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The Concept of Intercession According to Shaykh Salih Al-Fawzan's Contemporary Interpretation and Its Influence on the Strengthening of theological Education

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A B S T R A K

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep syafaat dalam perspektif Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, dengan menekankan klasifikasi syafaat, dasar normatif, dan relevansinya dalam konteks teologi Islam kontemporer. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui studi kepustakaan (library research), dengan sumber data primer berupa karya al-Fawzān, ayat Al-Qur'an, dan hadis sahih, serta sumber sekunder berupa literatur akademik nasional dan internasional. Analisis dilakukan dengan metode analisis isi dan analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi konsep, argumen, dan pola pemikiran utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa al-Fawzān mendefinisikan syafaat sebagai permohonan seorang makhluk kepada Allah untuk memberikan manfaat atau menolak mudarat bagi orang lain, dengan dua syarat pokok: izin Allah bagi pemberi syafaat dan keridaan Allah bagi penerimanya. Syafaat diklasifikasikan menjadi dua: al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah (syafaat yang ditetapkan) dan al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah (syafaat yang ditolak), sejalan dengan pandangan ulama salaf dan literatur teologi modern. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pemahaman syafaat yang benar mendukung pemurnian tauhid dan mencegah penyimpangan akidah. Penelitian ini juga membuka prospek pengembangan kajian komparatif lintas mazhab dan integrasi pemikiran al-Fawzān dalam pendidikan tauhid modern.

A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze the concept of intercession (shafā'ah) according to Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, focusing on its classification, normative basis, and relevance in contemporary Islamic theology. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach through library research, with primary sources including al-Fawzān's works, Qur'anic verses, and authentic hadiths, and secondary sources comprising national and international academic literature. Data were analyzed using content and thematic analysis to identify key concepts, arguments, and patterns of thought. The findings indicate that al-Fawzān defines intercession as a supplication by a creature to Allah to grant benefit or avert harm for others, requiring two main conditions: Allah's permission for the intercessor and Allah's approval for the recipient. Intercession is classified into two categories: al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah (affirmed intercession) and al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah (rejected intercession), consistent with the views of classical scholars and modern theological literature. These findings emphasize that a

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correct understanding of intercession supports the purification of tawhid and prevents doctrinal deviation. The study also suggests further comparative research across Islamic schools of thought and the integration of al-Fawzān's perspectives into modern tauhid education.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *shafā'ah*, or intercession, in Islam is a theological discourse that remains deeply embedded in the collective memory of Muslims. Intercession is often understood as a manifestation of God's compassion for His servants, a space of hope amidst human anxiety about the afterlife. However, precisely because of its close connection to human spiritual needs, the understanding of intercession has often been distorted over time. Some groups understand intercession as an automatic guarantee for pious individuals, while others associate it with specific religious practices that are not entirely based on Sharia law (Idris, N., 7(2)). These diverse understandings demonstrate that the topic of intercession, although classical, retains theological and sociological relevance in the contemporary Muslim context.

The development of the discourse of intercession in modern society is also influenced by factors such as education, local culture, and public access to religious literature. Yusuf's (2020) research shows that the perception of Indonesian Muslims towards intercession is layered by Islamic boarding school traditions, pilgrimage customs, and charismatic figures with the status of "intercessors," resulting in an ambiguous understanding of intercession between theology and culture (Yusuf, M., 2020). Rahmawati (2021) found that some Muslims understand intercession only as "the Prophet's help" without understanding the conditions for intercession stipulated in the Qur'an, such as the requirement for Allah's permission and His pleasure towards the servant who is being interceded (Rahmawati, S., 2021). These findings indicate that there is a gap in public knowledge that can have implications for the emergence of excessive belief in the role of creatures in providing help, even though Islamic faith is based on the principle of monotheism, which eliminates all forms of dependence on creatures in matters that are the exclusive rights of Allah. Academic discussions on intercession in the last decade have tended to be structured around two broad approaches: (1) a normative textual approach through the study of verses and hadith, and (2) a comparative theological approach that links the various opinions of salaf and khalaf scholars. Fauzi's (2019) research, for example, asserts that all forms of true intercession must comply with the provisions of QS. Al-Baqarah: 255, namely that no one can intercede except with Allah's permission (Fauzi, A., 2019). This study emphasizes that Allah's permission is a theological element that differentiates between intercession that is valid according to faith and intercession that has the potential to lead someone to a form of polytheism. Meanwhile, Andriansyah (2022) mapped the differences between classical and modern scholars in their views on intercession, and concluded that these differences generally lie in the socio-religious aspects of its application, not in the basic principles of monotheism (Andriansyah, R., 2022). However, few studies have specifically examined the thoughts of contemporary scholars such as Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān in depth and systematically, even though his works are widely used as references in teachings of faith in various Muslim countries.

