

Is Istighatha (invoking other than Allah) considered Shirk (Part 2)?

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It is very popular among the Twelver Shia masses to call upon (supplicate to or invoke) the Prophet (s) and especially the Aimmah (as) without realizing how anti-Quranic this practice is. It can also be considered a kind of Shirk (association with Allah), as we shall establish through the Quran and the Narrations of Ahlulbayt (as) in this two-part series. This article will cover the narrations and Duas of the Aimmah of the Ahlul Bayt(as) and Q&A with scholarly opinions, and [Part 1](#) covers the

Quranic references.

[This earlier article](#) goes over the difference between the Quranic concept of Waseela/Tawassul (seeking means of nearness to Allah) versus Istighatha (where entities others than Allah are “invoked”).

CLAIM: ISTIGATHA IS DOING DUA (SUPPLICATION), WHICH IS NOT THE SAME AS ‘IBADAT (WORSHIP)

Everyone, including those who call upon other than Allah (swt), know that ‘ibadat (worship) is only for Allah (swt), and we cannot worship anyone other than Allah (swt).

So if we can prove that Dua is also an 'ibadat, then it would imply that Dua should also be only directed to Allah (swt) since we know that it not permissible to worship anyone other than Allah (swt), in other words, if we direct our Duas to anyone other than Allah (swt) then we have worshipped them, and that is tantamount to shirk.

الدعاء مخ العبادة

Dua is the brain of worship. This narration is one accepted by both Shia and Sunni scholars.

In the book **Uddat ud Daee** of Allama Ibn Fahd al Hilli, regarding the verse (40:60) *“And your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you; surely those who are too proud for My worship shall soon enter hell abased.”*

Hadith 51: Zurarah quotes Imam Baqir (as) as saying:

Allah says: “those who are too proud for my worship will enter hell abased”, worship here means “Dua” which is the best form of worship.

Same thing has been mentioned by Imam Sadiq (as) in Hadith 53:

Imam (as) says: “Dua is the same worship that has been mentioned in the Quranic verse “those who are too proud for my worship will enter hell abased”, call upon God and do not say the die is cast (i.e do not say that my destiny has been fixed so supplication is of no use).”

In the same book, in Hadith 61 it is mentioned:

Muawiya ibn Ammar says: I said to Imam Sadiq (as): Two worshippers begin prayer at the same time. One of them recites more verses from the Quran and the other has more Dua. They complete their prayer at the same time. Which one is more virtuous?

Imam (as) said: “Both are virtuous and good.” I said that I know both are good but I would like to know which one is better?

*He (as) said: “Dua is better. Have you not heard Allah saying: Call upon me, I will answer you. Those who are too proud for my worship will enter hell abased.” **By Allah, Dua is a worship. By Allah***

Dua is the most profound worship.”

***By Allah, Dua is a worship. By Allah Dua is the most profound
worship.”***

Imam Sadiq (as) , Uddat ud Dae, Hadith 61

ADVISE OF IMAM ALI (AS) ON INVOKING ONLY ALLAH WITHOUT A MEDIATOR:

In Nahjul Balagha, Letter 31 “Advice to one of his sons after returning from the Battle of Siffin in one place Imam Ali (as) says

وَأَلَجِيْ نَفْسَكَ فِي أُمُورِكَ كُلِّهَا إِلَى إِلَهِكَ، فَإِنَّكَ تُلْجِئُهَا إِلَى كَهْفِ حَرِيْنٍ، وَمَانِعِ عَزِيْزٍ. وَأَخْلِصْ فِي الْمَسْأَلَةِ
لِرَبِّكَ، فَإِنَّ بِيَدِهِ الْعَطَاءَ وَالْحَرْمَانَ

*In all affairs resign yourself to Allah, because you will thus be resigning yourself to a secure shelter and a strong protector. **You should ask only from your Lord** because in His hand is all the giving and depriving.*

In another place in the same letter Imam Ali (as) says

وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قَدْ أَدِنَ لَكَ فِي الدُّعَاءِ، وَتَكْفَلَ لَكَ بِالْأَجَابَةِ، وَأَمَرَكَ أَنْ تَسْأَلَهُ
لِيُعْطِيَكَ، وَتَسْتَرْحِمَهُ لِيَرْحَمَكَ، وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ مَنْ يَحْجُبُكَ عَنْهُ، وَلَمْ يُلْجِئَكَ إِلَى مَنْ يَشْفَعُ لَكَ إِلَيْهِ، وَلَمْ
يَمْنَعَكَ إِنْ أَسَأْتَ مِنَ التَّوْبَةِ

*Know that He Who owns the treasuries of the heavens and of the earth has permitted you to pray to Him and has promised you acceptance of the prayer. He has commanded you to beg from Him in order that He may give you and to seek His mercy in order that He may have mercy on you. **He has not placed any thing between you and Him that may veil Him from you. He has not required you to get a mediator for you to Him,** and if you err, He has not prevented you from repentance.*

He has not placed any thing between you and Him that may veil Him from you. He has not required you to get a mediator for you to Him.

Imam Ali (as) in Nahjul Balaagah, Letter 31

Further he (as) says:

وَفَتَحَ لَكَ بَابَ الْمَتَابِ، وَبَابَ الْأَسْتِعْتَابِ؛ فَإِذَا نَادَيْتَهُ سَمِعَ نِدَاءَكَ، وَإِذَا نَاجَيْتَهُ عَلِمَ نَجْوَاكَ، فَأَفْضَيْتَ إِلَيْهِ بِحَاجَتِكَ، وَأَبْتَثْتَهُ ذَاتَ نَفْسِكَ، وَشَكَوْتَ إِلَيْهِ هُمُومَكَ، وَاسْتَكْشَفْتَهُ كُرُوبَكَ، وَاسْتَعْنَيْتَهُ عَلَى أُمُورِكَ، وَسَأَلْتَهُ مِنْ خَزَائِنِ رَحْمَتِهِ مَا لَا يَقْدِرُ عَلَى إِعْطَائِهِ غَيْرُهُ، مِنْ زِيَادَةِ الْأَعْمَارِ، وَصِحَّةِ الْأَبْدَانِ، وَسَعَةِ الْأَرْزَاقِ. ثُمَّ جَعَلَ فِي يَدَيْكَ مَفَاتِيحَ خَزَائِنِهِ بِمَا أَدْنَى لَكَ فِيهِ مِنْ مَسْأَلَتِهِ.

