



Tawassul and Istighātha

Imām Ibn al-Ḥājj al-‘Abdarī ¹

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1. Tawassul through the Prophet ﷺ :

After quoting the narration of the *tawassul* of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ through ‘Abbās ؓ, Ibn al-Ḥājj said:

Then he is to perform *tawassul* through the people of those graves, I mean: through the righteous from among them in fulfilling his needs and forgiving his sins. Then he should supplicate for himself, his parents, his teachers, his relatives, and the inhabitants of those graves, and the dead from among the Muslims and their living and their offspring until the Day of Judgment and those who are not present from his brothers. He should turn to Allāh the Exalted in supplicating at their place (of burial) and frequently make *tawassul* through them unto Allāh the Exalted, because He, the Glorified and Exalted choose them, honored them, and ennobled them. So, just as He caused them to be a source of benefit in this world, so it will be in the hereafter, nay, even more. So, whoever has a need to be fulfilled, then let him go to them and make *tawassul* through them, for they are the intermediaries between Allāh the Exalted and His creation. It has been established in the Sacred Law, and Allāh the Exalted knows what He has vouchsafed to them of (Divine) care. That is abundant and well known. The people have not ceased, among the scholars and elders, from elder to elder, both East and West, deriving blessings by way of visitation of their graves, and they find the blessings of that both in the sensory, and spiritual (*hissan wa ma’nan*). The Shaykh, the Imām, Abū ‘Abdallāh Ibn Nu’mān (may Allāh have mercy upon him) mentioned in his book titled: *safīnat al-najā’ li ahl al-iltijā’*, regarding the miracles of the Shaykh, Abūl Najā’.

¹ He is: Abū ‘Abd Allāh, Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad al-‘Abdarī al-Fāsī al-Mālikī, better known as Ibn al-Ḥājj. The author of many beneficial works, the most notable of them being *‘al-madkhal ilā al-shara’ al-sharīf*. Ibn Hajr al-‘Asqālānī said of his book, al-Madkhal: “It has abundant benefits. In it, he unveiled the faults and innovations that the people do and make light of. Most of them are from those matters that are censured, whereas some of them are matters that carry possibility (of being correct).” He died in Cairo in the year 737 Hijrī.

Speaking about this, he said: 'It has been realized by those who possess insight and consideration, that visiting the graves of the righteous is beloved for the sake of obtaining blessings along with reflection. The blessings of the righteous flow after their death, just as it did during their life. Supplicating at the graves of the righteous and seeking intercession through them has been acted upon by our verifying scholars from the Imāms of the religion.'²

2. Manners of visiting the grave of the Prophet ﷺ

In the section on the manners of visiting the Prophet ﷺ, Ibn al-Ḥājj said:

As for what has been mentioned regarding visiting the grave of the Master of the first and last ﷺ, then all that has been mentioned should be increased by many folds, meaning, in humility, brokenness, and tranquility, because he is the one who will intercede and have his intercession accepted, the one whose intercession will not be rejected. The one who intends him (in their journey of visitation) will not be let down, nor will the one who disembarks upon his place, nor the one who seeks his aid or refuge (*wa lā man ista'āna aw istaghātha bihi*), for he ﷺ is the pole of perfection and the crown jewel of the kingdom. Allāh the Exalted said in His mighty Book:

“He has certainly seen the greater signs from His Lord.”

Our scholars (may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon them) have stated: He ﷺ saw his image, for he is the crown jewel of the kingdom. So, whoever makes *tawassul* through him, seeks aid through him (*istaghātha bihi*), or seeks his needs through him, then he will not be refused or disappointed.³

Ibn al-Ḥājj further said:

Our scholars (may Allāh the Exalted have mercy upon them) said: The visitor should cause himself to feel as if he is standing in front of him ﷺ just as he would be in his life, for there is no difference between his death and life, meaning, in his witnessing of his Ummah, and his knowing of their situations, intentions, resolves, and inner thoughts. That is (all) clear to him without there being any concealment whatsoever. If someone said (in objection to this): These attributes are particular to the Master (Allāh) ﷻ, the response is: All of those who have relocated to the hereafter from among the believers know the situation of the living predominately. That has occurred to no end (found) in accounts that have been (reported) to have occurred. It is possible that their knowledge of that is when the actions of the living are presented to them, and there are other possibilities to it (as well). These matters are hidden from us. The truthful one ﷺ informed about the presentation of deeds to them (the dead) so it must occur. The knowledge of how it occurs is not known and Allāh knows best about it, and it is sufficient as a clarification, the statement of the Prophet ﷺ: “The believer sees with the light of Allāh.”

² al-Madkhal; 1/255

³ Ibid; 258

The light of Allāh is not veiled by anything. This is regarding the living among the believers, so what about those among them in the other worldly abode? The Imām, Abū ‘Abdallāh al-Qurṭubī said in his al-Tadhkirah: (It has been narrated that) Ibn al-Mubārak narrated with his chain to al-Minhāl ibn ‘Amr who narrated that he heard Sa’īd ibn al-Musayyib say: ‘There is not a day, except that on it, the actions of the Ummah are presented to the Prophet ﷺ, both in the morning and the evening. So, he knows them by their deeds and appearances, and it is due to that he will bear witness against them. Allāh the Exalted said:

“So how will it be when We bring every nation with a witness and bring you as a witness over these”

It has proceeded, that the deeds are presented to Allāh the Blessed and Exalted on Thursday and Monday and (the deeds are presented) to the Prophets and fathers and mothers on Friday and there is no contradiction, for it is possible that it is specific to the Prophet ﷺ that the deeds are presented to him every day and on Friday with the other Prophets. (end quote from al-Qurṭubī)⁴

Further on, Ibn al-Ḥājj said:

So when he visits him ﷺ, if he is able to (remain standing) and not sit, then this is better. If he was unable, then he can sit with proper decorum, respect, and honor. When the visitor is seeking the fulfillment of his needs and forgiveness of his sins, he might not need to mention that with his tongue. Nay, he may bring that to presence in his heart while he is standing in front of him ﷺ, because he ﷺ, knows his needs and benefits more than him, and is more merciful to him than himself, and more caring towards him than his own relatives. He said ﷺ: “The likeness of me and all of you is like moths that are rushing into the fire while I am standing to prevent you from it.”, or as he said. This applies to the Prophet ﷺ at all times-meaning in *tawassul* through him and seeking the fulfillment of one’s needs by way of his rank with his Lord ﷻ. Whoever is unable to undertake a visit to him ﷺ with his body, then let him intend it at all times with his heart, and let him bring present to his heart that he is there in front of him seeking intercession through him unto the One who bestowed (His) bounty (Allāh) through him, as was said by the Imām, Abū Muḥammad ibn al-Sayyid al-Baṭalāyūsī (may Allāh have mercy upon him) in his line (of poetry) that he sent to him:

⁴ Ibid 259

*Unto you I flee from my slips and sins,
and when I meet Allāh you are the one sufficient for me*

*Visiting your grave that is visited by foot
is my longing and desire if my Lord wills*

*So if visitation of him is prevented by my body,
then I am not prevented from visiting him with my heart*

*To you oh Messenger of Allāh I send, from myself,
a salutation of a believer and lover.⁵*



⁵ Ibid 264