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān is a key figure in contemporary Islamic theology, particularly in the field of monotheism and the prevention of practices deemed potentially leading to shirk. He is known for emphasizing two main forms of intercession: *al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah* (intercession determined by sharia) and *al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah* (intercession rejected because it does not meet the requirements of monotheism). According to al-Fawzān, all forms of true intercession must meet two conditions: they must be granted solely by God's permission, and they must be granted to a servant whose faith is pleasing to God (Al-Fawzān, Ṣāliḥ, 2015). This assertion is not merely a theological argument, but also an effort to maintain the integrity of monotheism from beliefs that ascribe to creatures the ability to independently benefit or harm.

The need to present new studies on intercession becomes even more pressing given the religious phenomenon in an increasingly pluralistic society. On the one hand, openness of information provides the public with broad access to various theological lectures, writings, and discourses. However, on the other hand, unfiltered information often leads to confusion. This aligns with the findings of Sari's (2023)

research, which states that deviations in understanding the creed often arise not due to a lack of literature, but because society lacks the ability to verify the authority of religious sources (Sari, N., 2023). Thus, studies based on primary literature, especially from authoritative scholars like al-Fawzān are crucial for guiding society toward a more balanced theological understanding.

Based on this context, this study was conducted to analyze Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān's thoughts on intercession comprehensively based on primary sources and supported by the latest academic literature. This study attempts to answer several important questions: (1) how does al-Fawzān classify the concept of intercession; (2) what are the theological arguments he puts forward; (3) the extent to which the concept is relevant to contemporary religious dynamics; and (4) how al-Fawzān's perspective can contribute to strengthening theological education in the context of modern Muslim society.

The units of analysis in this study include al-Fawzān's primary works, Qur'anic verses, authentic hadiths, and academic literature from the past ten years relevant to the study of intercession, monotheism, and Islamic theology. This article is structured as follows: the methods section explains the research approach and data sources used; the results section presents the main findings related to al-Fawzān's concept of intercession; the discussion section links these findings to modern academic literature; and the conclusion section summarizes the theoretical and practical implications of this research.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research approach. This approach was chosen because the study of the concept of intercession is more appropriately analyzed through in-depth exploration and reading of relevant religious texts and academic literature. In qualitative research, researchers seek to understand the meaning and structure of concepts, rather than conducting numerical measurements or statistically testing hypotheses (Moleong, Lexy J., 2019, p. 6).

The data sources for this study consist of two large groups. First, primary sources, namely the works of Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān, particularly his book *Al-Shafā'ah fī al-Islām*, as well as verses from the Qur'an and authentic hadiths that serve as the normative basis for discussing intercession. Second, secondary sources, namely national and international scientific journal articles from the last ten years, contemporary books on creeds (aqidah), and academic writings discussing intercession, tawhid, and related theological issues. Secondary literature was selected based on criteria of recency (2015–2024), topic relevance, and scientific accessibility.

The data collection procedure was carried out in several stages. First, the researcher conducted a literature search on national journal portals (Sinta, Moraref, Garuda) and digital book collections to identify relevant sources. Second, all the literature found was classified based on themes such as the definition of syafaat, the conditions for syafaat, the classification of syafaat according to scholars, and al-Fawzān's views. Third, the data was recorded in the form of data cards and coding sheets to facilitate systematic grouping of information (Zed, Zulfa A., 2018, p. 37).

In the context of library research, the terms population and sample are understood differently than in field research. The population of this study is all literature discussing syafaat and tawhid in classical and contemporary Islamic literature. The sample is a number of literatures selected purposively, based on their suitability to the research focus and the author's authority (Sugiyono, 2019, p. 81).

The data analysis techniques used were content analysis and thematic analysis. Content analysis was conducted to interpret the meaning of the concept of syafaat as presented by al-Fawzān, while thematic analysis was used to identify patterns, arguments, and key concepts from all the literature reviewed. The researchers then compared these findings with the opinions of classical scholars and the results of contemporary academic research to determine the congruence or discrepancies between the theological arguments.

Data validity was maintained through literature triangulation, which involved comparing research findings with various primary and secondary sources to ensure that the meaning and arguments obtained were not partial. Furthermore, the researcher applied the principle of academic traceability by citing sources in full, creating concept notes, and systematically writing the analysis flow so that the research process could be replicated by other researchers (Creswell, John W., 2018, p. 251).

In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the primary instrument, reading, interpreting, and reconstructing the meaning of the text. Therefore, the researcher maintained objectivity by conducting

repeated readings, avoiding interpretive bias, and adhering to standard methodological guidelines (Moleong, Lexy J., 2019, p. 121). With this research design, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive and scientifically sound picture of the concept of intercession according to Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān.

RESULT

This study presents key findings regarding the concept of intercession based on the work of Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān and contemporary academic literature. The findings are presented concisely and focused, without detailing the data analysis process.

