

29 Calling upon “Saints”

QUESTION: What reasons do Muslims give for their calling on these intermediaries such as saints?
Why make such a fuss over this?

ANSWER:

This practice is so widespread in so many Muslim countries that it merits more discussion about its origins and significance.

In some Muslim countries, elaborate tombs and shrines are built around the graves of religious people who have died, and people then go to these tombs to ask the dead people for wealth, health, success in exams, etc.

The people who maintain these shrines have in some cases developed sophisticated communications networks so that requests for money for upkeep of the shrine/enlargement of the tomb are even sent to Muslims in other countries, including the UK.

In general this practice of calling upon dead or absent people – something which Islam forbids without exception – is justified on the grounds that the person being called upon for help and assistance is a 'good person' and therefore 'closer to Allah' than the person doing the calling.

The Quran mentions this idea:

**Those who took other than Allah as protectors (and they say): "We only worship them so that they will bring us closer to Allah!"
Indeed Allah will judge between them in those matters in which they used to differ.**

Indeed Allah does not guide the person who is a liar and a disbeliever.

Surah Az Zumar (the 39th chapter) verse 3

Attempts are made to make an analogy between Allah and a king or a ruler.

The argument goes:

'Would you go directly to the King if you wanted to ask him for something – or would you go to his secretary who can command the King's attention better than you can?'

But Islam does not allow analogies to be made in matters of aqeedah (belief or creed).

Rather Muslims take their aqeedah from the texts – the Quran and the Sunnah – and not from analogies and philosophy.

The texts very clearly state that no 'secretary' is needed:

Amongst the many, many texts that prove this is the verse:

Call on Me, I will answer you.

Surah Ghafir (the 40th chapter) verse 60

And Islam teaches that calling upon dead people to answer your needs is equivalent to worshipping them – regardless of what name this practice is given, whether it be 'seeking intercession', 'seeking nearness', 'drawing close', etc.

Indeed Islam also teaches it is also forbidden for you call upon living people to give you those things which only Allah can give – eg asking someone who is alive to grant you a daughter rather than a son in your wife's next pregnancy.

The Quran states:

'And they worship other than Allah – those things which can not harm them nor benefit them.

(they) say: "These are our intercessors with Allah!"

Say (to them): "Are you trying to inform Allah of something that He does not know in the Heavens and on the Earth??"

Glorified and Exalted is He above all the shirk they commit.

Surah Yunus (the 10th chapter) verse 18

But an important point should be mentioned.

Islam does not prevent you from going to a living person to ask them to make dua (supplication) to Allah for Him to give you health, happiness, success, etc. Examples of this are reported from the time of Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

Hopefully the distinction between this and the practices of calling upon dead people to give you success, etc is clear.

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NEXT TIME:

To continue with the topic of those things which may cancel out the testimony of faith that a Muslim makes:

Not accepting that the rules and regulations that Muhammad (peace and blessings came with) overrule all other legislations.