



The first question of Fatwa no. 2961

Q 1: What is the Islamic ruling on Tawassul (supplicating to Allah through a means) through prophets and Awliya' (pious people)?

A: Tawassul through prophets and Awliya' is a general term that includes many forms, each of which has its own ruling. To clarify: **Firstly:** Asking a prophet or a Waliy (pious person) while they are alive and present to supplicate to Allah is permissible. An example of this is when a Bedouin asked the Prophet (peace be upon him), when he was standing on the Minbar (pulpit) delivering Friday Khutbah (sermon), to supplicate to Allah (Exalted be He) for rain. The Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated to his Lord (Glorified be He), Who made it rain. The next Friday, he asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to supplicate to Allah to withhold the rain due to the harm it was causing. The Prophet (peace be upon him) supplicated to his Lord (Glorified be He) to make it rain on the hills, mountains, and so on. This is confirmed on the authority of Anas ibn Malik, who said, [«Once the people suffered from drought during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah \(peace be upon him\). While the Prophet \(peace be upon him\) was delivering the Khutbah on the Minbar one Friday, a Bedouin stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! The livestock are perishing and the families are hungry, supplicate to Allah for rain for us.' He \(peace be upon him\) raised](#)

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[his hands and we could not see any clouds in the sky. By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, he had not lowered them \(his hands\) before clouds started stirring like mountains. And before he had descended from the Minbar, I saw rain trickling down his beard. We had rain that day, the next day, the following day, and the days after until the next Friday. That Bedouin or maybe he said "Someone else stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! The buildings are collapsing and the livestock is drowning. Supplicate to Allah for us.' So he \(peace be upon him\) raised his hands and said, 'O Allah! Around us and not on us.' Whichever direction the Prophet \(peace be upon him\) indicated to with his hand, the clouds dispersed, until there was a hole \(in the clouds\) over Al-Madinah. \(The rain\) continued falling over the valley of Qanah for a month and no one came from that direction without talking about the downpour.»](#) Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. It is also confirmed on the authority of Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) that whenever it was a rainless year, `Umar ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) used to perform Salat-ul-Istisqa' (Prayer for rain) through Al-`Abbas ibn `Abdul-Muttalib, saying: [«"O Allah! If we were suffering from a drought, we would supplicate to You through our Prophet and You would send us rain, and now we perform Tawassul to You through the uncle of our Prophet to send us rain." And Allah sent them rain.»](#) Recorded by Al-Bukhari. This Tawassul was not being performed through anyone's honor, sanctity, or rank, it was Tawassul through the Prophet's Du`a' to his Lord during his lifetime asking for rain or for averting harm, as was the Tawassul through the Du`a' of Al-`Abbas to his Lord. This is the first form of Tawassul, and it shows that `Umar and the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them), relinquished

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Tawassul through the Prophet (peace be upon him) after his death, and they asked Al-`Abbas to supplicate to Allah for them after that. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was highly respected both

during his life and after his death, and he is held in high esteem by his Lord and all believers.

Secondly: If someone performs Tawassul through the honor, sanctity, or blessings of a prophet or the honor, sanctity, rank, or blessing of a pious person, saying, for example, "O Allah! I ask You through the honor of Your Prophet, his sanctity, or his blessing, to give me wealth and children, or to admit me to Paradise and save me from the punishment of the Fire," they are not a Mushrik (one who associates others in worship with Allah) practicing Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) that puts them beyond the pale of Islam. They are, however, doing something that is forbidden to block the means to Shirk and to distance Muslims from matters leading to Shirk. Undoubtedly, performing Tawassul by the honor of the prophets and pious people is one of the means that can lead to Shirk in the course of time, as has been proved by reality and the human experience. There are many pieces of evidence in the Qur'an and Sunnah that authoritatively affirm that Sadd-ul-Dhara'i` (blocking the means) leading to Shirk and forbidden acts, is one of the objectives of the Shari`ah, as Allah (Exalted be He) says: [﴿And insult not those whom they \(disbelievers\) worship besides Allâh, lest they insult Allâh wrongfully without knowledge. Thus We have made fair-seeming to each people its own doings; then to their Lord is their return and He shall then inform them of all that they used to do.﴾](#) Allah (Glorified be He), in this Ayah (Qur'anic verse), forbids Muslims from insulting the deities that the Mushriks worship other than Him, as this might lead them to insult the True Deity (Glorified be He)

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wrongfully, through ignorance, while defending their false gods. The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade people from taking graves as places for worship, fearing that people might worship the graves. He (peace be upon him) also forbade Khulwah (being alone with a member of the opposite sex), women from showing their beauty to Ajanib (men lawful for them to marry), and women leaving their homes wearing perfume. Men and women have also been warned to lower their gazes. All this is to block the means that may lead to temptation and immorality. Allah (Exalted be He) says: [﴿Tell the believing men to lower their gaze \(from looking at forbidden things\), and protect their private parts \(from illegal sexual acts\). That is purer for them. Verily, Allâh is All-Aware of what they do.﴾](#) [﴿And tell the believing women to lower their gaze \(from looking at forbidden things\)﴾](#) It is confirmed in a Hadith that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, [﴿Allah cursed the Jews and the Christians; they made the graves of their prophets places of worship.﴾](#) Performing Tawassul by someone's honor, sanctity, and the like in Du`a' was not reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him), and `Ibadah is Tawqifiy (bound by a religious text and not amenable to personal opinion). As there is no evidence from the Qur'an, Sunnah, or the reports of the Sahabah (Companions) affirming this type of Tawassul, it is Bid`ah (innovation in religion). The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, [﴿Anyone who does something that we have not ordered \(in worship\) it will be rejected.﴾](#)

Thirdly: Supplicating to prophets or Awliya' and seeking their help in fulfilling needs, by saying, for example, "O Messenger of Allah! Relieve my distress or cure me," "I seek your support, O Messenger of Allah or O Husayn!" or other similar expressions, is

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major Shirk that puts the person who says it beyond the pale of Islam. Allah revealed His Books and sent His Messengers to abolish and warn people against this.

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

Member	Member	Deputy Chairman	Chairman
`Abdullah ibn Qa`ud	`Abdullah ibn Ghudayyan	`Abdul-Razzaq `Afify	`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz