

## 18. 'Calling' The Divine Personalities

One of the matters of disputes between the Wahhabis and other Islamic sects is the matter of pleading and calling the pious personalities and *awliya' Allah* in the times of hardship and difficulties.

Pleading and asking help from the Prophets (S) and *awliya' Allah* near their graves or otherwise is completely in vogue among the Islamic sects and they consider it neither to be *shirk* (polytheism) nor contradicting the Islamic foundations. On the other hand, the Wahhabis have strongly rejected such pleadings and for intimidating their opponents, they set forth some verses of Qur'an that are not having the least connection to what they claim and always raise the following verse as their slogan.

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا

***The mosques belong to Allah; do not call anyone with Allah. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Jinn, 72: 18)***

For acquainting the respected readers with all such verses that are the greatest excuse in the hands of the Wahhabis, we shall present them here and then explain their contents. The Wahhabis prove their point by producing the afore-mentioned and the following verses.

لَهُ دَعْوَةُ الْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُونَ لَهُمْ بِشَيْءٍ

***To Him is due the true prayer; and those whom they pray to beside Allah give them no answer. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ra'd, 13: 14)***

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ

***And those whom you call upon besides Him are not able to help you, nor can they help themselves. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, 7: 197)***

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ

**And those whom you call upon besides Him do not control a straw. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Fatir, 35: 13)**

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ أَمْثَالِكُمْ

**Surely those whom you call on besides Allah are in a state of subjugation like yourselves. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, 7: 194)**

قُلِ ادْعُوا الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ كَشْفَ الضُّرِّ عَنْكُمْ وَلَا تَحْوِيلًا

**Say: Call on those whom you assert besides Him, so they shall not control the removal of distress from you nor (its) transference. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra', 17:56)**

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ يَبْتَغُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ

**Those whom they call upon, themselves seek the means of access to their Lord. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra', 17:57)**

وَلَا تَدْعُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكَ وَلَا يَضُرُّكَ

**And do not call besides Allah on that which can neither benefit you nor harm you. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Yunus, 10: 106)**

إِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوا دُعَاءَكُمْ

**If you call on them they shall not hear your call. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Fatir, 35: 14)**

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ

**And who is in greater error than he who calls besides Allah upon those that will not answer him till the day of resurrection. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ahqaf, 46:5)**

The Wahhabis conclude from these verses that calling the *awliya'* and virtuous people after their death is *'ibadah* and their worship, and that anyone who says, "O Muhammad" either near his grave or from far

off, this calling itself is *'ibadah* and therefore an act of *shirk* (polytheism).

*Kashf Al-Irtiyab* on page 274, citing Al-San'ani<sup>1</sup>, narrates from book *Tanzih Al-I'tiqad*<sup>2</sup> as such:

وقد سَمَّى الله الدعاء عبادة بقوله: ادعوني استجب لكم إن الذين يستكبرون عن عبادتي ، ومن هتف باسم نبي أو صالح بشئ أو قال اشفع لي إلى الله في حاجتي أو استشفع بك إلى الله في حاجتي أو نحو ذلك أو قال إقض ديني أو إشف مريضى أو نحو ذلك فقد دعا النبي وال صالح والدعاء عبادة بل مُخَّهَا فيكون قد بد غير الله وصار مشركاً إذ لا يُنَمَّ التوحيد إلا بتوحيده تعالى في الإلهية بإعتقاد أن لا خالق ولا رازق غيره العبادة بعدم عبادة غيره ولو ببعض العبادات وعباد الأصنام إنما اشركوا لعدم توحيد الله في العبادة.