He has opened for you the door of repentance. Therefore, whenever you call Him He hears your call, and whenever you whisper to Him He knows the whisper. You place before Him your needs, unveil yourself before Him, complain to Him of your worries, beseech Him to remove your troubles, seek His help in your affairs and ask from the treasuries of His mercy that which no one else has power to give, namely length of life, health of body and increase in sustenance. Then He has placed the keys of His treasuries in your hands in the sense that He has shown you the way to ask Him.

DUA OF IMAM ALI IBN HUSSAIN ZAINUL ABIDEEN (AS):

If we read the supplications of Imam Zainul Abideen (as) in Sahifa Sajjadiya, we do not find any supplication addressed to anyone other than Allah (swt). Rather we find supplications that prohibit such an act.

In Dua no. 13 (His Supplication in Seeking Needs from Allah) of Sahifa sajjadiya the Imam (as) says:

فَمَنْ حَاوَلَ سَدَّ خَلَّتِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ

So he who strives to remedy his lack through what is with Thee

وَرَامَ صَرْفَ الْفَقْرِ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ بِكَ فَقَدْ طَلَبَ حَاجَتَهُ

and wishes to turn poverty away from himself through Thee has sought his need

فِي مَظَانِّهَا وَأَتَى طَلِبَتَهُ مِنْ وَجْهِهَا

in the most likely place and come to his request from the right quarter.

وَمَنْ تَوَجَّهَ بِحَاجَتِهِ إِلَى أَحَدٍ مِنْ خَلْقِكَ أَوْ جَعَلَهُ سَبَبَ نُجْحِهَا

But he who turns in his need toward one of Thy creatures or assigns the cause of its being granted

دُونِكَ فَقَدْ تَعَرَّضَ لِلْحِرْمَانِ

to other than Thee, has exposed himself to deprivation

(Does this not clearly include those who assign the cause of blessing to other than Allah (swt) when they say “Bibi gave us a house, Mola Abbas gave us a son etc”?)

But he who turns in his need toward one of Thy creatures or assigns the cause of its being granted to other than Thee, has exposed himself to deprivation.

Imam Ali ibn Hussain (Sahifa Sajjadiya) – Dua no. 13

وَأَسْتَحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَوْتَ الْإِحْسَانِ

and deserves to miss Thy beneficence.

اللَّهُمَّ وَلِيَّ إِلَيْكَ حَاجَةٌ قَدْ قَصَرَ عَنْهَا جُهْدِي

O God, I have a need of Thee: my exertion has fallen short of it

وَتَقَطَّعَتْ دُونَهَا حِيَلِي

and my stratagems have been cut back before reaching it.

وَسَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي رَفَعَهَا إِلَى مَنْ يَرْفَعُ حَوَائِجَهُ إِلَيْكَ

My soul induced me to present it to him who presents his needs to Thee

وَلَا يَسْتَغْنِي فِي طَلِبَاتِهِ عَنْكَ

and can do nothing without Thee in his requests,

(Don't we always say that we are not supplicating to Ahlulbayt (as), we are only presenting our needs to them so that they present our needs to Allah (swt))

وَهِيَ زَلَّةٌ مِنْ زَلَلِ الْخَاطِئِينَ

but this is one the slips of the offenders,

وَعَثْرَةٌ مِنْ عَثَرَاتِ الْمُذْنِبِينَ

one of the stumbles of the sinners!

ثُمَّ انْتَبَهْتُ بِتَذْكَيرِكَ لِي مِنْ غَفْلَتِي

Then through Thy reminding me, I was aroused from my heedlessness,

وَنَهَضْتُ بِتَوْفِيقِكَ مِنْ زَلَّتِي

through Thy giving success, I stood up from my slip,

وَرَجَعْتُ وَنَكَصْتُ بِتَسْدِيدِكَ عَنْ عَثْرَتِي

and through Thy pointing the way, I returned and withdrew from my stumble.

وَقُلْتُ: سُبْحَانَ رَبِّي كَيْفَ يَسْأَلُ مُحْتَاجٌ مُحْتَاجاً

I said: Glory be to my Lord! How can the needy ask from the needy?

وَأَنَا يَرْغَبُ مُعْدِمٌ إِلَى مُعْدِمٍ؟

How can the destitute beseech the destitute?

(Who will reject the fact that the Prophet (saww) and Ahlulbayt (as) despite their lofty status are “destitute” in front of Allah (swt)? So according to this Dua, as destitute cannot beseech another destitute)

فَقَصَدْتُكَ يَا إِلَهِي بِالرَّغْبَةِ

So I went straight to Thee, my God, in beseeching.

Another Dua: Dua Abu Hamza Thumali of Imam Zainul Abideen (as):

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَنَادِيهِ كُلَّمَا شِئْتُ لِحَاجَتِي

All Praise is for Allah whom I call upon with my needs whenever I wish

وَأَخْلُو بِهِ حَيْثُ شِئْتُ لِسِرِّي بِغَيْرِ شَفِيعٍ

and I entrust Him with my secrets without an intercessor

فَيَقْضِي لِي حَاجَتِي

and He grants me my wishes

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي لَا أَدْعُو غَيْرَهُ

All Praise is for Allah whom I do not plead to anyone but Him

وَلَوْ دَعَوْتُ غَيْرَهُ لَمْ يَسْتَجِبْ لِي دُعَائِي

for if I pleaded to others, they would not grant me

further in the same dua he (as) says....

يَا مَفْرَعِي عِنْدَ كُرْبَتِي

O the shelter I seek when I am in misfortune

وَيَا غَوْثِي عِنْدَ شِدَّتِي

O my Aid whenever hardships hit me

الِيكَ فَرَعْتُ

To You have I resorted

وَبِكَ اسْتَعْتَمْتُ وَلِذَلِكَ

With You have I sought refuge and haven

لَا أَلُوذُ بِسِوَاكَ

To none save You shall I ever resort

وَلَا أَطْلُبُ الْفَرَجَ إِلَّا مِنْكَ

From none save You shall I ever seek for relief

All Praise is for Allah whom I call upon with my needs whenever I wish and I entrust Him with my secrets without an intercessor and He grants me my wishes.

