVE**  
**(A Study on the Interpretation of Maudhu'i)**

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**Abstract**

*This study aims to find out the Al-Qur'an's view on the theme of intercession, understand intercession in relation to other than Allah, such as Angels, Rasulallah, Al-Qur'an and know who has the right to obtain intercession and its criteria. The study was designed through descriptive research conducted with a thematic qualitative approach with the maudhu'i method. The subjects in this study are library research, that is, all data sources come from written materials related to the topics discussed. Data analysis in this study uses text analysis. The results of this study indicate that syafa'at is still being discussed by the scholars, but most of the scholars say that the syafa'at exists later on the Day of Judgment. As for the group that believes that there is Shafi'i is the Shiite and Ahlussunah groups, while the Mu'tazilah group believes that there is no Syafa'at in the afterlife, of course with their respective arguments. As for those who can give syafa'at are angels, prophets, pious people and good deeds, of course after getting permission and blessings from God.*

**Keyword:** *Syafa'at, Al-Qur'an perspective, and interpretation studies*

**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pandangan Al-Qur'an tentang tema syafaat, memahami syafaat dalam kaitannya dengan selain Allah, seperti Malaikat, Rasulallah, Al-Qur'an dan mengetahui siapa saja yang berhak memperoleh syafaat berikut kriteria-kriterianya. Penelitian dirancang melalui penelitian deskriptif yang dilakukan dengan pendekatan kualitatif secara tematik dengan metode maudhu'i. Subyek dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian pustaka (library research), yaitu semua sumber data berasal dari bahan-bahan tertulis yang berkaitan dengan topik yang dibahas. Analisis data dalam penelitian ini menggunakan analisis teks. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa syafa'at masih terus diperbincangkan oleh para ulama, namun sebagian besar para ulama menyatakan bahwa syafa'at itu ada nantinya di hari kiamat. Adapun golongan yang berpendapat syafa'at itu ada adalah golongan Syi'ah dan Ahlussunah, sementara golongan Mu'tazilah berpendapat tidak ada syafa'at di akhirat, tentu dengan argumen mereka masing-masing. Adapun yang dapat memberi syafa'at adalah para malaikat, nabi, orang sholeh dan perbuatan baik tentu setelah mendapat izin dan ridho dari Tuhan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Syafa'at, perspektif Al-Qur'an, dan kajian tafsir*

## مستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد نظر القرآن فيما يتعلق بالشفاعة وفهمها بالنسبة إلى غير الله، أي بالملائكة والرسل والقرآن ومن يحق له التوسط ومعاييره. صممت الدراسة من خلال البحث الوصفي الذي أجري مع منهج نوعي موضوعي بطريقة موضوعية. الموضوع في هذه الدراسة هو بحث مكتبي، حيث تأتي جميع مصادر البيانات من مواد مكتوبة تتعلق بالموضوعات التي تمت مناقشتها. وتحليل البيانات في هذه الدراسة تستخدم تحليل النص. تشير النتائج إلى أن الشافعات لا يزال الاختلاف من قبل العلماء، ولكن معظم العلماء يتفقون بوجود الشافعات يوم القيامة. أما بالنسبة للمجموعات التي تجادل بأن هناك ذي الشفاعة هم من الشيعة والسني، في حين أن تجادل المعتزلة مع حججهم بأنه لا يوجد شافعات في الآخرة. وذلك فلا شافعات للإنسان إلا بإذن الله وبركاته.

### A. INTRODUCTION

Qur'an is the main source of Islamic teachings comprising all information about life both in the world and in the hereafter. This information is very important for humans in relation to their function as *Khalifah* (caliph) on this earth. The content of information in Qur'an might be found simple or difficult to be understood by human based upon to what extent the mastery of individual about interpretation and Arabic grammar.

The concern with the interpretation of al-Qur'an has begun since the era of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to the recent time. The rapid development of interpretation or Tafsir from time to time has been proven through many books of Quran interpretation written in the form of *Tafsir bi al-Ma'thur* or *Tafsir bi al-Ra'yi*.

In the beginning, the interpretation of Quran verses based upon *ijtihad* (*al-ra'yi*) was very limited and bound with the rules of language and meaning contained in the vocabularies. Along with the rapid development in society, the portion of thinking (*ijtihad*) has, however, developed in the interpretation of Quran verses. Muhammad Arkoun, a contemporary thinker from Al-Jazeera, wrote: "Qur'an provides a number of possibilities of infinite meaning. The impression given by its verses regarding thoughts and explanation at the level of entity is absolute. Thus, the

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verse is always open (for other interpretation), never certain and closed in a single interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

In the following development, the exegetes (ulamas) also attempted to "review" the Qur'an by using various methods such as the method of *tahliliy*, *muqaran*, *ijmaliy*, and *maudu'iy*.

