



Fatwa on *Istighātha* ¹

From Imām Shams al-Dīn al-Ramlī's ² *collection of his father, Imām Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ramlī's Fatāwa*

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The Imām was asked:

Regarding what occurs amongst the *ammām* who when in distress say “*ya shaykh fulān*” and “*ya Rasūlullāh*” and things like this from seeking aid (*istighātha*) with the Prophets and the Awliyā, the ‘Ulemā and the righteous, is this permitted or not? And do the Messengers, Prophets, Awliyā, the righteous, and the Mashayekh possess the ability to assist others after their deaths, and what strengthens that view?

He replied:

Istighātha (seeking aid) with the Prophets and Messengers, the Awliyā, the ‘Ulemā and the righteous is permitted. The messengers, Prophets and the Awliyā have [the ability to] assist after their death because the miracles of the Prophets and Awliyā are not severed following their death. As for the Prophets, then they are alive in their graves

¹ This article has been translated from the book titled *Fatāwa al-Ramlī* (<http://feqh.al-islam.com/Bookhier.asp?Mode=0&DocID=63&MaksamID=1>), Imām Shams al-Dīn al-Ramlī's collection of his father, Imām Shihāb al-Dīn Ramlī's *fatāwa*.

² He is Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Ahmad. He was born in Ramla, a village near Manūfiyya in Egypt, in 919AH. He was the son of the famous Shāfi'i *faqīh* and *mufti*, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ramlī. His teachers include his father, Shaykh al-Islām Zakariyya al-Ansārī and al-Khatīb al-Shirbīnī. After his father's death he became the chief Shāfi'i *mufti* in Egypt. Such was his eminence that many came to identify him as the *mujaddid* of his century. His works include '*nihāyat al-muhtāj*', a commentary on al-Nawawī's '*minhāj*', '*ghayat al-bayān*', a commentary on Ibn Ruslān's '*zubād*', a commentary on Shaykh al-Islām's (Zakariyya al-Ansārī) '*tahrīr*', a commentary on al-Nawawī's '*idāh fī manāsik al-hajj*', a collection of his father's *fatwas*. He died in the year 1004AH in Cairo. (Cited from '*Ibn Hajar al-Haytami and Imām Ramlī*' by Shaykh Taha Karaan. <http://www.islam.tc/ask-imām/view.php?q=13545>)

praying and doing hajj as it has come in the reports. So assistance from them will be a miracle on their behalf; and the martyrs are also alive, and have been seen, openly killing the *kuffār*.

And as for the Awliyā, then it is a *karama* from them. The people of the truth believe that this occurs from the Awliyā both with intention, and without intention-things that sever the customary manner of phenomenal reality (*kbariqa lil ādah*), that Allah the Exalted brings forth through them. The proof for these things is that they are matters that are (intellectually) possible and the permissibility of their occurrence does not necessitate anything that is impossible. So everything that is in this realm, then it is possible to occur. (An example) of its occurrence is the story of Maryam and how the provision came to her from Allah - as stated in the revelation, and the story of Abū Bakr and his guests as appears in the *sahih*, and the gushing (flowing forth) of the Nile river due to the letter of ‘Umar, and him seeing, while on the *minbar* in Medina, the army (being approached for a sneak attack), till he said to the Amīr of the army: “O *Sariya*, the mountain!”, warning him of the enemy behind the mountain. And Sariya heard his speech even though there was a great distance between them - the distance of two months journey. Khalīd Ibn Walīd drank poison without it harming him.

Khawāriq (matters that customarily go against the rules of phenomenal reality) have occurred by the hands of the companions, the followers, and those after them. It is not possible to deny this due to the fact that taken as a whole; they are at the level of *tawātur*. So, in general, what is possible to be a miracle (*mu’jiza*) for a Prophet, is possible to be a *karama* for a Walī. There is no distinction between them except in the area of provocation.³



³ This means that there is no difference except that the *mu’jiza* was in response to a *tahaddī*, a challenge from the *mushrikūn* saying that he was a liar.