

Demolishing the Delusions of Intermediaries Between the Servant and His Lord: A Refutation of the Doctrine of Seeking Rescue "al-istighathah" from the Dead and a Response to the Doubts of Extremist Sufis

By: Mohamad Mostafa Nassar

X: @NassarMohamadMR

Website: www.Islamcompass.com

Claims Contrary to Islam:

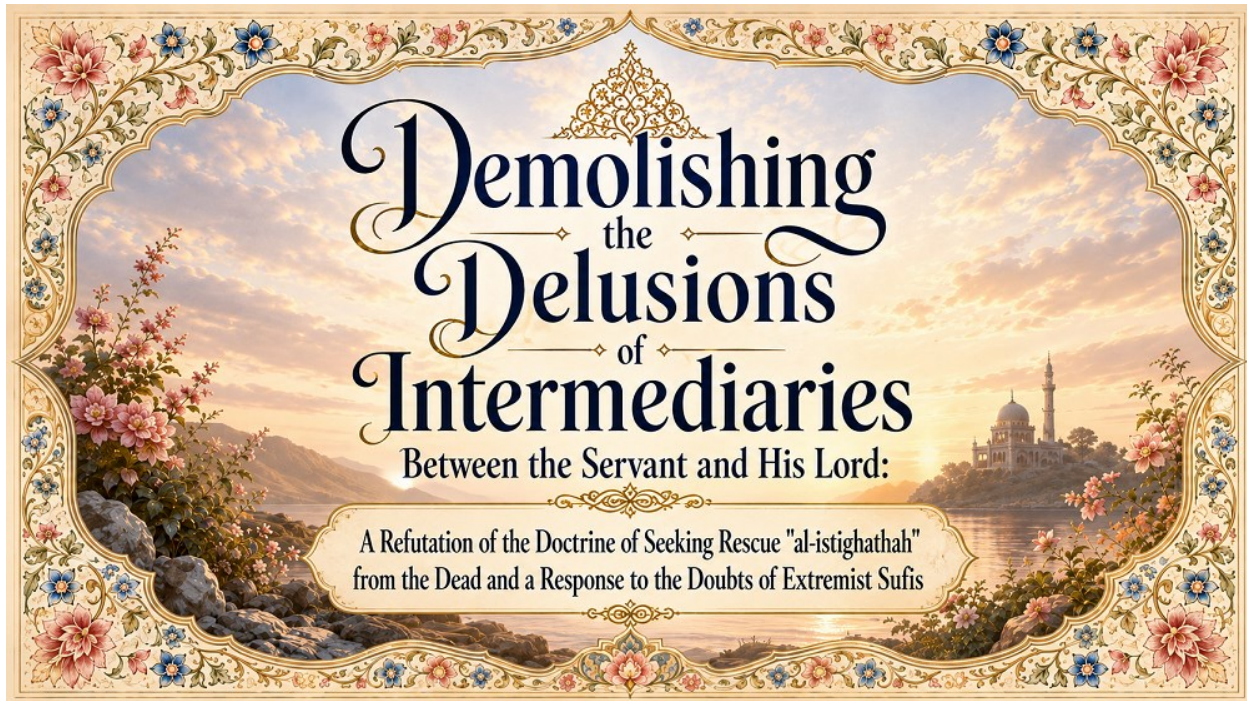
Some extremist Sufis among the worshippers of graves and those who seek help from the dead, who appeal to them and ask them for aid and support on the basis that they are intermediaries between themselves and Allah, the Exalted, claim that the Salafi Wahhabis have spread an idea which says:

“There is no intermediary between you and your Lord,”

to the point that common people have begun repeating this phrase without understanding or awareness. According to them, it is a word of truth by which falsehood is intended.

They say that, although it is true that every person is able to supplicate to Allah, the Exalted, directly without any barrier, this does not mean, in their view, the total negation of intermediaries, nor that adopting them is considered shirk “associating partners with Allah”.