First, the study found that intercession, according to al-Fawzān, is defined as a request from a creature to Allah to grant benefit or repel harm to another, with His permission and pleasure (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, p. 14). This definition confirms that intercession does not have any element of independent power from creatures. This finding aligns with research by Khan (2019), which concluded that the concept of intercession in Islamic theology is always associated with the affirmation of monotheism and the rejection of the attribution of metaphysical power to creatures (Khan, Muhammad Asif, 2019).

Second, the study shows that the concept of intercession has a strong normative basis in the Qur'an and Hadith. Verses such as Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 255 and ... An-Najm [53]: 26 indicates that intercession only occurs after Allah grants permission. Authentic hadiths about the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), including the hadith about the intercession of the intercessor, reinforce this normative legitimacy (in Sahih Bukhrari no. 3340 & Sahih Muslim no. 194). Hamdi's (2020) research supports this finding by showing that intercession, in the view of classical and contemporary scholars, is never understood as the intervention of a creature independent of Allah's will (Hamdi, Ahmad Zainul, 2020).

Third, the study found that al-Fawzān classified intercession into two main forms: established intercession (*al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah*) and denied intercession (*al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah*). Established intercession is intercession that meets the requirements of sharia and is given to those whom Allah approves. The intercession that is denied is that which is believed to be given by creatures without Allah's permission (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, p. 29). This finding aligns with Abdullah (2021), who pointed out that intercession is an integral part of *ulūhiyyah* and the purification of *tawhid* in the modern context (Abdullah, M. Amin, 2021).

Fourth, the study found that there are two basic conditions for intercession to occur: (1) Allah's permission for the intercessor, and (2) Allah's pleasure for the intercessor. These two conditions are emphasized in QS. Al-Anbiyā' [21]: 28. This finding is reinforced by Bagir (2022), who emphasized that in contemporary Islamic theology, the concept of Allah's permission and pleasure is the foundation that prevents deviations in the understanding of intercession (Bagir, Zainal Abidin, 2022).

Fifth, the study found that contemporary theological literature views intercession as an issue related to the purification of *tawhid*. Qadhi (2021) emphasized that deviations in understanding intercession often arise from belief in the metaphysical power of religious figures, making efforts to purify *tawhid* relevant in the modern context (Qadhi, Yasir, 2021). This finding is expanded upon by Zainuddin (2023), who shows that the purification of *tawhid* in the contemporary Salafi tradition always involves clarifying the boundaries of intercession within the Shari'a (Zainuddin, Muhammad, 2023).

Sixth, research shows that al-Fawzān's views are consistent with theological tendencies in contemporary Salafi thought. Meijer (2019) notes that the emphasis on *tawhid* and the rejection of false intercession are key characteristics of modern Salafi theology (Meijer, Roel, 2019). Similarly, research by Arif (2020) shows that contemporary scholars position the issue of intercession as part of the reform of Islamic creed to maintain the purity of the community's beliefs (Arif, Syamsuddin, 2020).

Overall, the research findings indicate that al-Fawzān's concept of intercession is consistent with the Shari'a texts, the thinking of classical scholars, and contemporary academic literature. These findings form the basis for further theoretical interpretation in the discussion section.

DISCUSSION

Definition of Syafaat and Its Theological Foundations According to the Salaf and al-Fawzān Scholars

The concept of syafaat (intercession) in Islamic theology is a crucial element directly related to a Muslim's understanding of the relationship between God, the Prophet, and humanity. Syafaat does not stand as an independent theological concept, but is closely tied to the broader idea of *tawhīd al-ulūhiyyah*—that all forms of true help come from God alone. Etymologically, intercession comes from the word *al-shaf'u*, which means “to make something complete,” namely the intervention of someone in a position to provide additional assistance to another party. Language scholars emphasize that this meaning implies the existence of an honored party who requests a higher party, and that higher party determines whether assistance is granted (Ibn Manẓūr, 1993, p. 183).

From a sharia perspective, intercession is the request of a servant who has been given a noble position by Allah to provide benefits or relief for others, but only if Allah permits it. This understanding is based on Allah's words, “Who can intercede with Him without His permission?” (Quran, al-Baqarah [2]: 255). This verse firmly establishes that no creature has the authority to intercede independently. Ibn Kathīr views this verse as dispelling the Jahiliyah belief that idols could serve as mediators that enforce God's decisions (Ibn Kathīr, 1999, p. 312). Tafsir al-Ṭabarī adds that God's permission here indicates that intercession is not a spiritual transaction, but rather a form of God's respect for His pious servants (Al-Ṭabarī, 2000a, p. 349).

The early scholars emphasized the monotheistic dimension of the concept of intercession. Ibn Taymiyyah explained that intercession is entirely God's right; whereas prophets, angels, or pious people are merely intermediaries who cannot act outside of His will (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995a, p. 155). According to him, intercession is merely one form of expression of Allah's greatness in honoring some of His servants, not a means for humans to make creatures their primary source of help (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995a, p. 157). Ibn al-Qayyim complements this view by emphasizing that true intercession encourages humans to be more obedient to Allah, because intercession is only given to believers who maintain *tawhīd* (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1996, p. 45).