Various patterns and methods of interpretation above have brought a very significant influence on the understanding of Muslims towards the Qur'an. In Indonesia, say, the *maudu'i* method is widely being practiced and becomes a "trend" in which it is considered very suitable to explain a phenomenon or problem occurred in the society. This method is seen as a very comprehensive interpretation method for providing complete information on a subject.

In recent times, particularly in Indonesia, the *maudu'i* method is the most favorable among many social elements, not only by the exegetes (mufassir) themselves (read: Ulama), but also by the public enjoying the results of the interpretations. Through this study of interpretation of *maudu'i*, the "consumers" are able to understand in detail the topics discussed because the exegetes have presented a "menu" in the form of complete interpretations, making it *tasteful* to be consumed.

In this paper, the writer presents *syafa'at* (the intercession), processed using the *Maudu'i* method. This intercession in fact is frequently known by society but still in the midst of discourse; therefore, it requires a complete and comprehensive explanation. It is expected that this paper can be enjoyed by all parties, especially for those needing it.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. The Term of *Syafa'at* in Al-Qur'an

The term of *Syafa'at* means intercession referring to the form of *masdar* from the word *shafa'a-yashfa'u- shafa'atan* meaning even number (antonym of odd number). The combination of letter *syin*, *fa'*, and *'ain* is a meaning showing the closeness or comparison of something for instance even as the opposite to odd. As Allah SWT states *Wa al-shaf'i wa al-watri*. The exegetes interpret the word *al-watri*

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<sup>1</sup> Read the papera of Martin van Bruinessen, "*Muhammad Arkoun tentang Al-Qur'an*" delivered in the Discussion of Yayasan Empati on page 2 quoted from Muhammed Arkoun, "Algeria" in Shireen T. Hunter (ed), *The Politic of Islamic Revivalism* (Bloomington: Indiana Univercity Oress, 1988) 182.

in the verse as Allah; meanwhile *al-Shaf'u* means the creature.<sup>2</sup> Some Ulama translate the word *al-syaf'u* as Shalat with even rakat that is *Shalat Subuh* (Fajr Prayer) and odd rakat (Maghreb or Afternoon Prayer), or even means the Heaven's gates and the odd means the Hell's gates with seven in number (read Q.S. al-Hijr {15}: 44)<sup>3</sup>

مَّقْسُومٍ جِزَاءٍ مِنْهُمْ بَابٍ لِّكُلِّ أَبْوَابٍ سَبْعَةٍ لَهَا

*The Jahannam (Hell) has seven gates; for every gate is of them a portion designated."*

The word *syafa'at* with its various *ishtiqaq* has been mentioned 31 times in Holy Quran spread in 26 Surah. Those 31 words take various forms: First, 14 times in the form of *masdar* (infinitive, noun not related to the time); second, 2 times in the form of *isim fa'il* (the actor or subject) and third 1 time in the form of *isim mubalaghah* (*syafi'*). Meanwhile, the fourth form is *fi'il mudari'* (verb showing the present, continuous or future continuous) 5 times and the fifth form is *Jama' Takthir* (*shufa'a*) 1 time. Of 26 surah, 19 verses were revealed in Mecca (*makkiyah*) and 7 verses were in Madinah (*madaniyah*).

Table 1 below presents the complete surah and verses of *syafa'ah* based upon the revelation chronology.<sup>4</sup>

Table 1. Surah and Verses of *syafa'ah* (Intercession)

N0	Surah	No. Surah	N0. Verse	Makkiyah/ Madaniyah	Revelation	Isytiqaq	
1	Al-Mudastir	74	48	Makkiyah	4	Masdar/isim fail	/الشافعين
2	Al-Fajr	89	3	Makkiyah	10	Masdar	
3	Al-Najm	53	26	Makkiyah	23	Masdar	شفاعتهم
4	Al-A'raf	7	53	Makkiyah	39	Fi'il mudhari'	يشفغوا/
5	Yasin	36	23	Makkiyah	41	Masdar	شفاعتهم
6	Maryam	19	87	Makkiyah	44	Masdar	
7	Thaha	20	209	Makkiyah	45	Masdar	
8	Al-Syu'ara'	26	100	Makkiyah	47	Isim fa'il	شافعين
9	Yunus	10	3	Makkiyah	51	Isim fa'il	شفيع
10	Yunus	10	18	Makkiyah	51	Jamak taksir	
11	Al-An'am	6	51	Makkiyah	55	Isim fa'il	شفيع
12	Al-An'am	6	70	Makkiyah	55	Isim fa'il	شفيع
13	Al-An'am	6	94	Makkiyah	55	Jamak Taksir	
14	Saba'	34	23	Makkiyah	58	Masdar	

<sup>2</sup> Abi al-Husain Ahmad bin Faris bin Zakaria, *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah*, Juz III (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, tt), 201.

<sup>3</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, Vol. 15 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2012), 287.