They assert that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, does not deal with His creation at all except through an intermediary, and they cite as evidence for this that revelation was not received by the Prophets and Messengers directly from Allah without an intermediary, but that the intermediary was always Jibril “Gabriel”, peace be upon him “alayhi al-salam”.



They also claim that Allah, Glorified and Exalted, did not address the common people directly, but addressed them through an intermediary, namely the Messenger, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him “salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam”, and that He does not breathe into the wombs directly, but through the angel appointed to breathe into them, and that He does not take souls Himself, but through the Angel of Death, and that He does not record the deeds of the servants, their good deeds, and their bad deeds directly, but through the two recording angels: Raqib “the watcher” and Atid “the ready recorder”.

From this, they conclude that the existence of a third party between the servant and his Lord does not in itself entail shirk “associating partners with Allah” at all. They compare this to a person asking his mother, father, or others to supplicate for him in times of distress, thereby having taken an intermediary between himself and Allah, and this, according to them, is not considered shirk “associating partners with Allah”. Nor does it prevent the servant himself from turning directly to Allah in supplication without an intermediary.

They then argue by citing the hadith “prophetic report” of intercession on the Day of Resurrection, and they say that the Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family “salla Allahu alayhi wa alihi wa sallam”, informed his Companions that

the people on the Day of Resurrection will seek rescue from Adam, then from Nuh “Noah”, then from Ibrahim “Abraham”, then from Musa “Moses”, then from Isa “Jesus”, and then from him, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his family “salla Allahu alayhi wa alihi wa sallam”.

According to them, these are six consecutive intermediaries. Yet the Prophet did not condemn this, nor did he tell them that it was shirk “associating partners with Allah” or unlawful, nor did he say to them: “There is no intermediary between you and Allah.”

Response to Those Claims:

Islam calls to pure monotheism, and that there is no intermediary between the servant and his Lord in worship and supplication. However, the Sufis insist upon polytheism and the need for an intermediary, such as the dead and those in graves, whom they invoke so that they may bring them nearer to Allah. This is what the polytheists of the Arabs and Quraysh did when they worshipped idols so that they might bring them nearer to Allah. Here, in this article, with the help of Allah the Most High, we refute the claims of the extremist Sufis regarding the alleged need for intermediaries between themselves and Allah as a necessity for the acceptance of deeds. This statement resembles the statement of the Christians regarding their need to call upon the Messiah as an intermediary between themselves and Allah.

Introduction

In our time, a statement has appeared which is repeated by some extremist Sufis among the worshippers of graves and those who seek rescue from the dead, who appeal to the saints and claim that they are intermediaries between themselves and Allah the Most High, alleging that “Wahhabi Salafism” spread an idea which says:

“There is no intermediary between you and your Lord.”

And that this phrase is “a truth by which falsehood is intended”.

These people claim that Allah the Most High does not deal with His servants except through intermediaries, and that adopting an intermediary in supplication is not polytheism, citing as evidence the intermediary role of Gabriel, peace be upon him “alayhi al-salam”, in revelation, the Angel of Death in taking souls, the angels in various deeds, and what has been mentioned in the hadith of intercession on the Day of Resurrection.

This claim, on its surface, appears to be an attempt to draw nearer to Allah, but in reality it is a confusion between the divinely ordained and legitimate intermediary means and the prohibited polytheistic intermediary means, and a deviation from the monotheism of worship with which the messengers came.

This is what we shall clarify below.

First: The Basis of the Claim Contradicts the Monotheism "Tawhid" Brought by the Messengers

The claim that there is a need for intermediaries between the servant and his Lord in worship contradicts the very foundation of the religion with which all the Prophets were sent, namely, the worship of Allah alone "Tawhid Allah" in worship and supplication, as He, Glorified and Exalted is He, said:

“We surely sent a messenger to every community, saying, ‘Worship Allah and shun false gods.’” [al-Nahl 16:36].