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān reconstructed the concept of intercession within the framework of contemporary *tawhīd*. He defined intercession as “a request by one creature for another creature to bring benefit or ward off harm, with two main conditions: Allah's permission for the intercessor and His pleasure for the intercessor.” (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, p. 14). This definition emphasizes two major theological foundations: (1) intercession should not be understood as an independent intermediary entity, and (2) intercession does not apply to those who commit *shirk* (polytheism) who use creatures as a means of worship, because this contradicts the structure of monotheism. Al-Fawzān criticized the practice of some Muslims who ask for intercession directly from the Prophet or a saint without realizing that such a request violates the principle of Allah's permission as the foundation of intercession itself (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, p. 29).

In modern academic studies, many scholars have highlighted that the concept of intercession is often misunderstood, giving rise to problematic religious practices. Muhammad Asif Khan (2019) emphasized that intercession in Islam is not a mechanism of “spiritual negotiation,” but rather a manifestation of God's grace through His exalted figure (Khan, Muhammad Asif, 2019). Ahmad Zainul Hamdi (2020) added that some people still understand intercession with a social patronage mindset that resembles pre-Islamic traditions, making the urgency of theological clarification even more crucial (Hamdi, Ahmad Zainul, 2020). Meanwhile, Zainal Abidin Bagir (2022) observed that the issue of intercession in the modern era often shifts into a debate between traditionalists and puritans, but both agree that intercession must remain within the boundaries of monotheism (Bagir, Zainal Abidin, 2022).

Thus, the definition and theological foundations of intercession form a framework for understanding that intercession is not merely a religious concept, but a pillar of faith that maintains the purity of monotheism. The understanding of classical scholars such as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn al-Qayyim, coupled with reinforcement from contemporary scholars such as al-Fawzān and the findings of modern academic studies, all converge on one central principle: intercession is the right of God alone and occurs only through His permission. This framework distinguishes intercession in Islam

from the concept of intercession in other religious traditions and makes it a central theme in contemporary discussions of faith.

Conditions for Intercession According to the Qur'an, Hadith, and Scholars

The discussion of the conditions for intercession is a central aspect of Islamic faith, as it demonstrates that intercession cannot be treated as a means of worshipping creatures or submitting to God's will, as was the case in pre-Islamic traditions. The Qur'an emphasizes that Intercession is the exclusive right of Allah, and therefore there are strict conditions for intercession to be granted. His words: "No one can intercede except after Allah permits it." (QS. Yunus [10]: 3). This verse provides the foundation that Allah's permission is an absolute pre-requisite for all forms of intercession.

Tafsir scholars explain that Allah's permission does not only mean verbal permission, but also the determination of His will and pleasure towards the person who gives and receives intercession. Al-Ṭabarī states that intercession will not occur except for those whose deeds and monotheism Allah is pleased with (Al-Ṭabarī, 2000a, p. 150). Al-Qurṭubī expands this explanation by stating that Allah will not be pleased with someone who is contaminated with shirk, so that the perpetrator of shirk is prevented from interceding with the prophets and angels (Al-Qurṭubī, 2006, p. 288). This opinion is reinforced by the QS. al-Anbiyā' [21]: 28 which states that "No one intercedes except for those who are pleased with (Allah)."

The Hadith of the Prophet ﷺ also confirms these conditions. In an authentic history, it is stated that the greatest intercession (al-syafā'at al-'uẓmā) is given to those who believe in monotheism and do not associate partners with Allah (in Sahih Bukhari, no. 3340). In another history, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ stated that his intercession was intended for "ahl al-kabā'ir min ummatī" (the perpetrators of major sins from my ummah), but still from among those who are not involved in it. Shirk (in Sahih Muslim no. 195). Thus, monotheism becomes the line of distinction between those who are worthy of intercession and those who are rejected.

Salaf scholars provide a more technical explanation regarding the conditions for intercession. Ibn Taymiyyah explained that there are two conditions for intercession: first, Allah's permission for the intercessor; second, Allah's approval for the recipient (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995a, p. 155). He emphasized that Allah's permission for the intercessor is a form of His honoring of His servants, while the recipient's approval is a form of Allah's justice and wisdom in determining rewards. Ibn al-Qayyim also emphasized that intercession is not granted to those who dishonor Allah by committing polytheism, because intercession is only for those whose intentions and hearts remain bound by monotheism (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1996, pp. 43–45).

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān reaffirmed this approach in the context of contemporary theology. According to him, valid intercession according to Sharia must fulfill three elements: (1) the intercession is requested or occurs in a situation that does not involve worship of a creature; (2) the intercessor is a creature whom Allah has permitted, such as the Prophet ﷺ; and (3) the recipient of intercession is a person whose religion and monotheism are pleasing to Allah (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, p. 29). Al-Fawzān strongly criticized the practice of some people who ask for intercession directly from the prophet or saints with a request that resembles worship, because this opens the door to shirk which actually invalidates intercession itself (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, pp. 31–33).

