

220340 - Ruling on asking of Allah by virtue of the Quran, the angels, the Prophets and the Sahabah

the question

Is there anything in the following supplication that is not pleasing to Allah and His Messenger? Is there anything haram in it? What is it that is haram? What is the evidence from the Quran and Sunnah? The supplication is: "I ask of You by virtue of the Quran and its letters. I ask of You by virtue of Jibra'il and his messages, and by virtue of Mika'il and his trust, and by virtue of Israfil and his blowing of the Trumpet, and by virtue of Sayyiduna Nuh (peace be upon him) and his progeny, and by virtue of Sayyiduna Ibrahim and his close friendship [with You], and by virtue of Sayyiduna Musa and Your speaking to him, and by virtue of Sayyiduna Muhammad and his intercession, and by virtue of as-Siddiq and his caliphate, and by virtue of 'Umar and his distinguishing between right and wrong, and by virtue of 'Uthman and his modesty, and by virtue of 'Ali and his courage."

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The questioner has mentioned various kinds of tawassul (seeking to draw close to Allah and for supplications (du'a's) to be answered) which may be divided into four categories. The first is seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the Quran; the second is seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him); the third is seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the righteous, such as the angels and prophets, and others; and regarding the fourth type, it is not clear what is meant.

The first type:

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It is permissible for the supplicant to ask of his Lord by virtue of the Quran, because that comes under the heading of seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of one of His attributes. Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of one of His attributes is something permissible, that is mentioned in Islamic teachings, such as the hadith that was narrated by Muslim (2202) and at-Tirmidhi (2080) from 'Uthman ibn Abi'l-'As (may Allah be pleased with him), which says that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught him to say when he felt pain: "*A'udhu bi 'izzatillahi wa qudratihi min sharri ma ajidu wa uhadhir* (I seek refuge in Allah and His might from the evil of what I find and I fear)." And the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "*Allahumma bi 'ilmik al-ghaybi wa qudratika 'ala al-khalqi, ahini ma 'alimta al-hayata khayran li wa tawaffani idha kanat al-wafat khayran li* (O Allah, by virtue of Your knowledge of the unseen and Your power over creation, cause me to live so long as life is better for me and cause me to die when death is better for me). Narrated by Ahmad in *al-Musnad* (30/265); classed as sahih by the commentators on the Mu'sasat ar-Risalah edition. The evidence for it being permissible to seek to draw close to Allah by virtue of His attributes is abundant.

One of the attributes of Allah, may He be exalted, is His words, and the Quran is part of His words. Therefore it is permissible to seek to draw close to Allah by virtue of it. Hence the early generations - such as Ahmad and others - quoted a great deal of evidence to indicate that the word of Allah is not created, including the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): "*A'udhu bi kalimat-illah it-tammat* (I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah)." They said: He sought refuge in them, and refuge cannot be sought in anything that is created.

See: *Qa'idat Jalilah fi't-Tawassul wa'l-Wasilah* (1/297).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymin said: Calling upon Allah by virtue of the Holy Quran means asking of one's Lord by virtue of His words. ... The Quran is one of the attributes of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, for it is the words of Allah which He spoke in a real sense, intending what the words mean. So it is His speech, may He be glorified and exalted.... As it is one of His attributes, seeking

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to draw close to Him and asking of Him by virtue of it is permissible."(*Fatawa Nur 'ala ad-Darb*).

The second type:

Seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), which is a type of tawassul that is widely known among many of the later generations, who say, "O Allah, I ask of You by virtue of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)" or "I ask of You by virtue of the status of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)." This idea is not narrated in the Sunnah. Regarding it, Abu Hanifah and his companions said that it is not permissible, and they disallowed it, as they said: Allah cannot be asked by virtue of anything created, and no one should say, "I ask of You by virtue of Your prophets."

It says in *Tabyin al-Haqa'iq* by az-Zayla'i (6/31): Abu Yusuf said: I would not approve of saying "by the right of So-and-so, by the right of Your prophets and messengers." End quote. That is because no one has any rights over Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, as al-Kasani said in *Bida'i' as-Sana'i'* (5/126).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymin said: The most correct scholarly view... Is that it is haram to seek to draw close to Allah and ask of Him (tawassul) by virtue of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Hence no one should say, "O Allah, I ask of You by virtue of the status of Your Prophet for such and such, and such and such." That is because the means of achieving a goal cannot be a sound means unless it has the effect of achieving the goal, and the status of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), for the one who is calling upon Allah, has no impact on his attaining his goal. As it has no impact, it is not a valid means. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, cannot be called upon except by that which is a valid means, which has an impact on attaining the hoped-for outcome. The status of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) belongs exclusively to him, and it is a virtue that is his only. As for us, we cannot benefit from it; rather we can only benefit from believing in the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be

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upon him)."*(Fatawa Nur 'ala ad-Darb)*.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If it is said: Can the words of the one who says "I ask of You by virtue of your Prophet Muhammad" may be understood as him meaning, "I ask of You by virtue of my belief in him and my love for him, and I seek to draw close to You by virtue of my believing in him and my love for him" because you said that this is permissible, and there is no scholarly dispute concerning that? The response is: Whoever intends this meaning, then it is valid, with no dispute, and if we understand in this way the words of those among the early generations who sought to draw close to Allah by virtue of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) after his death – as was narrated from some of the Sahabah and Tabi 'in, and from Imam Ahmad and others – this is fine, and in that case the issue is not to be regarded as being a matter of scholarly dispute.