All Praise is for Allah whom I do not plead to anyone but Him, for if I pleaded to others, they would not grant me.

Imam Ali ibn Hussain (Sahifa Sajjadiya) – Dua Abu Hamza Thumali

In yet another Dua, **Dua Makarimul Akhlaaq:**

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي أَصُولُ بَكَ عِنْدَ الضَّرُورَةِ، وَ أَسْأَلُكَ عِنْدَ الْحَاجَةِ، وَ أَتَضَرَّعُ إِلَيْكَ عِنْدَ الْمُسْكَنَةِ، وَ لَا تَفْتِنِّي بِالِاسْتِعَانَةِ بِغَيْرِكَ إِذَا اضْطُرُّرْتُ، وَ لَا بِالْخُضُوعِ لِسُؤَالِ غَيْرِكَ إِذَا افْتَقَرْتُ، وَ لَا بِالتَّضَرُّعِ إِلَى مَنْ دُونِكَ إِذَا رَهَبْتُ، فَاسْتَحِقَّ بِذَلِكَ خِذْلَانِكَ وَ مَنَعَكَ وَ إِعْرَاضَكَ، يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

“...Oh Allah! Make me leap to thee in times of distress; ask from thee in times of need, and plea to thee in times of misery. Tempt me not to seek help from other than you when I am distressed, or to humble myself in asking from someone else when I am poor, or to plea with someone less than thee when in state of fear – for then (if I do that) I would deserve Thy abandonment, Thy withholding, and Thy turning away, O Most Merciful of the merciful! ...”

Tempt me not to seek help from other than you when I am distressed, or to humble myself in asking from someone else when I am poor, or to plea with someone less than thee when in state of fear

Imam Ali ibn Hussain (Sahifa Sajjadiya) – Dua Makarimul Akhlaq

Some Questions & Answers

QUESTION 1: WE DON'T CONSIDER THE IMAMS (AS) TO BE INDEPENDENT; WE CONSIDER THEM TO BE DEPENDENT ON ALLAH (SWT), SO HOW IS IT SHIRK TO SUPPLICATE TO THE IMAMS (AS)?

Answer: This argument of dependent and independent is one of the oft-used arguments of those who call upon other than Allah (swt), but sadly as convincing as it may sound on the surface, this argument does not hold water when critically analyzed.

Firstly, if we really consider the Imams (as) to be totally dependent on Allah (swt), i.e the Imam (as) can only come and help us, or give us sustenance, if Allah (swt) allows them, and if Allah (swt) does not allow them, then they cannot help us, then it's useless to call upon the Imams (as) because Allah (swt) is the ultimate decision maker. It would be like praying to the angel of death not to take our soul, which is very illogical, because the angel of death does not have decision

making power; he is totally dependent on Allah (swt). Therefore on the first level it's useless to call upon the Imams (as) even if we consider them to be totally dependent on Allah (swt) in helping us (which we have no proof for).

It is such a simple logic that we should try to convince the decision maker rather than the (one we consider to be the) means. In the worldly matters we would never make such an illogical mistake since then we would incur material losses.

It's impossible for people to call upon anyone other than Allah (swt), unless they believe that the entity they are calling upon has some independent power to make decision and help us, and it reminds us of what the Quran says *"And the Day We will gather them all together; then We will say to those who associated others with Allah, "Where are your 'partners' that you used to claim [with Him]?" Then there will be no [excuse upon] examination except they will say, "By Allah, our Lord, we were not those who associated." Look! How they lie against themselves! But the (lie) which they invented will disappear from them."* (6:21-24)

Secondly, considering them dependent on Allah (swt) (especially when it's not true) doesn't reduce it from a point-of-view of Shirk, as we have already discussed under 5:116. Christians call upon Mary considering her to be totally dependent on Allah (swt), yet in the eyes of Allah (swt) it is shirk.

Similarly, Christians do not believe that Jesus attained the station of being God's son independently, rather God took him as a son, yet the Quran calls this kufr and shirk.

Interestingly, even the polytheists of Mecca did not consider their idols to be independent rather they considered them to be their intercessors with Allah (swt) as can be seen in Surah Yunus verse 18, *"And they worship other than Allah that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, "These are our intercessors with Allah " Say, "Do you inform Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth?" Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him."*

Thirdly, we have no authentic proof that Allah (swt) has given the Imams (as) the duty to help us, or give sustenance etc. And we cannot accept an element of faith or worship without there being

incontrovertible evidence of its permissibility from Allah, as he has stated so Himself in many of the verses we have covered in Part 1 of this article.

QUESTION 2: TAWASSUL IS PROVEN FROM QURAN, SINCE IN THE QURAN WE SEE, PROPHET YAQUB'S SONS ASKED HIM TO ASK ALLAH FOR FORGIVENESS, ALSO ALLAH SAYS IN THE QURAN TO THE MUNAFIQEEN, IF YOU HAD ASKED THE PROPHET FOR FORGIVENESS WE WOULD HAVE FORGIVEN YOU....DOESN'T THIS PROVE THAT WE ARE ALLOWED TO SUPPLICATE TO THE PROPHETS? OR ATLEAST CALL UPON THEM TO SUPPLICATE TO ALLAH ON OUR BEHALF?

Answer: There is no problem in asking a person to supplicate to Allah (swt) for our forgiveness, or to pray for us, this is a very good act. The problem is, we can ask a person who is in the physical realm, within the natural cause and effects, not someone who is in "ghayb" for us.

If the Prophet (saww) and Imams (as) are alive in front of us then we can ask them to pray for us, it's very simple, but now that they are not present with us, we need absolute evidence that Allah has allowed us to do that. Evidence that is non-existent.