Modern academic studies also emphasize the importance of this condition in correcting theological understanding. M. Amin Abdullah (2021) shows that an understanding of intercession that is not based on the principle of monotheism can give rise to a pattern of patronizing spiritual relationships, resulting in people relying on created beings rather than on God (Abdullah, M. Amin, 2021). Meanwhile, recent research by Muhammad Zainuddin (2023) in the journal Al-Bayan shows that the views of early scholars regarding the conditions of intercession have methodological relevance in correcting doctrinal deviations that have emerged in modern Muslim society (Zainuddin, Muhammad, 2023). This finding aligns with Yasir Qadhi's analysis (2021), which states that purifying monotheism in the concept of intercession is key to preventing Muslims from becoming trapped in deviant religious patterns (Qadhi, Yasir, 2021).

From the overall explanations of classical and contemporary scholars, as well as the results of academic research, it can be emphasized that the conditions of intercession in Islam are firmly based on

two main foundations: God's permission for the intercessor, and His pleasure for the recipient, who must maintain their monotheism. By understanding these conditions, people can view intercession as a form of Allah's mercy that does not contradict monotheism, but instead confirms His greatness and oneness.

Classification of Intercession from the Perspective of al-Fawzān, Salafist Scholars, and Modern Academics

The discussion of the classification of intercession is important because it is here that the distinction lies between authorized intercession (al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah) and rejected intercession (al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah). The Qur'an itself hints at the existence of these two types of intercession through a number of seemingly contradictory verses. On the one hand, Allah completely negates intercession from creatures—as in Surah al-Baqarah [2]: 48—but in other verses, Allah stipulates that intercession exists for certain parties under certain conditions, as in Surah Saba' [34]: 23. Scholars understand this variation in verses as indicating that intercession is only valid under certain conditions, not as a universal guarantee.

In classical exegesis, al-Ṭabarī explains that the verses that negate intercession apply to disbelievers and polytheists, while the verses that establish it apply to believers who fulfill the requirements of monotheism (Al-Ṭabarī, 2000b, p. 118). Ibn Kathīr supports this view by stating that the negation of intercession occurs because it cannot avert the punishment of those who are false and associate partners with Allah (Ibn Kathīr, 1999, p. 30). From these two exegesis, it is clear that the classification of intercession is not merely a conceptual category, but is closely related to the status of one's faith.

Ibn Taymiyyah provides a more systematic framework by dividing intercession into two broad categories: true intercession and false intercession. True intercession is that which occurs only with Allah's permission and is granted to those who believe in monotheism (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995a, p. 155). Invalid intercession, on the other hand, is a request made to a creature without Allah's permission, or intercession that contains elements of glorification to the point of worship. He called this latter form of intercession a continuation of the shirk tradition of the Jahiliyah (pre-Islamic shirk) (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995a, p. 157). In Ibn al-Qayyim's explanation, invalid intercession actually undermines monotheism because it makes creatures into "beneficiaries" who stand on equal footing with Allah's will (Ibn al-Qayyim, 1996, p. 47).

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān adopted this classification of the salaf scholars and developed it in greater detail, in line with the problematic context of modern aqidah. According to al-Fawzān, intercession is divided into two large groups:

1. Rejected intercession (al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah), which is intercession requested without fulfilling two conditions: Allah's permission for the intercessor and His pleasure for the recipient. This includes requests for intercession to the prophet after his death or to his guardian with the wording of the request resembling a prayer of worship (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, pp. 41–43).
2. The appointed intercession (al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah), namely the intercession given by the Prophet ﷺ on the Day of Judgment, the intercession of angels, the intercession of believers, and the intercession of the Qur'an for its readers (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, pp. 54–56).

Al-Fawzān emphasized that the greatest form of intercession is al-shafā'at al-'uẓmā, namely the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ for all mankind while waiting for Allah's decision in Padang Mahsyar, as told in the long hadith of intercession (in Sahih Bukhari no. 7510 & Sahih Muslim no. 193). This intercession is specific to him, showing a unique prophetic position and not shared by other creatures.

In the modern academic context, several studies highlight the relevance of the classification of intercession in understanding the dynamics of contemporary Islamic theology. Ahmad Zainul Hamdi (2020) found that misunderstandings of the classification of intercession often lead to two extremes: first, an excessively permissive attitude toward intercession, leading to spiritual dependence on certain figures; second, a total rejection that ignores the valid evidence for the intercession of the prophets and believers (Hamdi, Ahmad Zainul, 2020). Meanwhile, research by Bagir (2022) shows that the moderate approach of the Salaf scholars in classifying intercession is worth re-adopting to correct biases in theological understanding of modern Muslim society (Bagir, Zainal Abidin, 2022).

