



Istighātha, Isti‘āna, and Tawassul ¹ Imām Zāhid al-Kawtharī ²

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Let us add a word here concerning the issue of Istighātha and Isti‘āna. For starts, both of them are in the same valley [i.e. they share the same ruling], for in the Ḥadīth concerning the intercession that is found in al-Bukhārī, it says: “[they will seek aid with] Ādam, then Mūsā, then Muḥammad ﷺ...” This proves that it is permissible to utilize the wording of Istighātha in the same sense as Tawassul is used. As with regards to the Ḥadīth that states: “Help is not to be sought from me [*lā yustaghāthu bi*]” in the collection of al-Ṭabarānī, its chain contains [‘Abdullāh bin] Luhay’a, and we have explained his status in our book *al-Ishfāq*, so it does not stand to oppose the [other] authentic Ḥadīth. As with regards to the other Ḥadīth which states: “When you seek aid, then seek the aid of Allāh...”, it means: when you seek the aid of anyone that is of assistance, seek the aid of Allah for ease in all of your affairs—and this is in accordance with the literal meaning of the Ḥadīth, for the Muslim does not forget the One that is the Enabler of the means when he seeks aid in one of those means. Take the example of ‘Umar ؓ who sought rain through al-‘Abbās ؓ. He did not forget to say when praying for rain: “Oh Allah, send us rain.” This is the Islamic character.

If we did not understand the Ḥadīth in this way, we would be obliged to interpret it figuratively and it would have contradicted numerous verses of the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth that are too many to mention here. Hence, it would be far fetched to consider the word “when” in this Ḥadīth to mean “Every time”, rather, according to the logicians, it is considered to be of the expressions of *ihmāl* [indetermination as to the quantity of a proposition], therefore, the opponent has nothing to grasp from it in his argument at all. Add to this, the fact that the singular pronoun is used, and the fact that the elite—and

¹ Section Three, *Mahq al-Taḳawwul fī Mas’ala al-Tawassul*

² “Muhammad Zāhid ibn Ḥasan al-Kawtharī al-Ḥanafī al-Ash‘arī (1296-1371), the adjunct to the last Shaykh al-Islām of the Ottoman Caliphate and a major Ḥanafī jurist praised by Imām Muhammad Abū Zahra as a Reviver (*mujaddid*) of the fourteenth Islamic century.” See: Dr. Sheikh Gibrīl Fouād Haddād’s biography at

http://www.sunnah.org/history/Scholars/Imam_al_Kawthari.htm

surely Ibn ‘Abbās is from among them—are encouraged to seek aid solely from the One that is the Enabler of the means [Allāh].

As for the words of the Exalted: ***“You alone we worship and You alone we seek aid.”*** [al-Fātiḥa: 5], it is in the context of worship and guidance, as illustrated by the context of the verse as well as the order in which the words appear – and this is a fitting way of address when making personal entreaties – so it does not negate the normal and customary ways and means used in this worldly life.

Our close friend, the ‘Allāmah and author of numerous splendid works, the major Ustādh; Shaykh Muhammad Ḥusnayn al- ‘Adawī al-Mālikī did very well when he wrote numerous books repelling the misconceptions invented by the Taymiyyūn [bigoted followers of Shaykh Ibn Taymiyya] concerning Tawassul. So, by his splendid checking of facts, his fresh and sweet manner of composition, and his lofty rank in knowledge above the Shaykhs of all of these opponents by the agreement of the people of knowledge, by all of that, he was able to dispel the darkness that had encroached.

As with regards to the issue of the people of the graves hearing and comprehending, the most expansive presentation of the proofs in support of that was done by the scholar of Ḥadīth, ‘Abdul Ḥayy al-Luknāwī in his book; Tadhkīrat al-Rashīd. As with regards to the words of the Exalted: ***“And you can not make the dead hear”***, according to the verifying scholars, this is with respect to the polytheists. This has been verified, so do not pay any attention to the blunders of the erroneous ones.