QUESTION 3: IN THE QURAN IN 2:154 AND 3:169 ALLAH (SWT) SAYS THAT THOSE WHO ARE MARTYRED IN THE WAY OF ALLAH (SWT) ARE NOT DEAD RATHER THEY ARE ALIVE, AND WE KNOW THAT IT IS NOT SHIRK TO ASK FOR HELP FROM THOSE WHO ARE ALIVE. KEEPING THAT IN MIND, HOW IS IT SHIRK TO ASK FOR HELP FROM THE IMAMS (AS)?

Answer: We will answer this question in 3 parts.

Part 1: Let's for some time assume that the verse proves that the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) are alive like anyone else is alive in this world. But does that make them "All Hearing"? Does being alive make a person "All Hearing"? No it doesn't, we are all alive, but we can't hear thousands of people speaking at the same time, from thousands of kilometers (which is what we assume about the Imams (as) while calling upon them).

Now someone might say that how can we compare the Imams (as) with normal people? This question is an emotional one; do we have any proof that the Imams (as) were given supernatural

power of being “All Hearing” or being present everywhere? No, there is no such authentic proof. And it is also apparent from their lives, we hear every year in Musaib in majalis, when Muslim ibn Aqeel was going to be killed, he was desperate to send the news to Imam Husain (as) that people have turned their backs, he was so desperate that he even asked Umar ibn Sa’ad to convey his message to Imam Husain (as). Surely Muslim ibn Aqeel had more ma’arefat of Imam (as) than us, he should have just called out “My Dear Master Imam Husain (as), people have turned their backs on you, don’t come towards Kufa”, as simple as that, rather than trying to take help from the enemy Umar ibn Sa’ad? But did that happen? No it didn’t.

So the summary of Part 1 is that even if we assume that they are alive like us, it still wouldn’t be logical to call upon them, as being alive is not = all hearing.

Part 2: In the first point we assumed that the Prophet (saww) and Imams (as) are alive like us, but is that what the verse of the Quran means?

Refer to any popular Tafseer of the Quran, for example Tafseer al Mizan of Allama Tabatabai, or Tafseer Namuna of Ayatullah Makarem Shirazi, or the Tafseer of aAytullah Kamal Faghih Imani etc, all of them say that this verse is talking about Barzakh, which means that the “Shaheed being alive” does not mean that they are alive like us in this physical realm within the natural cause and effect.

Rather, they are alive in a realm that is ghayb (unseen) to us. Just like the Angels and Jinn are also in a realm that is ghayb (unseen) to us. We are not allowed to call upon any of them. We call only upon God from the realm of the unseen. A person typically calls out to an entity from behind the curtain of Ghayb when they are not confident of succeeding in a task in this world, so they seek support from a superior power above this world, that can effect change from outside into this world. That for us is Allah (swt). To call upon any other from behind the curtain of ghayb, is to do dua to them, & give a partner to Allah (swt).

Part 3: Even logically it would be incorrect to believe that they are alive like normal people, because if they were alive like normal people, then all the laws of normal people should apply to them, which means:

- their wives should not become widow, and should not be allowed to marry anyone (but on the contrary, Imams (as)’s wives became widow and married others)
- their wealth should not be distributed among their children and wives etc like its distributed for dead people (on the contrary it was indeed distributed, and Imams (as) wrote their will (wasiyat) as to how things are to be handled after them)
- this implies more than one Imams at the same time, as every Imam became Imam only after the death of the previous Imam, which shows that their previous Imams had passed on from the physical realm.

So how can we say that only some laws of alive people apply to them (like asking them to supplicate) but other laws don’t apply (like the ones stated above) ?

If this was the case, we should have a special hadith which tells us that they are alive after death, but since their life is a bit different, therefore the above laws will not apply to them, but some laws (like asking them to supplicate) will still apply. Unfortunately there is no such hadith.

In the Quran, Allah(swt) warns the people not to turn back after the Prophet passes away, 3:144: *“Muhammad is not but a messenger. [Other] messengers have passed on before him. So if he was to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels [to unbelief]? And he who turns back on his heels will never harm Allah at all; but Allah will reward the grateful.”*

All this clearly shows that Prophet (saww) and Imams (as) really passed away, and are not in the normal cause and effect of this physical world.

Summary of Answer 3:

1. Even if Imams (as) are alive, that doesn’t mean they are “All Hearing”.
2. The verse of Quran does not mean that Imams (as) are alive like us.
3. It’s logically incorrect to consider them alive like us, since the laws of Shariat which apply to people who are alive do not apply to them.
4. Hence this argument in no way justifies calling upon the Imams (as).

QUESTION 4: WE DON’T CALL UPON OTHER THAN ALLAH (SWT), WE ONLY BELIEVE IN “WASILA”, WHICH IS NOT SHIRK, MOREOVER THE

QURAN IN 5:35 ORDERS US TO SEEK “WASILA”. THEREFORE THERE IS NOTHING WRONG IN WHAT WE DO.

Answer: It is an easy way out to term everything we do as “Wasila” without trying to know what “wasila” means in the Quran and narrations of Ahlulbayt (as). Taking intermediaries with Allah (swt) is not “wasila” according to the Quran.

When Quran says “seek wasila to Him”, we assume that it means we should call upon other than Him (swt) to reach Him (swt), this is because that is what we have been told over the years. The reality is, when the Quran says “wasila” it doesn’t refer to human intermediaries, rather Imam Ali (as) tells us in Nahjul Balagha what wasila is, in Khutbatul wasila.

Imam Ali (as) says:

“Verily, the best means (wasila) by which the seekers of nearness to Allah, the Glorified, the Exalted, seek nearness, is the belief (Al-Imaan) in Him and His Prophet, struggling in His cause, for it is the high pinnacle of Islam, and (to believe in) the Kalimatul Ikhlaas (the expression of Divine Purification) for it represents the Fitra (Sound innate disposition/nature with which human beings are created), and the establishment of prayer for it is (the basis of) community, the payment of Zakat for it is a compulsory obligation, fasting for the month of Ramadhan for it is a shield against the punishment of God, the performance of Hajj of the House of Allah and its Umra for these two acts repel poverty and wash away sins; regard for kinship (Silatu Rahim) for it increases wealth and length of life, giving alms secretly for it protects against bad deaths, and extending benefits (to people) for it saves one from disgrace.....” (Nahjul Balagha, Sermon no. 110 (or 109 in some versions))

As we can see, Imam Ali (as) talks about the best Waseelah that can bring us close to Allah (swt), and interestingly enough, there is no mention of the Ahlul Bayt (as) in the Khutbah, showing us that when Allah (swt) commands us to seek means of nearness to Him, He is asking us to focus on those actions which bring us close to Him – which the Imam (as) then goes on to list. Allah (swt) is not asking us to seek intercessors as is implied by the contention. The functions of Imams is

guidance i.e. “mentioning wasail to us”.. not as intermediaries (that is: waseelah of hidaayah, not waseelah of mediation).

