185053 - Ruling on a person saying “O wisdom of Allah” or “O mercy of Allah”

the question

A man in the mosque said “O wisdom of Allah” or “O wisdom of my Lord.” The imam of the mosque was asked about saying “O wisdom of Allah” or “O wisdom of my Lord”, and said that it was permissible. Is that true?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

With regard to someone saying “O wisdom of Allah” or “O wisdom of my Lord”, the matter is subject to further discussion.

1.

If what he meant was to express wonder at the wisdom of Allah, such as if he saw something amazing of Allah’s creation, so he said “O wisdom of Allah” or “O wisdom of my Lord”, that is permissible, for Allah has perfect wisdom that dazzles people of intelligence and understanding, and in everything there is a sign which indicates that He is one.

2.

If what he meant was du‘aa’ (supplication) and turning to the “wisdom of Allah” – that is, calling upon the divine attributes – then this is haraam; in fact it is kufr (disbelief) and shirk (associating others with Allah), because this may give the impression that the attribute is something separate from Allah, may He be exalted, and independent of Him, and that it can give and withhold. Thus it is as if he regards it as a god alongside Allah.

The scholars drew attention to the seriousness of this issue, in the past and more recently.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Asking of Allah by virtue of His names, attributes and words, is permissible and is prescribed, as narrated in the hadiths. As for calling upon His attributes and words, that constitutes disbelief, according to Muslim consensus. Would any Muslim say, “O words of Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, help me, or come to my aid”, or “O knowledge of Allah…” or “O power of Allah…” or “O might of Allah” or “O greatness of Allah”, and so on? Or has any Muslim or a disbeliever ever been heard to call upon the attributes of Allah or the attributes of anyone else? Or to ask an attribute to bring him some benefit or ward off some harm, or grant him some help or support or aid and the like?

End quote from Talkhees al-Istighaathah wa’r-Radd ‘ala al-Bakri, p. 181.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling on a person calling upon one of the attributes of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and can you explain the evidence for this ruling?

Shaykh: Can the attribute do anything?

Questioner: No, it cannot do anything.

Shaykh: If you call upon one that cannot do anything, is that permissible?

Questioner: That is not permissible.

Shaykh: Then it is not permissible. Shaykh al-Islam said: Calling upon a divine attribute in supplication constitutes disbelief, according to consensus. He said this in Kitaab al-Istighaathah. Moreover, if you call upon a divine attribute, you are regarding it as independent, and able to bring you good things and ward off bad things from you. This means that you have effectively made it a god alongside Allah.

End quote from Liqaa’ al-Baab al-Maftooh (234/30).

He (may Allah have mercy on him) was also asked: If someone worships one of the attributes of

Allah, is that regarded as coming under the heading of shirk, and does the same apply to calling upon it in supplication?

He replied: If a person worships one of the attributes of Allah, or calls upon one of the attributes of Allah in supplication, that comes under the heading of shirk. This was mentioned by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him). That is because the attribute is undoubtedly something other than the one to whom it is ascribed, even though it is his attribute. So a person's strength is not the person himself, and a person's pride is not the person himself, and a person's words are not the person himself. By the same token, the might of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, is not the same as Allah Himself; rather it is one of His attributes. Therefore if a person worships one of the attributes of Allah, he is not worshipping Allah; rather he is worshipping that attribute, and not Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and man should only worship Allah, may He be glorified and exalted. "Say, 'Indeed, my prayer, my rites of sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah , Lord of the worlds'" [al-An'aam 6:162].

All the divine attributes belong to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, therefore if you worship one of His attributes, you are not worshipping Him, may He be glorified and exalted, because all the divine attributes belong to Allah. Similarly, calling upon an attribute in supplication comes under the heading of shirk, such as if you say "O forgiveness of Allah, forgive me; O might of Allah, support me" and so on.

End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen (2/164).

But the shaykh (may Allah have mercy on him) pointed out that when some of the common folks say "O mercy of Allah," their intention is to ask of Allah, not of (the attribute of) mercy.

He (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked, following the question mentioned above: If a person says "O mercy of Allah", does that come under the heading of calling upon the attribute in supplication, which is not allowed?

He replied:

If the intention of the person when he says “O mercy of Allah” is to seek help by virtue of the mercy of Allah, may He be exalted – meaning that he is not calling upon mercy itself; rather he is calling upon Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, asking Him to bestow His mercy upon him – that is permissible, and that is what he appears to mean. If you ask the person who says that: Do you mean to call upon mercy itself, or do you mean to call upon Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and ask Him to bestow mercy upon you? He will say: That [the latter] is what I mean.

But if his intent is to call upon mercy itself, then that has been answered in the answer to the previous question.

End quote from Majmoo‘ Fataawa Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (2/164).

But these common folk should be taught and their attention should be brought to the correct wording that cannot be interpreted as referring to falsehood, such as saying “O Most Merciful of those who show mercy, and O Most Just of judges.”

Secondly:

Some people may be confused about what is mentioned in the religious texts of seeking refuge in the perfect words of Allah, and seeking refuge in His pleasure from His wrath, and the like. The response to that is that this comes under the heading of seeking refuge with Allah whilst beseeching Him by virtue of these attributes.

Shaykh ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan ibn Naasir al-Barraak (may Allah preserve him) said: The words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in the hadith, “By Your mercy I seek help” come under the heading of tawassul [beseeching Allah by virtue of His attributes], not calling upon the attribute in supplication, like saying, “I ask You, O Allah, by virtue of Your mercy.” And in du‘aa’ al-istikhaarah, it says: “Allahumma inni astakheeruka bi ilmika wa astaqdiruka bi qudratika (O Allah, I seek Your guidance [in making a choice] by virtue of Your knowledge, and I seek help by virtue of Your power).” Saheeh al-Bukhaari (1166). Another example is seeking refuge with Allah by virtue of the attribute, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Allahumma innee a‘oodhu bi ridaaka min sakhatika wa bi mu‘aafaatika min ‘uqoobatika (O Allah, I

seek refuge in Your good pleasure from Your wrath, and in Your protection from Your punishment." Saheeh Muslim (486). And he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "A'oodhu bi kalimaat-illah il-taammaati (I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah)." Saheeh Muslim (2708).

All of that comes under the heading of tawassul [beseeching Allah by virtue of His attributes], and this is a type of tawassul that is prescribed in Islam. As for calling upon the attribute in supplication, that is not mentioned in the du'aa's that have been narrated from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and there is no way that it can be permissible in Islam, because calling upon the attribute in supplication – such as saying "O mercy of Allah, O might of Allah, O power of Allah," implies that the attribute is something separate and independent of Allah, able to hear and respond, and whoever believes that is a disbeliever. Rather the attributes of Allah are part of His Essence, and none of them is a god that can be called upon. Rather Allah, with His attributes, is one God, and He is the one to be called upon, in Whom we are to put our hopes, the only one to be worshipped, there is no god except Him. And Allah knows best.

End quote from Fataawa al-Islam al-Yawm.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: With regard to what is mentioned in the hadiths quoted by the commentator on at-Tahhaawiyyah, such as "I seek refuge in Your might, I seek refuge in Your greatness, I seek refuge in Your pleasure, I seek refuge in the perfect words of Allah," in fact the real meaning is seeking refuge in Allah, beseeching Him and seeking to draw near to Him by virtue of these attributes, and this is what may bring protection.

End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa Ibn 'Uthaymeen (2/165).

And Allah knows best.