



Tawassul, Istighātha, and Tashaffu' ¹

Imām Taqīyuddīn al-Subkī

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Know, that it is permissible and praiseworthy to perform *tawassul*, *istighātha*, and to seek intercession through the Prophet ﷺ unto his Lord ﷻ. The permissibility and desirability of this is from the matters that are well known among those who have *dīn*, and well known from the Prophets and Messengers, as well as the rest of the righteous *salaf*, scholars, and layman among the Muslims. *Tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ is permissible in every situation, both before his creation and after it in his time in the life of this world, as well as after his death in his time in the isthmus life, and after the resurrection on the day of reckoning and paradise.

It is of three types: That a person performs *tawassul* through him, ﷺ, meaning that the one that seeks (the fulfillment of his need) asks Allāh ﷻ by him or by his rank or blessings. This is permissible in all three situations. All three situations are supported with authentic reports. There is no difference in meaning when expressed as *tawassul*, *istighātha*, and seeking intercession. The one who supplicates in this manner is performing *tawassul* through the Prophet ﷺ and has made him ﷺ a means for Allāh to respond to his supplication. He makes *istighātha* with him ﷺ because he has made *istighātha* with Allāh ﷻ through him ﷺ in (the attainment) of his needs. He is seeking intercession through him ﷺ because he has asked Allāh by his rank ﷺ. So, what is intended here (is to say) is that it is permissible for the servant to ask Allāh ﷻ through the one that he is certain has a rank and value with Allāh. There is no doubt that the Prophet ﷺ has a lofty rank, high value, and mighty status with Allāh ﷻ. Customarily, it is so that the one who has a rank with someone else, in that if he interceded with him, then his intercession would be accepted. So if someone ascribed himself to someone in the latter's absence and performed *tawassul* through him, he will intercede for him. If the one (through whom *tawassul* was made) was not present or interceding, that one that is beloved and esteemed will be a means for (the acceptance of the former's) supplication. This appears in the authentic supplications (such as):

¹ Taqīyuddīn al-Subkī, *shifa' al-siqam fi ziyarat khayr al-anam*; as cited by al-Qādī Yūsuf al-Nabhānī in *shawahid al-haqq fil-istighatha bi-sayyid al-khalq* (The Proofs of Truth in the Seeking of Aid with the Master of Creation).

“I ask You by every name that is Yours, and I ask You by Your beautiful names, and I ask You by the fact that You are Allāh. I seek refuge with Your pleasure from Your displeasure, and from Your pardon from Your punishment, and (I seek refuge) with You, from You.”

As well as the Hadīth of the cave that contains the supplication by way of righteous action, and it is from the well known authentic Hadīth. So the one that is being asked in these narrations is Allāh alone without any partners, and that by which He is asked is different. Similarly, asking by the Prophet ﷺ is not asking the Prophet, rather, it is asking Allāh ﷻ by virtue of him ﷺ and sometimes the one by which one is asked is actually higher than the one being asked as appears in [the Hadīth]: *“Whoever asks you by Allāh give him.”* So here, the one by which the other is asked is the Creator ﷻ, and this “other” is some of mankind. Sometimes, the one asked is higher than the one by which He is asked-such as in asking Allāh the Exalted by the Prophet ﷺ. There is no doubt that the Prophet ﷺ possesses rank with Him ﷻ, so whoever says: I ask you by the Prophet ﷺ, then there is no doubt in its permissibility, similarly, if he were to say: [I ask You] by the right of Muhammad -and by this he means the right of his rank and station and the right that Allāh gave him over the entire creation, or the right that Allāh gave him over himself-by His bounty as appears in the authentic Hadīth in which he said: “And what is the right of the slaves over Allāh?” This “right” does not mean that it is necessary (*nājib*) for nothing of [contingent matters] are obligatory for Allāh ﷻ.

