

# A Living Quran Exploration of Tawassul Practices in Palu City: A Shortcut or a winding road to God's Grace?

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## A Living Quran Exploration of Tawassul Practices in Palu City: A Shortcut or a winding road to God's Grace?

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**Abstract.** Tawassul has been practiced widely by Muslim societies. However, in the Muslim community, *tawassul* has been controversial among those who practice it and those who reject to do so. Previous studies mainly discussed the *tawassul* controversy from scholars' perspectives, while studies on the controversy of *tawassul* from a Muslim society's perspective are scarce. This study, therefore, discusses the practice of tawassul in Palu City, Central Sulawesi, from the Muslim community's perspective of who practices *tawassul* and who rejects it. The aim of this study is to provide insight for academia and practitioners regarding the differences and reasons underlying the controversy of *tawassul* among Muslim communities. This study was conducted using a qualitative approach, and the data was gathered through direct observation and in-depth interviews with key Muslim figures who accept and reject tawassul. Five informants practiced tawassul were recruited, and five informants who did not practice tawassul. The data was presented in a matrix table based on the main themes found, and then the data was reduced to meet the discussion of the study. The results show that Muslim communities who accept and reject tawassul have similar arguments taken from Al-Quran and had, but they have a different interpretation of the sources. The other perception of *tawassul* does not cause conflict among Muslim societies in Palu. However, we also found that most of Muslim communities who reject *tawassul* come from academia who rely on rationality in interpreting the legality source of *tawassul*. Meanwhile, Muslim communities who practice *tawassul* come from ulama or Islamic scholars who are primarily of Arabic or Middle Eastern descent. In conclusion, we argue that there is no violation of the provisions of *aqidah* and *shari'ah*, as well is not sinful, both for groups that allow *tawassul* and those that do not practice *tawassul*. The essential problem lies in the different perspectives and understandings of the two groups towards the existing texts of the Qur'an and Hadith. Our study contributes to the body of knowledge within the area of Quranic studies and to the Muslim communities who practice or reject *tawassul*.  
**Keywords:** direct supplication; God's grace; intercessory prayer; tawassul

### Introduction

Most Muslims agree that *tawassul* is permissible to do. However, the debate about the permissibility of *tawassul* is still being debated both among practitioners and researchers. For this study, *tawassul* is defined as a ritual invocation consisting of two acts; the naming figures who are considered mediators (*wasilah*) between a supplicant and Allah and making an offering for the benefit of the mediator.<sup>1</sup> The definition reflects a Muslim use an intermediary in making a prayer to Allah rather than making a prayer directly by him or herself to Allah. However, there are differences of opinion regarding the implementation of *tawassul* because each practitioner and academic has a different basis of opinion. This basis can be in the form of interpretations of Al-Qur'an verses or traditions of the Prophet because the schools followed are also different.

<sup>1</sup> Millie, Julian. Supplicating, naming, offering: Tawassul in West Java. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 39(1) (2007), 107-122.

All parties who agree or disagree with *tawassul* argue that the practice of *tawassul* is only permissible if you pray only to Allah, not to other entities. However, in practice, there are a number of Muslims who practice *tawassul* in a deviant manner in a number of areas in Indonesia, such as

the belief in guardians on the island of Java who can give good luck<sup>2</sup>. These adherents believe that the guardians give them good luck, so the prayers offered are more directed to the guardians than to Allah Almighty. As a result, these actions are considered to lead to acts of shirk rather than receiving blessings from Allah SWT.

Research on *tawassul* has attracted the interest of many experts to study *tawassul* from various perspectives. For example, there are experts who study *tawassul*, which is associated with mental health and anxiety.<sup>3</sup> Then some experts research *tawassul* in relation to the emergence of fundamentalism and liberalism in Islam<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, there are also researchers who study *tawassul* in the context of the pilgrimage<sup>5</sup>, and *tawassul* research in the context of seeking educational values in it<sup>6</sup>. All of these studies aim to discuss *tawassul* as a ritual practice that can provide benefits in their respective fields.