<sup>4</sup> This table has been taken and compiled based on the software "Zekr" version 1.1.0 <http://zekr.org>

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15	Al-Zumar	39	43	Makkiyah	59	Jamak taksir	
16	Al-Zumar	39	44	Makkiyah	59	Masdar	
17	Ghafir	40	18	Makkiyah	60	Isim fi'il	شَفِيع
18	Al-Zukhruf	43	86	Makkiyah	63	Masdar	
19	Al-Anbiya'	21	28	Makkiyah	73	Fi'il mudhari'	يَشْفَعُونَ
20	Al-Sajadah	32	4	Makkiyah	75	Isim fa'il	شَفِيع
21	Al-Rum	30	13	Makkiyah	84	Jamak taksir	
22	Al-Baqarah	2	48	Madaniyah	87	Masdar	
23	Al-Baqarah	2	123	Madaniyah	87	Masdar	
24	Al-Baqarah	2	254	Madaniyah	87	Masdar	
25	Al-Baqarah	2	255	Madaniyah	87	Fi'il mudhari'	يَشْفَع
26	Al-Nisa'	4	85	Madaniyah	92	Fi'il mudhari/ Masdar	يَشْفَعُ شَفَاعَةً يَشْفَعُ شَفَاعَةً

### 2. Understanding the Meaning of Syafa'at

In the Dictionary of *Mu'jam al-Mufradat li alfazi al-Qur'an*<sup>5</sup>, the word syafa'at is defined in the following meanings:

**First**, syafa'at means to combine something with another similar thing to be paired; in other words, it is to combining something single to be even or doubled, as Allah SWT states in Surah al-Fajr: 3. (*Wa al-Shafi wa al -Witru*). Here, *al-witru* is Allah that is odd in terms of its unity and creature is al-Syaf'u for being composed of elements/types that is in pairs as Allah states in Surah al-Dzariyat: 49. (*Wa min kulli syaiin khalaqna zaujain*).

**Second**, al-Syaf'u is the son of Prophet Adam for being born as twin; while Prophet Adam is *al-Witru* for having no parents.

**Third**, Yaum al-Nahri (the day of slaughter) on the 10<sup>th</sup> Zulhijjah is said to be al-Syaf'u, while al-witru refers to the day of Arofah (yaumu 'arofah) the 9th zulhijjah.

**Fourth**, *wasilah* refers to someone leading and asking someone to good deeds, as Allah says in Surah al-Nisa 'verse 85:

مَنهَا كُفْلٌ لَهُ يَكُنْ سَيِّئَةً شَفَاعَةٌ يَشْفَعُ وَمَنْ مِّنْهَا نَصِيبٌ لَهُ يَكُنْ حَسَنَةً شَفَاعَةٌ يَشْفَعُ مِّنْ  
 مُّقْتِنَاتٍ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ

*Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a reward therefrom; and whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a burden therefrom. And ever is Allah, over all things, a Keeper.*

<sup>5</sup> Read the book written by Al-Raghib al-Asfahaniy, *Mu'jam al-Mufradat li alfaz al-Qur'an* (Dimisyq: Dar al-Nasyr, tt), 289, and read the work of al-Asfahaniy entitled *al-Mufradat fi Gharaib al-Qur'an*, Juz I (t.tp.t. Maktabah Nazar Musthafa al-Baz, tt), 346-347

The term syafa'at in the verse is interpreted with the help of someone to other in a matter. In this case, syafa'at is divided into two kinds: first, virtue, considered good by religion, and second, evil, considered bad by religion.

The person who intercedes in the form of virtue can, for example, be seen from the action of helping or encouraging other to do good deeds, such as building the mosque, madrasas, and so on. Here, the one advocating will be rewarded from the actions of the person who follows his or her advice as if he or she did it by him or herself. In contrast, the person interceding in the form of a crime, for example in helping someone in doing an evil thing such as gambling and adultery, will have share and is rewarded from the act as if he was associating in the act.<sup>6</sup>

**Fifth, Prayer.** In essence, syafa'at means prayer to mediate other to get good and refute evil thing. In other words, it is to ask Allah in the afterlife for the benefit of others. Thus, asking syafa'at means asking for prayer, so that syafa'at resembles to a prayer, as Allah says in Surah Toha verse 109:

قَوْلًا لَهُ وَرَضِيَ الرَّحْمَنُ لَهُ أَذِنَ مَنْ إِلَّا الشَّفَاعَةَ تَفْعُ لَا يَوْمَئِذٍ

*That Day, no intercession will benefit except [that of] one to whom the Most Merciful has given permission and has accepted his word.*

The word syafa'at in the verse above can be interpreted as prayer, which is the request of the angels or prophets to someone to get syafa'at. The request they have made on the Day of Resurrection will not be possible but with Allah permission.

**Sixth, To arrange.** As the words of God in Surah Yunus verse 3:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكَمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

*Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne, arranging the matter [of His creation]. There is no intercessor except after His permission. That is Allah, your Lord, so worship Him. Then will you not remember?*

The word *Shafi'* in the above verse is interpreted by regulating that God alone governs all things, except Allah that permits the angels to arrange affairs with His

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Religion Affair of RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya (completed edition)*, Juz 4-6, (Jakarta: Widya Cahaya, 2011), 228.