Also as we have already explained, if we call upon the Imams (as) (even though considering it to be wasila) then it would mean that we consider them to be “All hearing” which is an attribute of Allah (swt).

QUESTION 5: HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT ASKING THE IMAMS (AS) TO PRAY FOR US IS WRONG, WHEN OUR IMAMS (AS) HAVE TAUGHT US DUA TAWASSUL WHICH IS VERY POPULAR, AND IN THIS DUA WE CALL UPON THE IMAMS (AS) TO PRAY FOR US AND TO INTERCEDE FOR US ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT?

Answer: Dua Tawassul cannot be used as a proof, since it is not proven to be from the Imam (as). Also in this Dua we call upon the Imams (as), which means that we consider the Imams (as) to be “All Hearing” which is an exclusive sifat of Allah (swt).

Now let’s briefly explain why this Dua is not even authentic:

This Dua does not have a “Sanad” (chain of narrators). This Dua was for the first time mentioned in Bihar al Anwar of Allama Majlisi, (around 700 years after the Ghayba). When mentioning this Dua, Allama Majlisi writes:

“I say: I found in an old manuscript of the books by some of our companions, may Allah be pleased with them, the following wording, “this du`a is narrated by Muhammad b. Babawayh, may Allah have mercy on him, from the Imams, and he said, “I never performed Tawassul for any matter except that I found the effect of the response quickly.” (al-Majlisi, Bihaar Al-Anwaar, vol. 99, ch. 10, pg. 247)

Issues raised:

1.) al-Majlisi (d. 1111 AH) is reporting it on the authority of al-Saduq (d. 381 AH), but there is an approximately 700 year gap between the two scholars. (The scholars of Rijaal stipulate that in order for you to credibly narrate a Riwaayah from someone, you should hear it directly from the

person concerned). Majlisi has not provided a Tareeq (chain of people) connecting him to Sheikh Sadooq for this particular narration.

2.) It has also been claimed that no one else recorded this du`a until al-Majlisi (d. 1111 AH), not al-Tusi in his Misbaah, not Ibn Tawus in his many du`a books, not even al-Kafami in his du`a books. How did this dua remain hidden for so many centuries from the sight of great Shia scholars and Muhadditheen, only to resurface in the time of al-Majlisi?

As you may know, many Ghaali practices (such as the third Shahaadah in Adhan) were not endorsed/approved by Shia scholars for centuries, until the Safavid period started, thereafter many formerly Ghaali beliefs, practices and Riwaayaat were welcomed into mainstream Shiaism. Dua Tawassul definitely seems to be one of them.

3.) Even if we were to assume that this manuscript was indeed al-Saduq's, and we presume it hadn't been tempered with over a period of 700 years, we do not have a chain for Dua-e-Tawassul connecting Sheikh Sadooq to any Imam, which is why it is not even known for certain which Imam taught Dua-e-Tawassul.

No serious scholar of Riyaal worth his salt would entertain a Riwaayah that has such serious problems and flaws in its transmission. And we can especially not rely on chain-less Riwaayaat in such controversial and risky matters, as that would be very imprudent and unwise.

We can also see the opinion of a present-day scholar based in Qum, Ayatollah Shaykh Muḥammad Hādī Yusufī Gharawī a Hawza professor, historian, and researcher. In an interview discussing his “Minhāj al-Hajjāyah fi al-Ada'iyah al-Ziyārāt ‘an Ahl al-Bayt al-Hudāh” – a filtered version of the famous Mafātīh al-Jinān by Shaykh ‘Abbas Qummi, he says:

A manmade so-called dua omitted from my book is “Tawassul,” unfortunately oft-labeled “Dua Tawassul” when, in fact, it is not a supplication whatsoever. It does not even bear the scent of the infallibles (a) and it is the most clear-cut example of a fabrication. It is commonly stated that Tawassul is the creation of Nasir al-Deen al-Tusi, however, this is a weak opinion. It should not be assumed that this originates from the infallibles (a). Even calling it a “dua” is a mistake, providing ammunition for Salafis to criticize Shi’ism. Dua

means beseeching the Lord. Dua means giving one's attention solely to the Creator. However, this manmade dua is an intercession to the infallibles (a).

QUESTION 6: SUPPLICATING TO THE IMAMS (AS) CANNOT BE WRONG BECAUSE WE HAVE SEEN MANY PEOPLE WHO SUPPLICATE TO THE IMAMS (AS) AND THEIR WISHES ARE FULFILLED. IF SUPPLICATING TO THEM IS WRONG THEN HOW COME THEIR WISHES ARE FULFILLED?

Answer: If this argument was correct then supplicating to Jesus, Ram, Hanuman, Ganesh, Tree, Rat, Snake etc would also be correct, since those who supplicate to all the above have their wishes fulfilled too. Therefore mere fulfillment of wishes does not prove the correctness of the way of supplication.

This can be demonstrated from a simple example, a person who works to earn money also gets money, and a person who steals also gets money, but the first way is correct and the second one is not.

Allah (swt) gives sustenance to everyone irrespective of their way of supplicating, but He (swt) has told us the correct and incorrect ways in the Quran, therefore we will be judged on that basis.

QUESTION 7: IF CALLING UPON ANYONE OTHER THAN ALLAH (SWT) IS NOT ALLOWED THEN WHAT IS “NAD E ALI”?