*“The Holy Qur’an has unconditionally declared pleadings and callings towards someone other than Allah as 'ibadah; the reason being that in the beginning of verse, it says ادعوني أستجب لكم and following that it says:*

يستكبرون عن عبادتي

*Therefore, anyone who calls the Prophet (S) and or a pious person or asks to intercede for fulfilling his or her needs, or says “You help in repaying my debt”, or says “You cure my sickness”, then in these cases this person has, with such sayings, worshipped them because the reality of worship is nothing but calling someone. As a result of such calling, he has worshipped (someone) other than Allah and has become a polytheist since monotheism of divinity<sup>3</sup> (i.e. there is no Creator and Sustainer except Allah) should be accompanied with monotheism of worship which means not worshipping anyone except Him.”*

## Reply

There is no doubt about this fact that the word of دُعَا in Arabic means ‘to call’ and the term عِبَادَات means ‘to worship’ and one can never reckon these two words to be synonymous to each other; and say that both give the same meaning. In other words, one cannot say that every call and plead is *'ibadah* (worship) because: Firstly, in the Holy Qur’an, the word of دَعَوَات (calling) has been used in instances where it does not give the meaning of ‘worship’ at all.

Like:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا

***He said: ‘O Lord! I called my nation (towards Thee) day and night’. (Holy Qur’an, Surah Nuh, 71:5)***

Can we say that the intention of Nuh was to say “I worshipped my nation day and night!”?

The Qur'an quotes Satan as saying:

كَانَ لِي عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِلَّا أَنْ دَعَوْتُكُمْ فَاسْتَجَبْتُمْ لِي

***I did not have any authority upon you except that I called you (towards evil deeds) and you obliged. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Ibrahim, 14:22)***

Is it possible for anyone to interpret Satan's calling to mean that he has worshipped his followers!? If it was an act of worship it was from the side of the followers of Satan and not from Satan himself.

In this verse and tens of other un-mentioned verses, the word of دعوت (calling) has not been used in the meaning of عبادات (worship). Therefore, one cannot say that دعوت and عبادات are synonymous to each other and based on this, conclude that if anyone seeks help and calls the Prophets or the virtuous people, he has worshipped them.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, by دُعا in these verses is not meant as absolute calling but refers to some special calling which can be synonymous to the word of عبادات because, all these verses have come down with regard to the idol-worshippers who believed their idols to be small gods who were entrusted with some of the divine ranks and who possessed some kind of independence in their affairs.

Let it not be unsaid that humbleness and humility or any kind of utterance or behavior in front of a creature either as a big God or small god if it is with this intention that he is God, Lord, and the Owner of affairs like shafa'a and forgiveness, then it will be 'ibadah or worship. There is no doubt that the humility of the idol-worshippers and their pleading and calling were before those idols which they depicted as the owners of the right of intercession etc., and considered them as the independent authority in the affairs of this world and the Hereafter.

It is apparent that under these circumstances, any kind of pleading and calling towards these creatures is 'ibadah or worship. The most obvious witness to the fact that their pleadings and callings were accompanied with the belief in their divinity is this verse:

فَمَا أَغْنَتْ عَنْهُمْ آلِهَتُهُمُ الَّتِي يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

***So their gods whom they called upon besides Allah did not avail them ought. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Hud, 11:101)***

Therefore, the verses under discussion have no relation to the main point of our discussion.

The topic of our discussion is pleading of one slave to another slave who neither considers him as God nor Lord nor as the Owner and independent authority in the worldly and heavenly affairs. Rather, he

reckons him to be a beloved servant of Allah who has appointed him to the position of Prophethood and Imamate and promised to accept his prayers with regards to His slaves. As verse says:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا

***And had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Apostle had (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Nisa, 4:64)***

Thirdly, in the aforementioned verses itself, there is a clear evidence that by دعوت is not meant absolute asking for one's affairs and needs but refers to asking and calling in the sense of 'ibadah and worship. For this reason, in one of the verses, the word of 'ibadah immediately follows the word of دعوت giving the same meaning. Like:

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

***And your Lord says: Call upon Me, I will answer you, surely those who are too proud for My service shall soon enter hell abased. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ghafir, 40:60)***

Just as you must have noticed, in the beginning of the verse the word of ادعوني and following the same verse the word of عبادتي has come and this clearly shows that by this دعوت is meant some special pleading and beseeching before a creature whom they recognized by the divine qualities.