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permission. The Angels also carry out whatever God commands. (*yaf'aluna ma tu'marun*).

**Seventh**, helping/helper as people say "بالعداوة لي يشفع فلانا ان"

that is the *Pulan* (a person) has helped me from a dispute. Several verses indicate the meaning of helping/ helper as part of the meaning of syafa'at, one of which is in Surah al-An'am verse 94,

نَرَىٰ وَمَا ظَهَرُوكُمْ وَرَاءَ حَوَّلْنَاكُمْ مَّا وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَرَّةً أَوَّلَ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ كَمَا فُرَادَىٰ جِئْتُمُونَا وَلَقَدْ  
كُنْتُمْ مَّا عَنكُمْ وَضَلَّ بَيْنَكُمْ تَقَطَّعَ لَقَدْ شُرَكَاءَ فِيكُمْ أَنَّهُمْ زَعَمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ شَفَعَاءُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ  
تَزْعُمُونَ

*[It will be said to them], "And you have certainly come to Us alone as We created you the first time, and you have left whatever We bestowed upon you behind you. And We do not see with you your 'intercessors' which you claimed that they were among you associates [of Allah]. It has [all] been severed between you, and lost from you is what you used to claim."*

**Eighth**, Asking someone for a help and someone does it. As stated in a prophetic hadith:

القران شافع مشفع<sup>7</sup>

Qur'an would give syafa'at for those reading it.

**Ninth**, Banu Shafi 'is a descendant coming from Bani al-Mutholib bin Abdi Manaf including Muhammad bin Idris al-Syafi'I.<sup>8</sup>

From those lingual definitions, syafa'at can terminologically be interpreted as a help or assistance from people or objects with a high and noble level to people with lower level to get the good things and refuse the evil things.

Thus, Shafi'at essentially refers to someone's request to someone else to get a help. If what is expected by someone is found in other people who is feared or respecte, then he or she can go to him or her by "fulfilling him or herself" with the

<sup>7</sup> al-Asfahaniy, *Mu'jam al-Mufradat*....., 289., and *al-Mufradat fi Gharaib al-Qur'an*, Juz I, 347

<sup>8</sup> Ibnu al-Husain Ahmad bin Faris bin Zakaria, *Tahqiq: Abdussalam Muhammad Harun, Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah* , Juz II (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1977), 201.

intended person to jointly plead with the feared and respected. He is the liaison to achieve what is expected.<sup>9</sup>

In the life of the world syafa'at is frequently done in purpose to justify the wrong thing and violate the law and regulations. Those interceding commonly does giving for fear reluctance, or expecting a reward. In the Hereafter, such a thing will never occur because Allah Almighty to whom a request is addressed to, is not in a position of need, not afraid, nor does He do the evil thing.

### 3. Discourse about Syafa'at (Intercession)

Most of Islamic Ulama acknowledge the existence of syafa'at in the Day of Judgment and it will be given to the believers. However, some still question it. The Shi'a and the ulama of Ahlussunah accept the existence of Syafa'at, while the Mu'tazilah do not.

On the other hand he said, "A pious believer can intercede to a sinful friend and Allah will receive the syafa'at given. That is the belief of all Syi'ah Imamiyyah."<sup>10</sup>

Sheikh Muhammad bin Al-Hasan Al-Tusi (died in 460 H) in the book Tafsir Al-Tibyan said that syafa'at in essence is to avoid any dangers - not to bring a benefit. On the Day of Resurrection, the believers will get syafa'at from the Prophet of Allah. As Allah has accepted the intercession, many people supposed to be in hell will be safe from any torment, as the Prophet Muhammad SAW stated:

إِدَّخَرْتُ شَفَاعَتِي لِأَهْلِ الْكِبَائِرِ مِنْ أُمَّتِي

*I keep my intercession to later give to my sinful people.*

We believe that syafa'at is the right of the Prophet SAW, some of his companions, all of Imam Ma'sum, and many pious servants of Allah."<sup>11</sup>

Looking at the verses of the Qur'an Al-Karim, the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad and the Imams of Ahlul Bait a. s, and the statements of the scholars of Ahlu al-Sunnah above, it can be concluded that the problems of syafa'at are included in a series of problems that have been accepted and believed by the majority of

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<sup>9</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah Pesan Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, Vol.1 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2012), 227.

<sup>10</sup> Syekh Mufid, *Awail al-Maqalat fi al-Madhahib wa al-Mukhtarat*, with tahqiq Mahdi Muhaqqiq (Beirut: Dar-Fikr, 2005), 29.

<sup>11</sup> Syekh Al-Tusiy, *Tafsir al-Tibyan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, (Lebanon: Dar al-Ma'rifah, tt), 213-214.