But many of the common folk say this phrase without meaning it in that way. These are the ones to whom the scholars objected.

Moreover, what the Sahabah intended when they sought to draw close to Allah by virtue of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) was to seek to draw close to Allah by virtue of his supplication [when he was still alive] and his intercession [in the hereafter]. This is permissible, and there is no scholarly dispute concerning that. Moreover, most people in our time do not intend this meaning when they utter this phrase."*(Qa'idah Jalilah p. 119)*.

The third type: seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of created beings.

According to Islamic teachings, this comes under the heading of reprehensible innovation, and is objectionable according to what is commonly known among people and on the basis of the wording itself. It is akin to doing something for which Allah has not given permission, and it is going against the goals intended by the one who is calling upon Allah, seeking to draw close to Him and seeking intercession, and it is contrary to the proper etiquette in offering supplication.

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Shaykh al-Islam said: As for seeking intercession by virtue of one who cannot intercede for the one who is asking, and cannot seek for his need to be met, and may not even be aware of what he is asking for, this cannot be called seeking intercession either in linguistic terms or in the words of one who knows what he is talking about."(*Al-Fatawa* 1/242).

He also said: If a man were to say to someone of high status and authority: I ask you by virtue of the obedience of So-and-so to you, and by virtue of your love for him because he obeys you, and by virtue of his status with you that he attained by obeying you, he would be asking him about something that has nothing to do with him whatsoever. Likewise, the fact of Allah's bestowing blessings upon those who are close to Him and His loving them because they worship Him and obey Him does not help to bring about a response to the supplication of one who asks by virtue of them.

Rather what could bring about a response to his supplication is some measures that he may take, such as his being obedient to them, or measures that they take, such as their intercession for him. If none of that is present, then that is not a means for his supplication to be answered.

And he said: When a person says, "O Allah, I ask of You by virtue of So-and-so and So-and-so" among the angels, the prophets, the righteous and others, or "by virtue of the status of So-and-so," or "by virtue of the sanctity of So-and-so," this implies that these people have status before Allah, and this is correct. These people indeed have standing, status and sanctity before Allah, and that is why Allah raised their status and will accept their intercession if they intercede. ... But if there is no supplication or intercession on their part, then he has asked by virtue of something that has nothing to do with him and cannot be a cause of benefit for him.

And he said elsewhere: The fact that Allah has honoured that person is not a means which would dictate that an answer should come about. If he says that the means is his intercession and his supplication, that is true, if he indeed intercedes for him and offers supplication for him.

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But if he does not intercede for him or offer supplication for him, then it is not a means.

Imam al-'Allamah Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) discussed this issue at length in his blessed book *Qa'idah Jalilah fi't-Tawassul wa'l-Wasilah*.

The fourth type:

What the questioner mentioned – about seeking to draw close to Allah by virtue of the trumpet blast, and the progeny of Nuh, and the caliphate of as-Siddiq, and the courage of 'Ali, and so on – is something that came about as a result of the supplicant's attempt to be poetic and make things rhyme [in Arabic], without thinking about the meaning. So these words are meaningless, and cannot be uttered by one who is offering supplication with focus of mind, knowing what he is saying.

How can the progeny of Nuh be a means of one's supplication being answered, when among them there are Muslims and disbelievers, righteous people and evildoers? How can the caliphate of as-Siddiq, or the courage of 'Ali, or 'Umar's distinguishing between right and wrong, or the modesty of 'Uthman, or even Allah's close friendship with Ibrahim, be a means of supplication being answered?

What has this supplicant to do with the fact that Ibrahim was a close friend of Allah? What is his share in this sublime and lofty status?

This is one of the outcomes of going against the Sunnah and inclining towards invented supplications, attempting to make them rhyme. Thus the wisdom behind the prohibition on striving to make supplications rhyme becomes clear.

Ibn Battal (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Because seeking to make supplications rhyme requires effort and striving, and that prevents proper focus and sincerity in beseeching Allah, may He be exalted. It says in the hadith: "Allah does not accept anything from a heart that is heedless

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and distracted." The attention of the one who wants to make his supplication rhyme is focused on repeating things twice in different, rhyming words. The one who is thinking hard and trying to make his supplication rhyme is not focusing; rather he is heedless and distracted."(*Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* 10/97).

And Allah knows best.