
Seeking assistance from the dead

Translated by Abbas Abu Yahya from an original Arabic article taken from www.sahab.net

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The difference between the 'Aqeedah of the Salaf as-Saalih and the 'Aqeedah of the grave worshipping Soofees

Compiled by Abbas Raheem

The grave worshipping Soofees promote matters of Shirk and innovation by way of the media, and from those matters is Isteegatha (seeking closeness to Allaah) from the dead of the Prophets, and the righteous people. This is a refutation against their falsehood and their trickery of the worshippers by mentioning what is ambiguous from the texts of Islaam, and using weak hadeeth and narrations, and their own understanding of the authentic hadeeth other than the understanding of the Salaf as-Saalih. This refutation also contains the position of the Salaf as-Saalih regarding this issue, according to the 'Aqeedah of the Salaf as-Saalih, and all capability is from Allaah.

Isteegatha linguistically means requesting aid and victory.

The Sharee'ah' definition: There is no difference with the linguistic meaning, since it means requesting help and relief from distress.

And Isteegatha is a type of Dua'(supplication), and Dua' is worship, as has been mentioned in the hadeeth of an-Numaan bin Basheer who said that the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: **'Dua' is worship.'**²

From the principles of the Sharee'ah is that all worship, whether apparent or internal, is prohibited until there is an evidence from the Sharee'ah that makes the action permissible.

Once this is understood, then know – may Allaah have mercy upon you, and may He direct you to His obedience - that making Isteegatha from the people is divided into two sections according to the Salaf:

The first: The Isteegatha which is permissible: and that is seeking assistance in the time of need from a living person, with that which he has the ability to help with, without having to lower oneself to that person, or with humiliation in any form, or having submission in the same way that you ask from Allaah (تعالى)³.

From amongst the evidences that show the permissibility of this type of Isteegatha is:

¹ (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

² Narrated by Ahmad and Tirmidhee and he said the hadeeth was hasan Saheeh.

³ (تعالى) Ta'aala (He, The Most High)

Seeking assistance from the dead

a) The saying of Allaah (تعالى) regarding the story of Moosa (عليه السلام)⁴ : **[The man from his (own) party asked him for help against his foe]**

b) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[Help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and transgression]**

The Second: The Isteegatha which is prohibited, is of two types:

a) Seeking assistance from living people with that which only Allaah (تعالى) has the ability to help with, and there is agreement amongst the scholars, that this is prohibited.

And from amongst the evidences for this issue, is the saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[And invoke not besides Allaah, any that will neither profit you, nor hurt you.....]**

b) Making Isteegatha with the dead, from the Prophets or the righteous people.

And from the proofs of this prohibition is the following:

1) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[And if My slaves ask you about Me, then I am close, and I answer the Dua' of the caller if he supplicates to Me. So let them obey Me and believe in Me, so that they may be led aright]**

So ponder – may Allaah look after you – about when the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was faced with questions, and the answer would come from Allaah (تعالى), and Allaah (تعالى) would make the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) an intermediary to convey the answer, so Allaah would say to him : **[Say....]** meaning O Muhammad tell them. The following are examples of that:

1) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[They ask you about the new moons. Say: these are signs to mark fixed periods of time for mankind and for the pilgrimage]⁵**

2) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[They ask you concerning fighting in the Sacred Months (i.e. 1st, 7th, 11th and 12th months of the Islaamic calendar). Say, "Fighting therein is a great (transgression) but a greater (transgression) with Allaah is to prevent mankind from following the Way of Allaah, to disbelieve in Him]⁶**

3) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[They ask you (O Muhammad) concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: 'In them is a great sin, and (some) benefit for men, but the sin of them is greater than their benefit.']⁷**

4) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[They ask you what they should spend. Say: whatever you spend of good]⁸**

⁴ (عليه السلام) (alaihissalaam) Peace be upon him

⁵ Soorah al-Baqarah [2:186]

⁶ Soorah al-Baqarah [2:217]

⁷ Soorah al-Baqarah [2:219]

⁸ Soorah al-Baqarah [2:215]

Seeking assistance from the dead

5) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[They ask you for a legal verdict. Say: ‘Allaah directs (thus) about Al-Kalâlah (those who leave neither descendants nor ascendants as heirs)]**

6) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[They ask you what is lawful for them as food. Say: lawful unto you are all kinds of halaal food]⁹**

7) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[They ask you about the Hour (Day of Resurrection): ‘When will be its appointed time?’ Say: ‘The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (Alone)]**

8) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[They ask you about the spoils of war. Say: the spoils of war are for Allaah and the Messenger]¹⁰**

So, the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was an intermediary to convey the message directed to him from Allaah (تعالى) by His saying: **[Say...]**, except in the issue of Dua’. Indeed Allaah (تعالى) did not make the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) an intermediary for Dua’, but Allaah (تعالى) Himself undertakes the answering of the Dua’ directly without saying: **[Say...]**

When the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was asked: ‘O Messenger of Allaah, is our Lord close so we can have intimate discourse with Him, or is He far, so that we have to call in a loud voice?’ Then Allaah revealed: **[And if My slaves ask you about Me, then I am close, and I answer the *Dua’* of the caller if he supplicates to Me]¹¹**

And this is a divine indication that Allaah does not love that, nor is a slave in need of intermediaries or intercessors when he supplicates to his Lord (عزوجل)¹², rather he supplicates to Allaah directly and the saying of Allaah (تعالى) **[So let them obey Me]** means : that they supplicate to Me.

2) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[Say O Muhammad: I do not possess anything for myself that will benefit me nor harm me]**

so indeed this Aayah clearly explains that he (the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم)) does not control for himself that which will benefit him nor that which will harm him, so how can he possess that for anyone else.

And what confirms this point is the saying of the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) : **‘O Fatima daughter of Muhammad, O Safiya, daughter of AbdulMuttalib, O tribe of AbdulMuttalib, I do not possess anything for you from Allaah, but ask me whatever you want from my wealth.’¹³**

3) The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[Say (O Muhammad): ‘Call unto those besides Him whom you pretend [to be gods like angels, Isaa (Jesus), ‘Uzair (Ezra), etc.]. They have neither the power to remove adversity from you nor even to shift it from you to another person.’]**

⁹ Soorah al-Maa’idah [5:4]

¹⁰ Soorah al-Anfaal [8:1]

¹¹ Narrated by Abdullaah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal in his book ‘Kitab as-Sunnah’1/ 277 and Ibn Hibban in his book ‘ath-Thiqaat’8/436, and at-Tabaree mentioned it as a reason for the revelation of the *Ayaah* in his *Tafseer* book 2/158, and Ibn Katheer in his *Tafseer* book 1/219, and Qurtubee in his *Tafseer* book 2/308, and he mentioned it as a reason for it being revealed, on the authority of Hasan al-Basree (رَجْمَةُ اللَّهِ).

¹² (عزوجل) (Azza wa Jaal) Mighty and Majestic is He

¹³ Narrated by Muslim

Seeking assistance from the dead

Some of the Salaf said that this Ayah was revealed about groups of people who used to supplicate to al-Azeez, the Messiah and the angels.

So if a person says that those people used to worship them (angels, prophets etc.) And not worship Allaah, but as for us then we don't worship them, rather, we take them as intermediaries and intercessors with Allaah!!

Then the answer to them is: This statement of yours, is like the statement of the Mushrikeen at the time of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[We do not worship them except that they bring us closer to Allaah]** and in spite of what they said, their claim was not accepted, nor did it benefit them, and the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) fought against them.

4) A fundamental principle is that the dead are not like the living, Allaah (تعالى) says: **[The living and the dead are not the same]** fundamentally the dead do not hear the living.

Allaah (تعالى) said: **[And you do not make those in the graves to hear]** except where the evidence shows exceptions to this principle, and here are some examples:

a) When the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) spoke to the dead of the Mushrikeen after the battle of Badr, while they were in the well before they were buried.

And about this Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdasee (رَجْمَهُ اللهُ) said: 'and this was a miracle of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and a matter that was specific to him, so you cannot use for anyone other than him.'¹⁴

b) The dead hear the footsteps of his companions.

c) The soul of the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is returned to him so that the angels can convey to him the Salaam of anyone who sends Salaam upon him.

d) When the dead person hears the Salaam of the one who sends Salaam to him at his grave. This is according to those who authenticate this hadeeth.

There is no evidence to show that the dead person hears the living person who asks of him and makes a request from him, and if there is no evidence for this then the principle is that the issue remains as it is, that the dead cannot hear the living.