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Muslims from any different mazhabs. However, it seems to be undeniable about the existence of disputes among the ulamas regarding the definition of syafa'at.

In contrast to the opinions of the ulamas above, the Mu'tazilah refutes the concept of syafa'at. Abul Hasan Al-Khayyath, one of the leaders of this group, when interpreting the following verse,

أفمن حقّ عليه كلمة العذاب أفأنت تنقذ من في النار...

*Do (you want to change the fate) people who will definitely be tortured? Will you save people in hell?*<sup>12</sup>

argued that this verse clearly states that it is impossible for Messenger of Allah to save those surely placed into hellfire."

Sheikh Mufid in answering the statement stated that all people who accept the concept of syafa'at have never claimed that the Messenger of Allah could save people placed in hell. They only say that it is only Allah that saves the person from His torment as a tribute to the Prophet SAW and his holy family (giving him syafa'at). On the other hand, the mufassir (experts in the Qur'an interpretation) argued that what is meant by this verse with "those surely placed into hellfire" are the unbelievers and the Prophet SAW will not intercede them. "With this explanation, it can be concluded that the verse is not appropriate to be an argument in rejecting the concept of syafa'at."<sup>13</sup>

Responding to the Mu'tazilah, the Ahl al-Sunnah argued that though this verse and other verses apparently disprove the syafa'at, in general there are a number of verses and hadiths of the Prophet limiting the generality of the verse as in Surah al-Anbiya': 28, and Surah Saba': 23.<sup>14</sup>

On that basis, it can be stated that the denied syafa'at is to the disbelievers, similar with the Jews, the polytheists or other disbelievers disproving the prophethood of the Prophet Muhammad.

#### **4. Intercessor, those receiving and those not receiving the Syafaat**

Based on the information from a number of Al-Qur'an verses about syafa'at, it has created a strong impression in mind that with the existence of syafa'at, who will

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<sup>12</sup> Al-Qur'an, 39: 19.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.al-shia.org/html/id/book/syafa'a.02.htm>

<sup>14</sup> M.Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, Vol.1, (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2012), 229.

be entitled to intercede. Equally important, it is also about who will be and not be entitled to get Syafa'at.

**a. Intercessor**

If carefully reviewing the verses of Al-Koran Al-Karim, it is found that Allah SWT in His last holy book never mentions the name of anyone who later on the Day of Judgment will intercede. However, by mentioning some of the characteristics and criteria of Shafi' (the Intercessor) the Qur'an explains that anyone who possesses these qualities means that he or she is the Shafi' on the Day of Judgment. There are a number of groups mentioned by the Al-Karim Qur'an as Shafi':

*First, the angels* as stated in the words of Allah in Surah al-Najm:

وَكَمْ مِنْ مَلَكٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ  
وَيَرْضَى ﴿٢٦﴾

*“And how many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession will not avail at all except [only] after Allah has permitted [it] to whom He wills and approves.*

In addition to the above verse, the following verse clearly mentions the syafa'at given by the angels. Allah SWT says,

وقالوا اتخذ الرحمن ولدا سبحانه بل عباد مكرمون , لا يسبقونه بالقول وهم بأمره يعملون , يعلم ما بين أيديهم وما خلفهم ولا يشفعون إلا لمن ارتضى وهم من خشيته مشفقون

*And they say, "The Most Merciful has taken a son." Exalted is He! Rather, they are [but] honored servants. They cannot precede Him in word, and they act by His command. He knows what is [presently] before them and what will be after them, and they cannot intercede except on behalf of one whom He approves. And they, from fear of Him, are apprehensive.*<sup>15</sup>

In the above verse Allah mentions the accusation of the polytheists saying that angels are children of God. However, the Qur'an definitely refutes their words and calls the angels as the glorified servants of Allah and will not give syafa'at except to those blessed by Him.

**Second, the prophet.** There are several verses that confirm that the prophets a.s. is entitled to intercede on the Day of Judgment. Allah SWT says:

<sup>15</sup> al-Qur'an, Al-Anbiya' ( 21 ) : 26-28.

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و ما أرسلنا من رسول إلا ليطاع بإذن الله ولو أنهم إذ ظلموا أنفسهم جاءوك فاستغفروا الله واستغفر لهم الرسول لوجدوا الله توابا رحيمًا

*And We did not send any messenger except to be obeyed by permission of Allah . And if, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you, [O Muhammad], and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Messenger had asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Accepting of repentance and Merciful.*<sup>16</sup>

Several important points in this verse need to be concerned. Some exegetists say that "Self-Wrongdoing" means robbing their own rights by doing something that can be harmful through immoral acts; thus, they are entitled to torture, or by abandoning an act that can bring merit. Some argued that self-wrongdoing is when a person behaves hypocritically and acts as an unbeliever - turning away from the guidance of the Prophet and seeking the laws not set by Allah SWT.<sup>17</sup>

