

Tawassul to the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ

Compiled by Sr. Arifa Hudda

In our previous discussion on *Struggle with the Self*, we discussed the importance of *Seeking Refuge with the Noble Qur'an*. Continuing on with this Jihād (struggle), we see that another stage in this inner battle is the Du'ā - supplication. In order to overcome the Nafs-e-Ammārah, we need to ask for help from Allāh ﷻ by means of the many different and special supplications that we have been taught. However, we must keep in mind that one of the conditions for the acceptance of our supplications is "Tawassul to the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ".

In fact, if one looks through Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummi's (may Allāh be pleased with him) monumental work, *Mafātihul Jinān*, which has been translated into at least four languages, one would hardly find any Du'ā in which there is no form of Tawassul to the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ. The author of *Wasāilush Shī'a*, Shaykh Hurr al-Amulī (may Allāh be pleased with him), in the section on Tawassul, has narrated approximately 70 aḥādīth in which it is stated that the condition of acceptance of one's supplications is to employ Tawassul to the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ.

The Noble Qur'an even states in regards to Du'ā that one must bring a Wasilah - or intermediary before one's prayers will be accepted. In Sūrah al-Māidah (5), verse 35, we are told:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءٰمَنُوْا اتَّقُوْا اللّٰهَ وَاَبْتَغُوْا اِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيْلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوْا فِيْ

سَبِيْلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾

"O' you who have true faith! Have consciousness of Allāh and seek a way to Him through a Wasilah (intermediary) and struggle in His way so that maybe you will be successful."

This verse of the Qur'an is telling those of us who have consciousness of Allāh (Taqwa) that if we go to the house of Allāh ﷻ (with a request), then we must go with a Wasilah; and if we want to achieve success and happiness from Allāh ﷻ both in this world and in the next world, then we must have a Wasilah, and in order to get closer to Allāh, we need to employ a Wasilah as well.

In many narrations from the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ, we see them state that, "نحن الوسيلة" meaning, "We are the Wasilah that the Qur'an has commanded the believers to go through" - (meaning the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ).

Ziyārat al-Jāmiyah which is the most authentic and comprehensive Ziyārat that we have, was taught to us by the 10th Imām, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Naqī ﷺ in response to a question that someone had posed to him. This Imām ﷺ was asked, "How should the followers address you or perform your Ziyārat?" In response, this comprehensive prayer was taught to the followers.

The entire Ziyārat which is so perfect and eloquent can be divided into two main categories: (1) Attributes of a true Shī'a (the authentic followers of the Prophet ﷺ and Ahlul Baīt ﷺ) and (2) Attributes or qualities of the infallible Ā'immah ﷺ.



The aim of this Ziyārat is to create a true bond between us and the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ. It is also one of the three things that Imām az-Zamān (may Allāh hasten his return) strongly advised and recommended Sayyid Rushtī that the people should recite during the period of occultation of the Imām (the other two things recommended were the recitation of Ziyārat 'Ashurā, and Ṣalātul Lail; and this entire event has been narrated in *Mafātihul Jinān* by Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummi).

In Ziyārat al-Jāmiyah, it says:

مَنْ أَرَادَ اللّٰهَ بَدَأَ بِكُمْ وَمَنْ وَحَدَهُ قَبْلَ عِنْتِكُمْ وَمَنْ قَصَدَهُ تَوَجَّهَ
بِكُمْ

"Whoever desires Allāh must begin with you (Ahlul Baīt) and whoever acknowledges His unity accepts if from you. Whoever aims (to find, reach) Him, must turn to you."

Every true believer's aim in life is to get closer to Allāh ﷻ and this should be our only goal while we are alive, and the way to do this is by going through the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ. In other words, we must use them as our Wasilah (means) to get to Allāh ﷻ.

In another place in the same Ziyārat, it says:

بِكُمْ فَتَحَ اللّٰهُ وَبِكُمْ يَخْتَمُ

This line simply means that if Allāh ﷻ wants to open the doors of blessings for someone, it is because of the bounties (barakāh) of the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ, and if He wants to close the door of trials, tribulations and misfortunes for someone, then that too is by the blessings of the Ahlul Baīt ﷺ.

Therefore, all things are because of the Ahlul Baït ﷺ – both the blessings that come about and misfortunes that are repelled from us.