Differences of opinion regarding *tawassul* are generally caused by differences in the basis of fiqh among society, both among classical and moderate scholars<sup>7</sup>. Most experts argue that the *tawassul* practiced in Muslim society is permissible because it is considered that the person who is *tawassul* believers in the person being *tawassul* is only to Allah<sup>8</sup>. Then the reason for the permissibility of *tawassul* is also that people who pray directly to Allah by themselves are considered not worthy, so an intermediary of a purer person is needed so that their prayer is accepted<sup>9</sup>. While those who consider *tawassul* as an act of shirk argue that if the *tawassul*<sup>10</sup> is done by praying to other than Allah or with the *jah* (position) of a righteous person who has died<sup>11</sup>. There are also experts who consider the problem of implementing *tawassul* as *khilafiyah*<sup>12</sup>.

However, all of these studies discuss the concept of *tawassul* from the perspective of each expert. While research related to differences in views on the implementation of *tawassul* among the adherent communities has not been carried out much, causing limited literature on this issue. As such, this study discusses the novelty of this study from the perspective of both parties about *tawassul* to meet scientific argument and to show that *tawassul* is not about forbidden or allowed, but it is about showing the right argument based on Qur'an and hadith interpretation. In addition, this research was also conducted to examine the differences in reasons and views of the people who practice *tawassul* in the city of Palu, Central Sulawesi. The purpose of this study is to fill the gap in the literature and also to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of the practice of

<sup>2</sup> Kato, H. Religion as an Organic Entity: The Emergence of Fundamental-Liberalism in Islam in Indonesia and in Japanese Shinran Buddhism. *Comparative Civilizations Review*, 67 (2012), 37-49.

<sup>3</sup> Sadati, R. S., Raiesdana, N., Asgari, M. R., Mirmohammadhani, M., Zahmatkesh, M., & Saravi, M. Effect of Recitation of Tawassul Prayer on Anxiety and Physiological Parameters of Patients with Myocardial Infarction Admitted to Coronary Care Unit: A Randomized Clinical Trial. *Iran Red Crescent Med*, 28(3) (2021), 1-6.

<sup>4</sup> Kato, "Religion as an Organic Entity:

<sup>5</sup> Sya'rani, A. R. Assessing "The Religious" and "The Secular" in The Pilgrimage to Gus Dur's Grave. *urnal Sosiologi Agama*, 12(2) (2018), 173-186.

<sup>6</sup> Sabar. *Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Tradisi Tawassul di Pondok Pesantren Kec Binnuang Kab Polewali Mandar*. (Magister), Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin, Makassar; 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Ansory, I. *Pro Kontra Tawassulan* (Vol. 1). Jakarta: Rumah Fiqih Publishing; 2019

<sup>8</sup> Nur, F. M. (2011). Konsep Tawassul dalam Islam *Jurnal Substantia*, 13(2) (2011), 267-273

<sup>9</sup> Rosmani, A. S., Haronii, Z., Junaidiiii, J., Yusufiv, F. M., Syukri, M., Abdullah, Y., & Mashrom, Z. Tawassul and Istighathah With Prophet Muhammad in the Practice of Mawlid Berzanji. *Al Qanathir: International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 12(2) (2018), 22-33.

<sup>10</sup> Mianoki, A. Tawassul Syar'i vs Tawassul Syirik. Accessed on 14 Januari 2023, from Muslim.or.id <https://muslim.or.id/5397-tawassul-syar-i-vs-tawassul-syirik.html>

<sup>11</sup> Nur, "Konsep Tawassul dalam Islam *Jurnal Substantia*"

<sup>12</sup> Alwi, E. A. Z. E., Nordin, M. H., & Shuhari, M. H. Al-Takfir According to Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jama'ah

and Its Relation to National Unity. *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology*, 10(3) (2019), 3344-3350.

*tawassul* in Islam. The results of this study are expected to provide benefits and enlightenment to Muslims who practice *tawassul* and also the academic world so that it can add academic literature and reduce controversy among those who practice and reject *tawassul*.