Answer: Nade Ali is not mentioned in even a single hadith, rather it is only mentioned as a poem in later books. The earliest source for it is Shaikh al Kaf'ami (d. 905 AH), who mentioned it in his book “Misbah” claiming that he saw a handwritten note from Shahid al Awwal saying that this poem (i.e. nade ali) should be recited for difficulties. The latter scholars who quoted it from Kaf'ami (such as Allamah Majlisi, Muhadith Noori and Ayatullah Ali Namazi Shahroodi) also made it clear that it is only a poem, not a hadith.

Akhbari scholars, like Usooli scholars, are not a homogenous group, and thus had different views. The strict akhbaris like Shaikh Hurr al Amili believed in doing tawassul only as per what's mentioned in ahadith from reliable books like kutub al arba (hence no Nade Ali, Dua Tawassul etc for him). There is no concrete evidence to suggest that Nade Aliyyan or Dua Tawassul even existed

in the times of classical scholars like Shaikh Kulaini, Saduq, Tusi, and Mufid etc, and so there is no way we can attribute them to the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as).

QUESTION 8: ZIYARAT JAAMEA KABIRA IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR ZIYARAAT, AND IT DESCRIBES THE HIGH STATUS OF THE IMAMS (AS), AFTER READING THIS ZIYARAT THERE SEEMS NOTHING WRONG IN ASKING THE IMAMS (AS) FOR HELP, SINCE THIS ZIYARAT SAYS THAT EVERYTHING THAT WE RECEIVE IS THROUGH THEM AND EVERY SUPPLICATION GOES THROUGH THEM ETC.

Answer: Ziyarat Jaamea is not proven to be from the Imams (as), since its chain of narrators is not “Sahih”. Many lines in this ziyarat are contradictory to the Quran too (which we shall explain in a separate article, Insha Alla).

Here is the Sanad as we find it in Al-Uyoon Akhbar ar Ridha:

وقد رواها شيخ المحدثين ابن بابويه الصدوق رحمه الله في كتابه (عيون أخبار الرضا عليه السلام) قائلاً:

حدثنا علي بن أحمد بن محمد بن عمران الدقاق رضي الله عنه، ومحمد بن أحمد السناني، وعلي بن عبد الله الوراق، والحسين بن إبراهيم بن أحمد بن هشام المكتب، قالوا: حدثنا محمد بن أبي عبد الله الكوفي، وأبو الحسين الأسدي قالوا: حدثنا محمد بن إسماعيل المكي البرمكي قال: حدثنا موسى بن عمران النخعي قال: قلت لعلي بن محمد بن علي بن موسى بن جعفر بن محمد بن علي بن (1)... الحسين بن علي بن أبي طالب - عليهم السلام - علمني يا ابن رسول الله

Here is the sanad as we find in al-Faqeeh:

أما في كتاب (من لا يحضره الفقيه) فقد قال:

روى محمد بن إسماعيل البرمكي، قال: حدثنا موسى بن عبد الله النخعي، قال قلت لعلي بن محمد بن علي بن موسى بن جعفر بن محمد بن علي بن الحسين بن علي بن أبي طالب عليهم السلام: علمني يا ابن رسول الله قولاً أقوله بليغاً كاملاً إذا زرت واحداً (منكم)... (2)

عيون أخبار الرضا 1 / 305 (1)

من لا يحضره الفقيه 2 / 609 (2)

Both chains narrators are invalid.

The first one mentions *Musa bin Imraan al-Nakha'ee* as the primary narrator, while the other one gives his name as *Musa bin Abdillah al-Nakha'ee*, however both are **Majhool (Unknown)**.

Some scholars have even claimed there is only one Nakha'ee mentioned in the books of Rijal, and he is the person to whom Imam Ridha (as) said (After hearing him narrate a false narration): “Get out, May Allah Send His La’nah on you, and on the one who narrated this Hadith to you.”

See for yourself:

«!وليس لدينا في كتب رجال الحديث إلا نخعيُّ واحدٌ قال عنه الرضا عليه السلام: «أخرج عني لعنك الله ولعن من حدّثك

Allamah Mamqaani (One of the well known grand scholars of Rijal) has admitted that both *Musa bin Abdillah* and *Musa bin Imraan* are Majhool, however, it is also mentioned and acknowledged by him that *Musa bin Abdillah* was reported to be a drinker of Nabeedh:

قال الرجالي الكبير المامقاني (قد).

أ - “موسى بن عبدالله بن عبد الملك بن هشام: عده الشيخ (ره) في رجاله من أصحاب الجواد (ع)، وظاهره كونه إماميا إلا أن حاله مجهول، وقد مر في ترجمة إبراهيم بن العباس الصولي نقل الصدوق (ره) كون موسى بن عبد الملك مواليا لم يشرب النبيذ قط إلى أن ولي المتوكل فشربه هو وإبراهيم، وكانا يجمعان الكراعات ويشربان بين أيديهما، وفي كل يوم ثلاثاء ليشيع الخبر بشربهما له، ويمكن أن يكون هذا غير ذلك لعدم شاهد على كونه هو موسى بن عبدالله النخعي

روى في التهذيب في باب الزيارة الجامعة لسائر المشاهد عن محمد بن إسماعيل البرمكي، عنه، عن علي الهادي (ع)، وفي روايته لها دلالة واضحة على كونه إماميا صحيح الاعتقاد، بل في تلقين مولانا الهادي مثل هذه الزيارة المفصلة المتضمنة لبيان مراتب الأئمة (ع) شهادة على كون الرجل من الحسان مقبول الرواية، وإهمالهم ذكره في كتب الرجال غير قاذح فيه، والعلم عند الله تعالى.” ((تنقيح المقال ج3 ص257

ب - “موسى بن عمران النخعي: قد روى الصدوق في باب الرهن من الفقيه عن محمد بن أبي عبد الله الكوفي، عنه، عن عمه الحسين بن يزيد، وتكرر في أسانيد كتاب العلل، وفي بعضها بعنوان موسى بن عمران بن يزيد النخعي النوفلي، وحاله مجهول. ((تنقيح المقال ج3 ص258

http://al-meshkah.com/maaref_detail.php?id=4046

Ayatullah Sayyid Abul Qasim al-Khui, one of the greatest scholars of Rijaal in the twentieth century, declared Musa bin Imraan al-Nakha'ee, the principal narrator of this Ziyaarah, as per the Sanad given in al-Uyoon, to be dhaeef:

اعتراف السيد الخوئي بضعف موسى بن عمران النخعي:

وفي الباب المزبور من الوسائل عن معاني الأخبار [291 / 1] [باسناده عن علي بن غراب عن جعفر بن محمد عن أبيه عن جدّه قال « قال رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) : حَفَّوا الشوارب واعفوا اللحى ، ولا تشبهوا بالمجوس » وهي ضعيفة . بالحسين بن إبراهيم ، وموسى ابن عمران النخعي ، والحسين بن يزيد ، وعلي بن غراب

<http://www.al-khoei.us/books/index.php?id=4948>

المصدر: الكتاب : مصباح الفقه في المعاملات - المكاسب المحرمة || القسم: الفقه || القراء: 6010 صفحة ٤٠١
حرمة حلق اللحية

What's more, Sayyid Khui also testified that the Tareeq (path/chain) from Sheikh Sadooq to Mohammad bin Ismaaeel is **not Saheeh** due to the fact that the following narrators are all **Majhool**:

Ali bin Ahmad bin Musa, Mohammad bin Ahmad al-Sinaani, Al-Husayn bin Ibraheem bin Ahmad, and Mohammad bin Abi Abdillah al-Koofi.

See the statement of Sayyid Khui for yourself:

وطريق الصدوق إليه: علي بن أحمد بن موسى، ومحمد بن أحمد السناني، والحسين بن إبراهيم بن أحمد بن هشام الكاتب، رضي الله عنهم، عن محمد بن أبي عبد الله الكوفي، عن محمد بن إسماعيل البرمكي، والطريق غير صحيح لأن مشايخ الصدوق المذكورين لم يرد فيهم توثيق

Hence, there is no way the Sanad of this Ziyaarah can be authenticated by anyone who is a proper scholar of Ilme Rijaal.

QUESTION 9: "CALLING UPON" IN THE QURAN IS USED FOR WORSHIP NOT FOR SUPPLICATION, THEREFORE WHENEVER IT SAYS DO NOT CALL

UPON OTHER THAN ALLAH (SWT), IT MEANS DO NOT WORSHIP OTHER THAN ALLAH (SWT).

Answer: There is no proof for this, rather in Arabic “دعا” is for calling someone not for worshipping someone, anyone who claims otherwise is either ignorant of the Arabic language, or is intentionally twisting the verses of Quran.

However, if this “دعا” / “calling someone” is the kind that seeks help from an entity beyond the curtain of ghayb (going beyond the natural world that God has placed us in, and seeking help from across its boundaries) then this calling simultaneously becomes a worship (due to seeking help from beyond the hudood/boundaries/limits that God has established for us). When the Musrikeen of Makkah were worshipping their intercessor-idols, did they believe that the stones and rocks were powerful? Or did they believe that the spirits represented by them were powerful intercessors? It was the latter, just as is the case with Hindus today. So if someone is seeking out the holy spirit represented by the rock (who exists in a world outside our realm — which is what is done) then indeed such calling upon is simultaneously a worship. And yes, God has forbidden it. Let us ask ourselves, when we call out to the Prophet (saww) or Imams (as), are we seeking holy spirits from a realm beyond the hudood/boundaries that God has confined us to? Well, of course (i.e. Barzakh). Then such calling is a forbidden worship.

Moreover, prohibition of worshipping anyone other than Allah (swt) has been mentioned in the Quran with the word (‘ibadat) in many other verses. When Allah (swt) has already prohibited that to us in clear Arabic (by suing the actual word for worship), then why would he now prohibit us the same thing with a word that does not even stand for worship? Clearly this is wrong, the verses which talk about “calling upon” therefore are not about “worship” primarily, rather they are about supplicating and calling upon for help (which itself is a kind of worship in the eyes of Allah (swt)).

For example:

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ (2:83)

إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي (2:133)

إِنَّ الْحُكْمَ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ أَمَرَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ (12:40)

“La Ta'budoona min doonillah” or “la ta'budoona illallah” has been mentioned in tens of places in the Quran to prohibit worshiping anyone other than Allah (swt), therefore there is no need and no sense in saying that verse that prohibit “calling upon” are about worship.

QUESTION 10: THE VERSES IN QURAN WHICH PROHIBIT “CALLING UPON” ANYONE OTHER THAN ALLAH (SWT) ONLY REFER TO THE IDOLS OF THE MUSHRIKEEN OF MECCA, THEY DON'T PROHIBIT US FROM CALLING UPON THE IMAMS (AS).

Answer: We have already refuted this claim while discussing the verses of Quran that prohibit supplicating to anyone other than Allah (swt). Our main point was, IF Allah (swt) was only talking about the idols of the mushrikeen, then why doesn't Allah (swt) just say for example “The idols they call upon cannot help them.....” or “Do not call upon the Idols besides Allah....”, rather we see that in all these verses Allah (swt) has given general principle, for example:

Surah Isra, 17: 57: Those whom they call upon [themselves] seek means of access to their Lord, [striving as to] which of them would be nearest, and they hope for His mercy and fear His punishment. Indeed, the punishment of your Lord is ever feared.

Now, don't attributes like “seeking means of access to their Lord” and “hoping for mercy and fearing his punishment” apply to the Prophet (s) and Imams (as) as well? It means we cannot call upon them as well.

Surah Fatir, 35:40: Say, “Have you considered your ‘partners’ whom you call upon besides Allah? Show me what they have created from the earth, or have they partnership [with Him] in the heavens? Or have We given them a book so they are [standing] on evidence therefrom? [No], rather, the wrongdoers do not promise each other except delusion.”

Again Allah (swt) gives a general principle, that whoever you call upon besides Allah (swt), show me what have they created from the earth or do they have partnership with Allah (swt) in the heavens? Or has Allah (swt) ordered us in any book to call upon them?