In the contemporary scholarly tradition, Ibn Baz and al-'Uthaymīn also provide classifications that align with those of the Salaf scholars. Ibn Baz emphasized that valid intercession should not be requested directly from a prophet or guardian, but rather from God with the supplication: "O God, grant me the intercession of Your Prophet." (Ibn Bāz, Abū Bakr, 2003, p. 122) Meanwhile, al-'Uthaymīn emphasized that the intercession of the Qur'an for its readers is a form of God's appreciation for servants who maintain interaction with His book (Al-'Utsaimīn, Muhammad, 2004, p. 233).

Thus, the classification of intercession according to al-Fawzān and the early scholars is an important foundation for maintaining the purity of monotheism and placing intercession within a framework that balances God's grace and a servant's submission. From the perspective of modern Islamic studies, this framework is also seen as effective in preventing theological deviations and reaffirming the community's understanding of the true nature of intercession.

The Salafist Scholars' Views on Intercession: A Comparative Analysis

The Salafist scholars viewed intercession as a form of Allah's mercy bestowed upon His servants on the Day of Judgment. They emphasized that intercession is valid only if it occurs with Allah's permission and does not violate the principle of monotheism. Ibn Taymiyyah emphasized that true intercession is intercession that occurs within the framework of Divine Will, and it cannot avert the punishment of those who associate partners with Allah or reject His obedience (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995b, pp. 155–157). Ibn al-Qayyim added that false intercession—that is, that which is requested directly from a creature or places a creature on a par with Allah—violates the principle of monotheism and is a form of shirk (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2001, p. 47).

Within this framework, Ibn Taymiyyah divided intercession into two broad categories: true intercession and false intercession. True intercession is valid only with Allah's permission and is granted to those who believe in monotheism. In contrast, invalid intercession is a request for intercession from a creature without Allah's permission, or one that contains elements of glorification that resemble worship. Ibn al-Qayyim explained that invalid intercession often results from the practice of polytheism (shirk) during the Jahiliyah era because it places creatures as sources of benefit independent of Allah (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2001, pp. 48–49).

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān emphasized and developed this classification in the context of modern problems. According to al-Fawzān, intercession is divided into two large groups: (1) rejected intercession (al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah), which is intercession requested without Allah's permission or without His pleasure, including requests for intercession to the Prophet ﷺ after his death or to a guardian with a phrase that resembles a prayer of worship; and (2) the established intercession (al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah), such as the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ on the Day of Judgment, the intercession of the angels, the intercession of the believers, and the intercession of the Qur'an for its readers (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, pp. 41–43, 2018, pp. 54–56). Al-Fawzān emphasized that the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ (al-shafā'at al-'uẓmā) is the greatest intercession, specifically for him, which confirms the unique prophetic position that no other creature possesses (in Sahih Bukhari no. 7510 & Sahih Muslim no. 193).

Contemporary opinions expressed by scholars such as Ibn Bāz and al-'Uthaymīn are in line with those of the Salaf. Ibn Baz emphasized that valid intercession should not be requested directly from the Prophet ﷺ or a guardian, but must be done through Allah with the request: "O Allah, grant me the intercession of Your Prophet." (Ibn Bāz, Abū Bakr, 2000, p. 122). Al-'Uthaymīn added that the intercession of the Qur'an for its readers is a form of Allah's appreciation for servants who maintain interaction with His book, emphasizing the relationship between good deeds and intercession (Al-'Utsaimīn, Muhammad, 2004, p. 233).

From the perspective of modern academic research, Ahmad Zainul Hamdi (2020) found that misunderstanding the classification of intercession often leads to two extremes: first, an excessively permissive attitude that leads to spiritual dependence on certain figures; Second, a total rejection that ignores the valid evidence for the intercession of the prophets and believers (Hamdi, Ahmad Zainul, 2020). Meanwhile, Zainal Abidin Bagir (2022) emphasized that the moderate approach of the Salaf scholars in classifying intercession is worthy of being revisited to correct biased theological understanding of modern Muslim society (Bagir, Zainal Abidin, 2022).

Thus, the views of the Salaf scholars, including Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, and al-Fawzān, provide a clear theological framework for intercession. This framework maintains a balance between God's grace and the submission of a servant, emphasizing that intercession is not an absolute right of creatures, but a gift bestowed by God upon His servants in accordance with sharia. This comparative analysis strengthens the relevance of Salafist thought for understanding intercession in the contemporary context, while also preventing theological deviations.

Analysis of al-Fawzān's Thought

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān in the work *Al-Shafā'ah fī al-Islām* emphasizes that intercession is not an absolute right of creatures, but rather a gift given by Allah to His servants according to the Shari'a and His will (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, pp. 41–43). He emphasized that valid intercession only occurs through Allah's permission, both for the Prophet ﷺ, angels, and believers, and always emphasized the importance of purifying monotheism in the context of requests for intercession (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, pp. 54–56). Thus, al-Fawzān places intercession as a form of Allah's mercy, as well as a means of maintaining a balance between direct worship of Allah and recognition of prophetic position.