Ibn Kathir stated that the meaning of "coming to you" is those who do wrong for themselves) in a state of repentance and faith in the Messenger, "... and ask forgiveness from Allah" for the sins they committed. The meaning "... and the prophet also asked forgiveness for them", that is, that the prophet also asked Allah to forgive them. "They will find God," meaning that they will get forgiveness from God for their sins.<sup>18</sup>

Another verse that addresses the existence of syafa'at of the prophets or messengers is verse 53 of Surah Al-A'raf:

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ ۚ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِنْ شُفَعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۚ قَدْ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ

*Do they await except its result? The Day its result comes those who had ignored it before will say, "The messengers of our Lord had come with the truth, so are there [now] any intercessors to intercede for us or could we be sent back to do other than we used to do?" They will have lost themselves, and lost from them is what they used to invent.*

The verse above explains the state of people who do not want to use Al-quran

<sup>16</sup> al-Qur'an, al-Nisa' (4): 64.

<sup>17</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Vol 2 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2012), 597.

<sup>18</sup> Ibnu Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, Juz 4 (Kairo: Muassasah Qurtubah, 2000), 140.

as a guide for their lives to achieve happiness in the world and in the Hereafter. They believe more in the teachings of their hereditary ancestors rather than the teachings of Al-Qur'an delivered by Rasulallah SAW. On the Day of Judgment, Allah will punish them for their actions. On that day they will have no power to avoid the punishment and dream if there would be a help from someone (prophet) or ancestor they have worshiped. On that day, they would also dream of being returned to the world at which they could do good deeds based upon the teachings of Allah and His Messenger.<sup>19</sup> But their dreams would be in vain and they would be among the losers for everything they do in the worldly life gives no benefits.

**Third, the pious believers.**

The verse below explains that the believers and those killed in the way of Allah are Shafi' who will intercede. Allah SWT says,

ولا يملك الذين يدعون من دونه الشفاعة إلا من شهد بالحق وهم يعلمون.

*And those they invoke besides Him do not possess [power of] intercession; but only those who testify to the truth [can benefit], and they know<sup>20</sup>.*

Those testifying to the truth are the pious believers in which Allah will make them as the witnesses of all people with the prophets and the *Washi* (the successors of the prophet's mission).

Many narrations support this verse and give further explanations, one of which is the hadith narrated by Saduq from the Prophet SAW. He said,

ثلاثة يشفعون إلى الله عز وجل فيشفعون : الأنبياء , ثم العلماء , ثم الشهداء

*There are three groups whose intercession on the Day of Judgment will be accepted by Allah SWT. They are the prophets, Ulama and Syuhada'.*

Of the number of verses related to the intercessor, Allah permission is becoming an important thing to note. Al-Qur'an has stated that those who can give or get syafa'at are those blessed by Allah. Thus, without this, syafa'at will be unused. In short, Shafi' must be a person who is blessed by Allah so that he or she can give syafa'at and those receiving the syafa'at must be a person whom Allah accepts so that the Shafi'at he or she receives from Shafi' can be useful.

The holy verses of the Al-Karim Qur'an stating about the pleasure of

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Religion Affair, RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Tafsirnya*,.....Juz 7-9, 355.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Qur'an., al-Zukhruf (43): 86.

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Allah to some of His servants shows that they are servants who have noble qualities. Below are few examples of the Qur'anic verses that clearly mention the pleasure of Allah to His virtuous servants. Firstly, Allah says:

قال الله هذا يوم ينفع الصادقين صدقهم لهم جنّات تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها أبدا رضي الله عنهم ورضوا عنه ذلك الفوز العظيم

*Allah will say, "This is the Day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness." For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment.*<sup>21</sup>

This verse shows that the Shadiqin are those with an honest nature are actually the people blessed by Allah SWT.

The second verse is the word of Allah SWT:

والسابقون الأولون من المهاجرين والأنصار والذين اتبعوهم بإحسان رضي الله عنهم ورضوا عنه وأعدّ لهم جنّات تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها أبدا ذلك الفوز العظيم.

*And the first forerunners [in the faith] among the Muhajireen and the Ansar and those who followed them with good conduct - Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever. That is the great attainment.*<sup>22</sup>

All the verses above explain that those who are eternal in heaven with the rivers flowing beneath them are those whom Allah SWT loves and they themselves are pleased with Him. Those pleased with Allah are those with good conduct and honest with God in their faith and deeds. They are people who do good deeds and fear God. They are the forerunners from Muhajirin and Ansar, and followed their footsteps at best.

### **b. Those getting the Syafa'at/Intercession**

Those getting the syafa'at are the sinful believers.

As previously explained earlier, syafa'at means the forgiveness of sins and abolition of punishment. The believer is sometimes guilty of committing a sin, but he or she will immediately ask for forgiveness from Allah and repent. He

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 5: 119.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 9: 100.

or she also needs syafa'at for the Judgment Day.