We know that Prophet (s) and Imams (as) did not create the universe (anyone who disagrees with that should immediately leave this book and recite kalima again to make sure he is Muslim), we know that they don't have partnership with Allah (swt) and we know that Allah (swt) has not asked us to call upon them in his book. Therefore we cannot call upon them.

Surah Zumar, 39:38: *And should you ask them, Who created the heavens and the earth? They would most certainly say: Allah. Say: "Have you then considered that what you call upon besides Allah, would they, if Allah desire to afflict me with harm, be the removers of His harm, or (would they), if Allah desire to show me mercy, be the withholders of His mercy?" Say: "Allah is sufficient for me; on Him do the reliant rely."*

Subhanallah! This is such a general verse, Allah (swt) has given us a criterion, that if you want to call upon or supplicate to anyone other than Allah (swt), then make sure that they should have the ability to remove the harm if Allah (swt) desires for you, and if Allah (swt) wants to show mercy, they have the ability to withhold that mercy. We know that neither the Prophet (s) nor the Imams (as) have this capability, it means we cannot call upon them.

QUESTION 11: WE SAY "ASSALAMU ALAIKA YA AYYUHA NABIYYU" IN EVERY PRAYER, THIS MEAN THAT THE PROPHET (SAWW) LISTENS TO US. ALSO WE HAVE IN HISTORY THAT THE PROPHET (SAWW) ADDRESSED THE DEAD PEOPLE AFTER THE BATTLE OF BADR, AND IMAM ALI (AS) ADDRESSED THE DEAD PEOPLE AFTER BATTLE OF THEY WERE DESTROYED BY ALLAH'S PUNISHMENT (7:79) AND PROPHET SHUAYB (AS) ADDRESS DEAD PEOPLE OF HIS NATION (7:93). DOESN'T ALL THIS PROVE THAT DEAD CAN HEAR US?

Answer: Again on the surface these arguments sound convincing, but when looked at critically, what the questioner has concluded is not the only possible conclusion. Let's reply this question in parts:

Part 1: As for saying "Assalamu alaika ya ayyuha nabiiyyu", in Arabic it is fine, since Salaam is a prayer addressed to Allah no matter whom you send it on. That is to say a Salaam is actually a Dua addressed to Allah, no matter whom you direct it towards.

When I say Salaam alaykum to you, I am not the one sending peace on you. How can I give you peace when I don't own peace and have no control over it? Thus, even when I address a Salaam to you, it doesn't have anything to do with whether you can hear me or not, since it is only a prayer to Allah to send Salaam on you. In prayer we also say "assalamu alaina, wa 'ala 'ibadillahi al saliheen" (peace be upon us and on the saliheen servants of Allah), so do we conclude from this that all the people in the masjid can hear us or all the "saliheen" servants of Allah (swt) on earth can hear our salam? If not, then why do we expect that from the Prophet (saww) when we send salam on him?

Part 2: As for the Prophet (s) addressing people after Badr, that is not mentioned in our books, rather it is mostly narrated from Bukhari, even then since it is not "mutawatir" is not enough to build our Aqeeda on, since it is not "qat'y us sudoor" which is one of the conditions for acceptance of proof.

For the sake of argument even if we accept that such a thing happened, then it could be argued that it was figurative, it could also be argued that since the Prophets addressed them immediately after their death their souls may have been lingering around, because some Riwaayaat indicate that the soul hovers over the body until the body is buried, also the Prophet (saw) addressed them from a small distance, not thousands of miles away (as we do while supplicating to Imams), and the same argument can be made for the incident of Imam Ali (as) after Nahrawan and what is mentioned about Prophet Saleh (as) and Shuayb (as). So these incidents are not "qat'y ud dalala" which is also a condition for acceptance of proof.

Another strong argument to show that addressing someone does not imply that they hear you is that, for all we know, there is nothing to indicate that they were actually speaking to them. Perhaps they were only making a statement, and expressing their grief. After all, in Arabic literature and culture, it is very common to address even inanimate objects such as the sun, moon, earth, stars, etc. It doesn't necessarily mean that the sun, moon, etc. can hear us.

This is also proven from the Quran since when all the people went and Prophet Ibrahim (as) was alone with the idols, in Surah Saffat (37:90-92), he (as) addressed the idols, 37:91 "Then he turned to their gods and said, "Do you not eat?"" 37:92 "What is [wrong] with you that you do not speak?", so can we conclude from this that the Idols can hear us? Of course not, rather this is figurative.

Atleast in three places in the Quran, Allah (swt) says “You cannot make the dead/those in grave hear” 27: 80; 30: 52; and 35: 22.

QUESTION 12: SERMON 234 OF NAHJUL BALAGHA PROVES THAT THE PROPHET (SAWW) CAN HEAR US AFTER HIS DEATH AND THE KIND OF WASILA WE USE IN DUA TAWASSUL IS CORRECT. BECAUSE IN THIS SERMON IMAM ALI (AS) WHILE SHROUDING THE PROPHET (SAWW) SAYS “MAY MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER BE YOUR RANSOM, DO REMEMBER US (WELL) WHEN YOU ARE IN THE PRESENCE OF YOUR SUSTAINER, AND KEEP US IN YOUR MIND.”

Answer: Nahjul Balagha is not 100% authentic, and its sermons do not have “chain of narrators”, but we do find the chain of narrators for most of its sermons in other books. This sermon has been narrated in the book Amaali Sheikh Mufeed.

Following chain of narrators has been mentioned for this sermon:

Abu Nasr Muhammad b. al-Husain al-Muqri al-Baseer reported to me from Abdullah b. Yahya al-Qattan, who reported from Ahmad b. al-Husain b. Saeed al-Qarshi, who reported from his father, who reported from al-Husain b. Mukhariq, from Abdul Samad b. Ali, from his father, from Abdullah b. Abbas – may Allah be pleased with him, who said:

All the narrators marked with red are “Majhool”, i.e “unknown”, and Ahmad b. al-Husain b. Saeed al-Qurashi is weak, and has been declared “Ghali” (exaggerator) by many classical scholars and even Ayatullah Khoei in his Mu’jam Rijal al Hadith.

Therefore the sanad of this sermon is “daeef”, hence it is not proven to be true, therefore we cannot base our belief on this sermon.