The master of the prostrators, Imam Zayn Al-'Abidin (a) says in his supplication as such:

فسميت دعاءك عبادة وتركه استكباراً وتوعدت على تركه دخول جهنم داخريين

*“Thou have named Thy calling as worship and its abandonment as pride and Thou have promised a miserable entry into the fire for those who abandon it.”<sup>5</sup>*

And sometimes in two verses where the contents are similar, we see in one place the word of عبادات and in another place the word of دعوت such as:

قُلْ أَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا

***Say: Do you serve besides Allah that which does not control for you any harm, or any profit? (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Maida, 5:76)***

In another verse it says:

قُلْ أَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا

**Say: Shall we call on that besides Allah, which does not benefit us nor harm us. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am, 6:71)**

In Surah Al-Fatir, it says:

وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْ قِطْمِيرٍ

**And those whom you call upon besides Him do not control a straw. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Fatir, 35: 13)**

In this verse, the word of تدعون is used whereas in another verse which contains the same contents the word of تعبدون is used.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا

**Surely they whom you serve besides Allah do not control for you any sustenance. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ankabut, 29: 17)**

Sometimes, in one verse, both the words have appeared and has been used in the same meaning:

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

**Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides Allah. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-An'am, 6:56)**

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ

**Say, I am forbidden from worshipping those which you call them [i.e. worship them] (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Ghafir, 40:66)**

Respected readers are requested to refer to *Al-Mujam Al-mufahras*<sup>6</sup> under the words عبد and دعا so that they will witness as to how in on verse the word of عبادات has come and in another verse the word of دعوت has come giving the same meaning. This itself shows that the meaning of دعوت in this verse, is

*'ibadah* and worship and not absolute calling.

If you carefully pay attention to the whole set of verses wherein the word of **دَعْوَت** has been used in the sense of **عِبَادَات** you will realize that these verses either refer to the Great God of the Universe whom all the monotheist believe in His Divinity, Lordship and Mastership or refers to the idols where its worshippers considered them as small gods and masters of intercession. Under these circumstances, reasoning out with these verses for discussing about **دَعْوَت** (calling) one of the *awliya'* and beseeching one of them who doesn't have any of these qualities is really astonishing.

- [1.](#) Muhammad ibn Isma'il Al-San'ani (1688–1768 A.D.) was a Yemeni Salafi scholar specialized in the Science of hadith.
- [2.](#) Tanzih Al-'Itiqad 'an Al-Hulul wa Al-Itihad authored by Jalal Al-Din Al-Suyuti.
- [3.](#) Contrary to the terminology of the Wahhabis, Al-San'ani has used the word of "الوہی" whereas he should have, from their viewpoint, used the word of "ربوني"
- [4.](#) From the viewpoint of relationship, calling and worship (general and special) is in one direction. In case of asking help from someone other than Allah but as a doer depending on God, it shows calling and not worship. But in practical glorifications like ruku' and sajdah which is accompanied with the belief in the divinity of the opposite person it denotes 'worship' and not دُعَا. In some instances, such as salat, both دُعَا and عِبَادَات are applicable.
- [5.](#) Al-Sahifa Al-Sajjadiyya, supplication No. 45 and what is meant is Surah Al-Ghafir, no. 40, verse 60. Online at: <https://www.al-islam.org/sahifa-al-kamilah-al-sajjadiyya-imam-ali-zayn-a...> [1]
- [6.](#) Al-Mu'jam Al-Mufahras li alfaz Al-Qur'an Al-Karim compiled by Muhammad Fu'ad Abd Al-Baqi (1882 – 1968 A.D.) an Egyptian Islamic scholar.

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