

Is it true, as some people say, that tawassul or "seeking means" through the Prophet and the awliya', such as seeking their intercession, is not necessary nor a priority in Islam, because Allah says that He is near and answers whoever calls Him directly?

What about the statement in al-Wala' wal-Bara' According to the `Aqeedah of the Salaf that among the "ten actions that negate Islam" is "relying on an intermediary between oneself and Allah when seeking intercession"?

What about Albani's claims that tawassul is not through the person of the Prophet after his time, but through his du`a and only in his lifetime?

And what about those who compare tawassul and asking intercession to the Christian worship of Jesus and the saints, those who reject tabarruk bi al-athar -- getting blessings from the Prophet's relics -- as being outside Islam, and those who put limitations on invoking salawat -- blessings and peace -- on the Prophet?

Praise be to Allah, Lord of all the worlds, and blessings and peace of Allah upon His Prophet and Messenger Muhammad, his Family and all his Companions. There is not one single act of worship in Islam that is not a tawassul (seeking means to Allah), therefore it is inadmissible to say that tawassul is not an integral and central part of Islam.

Tawassul is the very heart of Islam, and the shahada contains a declaration of belief in tawassul, for one cannot be a Muslim unless one recognizes the messengership and prophethood of Muhammad, blessings and peace upon him, and of all Prophets, although the goal is Allah alone Who said: "I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me" (51:56). Therefore this is seeking an obligatory means to an obligatory end. The pillars of Islam similarly all consist in actions which are means before Allah for one who performs them.

Intercession is the greatest means as it will be only through intercession that the people of the Fire will enter Paradise, and Allah even called Himself "Intercessor" in the verse: "You have not, beside Him, a protecting friend or mediator" (32:4) and in the long hadith narrated by Muslim wherein the Prophet said:

Allah will say: "The angels have interceded. The Prophets have interceded. The believers have interceded. There does not remain except the Most Merciful of the merciful ones." [1]

The Prophet also called the Qur'an an intercessor, declared that people were intercessors, and gave as an example the intercession of children for the parents who lost them in their infancy. We ask for the intercession of the dead person every time we pray janaza, when we say: *allahumma la tuhrimna ajrahum* which means "O Allah, do not prevent their benefit from reaching us." Allah declares that the best people are the Prophets, then those who are absolutely truthful (*siddiqin*) and these are the great saints, then the martyrs (*shuhada*), then the righteous (*salihin*), and the Prophet declared that every person will be making intercession on the Day of Resurrection, but with an order of priority among them, just as Allah gives precedence in this world to those who are closest to Him. All this is a great blessing of Allah to the worlds and the reason why we are greatly blessed on this earth despite our sins. For the earth is never empty of the true worshippers and there is still someone left saying "Allah." If you realize this, you will never harbor doubts about Muslims availing themselves of the blessings and guidance that Allah sends to them in the persons of the *anbiya'* and *awliya'*.

Nor do we believe that the friendship with Allah established in *nubuwwa* and *wilaya* stops with death. We strenuously reject the heresy of those who claim that the Prophet is dead and gone after delivering his message. *Hasha, wa ta`ala Allahu `amma yasifun*. He is alive and fed, our greetings reach him, our actions are shown to him, he intercedes for us, and the dust of his grave is the most blessed spot on earth for which no show of love and honor is too great. No-one who has love in their heart approaches it without *adab*. It is the responsibility of every Muslim to ascertain what is correct from what is wrong, and *tawassul* is correct, recommended, and one of the greatest means of drawing close to Allah, first and foremost through the Prophet. This is the position of the overwhelming majority of the scholars until our own time, opposed by a handful of dissenters.

*Tawassul* is not a luxury for the rich, and its validity is not determined by circumstance, analogy, or personal feelings but by solid, known legal proofs and the practice of the righteous early generations. It is not a matter of procedure and scholarship but one of sound belief. Dislike for asking for the Prophet's help displays arrogance against Allah's greatest mercy, dislike for the Prophet, and a diseased heart. May Allah protect us from it at all times, especially in our time which is the time of fear of declaring love for our Prophet and that of rampant disaffection towards him. As for *tawassul* with the saints, no one can claim that they know Allah better than the Prophet, just as no one can claim that they know the Prophet better than the Friends of Allah. What then is the status of one who would stop seeking their company and asking for their help and guidance?

Reference- [1] Narrated by Muslim (Iman) from Abu Sa`id al-Khudri.