

10083 - Seeking blessing from scholars and righteous people, and their relics

the question

There are people who think that it is permissible to seek blessing from the scholars and righteous people, and their relics, based on the reports of the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) seeking blessing from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). What is the ruling on that? Does that not involve likening someone who is not the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? Is it possible to seek blessing from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) after his death? What is the ruling on seeking means of drawing closer to Allaah (tawassul) by seeking blessing from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)?

Detailed answer

It is not permissible to seek blessing from anyone other than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), not from his wudoo' or his hair or his sweat or anything else from his body. All of that applies only to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), because of the goodness and blessing that Allaah has put in his body and whatever he touches.

Hence the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) did not seek blessing from any one of their number during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or after his death, not with the Khulafaa' al-Raashideen or anyone else. This indicates that they knew that this applied only to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and not to anyone else. And because this is a means that could lead to shirk and worshipping someone other than Allaah. Similarly it is not permissible to seek means of drawing closer to Allaah (tawassul) by virtue of the position and status of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), or his person, or his attributes, or his blessing, because there is no evidence (daleel) for that, and because these are among the means that may lead to shirk and they are ways of exaggerating about him (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).

Also, these things were not done by the Sahaabah, and if they were good then they would have done them before us. And this goes against the evidence of sharee'ah. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And (all) the Most Beautiful Names belong to Allaah, so call on Him by them” [al-A'raaf 7:180]

Allaah did not command us to call upon Him by virtue of the position or status or blessing of anyone.

Part of that is seeking means of drawing closer to Him by virtue of His attributes, such as His Glory, His Mercy, His Words, etc. An example of that is to be found in the saheeh ahaadeeth which speak of seeking refuge in the perfect words of Allaah, and seeking refuge in the Glory and Power of Allaah.

Also connected to that is the idea of seeking means of drawing closer to Allaah by loving Allaah and loving His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), by believing in Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and seeking to draw nearer to Allaah by virtue of one's righteous deeds, as described in the story of the people in the cave, whose need for shelter in the rain led them to enter a cave, then a rock fell down from the mountain and blocked the entrance of the cave. They were not able to push it away, so they discussed amongst themselves ways of getting out.

They came to an agreement that the only way they would be saved from their predicament would be if they called upon Allaah by virtue of their righteous deeds. So one of them called upon Allaah by virtue of his honouring his parents, and the rock moved a little, but they could not get out... The second one called upon Allaah by virtue of his keeping away from zinaa on an occasion when he was able to indulge in it, and the rock moved a little but they still could not get out... Then the third one called upon Allaah by virtue of his fulfilling a trust, and the rock moved and they were able to escape.

This hadeeth is reported in al-Saheehayn from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him); it is one of the stories of the people who came before us, in which there is a lesson and a reminder for us.

The scholars (may Allaah have mercy on them) stated the points mentioned in this answer, such as Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, his student Ibn al-Qayyim, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Hasan in Fath al-Majeed Sharh Kitaab al-Tawheed, and others. With regard to the hadeeth about the blind man who sought to call upon Allaah (to cure him of his blindness) by virtue of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) during his life time, so the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) interceded for him and prayed for him, and Allaah restored his sight – this was a case of seeking the help of Allaah by means of the du’aa’ and intercession of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), not by means of his status and virtue. This is clear from the hadeeth... And similarly, the people will seek his intercession on the Day of Resurrection for Judgement to be passed, and the people of Paradise will seek his intercession on the Day of Resurrection for them to be admitted to Paradise. In all these cases, the help of Allaah is sought through him when he is alive, whether that is in this world or in the Hereafter, and it is seeking the help of Allaah through his du’aa’ and intercession, not by virtue of his person or status, as was clearly stated by the scholars, including those whom we have mentioned above.