In al-Fawzān's analysis, intercession is divided into rejected intercession (*al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah*) and accepted intercession (*al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah*). Intercession that is rejected includes direct requests to creatures without Allah's permission or resembles prayers of worship to creatures, while the intercession that is stipulated includes the intercession of the Prophet ﷺ on the Day of Judgment, the intercession of angels, the intercession of believers, and the intercession of the Qur'an for its readers (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, pp. 41–56). Al-Fawzān emphasizes that the greatest form of intercession (*al-shafā'at al-'uẓmā*) is specifically for the Prophet ﷺ, confirms the unique position of prophethood that no other creature has (in *Sahih Bukhari* no. 7510 & *Sahih Muslim* no. 193).

Al-Fawzān also criticizes popular practices that deviate from monotheism, such as asking for intercession from saints or pious people who have died directly, without going through Allah. He emphasized that such practices undermine the creed because they place creatures as benefactors on a par with Allah's will. This approach is consistent with the views of Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim, who emphasized the importance of Allah's permission in every form of intercession (Ibn al-Qayyim, 2001, pp. 47–49; Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995, pp. 155–157).

Methodologically, al-Fawzān combines Qur'anic evidence, authentic hadith, and the opinions of early scholars to develop a framework for understanding intercession. This approach allows for a comprehensive and measurable analysis, making it relevant as a reference in creed education and modern Islamic theology. The emphasis on rationality and the connection between intercession and tawhid also prevents misunderstandings that often arise in contemporary Muslim society (Saleh, Ahmad Syukri, 2022).

From an academic perspective, research by Zainul Hamdi (2020) and Bagir (2022) reinforces the importance of al-Fawzān's classification as a moderate and authentic reference. Hamdi emphasized that a misconception of *syafa'at* can lead to spiritual extremism or excessive permissiveness (Hamdi, Ahmad Zainul, 2020), while Bagir emphasized the relevance of the moderate approach of the Salaf and al-Fawzān in guiding modern Muslim society to adhere to the principles of tawhid and sunnah (Bagir, Zainal Abidin, 2022).

Thus, the analysis of al-Fawzān's thought demonstrates a balance between recognizing the prophetic position and affirming the servant's submission to God, while providing a strong theological framework for studying *syafa'at* in a contemporary context. This approach integrates the legacy of the Salaf scholars with modern challenges, making it relevant to current academic studies and Islamic educational practices.

Al-Fawzān's Thoughts in a Contemporary Academic Perspective

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān's thoughts on intercession provide a systematic theological framework; however, to ensure academic relevance, they need to be compared with recent studies in SINTA journals and international publications. In his article, Ahmad Zainul Hamdi (2020) emphasized that a misconception about intercession often leads to extremes: an excessively permissive attitude that makes a particular figure the spiritual center, or a complete rejection of the intercession of the Prophet

and believers (Hamdi, Ahmad Zainul, 2020). This finding aligns with al-Fawzān's emphasis on the importance of God's permission as a prerequisite for valid intercession, ensuring that religious practices remain in accordance with the principles of monotheism.

Zainal Abidin Bagir (2022) highlights that the moderate approach of Salaf scholars in classifying intercession can be used as a reference to correct theological biases in modern society (Bagir, Zainal Abidin, 2022). This reinforces al-Fawzān's view, which integrates Qur'anic evidence, authentic hadith, and the opinions of the Salaf to affirm correct intercession. In other words, SINTA's research demonstrates that al-Fawzān's theological framework is not only normatively relevant but also supports healthy religious literacy in contemporary society.

International studies have further expanded this perspective. Khan (2019) emphasized that intercession must be understood in the context of divine permission and the integration of faith, while Fauzi Abdul Hamid (2020) highlighted modern challenges to the practice of intercession, including the potential for theological deviation due to a permissive or literalistic attitude towards the text (Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, 2020; Khan, Muhammad Asif, 2019). This study supports al-Fawzān's classification of rejected intercession (*al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah*) and established intercession (*al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah*), demonstrating consistency between the classical legacy of the Salaf and contemporary international studies. Furthermore, other contemporary Salafi scholars, such as Qadhi (2021) and Faruq (2023), emphasize the importance of purifying tawhid (monotheism) in the practice of intercession, in line with al-Fawzān (Faruq, Muhammad Umar, 2023; Qadhi, Yasir, 2021). They emphasize that true intercession always lies within the bounds of Allah's mercy, not the absolute right of creatures, and their critique of intercession practices that resemble worship of creatures confirms the relevance of al-Fawzān's classification in the modern context.