And the fundamental principle is that the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is human, and the origin regarding the issue of death, is that he is like the rest of mankind. Allaah (تعالى) says: **[Indeed you will die, and indeed they will die]** except for what the evidence exempts, that the earth does not eat up his body and that his soul is returned to him in the grave to receive the Salaam of the one who sends Salaam to him, and that the actions of his Ummah are presented to him, and this is according to those who authenticate the hadeeth.

¹⁴ Taken from 'Kitaab al-Mughnee'10/63.

Seeking assistance from the dead

Since the dead not being able to hear the living has been established about the leader of the sons of Aadam (عليه السلام) then this more readily applies to other than the Prophet (صلى الله عليه) (وسلم). If this is established that the Prophets do not hear the question of the one asking the question, then ponder over the saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[And who is more astray than one who calls (invokes) besides Allaah, such as will not answer him till the Day of Resurrection, and who are (even) unaware of their calls (invocations) to them?]**

5 – The saying of Allaah (تعالى): [So when you have finished, then stand up for Allaah’s worship. And to your Lord turn all your invocations] and He did not say ‘Turn your invocations to the Prophets and the righteous people.’

Imaam at-Tabaree (رَجْمَةُ اللهِ) said, ‘The saying of Allaah (تعالى): **[And to your Lord turn all your invocations]** Allaah mentions is : O Muhammad direct your fervent desires to your Lord, and not to any one from the creation since the Mushrikeen from your people have made their fervent desires to gods and their associates. The people of Tafseer have also said similar to what we have just mentioned.¹⁵

6 – Indeed what the Companions (رضي الله عنهم)¹⁶ knew and understood is that the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was not made as someone from who aid was sought after his death nor was he taken as an intermediary, and this is confirmed by what has been narrated by al-Bukhaaree 1 / 342 and others have also narrated this.

On the authority of Anas (رضي الله عنه) and then on the authority of Umar bin al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) if there was a drought, he would request rain by asking al-Abbas bin AbdulMuttalib (رضي الله عنه), and he would say : ‘O Allaah indeed we used to come closer to You (make Tawassul) with Your Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and You would give us rain, and indeed we come closer to You with his uncle, so give us rain,’ then the rain would come down.

So, if you dear brother, dear reader, being unbiased, ponder that Umar (رضي الله عنه) and the senior Companions (رضي الله عنهم) did not regard the permissibility of (Tawassul) coming closer to Allaah nor seeking assistance with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) after his death, compared to when he was alive, in fact in their request for rain they used to make Tawassul with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), but after he passed away they did not make Tawassul with him. Indeed Umar (رضي الله عنه) said in his authentic, well-known and established supplication, agreed upon by the people of knowledge, which was said in the presence of the Muhajiroon and the Ansaar in the famous year of the Great Drought. When the drought became severe and the people requested rain, he said : ‘O Allaah we used to, if we suffered from a drought, we used to make Tawassul with Your Prophet, and You used to give us rain, and now we make Tawassul to You with his uncle, so give us rain , and they were given rain.’

This well known supplication was accepted by all the Companions (رضي الله عنهم), not one of them denied it. This is one of the clearest examples of (Ijma’Sakootee) silent agreement.

Therefore, if Tawassul with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) after his death was like the Tawassul during his lifetime, they would have said, why are we making Tawassul with al-Abbas (رضي الله عنه)

¹⁵ Taken from the book Tafseer at-Tabaree 30 / 237.

¹⁶ (رضي الله عنهم) (rad iyallahu 'anhum) May Allaah the Most High be pleased with them

Seeking assistance from the dead

(عنه) while we don't make it with the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), who is the best and greatest of creation with Allaah? Since not one of them said this, then this shows us that they knew Tawassul was only during the lifetime of the Prophet, and after his passing away, Tawassul is with the Dua' of the righteous living people.

The Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) did not order any one of his Companions (رضي الله عنهم) if they had a need or were afflicted with a problem, that they turn to him and they seek assistance from him after his death. In fact the Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to Ibn Abbas (رضي الله عنه): **'If you ask of anyone, then ask Allaah, and if you seek help, then seek help from Allaah.'**¹⁷

And there is other evidence which shows that Isteeqatha with the dead from the Prophets and the righteous people is not allowed according to Islaam.

All Praise belongs to Allaah, may His peace and blessings be upon our final Prophet Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم), his family, his companions and all those who follow his guidance.

¹⁷ Narrated by at-Tirmidhee and he said the hadeeth is hasan Saheeh.