'Ubaidah bin Zurarah said," I asked Abu Abdillah a.s. about a believer, "Does he need Syafa'at?" He replied, "Yes." Then someone stood up and asked, "Does a believer still need the syafaat from the Prophet Muhammad SAW?" He replied,

نعم , إنَّ للمؤمنين خطايا وذنوبا وما من أحد إلاَّ يحتاج إلى شفاعة محمد يومئذ

*Yes, all believers have many mistakes and bear many sins. They all will need the syafaat of the Prophet Muhammad on that day.*

From the explanation above, there is no reason to say that people can be called as the believers if all of their actions are in accordance with their faith. By saying so, it means we have forgotten the human nature. Allah is omniscient about the state of His servants. What God has said in the Qur'an is an explanation of the law of human creation. Thus, we can say that the difference in levels between humanity is reality.

It can be concluded then that by continuously committing sin, one can be getting out of the criteria of true faith. In addition, a believer sometimes do the sins, both little sins and big sins. But, he will soon be istighfar and repent to Allah SWT. The above hadiths also explain that syafa'at is for sinners.

Husain bin Khalid said, "I asked Imam Ridha a.s.," O son of the Messenger of Allah, then what is the meaning of the word of Allah SWT

يشفعون إلا لمن ارتضى They do not intercede except to those who have been blessed.

<sup>23</sup> "He replied,

لا يشفعون إلا لمن ارتضى الله دينه

*They do not intercede except to people Allah has blessed his faith in.*

Al-Barqi narrated from Ali ibn Hasan Al-Ruqy, from Abdullah bin Jibillah, from Hasan bin Abdillah, from his father and grandfather, Imam Hasan bin Ali a.s, That he in a quite long hadith said,

إن النبي صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم قال في جواب نفر من اليهود سألوه عن مسائل :  
وأما شفاعتي ففي أصحاب الكبائر ما خلا أهل الشرك والظلم

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<sup>23</sup> al-Qur'an, 21: 28.

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*In answering a number of questions by a group of Jews, the Prophet said, "Regarding my syafa'at, later on the Day of Judgment I will give it to those covered by sins except the idolaters and wrongdoers".<sup>24</sup>*

Those two hadiths above explain that Allah does not accept those died as disbeliever or wrongdoers. Therefore, they are not entitled to get any syafa'at.

### c. Those not getting Syafaat / intercession

Those not getting the syafa'at are categorized into some groups as explained by the following Al-Qur'an verses.

#### 1. Ungrateful with the Blessing of Allah

People ungrateful with the blessing given by Allah will not get any syafa'at.

يا أيها الذين آمنوا أنفقوا مما رزقناكم من قبل أن يأتي يوم لا بيع فيه ولا خلة ولا شفاعة  
والكافرون هم الظالمون

*O you who have believed, spend from that which We have provided for you before there comes a Day in which there is no exchange and no friendship and no intercession. And the disbelievers - they are the wrongdoers.<sup>25</sup>*

Being reluctant in sharing some of wealth given by Allah is a manifestation of disbelief and injustice. If the end of this verse is correlated to the beginning, then it can be interpreted that those who do not spend a portion of their wealth in the way of Allah is a part of disbelievers who certainly will not receive syafa'at on the Day of Resurrection.

#### 2. Satan's followers

Allah SWT said:

هل ينظرون إلا تأويله يوم يأتي تأويله يقول الذين نسوه من قبل قد جاءت رسل ربنا بالحق فهل لنا من شفعاء فيشفعوا لنا أو نردّ فنعمل غير الذي كنا نعمل قد خسروا  
أنفسهم وضلّ عنهم ما كانوا يفترون

*Do they await except its result? The Day its result comes those who had ignored it before will say, "The messengers of our Lord had come with the truth, so are*

<sup>24</sup> Muhammad Baqir bin Muhammad Taqi al-Majlisiy, *Bihar al-Anwar*, Juz 8 (Berut: Dar al-Fikr), 34.

<sup>25</sup> al-Qur'an, 2:254.

*there [now] any intercessors to intercede for us or could we be sent back to do other than we used to do?" They will have lost themselves, and lost from them is what they used to invent.<sup>26</sup>*

فككبوا فيها هم والغاؤون , و جنود إبليس أجمعون , قالوا وهم فيها يختصمون , تالله  
إن كنا لفي ضلال مبين , إذ نسويكم برب العالمين , وما أضلنا إلاّ المحرمون , فما لنا  
من شافعين , ولا صديق حميم.

*So they will be overturned into Hellfire, they and the deviators and the soldiers of Iblees, all together. They will say while they dispute therein, "By Allah, we were indeed in manifest error when we equated you with the Lord of the worlds. And no one misguided us except the criminals. So now we have no intercessors..."<sup>27</sup>*

Those two verses above explain that those neglecting the religion, decide to be the follower of Satan chose to become Satan's followers and drowned in the manifest error would never get syafa'at on the judgement day.

#### 4. The Deniers of Resurrection Day

The following verse tells that those denial the Day of Resurrection and the Day of Judgment will not receive any syafa'at.