From SINTA-indexed journals, articles by Nur Kholis Setiawan (2021) and Ahmad Syukri Saleh (2022) highlight the relationship between *ulūhiyyah* and intercession, as well as the importance of theological education that emphasizes Allah's role as the source of intercession (Saleh, Ahmad Syukri, 2022; Setiawan, Nur Kholis, 2021). This aligns with al-Fawzān's view, which emphasizes that requests for intercession are only valid if made through Allah, while also emphasizing the prophetic position and righteous deeds of the servant as intermediaries for Allah's mercy.

Thus, a comparison between al-Fawzān's thought, SINTA research, and international studies demonstrates conceptual alignment and contemporary relevance. Al-Fawzān's classification framework for intercession is not only an authentic legacy of the Salaf but also proven to be consistent with modern academic studies, both nationally and internationally, thus providing a strong foundation for theological education and contemporary theological research.

Contemporary Relevance

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān's thoughts on intercession have significant relevance for modern Muslims, both in the context of theological education and daily worship practices. By emphasizing that valid intercession is always by God's permission and in accordance with the principle of tawhid, al-Fawzān provides a preventive framework against theological deviations, such as directly requesting intercession from deceased beings or religious figures (Al-Fawzan, Ṣāliḥ, 2018, pp. 41–56). This approach aligns with contemporary Islamic education, which emphasizes rationality, textual consistency, and the purification of faith.

In the context of modern *aqidah* education, the integration of al-Fawzān's concept of intercession can be used as learning material that balances classical texts and contemporary realities. Ahmad Zainul Hamdi (2020) highlights that misunderstandings of intercession can lead to excessive spiritual dependence or a permissive attitude towards heretical practices (Hamdi, Ahmad Zainul, 2020), while Bagir (2022) emphasizes the need for a moderate Salafist approach to correct biases in modern Muslim society (Bagir, Zainal Abidin, 2022). Thus, al-Fawzān's classification of intercession serves as a pedagogical foundation for building an authentic and moderate understanding of *aqidah*.

Furthermore, in modern religious practice, al-Fawzān's thinking can serve as a reference for scholars and educators in responding to the phenomenon of popular spiritualism that prioritizes certain figures as intermediaries for God's grace. The emphasis on God's permission as a prerequisite for valid intercession helps educate society against regarding creatures as the absolute source of grace, while

maintaining a balance between recognizing prophetic status and complete submission to God (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995b, pp. 155–157).

Contemporary international studies also support this relevance. Fauzi Abdul Hamid (2020) and Khan (2019) point out that misinterpretations of intercession often arise in modern society due to a lack of integration between classical texts and contemporary contexts (Ahmad Fauzi Abdul Hamid, 2020; Khan, Muhammad Asif, 2019). Al-Fawzān's thinking, drawing on authentic hadith and the interpretations of early scholars, provides clear guidelines that can be applied in a global context, both for theological research and Islamic education.

Furthermore, contemporary relevance is also evident in strengthening the consistency of faith amidst global religious and cultural pluralism. Al-Fawzān emphasized that true intercession is not merely a ritual matter, but also an indicator of a servant's submission to Allah and the purification of tawhid in daily life. This is crucial for preventing practices of intercession that resemble worship of creatures and for keeping the community within the straight path of faith (Zainuddin, Muhammad, 2023).

Thus, al-Fawzān's thinking makes a strategic and practical contribution to contemporary Muslims. It offers a measurable, text-based, and socially relevant theological framework, so that the classification of intercession and the emphasis on God's permission can be used as a guide for academic, educational, and modern religious practice, while also affirming the continuity of the Salafist tradition with the challenges of the modern era.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that the concept of intercession according to Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān is defined as a request from a creature to Allah to provide benefits or prevent harm to others, by fulfilling two main conditions: Allah's permission for the giver of intercession and Allah's pleasure towards the recipient of intercession. This definition emphasizes that intercession does not have independent power from creatures, in line with the principle of monotheism and *syar'i* texts in the Al-Qur'an and authentic hadith.

Al-Fawzān classifies intercession into two broad categories: prescribed intercession (*al-shafā'ah al-muthbatah*) and rejected intercession (*al-shafā'ah al-manfiyyah*). This classification is consistent with the views of early scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim, and aligns with contemporary academic literature that emphasizes the importance of purifying tawhid and protecting it from theological deviations.

The research findings also demonstrate that a correct understanding of intercession has practical and educational implications in the context of modern Muslim society. Al-Fawzān's view emphasizes that intercession must be placed within a framework of balance between God's mercy and the servant's submission, thus preventing excessive permissiveness or total rejection of intercession, while simultaneously strengthening awareness of faith.

Based on these findings, the research opens up prospects for further development, including: a comparative study across schools of thought regarding the classification of intercession, an analysis of the impact of understanding intercession on contemporary worship practices, and the integration of al-Fawzān's thoughts into the tawhid education curriculum in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and modern Islamic educational institutions. These prospects can help broaden theological understanding and more proportionate religious practices in society.

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