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The third, fourth, and sixth questions of Fatwa no. 9047

Q 3: What is your opinion regarding what Imam Ibn Taymiyyah (Shaykh Al-Islam) says in his book "Iqtida' Al-Sirat Al-Mustaqim", "There is no disagreement among scholars except in respect to taking oaths by the Prophet (peace be upon him)." There are two juristic opinions cited from the Madh-hab (School of Jurisprudence) of Imam Ahmad. It is related that Imam Ahmad said about the issue of Tawassul (supplicating to Allah by means) through the Prophet in Al-Marudhy's book, "Mansak" that taking an oath by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is valid. However, the sound view states that taking an oath by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is invalid, and thus ineffective.

Imam Ahmad also says in "Majmu' Al-Fatawa" that if we do not ask Allah by means of supplicating to them (prophets and righteous men) nor by means of our deeds, but by virtue of their personalities, that will not be a reason for answering our supplications. Therefore, we are performing Tawassul through a fruitless means. That is why we find no authentic report from the Prophet (peace be upon him) or even a narration transmitted from the Salaf (righteous predecessors) in support of this practice. However, in "Mansak", Al-Marudhy related from Imam Ahmad one supplication including Tawassul by the Prophet (peace be upon him).

A: What is reported by Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (may Allah be merciful to him) from the leading jurists in his two books on the topic is variance in wording while bearing the same meaning.

It may be interpreted that: leading jurists like Malik, Abu Hanifah, and Al-Shafi'y (may Allah be merciful to them) maintain that swearing by anyone other than Allah is absolutely forbidden whether the oath is taken by a prophet or not, thus this formula of oath is invalid. This is the correct opinion

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reported from Imam Ahmad (may Allah be merciful to him). This is also the opinion of Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah who said: "This is the sound opinion." Another opinion of Imam Ahmad declares the permissibility of swearing by our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and thus deems the oath valid. Some Hanbali jurists expanded this judgment to include all the prophets. The validity of this oath constitutes the grounds for the validity of adjuring Allah in the name of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or other prophets. Thus, the well-known account of the blind man who made Tawassul by means of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is understood in the light of this view. Ibn Taymiyyah states that the view that permits and validates taking oaths by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is irregular and weak. Therefore, whatever judgments originated from them i.e. the permissibility to adjure Allah by the Prophet and to make Tawassul by him, are also irregular and weak. Indeed, the opinion of Shaykh Al-Islam forms the right opinion held by the majority of scholars. In fact, it goes in conformity with the legal evidence. Finally, all success belongs to Allah.

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

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