The concept of employing a Wasilah as mentioned in the Noble Qur'an is something that the Ahlul Baït ﷺ themselves even resorted to! It has been narrated that when the Prophet ﷺ used to pray from the beginning of the night until the morning, he used to implore Allāh ﷻ through the person of Amīr al-Mo'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ﷺ by saying, "O' Allāh! By the sake of 'Alī..."

When the other Ā'immah ﷺ used to pray, they too would ask Allāh ﷻ through the five members who were part of the Ahlul Kisā (Prophet Muḥammad, Imām 'Alī, Sayyidah Fāṭimah, Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusain). Thus, the way of the Ahlul Baït ﷺ was such that even they used to resort to Tawassul whenever they supplicated to Allāh ﷻ.

It is very unfortunate to see many people these days ignorantly questioning or criticizing the aspect of Tawassul that we have in our beliefs or even trying to completely destroy it! Many people (both non-Shī'a and even some so-called "Shī'a") state that the followers of the Ahlul Baït ﷺ are performing Shirk (worshipping other than Allāh) when we pray to Allāh through one of the Infallible personalities!

Ayatullāh Tawakkul, a renowned and educated scholar in Qum who gives lectures on Akhlāq and self-building presents a beautiful example in his most recent book called *The Concept of Wasilah* which we mention below.

He mentions that when we switch on a lamp in our house and get light from it, we know that the basis of this light is the electric company that is supplying the power; however there must be some way or means between the main source of power and the lamp - and this is the wire that serves as a connection between the two things. Without this connection (the wire from the lamp to the plug in the wall and the wires that stretch from the house to the power plant), we would not get the desired result as we have failed in providing one of the essential items needed to illuminate our house.

Similarly, in order to get our needs from Allāh ﷻ, the main source – we need the Ahlul Baït ﷺ as a means or way to serve as a connection between us and Allāh ﷻ. Thus, we must know that the One fulfilling our desires and answering our prayers is none other than the Almighty Creator ﷻ, but we need to ask Him through the Ahlul Baït ﷺ.

The Shī'a are very fortunate to have these great personalities to pray through and it is unfortunate if we do not take advantage of them.

Ayatullāh Mazāherī mentions in his book, *Struggle with the Self (Jihād ba Nafs)*, that there is a narration from the Noble Prophet ﷺ that states, "In your life, you have many opportunities and chances and you have this mercy of Tawassul therefore be careful and make the most use of it. In addition, make use of your youth, because there are many people who will regret their state while in the grave, barzakh and Qiyāmat that they were a Shī'a of the Ahlul Baït however they did not make use of the concept of Tawassul that was given to them."

One other way which is one of the best methods of using Wasilah to the Ahlul Baït is to recite Du'ā al-Tawassul, with full understanding and sincerely asking Allāh ﷻ through these fourteen noble personalities. It is especially recommended to be recited on Tuesday nights, but can be recited at any time one has any difficulty or desire that one needs fulfilled. It is sufficient for us to mention that this Du'ā is commonly referred to as, "The Du'ā for quick fulfillment of legitimate desires" and in this supplication, after we mention each Imām and their status and rank in the sight of Allāh ﷻ, we say:

يَا سَيِّدَنَا وَ مَوْلَانَا إِنَّا تَوَجَّهْنَا وَ اسْتَشْفَعْنَا وَ تَوَسَّلْنَا بِكَ إِلَيْهِ
 اللَّهُ وَ قَدَّمْنَاكَ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ حَاجَاتِنَا. يَا وَجِيهًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِشْفَعْ لَنَا
 عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

"O' our chief, O' our master. Surely we turn towards you, seek your intercession and advocacy (Tawassul) before Allāh. We put before you, our open needs. O' intimate friend of Allāh, stand by us when Allāh sits in judgement over us.

In conclusion, it can be seen that if one wants good in this world and in the next world; has prayers he needs accepted; wants help in the grave and on the Day of Judgement and basically anything at all – we must perform Tawassul to the Holy Ma'sūmīn.

There are also other noble personalities in history who were not among the 14 infallibles but even Tawassul to them is accepted by Allāh ﷻ. For example, Sayyidah Zainab, Abūl Fadhl 'Abbās - his mother Ummul Banīn, Sayyidah Fāṭimah Ma'sūmah, and others. ●