



Seeking Aid with the Prophet ¹

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From amongst the untruths of Ibn Taymiyya which no scholar before him had said, and whereby he created dissent between the people of Islām, is that he denounced *tawassul* and *istighātha* (seeking aid) through him ﷺ; and that is not as he had decreed (i.e. that it is impermissible). Rather, *tawassul* through him is *hasan* (good) in every state: before his creation and after his creation, in the *dunya* and in the *ākhirah*.

That which proves seeking *tawassul* through him ﷺ before his creation and that it is the path taken by the pious predecessors, the Prophets, the Awliyā and others (and thus the view of Ibn Taymiyya has no basis [and is] from his concoctions) is: that which al-Hākim transmitted and declared *sahīh* that he ﷺ said:

“When Ādam committed his mistake he said: O my Lord, I am asking you to forgive me for the sake of Muhammad. Allāh said: O Ādam, and how do you know about Muhammad whom I have not yet created? Ādam replied, O my Lord, after You created me with your hand and breathed into me of Your Spirit, I raised my head and saw written on the heights of the Throne: lā ilāha illallāh muhammadun rasūlallāh. I understood that You would not place next to Your Name but the Most Beloved One of Your creation. Allāh said: O Ādam, I have forgiven you, and were it not for Muhammad I would not have created you.”

The meaning of ‘for his sake’ (*bi-haqqihi*) is his rank and station in His sight Most High, or the right (*haqq*) that Allāh ﷻ made for him over creation, or the right which Allāh Most High made obligatory on Himself over him by His grace as in a *sahīh* Hadīth,

“He said: what is the right (haqq) of the servants over Allāh?”

not [that it is] incumbent (*wājib*) [upon Allāh] since nothing is incumbent upon Him.

Furthermore, asking by him ﷺ is not actually asking him such that it may be considered associating [partners with Allāh]. It is truly but asking Allāh Most High through one who has a high estimation, an elevated rank and a great distinction with Him. From amongst his miracles from his Lord is that He does not fail one asking

¹ Ibn Hājar al-Haytami, *al-jawhar al-munazzam*, as cited by al-Qādi Yūsuf al-Nabhānī in *shawahid al-haqq fil-istighātha bi-sayyid al-khalq* ﷺ (The Proofs of Truth in the Seeking of Aid with the Master of Creation ﷺ) See: <http://www.marifah.net/scans/nabhani-shawahid.jpg>

through him, and seeking intermediary to Him through his rank. It suffices as humiliation for one who denies this that he is deprived of this [blessing].

[That which proves seeking *tawassul* through him] during his lifetime is that which was transmitted by al-Nasāʿī and al-Tirmidhī who declared it *sahīb* that:

“An afflicted man approached the Prophet ﷺ and said, ‘supplicate to Allāh on my behalf that He cures me’. He said, ‘if you wish, I will supplicate (to Allāh on your behalf) and if you wish you can remain patient and that is better for you.’ He said, ‘supplicate to Him.’”

And in (another) narration (he said):

“I have no guide and it is difficult for me’, so he (the Prophet) instructed him to perform wudū and perfect his wudū and supplicate with this supplication: ‘Oh Allāh, I ask You and turn to You through my Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy; O Muhammad, I seek your intercession with my for my need, that it may be fulfilled. O Allāh! grant him intercession for me.’”

Al-Bayhaqī also declared it *sahīb* and added,

“he stood and was able to see”.

And, in [another] narration,

“O Allāh! Grant him intercession for me and grant me intercession for myself”

The Prophet ﷺ knew that but did not supplicate for him because he desired to achieve from him concentration and the toil of poverty, brokenness and desperation, seeking *istighātha* through him ﷺ, so as to attain for him the perfection of his objective. And such an implication is attainable in his life and after his death; and therefore the Salaf have used this supplication in their needs after his death. `Uthmān ibn Hunayf ؓ taught it to a Sahābī... al-Tabarānī and al-Bayhaqī narrated it and al-Tabarānī narrated with a *jayyid* (good) chain that,

“He mentioned in his supplication ‘for the sake of Your Prophet and the Prophets before me.’”

There is no difference between the mention of *tawassul*, *istighātha*, *tashaffu`* and *tawajjuh* (directing/turning) through him ﷺ or through others of the Prophets and likewise the Awliyā. This is because the permissibility of *tawassul* with actions as in the *sahīb* Hadīth of the cave has been mentioned despite them (the actions) being transitory; therefore pious souls are more preferable, and (also) because `Umar ibn al-Khattāb ؓ sought *tawassul* through al-`Abbās ؓ for seeking rain and (al-`Abbās) did not repudiate this. It is as though the wisdom of his *tawassul* through him and not the Prophet ﷺ and his grave was to display humility on his behalf, and elevation of his relatives, and thus in his *tawassul* through al-`Abbās he is performing *tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ and more.

It is not to be said that the expressions *tawajjuh* and *istighātha* presuppose that the one by whom aid is sought (*al-mustaghath bibi*) is higher than the one whose aid is sought

(*mustaghāth ilayhi*). That is because *tawajjuh* comes from [the word] *jāh* which is a high status. *Tawassul* could be sought from a possessor of rank unto one who possesses a higher rank than him.

Istighātha is seeking aid, and the one seeking aid is seeking from the one from whom aid is sought in order to obtain aid from other than him, even if that other is greater than him. So *tawajjuh* and *istighāthab* with him ﷺ and others than him does not have a meaning in the heart of the Muslims other than that and they do not intend by these two matters (i.e. *tawajjuh* and *istighātha*) anyone besides Him ﷻ. So, whoever's breast is not opened with this, then let him cry over himself. We ask Allāh ﷻ for well-being. The one in whom aid is sought in reality is Allāh the Exalted, and the Prophet ﷺ is an intermediary between Him and the one seeking aid. So aid is sought from Him, the Exalted, and the aid comes from Him both in creating and bringing fourth. The Prophet is the one whose aid is sought and aid is from him by way of intermediary means and *kasb* (acquisition) and aid is sought from him metaphorically.

So in general, using the term *istighātha* in an unrestricted sense for the one from whom aid is obtained, even if only by way of intermediary means and *kasb*, is something well known and there is no doubt regarding it; not in the language, or in the Sacred Law. Therefore, there is no difference between it and asking, especially in light of the narration that has been mentioned in al-Bukhārī concerning the intercession on the day of judgement:

“As they were in that state, they sought aid (istaghāthū) from Ādam ؑ, then Mūsa ؑ, then Muhammad ﷺ”

Tawassul could also mean seeking supplication from him for indeed he is living and knowing the question of the one who asks him. It has been authentically reported from a long Hadith:

The people suffered a drought during the successorship of `Umar ؓ, whereupon a man came to the grave of the Prophet and said: ***“O Messenger of Allāh, ask for rain for your Community, for verily they have but perished,”*** after which the Prophet appeared to him in a dream and told him that the rain shall come. And in it also it appears: ***“Go to `Umar and give him my greeting, then tell him that they will be watered. Tell him: You must be clever, you must be clever!”***

Meaning, gentleness, because he was severe in the religion of Allāh.

So he came to him and informed him, after which he cried and then said: ***“O my Lord, I spare no effort except in what escapes my power!”***

In another narration it states that the one who saw the dream was Bilāl ibn Hārith al-Muzanī, the companion ؓ.