## Discussion

### Understanding of Tawassul

The word *tawassul* comes from Arabic, which means 'closeness' or 'means' through which to achieve a certain goal. For example, when it says *wassail ila Allah*, it means doing certain praying to get closer to God through an intermediary. Thus *wasilah* here means 'to desire God'<sup>13</sup>. Related to closeness to God, experts argue that there are three situations in which God is considered closer to humans, namely in holy places, during "lucky times," and through holy people<sup>14</sup>. Therefore praying through these three circumstances is considered appropriate for the practice of *tawassul*, so some people think visiting the graves of people who are considered holy and praying is considered better for praying.

*Tawassul*s also often mentioned with term *wasilab*. The two terms generally mean intermediaries as stated by experts including Jamaluddin Muhammad bin Mukram ibn Mandzur,

Ibn Faris Abu al-Husain Ahmad and al-Ragib al-Ashfahani as

follows: هو بمعنى اختيار الوسيلة, تعنى ما يتقرب به الى الغير. يقول ابن منظور: وسل فلان الى وسيلة,

إذا عمل ع ملا تقرب به اليه ... الوسيلة<sup>15</sup>

*Tawassul in language: to choose the wasilab method (intermediary), and through the wasilab or tawassul, can bring someone closer to the goal he wants. Ibn Mandzur said: so and so (a person) reaches his destination through an intermediary; if someone does an activity with a practice, then that practice serves as an intermediary to close and reach the desired destination.*

Compare to the meaning of *tawassul* according to Ibn Faris Abu al-Husain Ahmad in *Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah* as follows:

مَا ي ت قَرُبُ وَي ت وَصَّلُ بِهِ إِلَى غَيْرِكَ, يُقَالُ وَسَلْتُ إِلَى اللَّهِ, أَسَلُ وَأَتَوَسَّلُ, أَي تَقَرَّبْتُ إِلَيْهِ وَتَأْتِي الْوَسِيلَةُ بِمَعْنَى السَّبَبِ

والطريق الى الشيء, بلى كل ذي دين الى الله واسل ومن ذلك القياس الوسيلة<sup>16</sup>

*Something that can make you closer and convey intentions or desires to other than yourself, namely Allah. I am tawassul, I am tawassul, and with that tawassul, I am close to him and reach him. tawassul also means a cause and or a way to arrive at something; even every religious matter related to Allah requires a liaison, and this is what is said as a wasilab or intermediary.*

Then, compare again to the meaning of *tawassul* according to al-Ragib al-Ashfahani in *Mufradat Alfaz al-Qur'an* as follows: <sup>17</sup> وحقيقة الوسيلة الى الله تعالى مراعاة سبيله بالعلم والعبادة

*The essence of wasilab, or mediation of relationship to Allah, is obedience to Him through the intercession of knowledge and worship.*

<sup>13</sup> Mohsin, U. Tawassul: Antara yang disyariatkan dan yang dipertikaikan. *Islamiyyat*, 18(19) (1998), 35-45.

<sup>14</sup> Sya'rani. "Assessing "The Religious" and "The Secular"."

<sup>15</sup> . Jamaluddin Muhammad bin MukramibnuMandzur, *Lisanu al-Arab*, Dar al-sadr, Juz 11, 1992. 724.

<sup>16</sup> . Ibnu Faris Abu al-Husain Ahmad, *Mu'jamMaqayis al-Lughah*, Beirut, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 1999. 110.

<sup>17</sup> .Al-Allamah al-Ragib al-Ashfahani, *MufradatAlfazd al-Qur'an*. Beirut: Dar al-Syamiyyah. 871.

Based on the above Hadith and Qur'an verse, it can be understood that tawassul is a form of getting closer to Allah through wasilah in carrying out worship to Him, obedience to Him, by following the instructions of His Messenger and practicing all the practices that please Him, in

other words, we perform worship with the aim of getting Allah's approval so that got heaven. In other words, tawassul is a means or wasilah so that worship or prayer is more accepted and granted by Allah Subhanahuwata'ala. Al-wasilah means everything that can get closer and convey something. The plural form of the word is Wasaa-il<sup>18</sup>.