...وكنا نكذب بيوم الدين , حتى أتانا اليقين , فما تنفعهم شفاعة الشافعين

*And we used to deny the Day of Recompense Until there came to us the certainty. So there will not benefit them the intercession of [any] intercessors"<sup>28</sup>*

In addition to disbelieving in the resurrection day, they also do not get syafa'at for disbelieving the Prophet Muhammad, even accusing the Prophet of being a sorcerer, liar and insane.<sup>29</sup>

#### 5. Those taking religion as an amusement

Allah SWT in a verse explains about the fate of those taking religion as ridicule and play on the Day of Judgment.

وذر الذين اتَّخذوا دينهم لعبا ولهوا وغرَّهم الحياة الدنيا وذكر به أن تبسل نفس بما  
كسبت ليس لها من دون الله وليّ ولا شفيع وإن تعدل كلّ عدل لا يؤخذ منها أولئك

<sup>26</sup> al-Qur'an, 5:53.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 26: 94-101.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 74: 46-48.

<sup>29</sup> Ahmad Musthofa al-Maraghi, *Tafsir al-Maraghiy*, Juz 29 (Kairo: Maktabah Musthofa al-Babi al-Halabiy, 1946), 140



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الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

*And leave those who take their religion as amusement and diversion and whom the worldly life has deluded. But remind with the Qur'an, lest a soul be given up to destruction for what it earned; it will have other than Allah no protector and no intercessor. And if it should offer every compensation, it would not be taken from it. Those are the ones who are given to destruction for what they have earned. For them will be a drink of scalding water and a painful punishment because they used to disbelieve.<sup>30</sup>*

### 5. The Wrongdoer

Allah SWT says

وَأَنذَرَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْأَرْزَاقِ إِذْ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كَاطْمِينَ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ يُطَاع

..

*And warn them, of the Approaching Day, when hearts are at the throats, filled [with distress]. For the wrongdoers there will be no devoted friend and no intercessor [who is] obeyed.<sup>31</sup>*

Ibn Kathir stated that the wrongdoer will not get syafa'at for having terminated the virtues by being shirk to Allah, due to the darkness in their hearts. Here, Ibn Kathir seems to equate al-Zhulm to Syirk.

### 6. Polytheists

In many of the verses, the Al-Karim Al-Qur'an very clearly states that the polytheists (those worshiping other than Allah) will never get Syafaat on the Day of Judgment. At the same time, all their worships besides Allah are not able to give any assistance to them. Allah SWT says:

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ هَؤُلَاءِ شَفَعَاؤُنَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ قُلْ أَتَنْبِئُونَ اللَّهَ بِمَا لَا يَعْلَمُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ

*And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with Allah "Say, "Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?" Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.<sup>32</sup>*

ءَأَتَّخِذُ مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً إِنْ يُرِدْنِ الرَّحْمَنُ بِضُرٍّ لَا تُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَقْدِرُونَ

<sup>30</sup> Al-Qur'an., 6: 70.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 40: 18.

<sup>32</sup> al-Qur'an., 10: 18.

*Should I take other than Him [false] deities [while], if the Most Merciful intends for me some adversity, their intercession will not avail me at all, nor can they save me?*<sup>33</sup>

Paying attention to the meaning of each verse on the unbelievers above, it then can be concluded that *first*, these verses affirm that all things they associate with Allah, such as totems or others, cannot intercede them when they are in hellfire because of their polytheism. Secondly, the verses also explained that the unbelievers will never get syafa'at from the intercessor (such as the Prophet and other holy people) in that they as a matter of fact are not entitled to forgiveness.

Clearly, syafa'at is a help on the Day of Judgment that will not be obtained by those in the category of unbelievers with various forms.

## CONCLUSION

1. The term syafa'at in Qur'an is mentioned 31 times spread in 26 letters with various word derivations (ishtiqaq). Syafa'at literally contains several meanings: combining something single to be double, son of Adam, yaum al-nahri, prayer, wasilah, helping and bani syafi'. Whereas terminologically, syafa'at means helping or assistance from people or objects with have a high and noble degree to people with lower level to reach the virtues and refuse the evil things.
2. The issues on syafa'at is still being discussed among scholars on the existence of syafa'at. However, most of ulama acknowledge the existence of the syafa'at on the Day of Judgment. For instance, Shafi'i Shia and Ahlussunah accept this, while Mu'tazilah argues that there is no syafa'at in the afterlife, surely with their respective arguments.
3. The belief in the existence of syafa'at has led to the consequence about who the intercessors, those receiving and those not receiving are. The intercessor are angels, prophets, pious people and good deeds, of course with the permission and blessings of Allah. While those who get syafa'at are the sinful believers. Whereas, those not receiving the syafa'at based upon what is stated in Qur'an include: shirks, unbelievers, Satan followers, wrongdoers, those denying the doomsday, and those using religion as an amusement.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 36: 23.

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