23265 - Ruling on asking of Allaah by virtue of the status of the righteous before Him

the question

Will Allah honour the living slave by virtue of the righteous dead if we ask of Allah “by virtue of the righteousness of Shaykh So and so and his position before You and his worship of You, to relieve me of my distress, O Allah” – when we know that all benefits come from Allah?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Undoubtedly du’aa’ is one of the greatest acts of worship prescribed in sharee’ah. It brings a person closer to his Lord, may He be glorified. And undoubtedly it is not permissible for anyone to worship Allah except in the ways that He has prescribed on the lips of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Al-Bukhari (2499) and Muslim (3242) narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours that is not part of it, will have it rejected.” According to the version narrated by Muslim: “Whoever does something that is not part of this matter of ours will have it rejected.”

Hence it may be known that turning to Allah and beseeching Him in ways that were not narrated from His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in word or in deed, and in ways that were not done by the noble Sahaabah who were the keenest of people to do good and adhere to it, is a reprehensible innovation, which a person who loves his Lord and follows His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) should not do and should not worship Allah in that manner.

If we look at what you have mentioned in your question about beseeching Allah by virtue of the

status of the righteous, their worship and their position before Allah, we will notice that this is something that has been innovated and was not narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Nor was it narrated from his noble companions that they ever sought to draw close to Allah by virtue of the Prophet's position and status before his Lord, whether during his lifetime or after his death. Rather during his lifetime they used to beseech Allah by virtue of his du'aa' for them, and when he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) died, they sought to draw closer to Allah by virtue of the du'aa's of the living righteous, and they stopped seeking to draw closer to Him by virtue of the Prophet's status. This clearly indicates that if beseeching Allah or seeking to draw closer to Him by virtue of the Prophet's status were something good and prescribed in Islam, they would have done it before us. Who dares claim that he is keener than 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allah be pleased with him) to do good when he turned away from seeking to draw closer to Allah by virtue of the status of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and sought to draw closer to Him by virtue of the du'aa' of the paternal uncle of the Prophet, and the Sahaabah witnessed that and did not denounce him or object to that? It is narrated in Saheeh al-Bukhari (954) from Anas ibn Maalik that if a drought came, 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab (may Allah be pleased with him) would ask al-'Abbaas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib to pray for rain. He would say: "O Allah, we used to beseech You by means of (the du'aa' of) Your Prophet for rain and You would give us rain; now we beseech You by means of (the du'aa' of) the paternal uncle of Your Prophet, so grant us rain." Then it would rain.

What is meant by their beseeching Allah by mean of the du'aa' of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or of al-'Abbaas is beseeching Him through their du'aa', based on what is said in some versions of this hadeeth, that Anas said: "If drought came at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), they would ask him to pray for rain, and he would pray for rain for them, then it would rain. During the caliphate of 'Umar…" and he narrated the same hadeeth. This was narrated by al-Ismaa'eeli in his al-Mustakhraj 'ala'l-Saheeh. 'Abd al-Razzaaq narrated from Ibn 'Abbaas that "'Umar prayed for rain in the prayer-place, and he said to al-'Abbaas: 'Get up and pray for rain.' So al-'Abbaas got up …" and he quoted the hadeeth. This was quoted by al-Haafiz in al-Fath and he did not comment on it.

Thus it is clear that the beseeching meant by ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) is du’aa’ by a righteous man. This is the correct kind of beseeching as prescribed in sharee’ah, and is indicated by a great deal of evidence. It was known at the time of the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them). If they were threatened with drought and there was no rain, they would ask the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to pray for them, and he would pray, then it would rain. There are many well-known ahaadeeth about this.

It says in Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah (1/153):

It is not permissible to supplicate Allah (du’aa’) by virtue of the Messenger of Allah or by virtue of any of the Sahaabah or anyone else, or by the life of anyone, because acts of worship are tawqeefi (i.e., we must adhere to what is prescribed in the Qur’aan and Sunnah and not worship Allah in any way except that which has been prescribed). Beseeching Allah in the manner described (in the question) has not been prescribed by Allah, rather He has commanded His slaves to beseech Him by His names and attributes, by believing in His Oneness, by having faith in Him, and by virtue of one’s righteous deeds – not by virtue of the status of So and so or by his life. So we must limit ourselves to that which Allah has prescribed. Hence it is known that beseeching Allah by virtue of the status or life of So and so is an innovation that has been introduced into Islam.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: No one has the right to pride himself before Allah on the righteousness of his forebears, for their righteousness is not part of his deeds for which he may deserve reward, as in the case of the three people in the cave. They did not beseech Allah by the righteousness of their forebears, rather they beseeched Allah by virtue of their own righteous deeds.

We ask Allah to make us steadfast in adhering to His religion and His sharee’ah until we meet Him…

And Allah knows best.

See: al-Tawassul Anwaa’uhu wa Ahkaamuhu by Shaykh al-Albani, p. 55ff

Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah, 1/153

Al-Tawassul ila Haqeeqah al-Tawassul by Shaykh Muhammad Naseeb al-Rifaa’i, p. 180.