True monotheism "Tawhid" requires that worship in all its forms, whether supplication, hope, seeking relief, sacrifice, or vow, be devoted sincerely to Allah alone, without partner, intermediary, or intercessor except by His permission, because Allah is near to His servants, hears their supplication, and responds to them without barrier or intermediary. Allah, the Most High, said:

“When My servants ask you ‘O Prophet’ about Me: I am truly near. I respond to one’s prayer when they call upon Me.” [al-Baqarah 2:186].

Imam Ibn Kathir, may Allah have mercy on him "rahimahu Allah", said:

“That is, they do not need an intermediary between Me and them; rather, when they call upon Me, I answer them” (Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, 1/502).

Secondly: Types of mediation and the confusion between what is lawful and what is prohibited

The extremist Sufis have confused two types of mediation:

1. Decreed cosmic mediation (lawful)

This is what Allah has established within the order of the universe to perform specific functions by His command, such as:

- (a) Jibreel, peace be upon him "alayhi al-salam", in conveying revelation.
- (b) The Angel of Death in taking souls.
- (c) The messengers and prophets in conveying the messages.
- (d) The angels in managing commands and carrying out the divine decree.

This mediation belongs to Lordship and divine decree, and is permitted by Allah. It is not worshipped, not called upon, and no intercession or fulfilment of needs is sought from it. Allah, Exalted is He, says:

“But they are only honoured servants, who do not speak until He has spoken, acting at His command.” [Al-Anbiya 21:26-27]

2. Mediation in worship and supplication (prohibited)

This is when a person places intermediaries between himself and Allah, calling upon them, seeking rescue through them, or turning to them in the hope of drawing near to Allah. This is the polytheism of the first Age of Ignorance "Jahiliyyah" which the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him "salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam", was sent to destroy. Allah, Exalted is He, says:

“They worship besides Allah others who can neither harm nor benefit them, and say, ‘These are our intercessors with Allah.’ Ask them, O Prophet, ‘Are you informing Allah of something He does not know in the heavens or the earth? Glorified and Exalted is He above what they associate with Him!’” [Yunus 10:18]

So, cosmic mediation does not justify adopting intermediaries in worship, because Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, has negated any intermediary in the station of worship and supplication, not in the station of creation and administration. Allah, Exalted is He, says:

“Your Lord has proclaimed, ‘Call upon Me, I will respond to you. Surely those who are too proud to worship Me will enter Hell, fully humbled.’” [Ghafir 40:60]

Third: The Invalidity of Using Cosmic Means as Evidence for Mediation in Worship

The angels and messengers whom Allah has made means in carrying out His command are not to be asked, nor is anything to be hoped from them, because they are commanded and fully obedient. Allah the Exalted said:

“They do not speak until He has spoken, and they act at His command.” [Surah Al-Anbiya 21:27]

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, May Allah have mercy on him "rahimahullah", said:

“The mediation that the early generations rejected is mediation in worship and supplication, not mediation in the cosmic order, for Allah causes matters to occur through means that He has created” (Al-Radd 'ala al-Bakri, p. 68).

So, the Sufis’ confusion between the two types is ignorance of creed and a deception of the people.

Fourth: Requesting supplication from a living person is not comparable to supplicating to the dead

Some of them argue that requesting supplication from one’s mother or a living righteous person is a lawful form of mediation, and then they analogise from that to supplicating to the dead.

This is an invalid analogy because the difference is fundamental:

- (a) A living person who is present and capable may be asked to supplicate because he is permitted, alive, hears the request for supplication, and is able to act.
- (b) The dead or the absent neither hear nor are able, and supplicating to them is major shirk.

It is authentically established from Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, that he said in the prayer for rain:

“O Allah, we used to ask our Prophet to invoke You for rain, and You would bless us with rain, and now we ask his uncle to invoke You for rain” (Narrated by al-Bukhari).

They did not go to the grave of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him; rather, they made al-Abbas a means through his living supplication, not through his person.

Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said:

“Whoever makes a created being an intermediary between himself and Allah, calling upon him and asking him, has taken him as an intercessor in the manner of the polytheists who said: ‘We only worship them so that they may bring us nearer to Allah’” (al-Fatawa al-Kubra, 1/124).

Fifth: The hadith of intercession does not indicate the permissibility of adopting intermediaries

Their use of the hadith of intercession in the Hereafter as evidence is false and misplaced, because intercession on the Day of Resurrection is not a worldly mediation. Rather, it is an intercession permitted by Allah after His approval of both the intercessor and the one for whom intercession is made, as He, Exalted is He, said:

“Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission?” (al-Baqarah 2:255).

Shaykh Ibn Baz, may Allah have mercy on him "rahimahu Allah", said:

“Intercession that is sought from the dead is polytheism, because it is supplication directed to other than Allah. As for the intercession that occurs by Allah’s permission on the Day of Resurrection, it is part of sound creed.” (al-Fatawa, 1/117).

Accordingly, there is no connection between intercession in the Hereafter and seeking intermediaries in this world, since intercession is not sought from a prophet or a righteous saint after his death.

Sixth: The Ruling on Taking Intermediaries in Worship and Supplication

Whoever places intermediaries between himself and Allah, calling upon them, relying upon them, or asking them to fulfil needs, has fallen into major polytheism "al-shirk al-akbar".

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said:

“Whoever places intermediaries between himself and Allah, calling upon them, relying upon them, and asking them, has committed disbelief by consensus” (Al-Fatawa al-Kubra, 5/321).

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him "rahimahu Allah", also said:

“The people of the Age of Ignorance "al-Jahiliyyah" did not believe that their idols created or provided sustenance. Rather, they sought nearness through them so that they might bring them nearer to Allah, and thus they fell into polytheism because of the intermediary” (Ighathat al-Lahfan, 1/190).

Therefore, the legislated form of seeking a means "al-tawassul al-mashru'" is seeking a means through the names and attributes of Allah, through righteous deeds, or

through the supplication of a righteous living person. It is not done through the persons of the dead, nor by requesting support and assistance from them.

Seventh: Supplication is an act of worship that must be directed to none but Allah

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, said:

“Supplication is worship.”

(Narrated by al-Tirmidhi and authenticated by al-Albani).

So, whoever directs supplication to other than Allah has committed polytheism, even if he says, “I only seek nearness to Allah through them.” This is precisely the polytheism of the earlier polytheists, about whom Allah said:

“We only worship them so that they may bring us nearer to Allah in position.” [Az-Zumar 39:3]

Eighth: Negating intermediaries in worship and supplication does not mean negating them in creation

Allah, Exalted is He, negated intermediaries in the context of worship and supplication, not in the context of revelation, creation, and governance. Therefore, distinguishing between the two contexts is necessary.

Allah, Exalted is He, said:

“Call upon your Lord in humility and privately.” [Al-A‘raf 7:55]

“And We are closer to him than his jugular vein.” [Qaf 50:16]

So, the servant does not need, in intimate supplication and prayer, any created being to hear for him or convey on his behalf, because Allah is the All-Hearing, the Near.

Conclusion

The intermediaries invoked by extremist Sufis are nothing but a revival of the polytheism of the first Age of Ignorance, even if they are clothed in the guise of “means” and “intercession”.

As for creational intermediaries in the universe, they are created and commanded; however, intermediaries in worship and supplication are prohibited polytheism.

The monotheism brought by all the prophets is that you ask Allah alone and supplicate to Him directly, without any intermediary or intercessor except by His permission. Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, is nearer to His servants than the jugular vein. He hears their private speech and knows their secrets and their confidential discourse. He does not need any human being or angel to convey their supplication to Him.

It was with this monotheism that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him “salla Allahu alayhi wa sallam”, was sent to demolish the ignorance of intermediaries, which has today returned in a new form under the slogan of “means”.

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And Allah Knows Best.

References:

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