Al-wasilah is permitted or ordered in the Qur'an, namely everything to bring a servant closer to Allah Ta'ala, in the form of obedience and worship that is prescribed. There are different types of tawassul. First, sunnah tawassul, which is practiced using tawassul by saying Asma ulhusna when praying according to his wishes. Second, forbidden tawassul in which a tawassul is practiced by using the position of Rasulullah shallallahu'alaihi wasallam or someone other than Him or doing tawassul by saying the name and glory of pious people when praying to Allah Ta'ala. Third, tawassul shirk akbar, is understood as a tawassul that makes people who have died intermediaries or wear in worship. Like asking for a wish to be buried, praying to those who have died, or asking them for protection. For example, "Ya Sayyid Al-Badawi, ask Allah for forgiveness for us."<sup>19</sup>

### Perception of Communities who practice tawassul

Palu City community groups that allow and carry out *tawassul* have long practiced *tawassul* in their lives. The people of Palu City are partly composed of Arab communities and descendants of other countries in the Middle East who have long adapted to the local community. The Arab community is part of the Al-Khairaat organization, which is the largest religious and social organization in Central Sulawesi and has made a real contribution to educational and social development in Palu City and Central Sulawesi in general.<sup>20,21</sup>

The community group that practices the *tawassul* believes that they adhere to the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith, among others, namely QS.al-Maidah verse 35 explains the command to believers to fear Allah and seek Wasilah (intermediaries) to be close to Allah and strive (fight) in Allah's way so that they will be lucky. Then QS.al-A'raf verse 180 explains that Allah has great names; therefore, pray through the names of Allah—furthermore, QS.al-Israayat 57 explains about those who pray to Allah through Wasilah (intermediary), which of them is the closest to Allah and hopes for His mercy.

While the argument of the Hadith used by the community groups who practice the tawassul is a hadith narrated by Abdullah bin Umar about three people who were trapped in a cave and could not get out because the cave door was closed by a large rock that fell from above and covered the cave door. Finally, the three of them prayed to Allah while mentioning their respective good deeds as the ware (intermediary) in the hope that the stone could be removed from the cave door and they could get out of it. All three prayers were granted by God. The pray of the three men, through mentioning good deeds, reflects the use of intermediaries in expectation of fast prayer accepted by God. The concept of using an intermediary in praying to God is expressed by an

<sup>18</sup> Ibnu Al-Atsir, Majd al-Din Abi Sa'dah al-Mubarak Ali Nashif. *An nibayat fi gharibi al hadits wa al atsar jilid 3 / Ibnu Al Atsir*. Beirut Dar Al-Kotob Al-ilmiyah, 2022.

<sup>19</sup> Mohsin, Udh. (1998). Tawassul: Antara yang Dipersyaratkan dan yang Dipertikaikan. *Islamiyyat*, 18(19), 3545.

<sup>20</sup> Nuur, M., Nurdin, N., & Adam, A. *Analisis Pendekatan Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) terhadap Peserta Didik yang Buta Aksara Arab di MTs. Alkhairaat Pandere Kec. Gumbasa Kab. Sigi* Paper presented at the Kajian Islam dan Integrasi Ilmu di Era Society (KIHES) 5.0, Palu., 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Umam, M. K., Nurdin, N., & Pettalongi, A. *Implementasi Pengembangan Nilai Karakter Akhlakul Karimah Santri Pondok Pesantren Modern Alkhairaat Siniu Dalam Menghadapi Perkembangan Era Society 5.0* Paper presented at the Kajian Islam dan Integrasi Ilmu di Era Society (KIHES) 5.0 Palu, 2022.

informant who is a Habib background. The informant argues that *tawassul* can make it easier for someone's prayer to be answered by God because it is mediated by chosen people, as stated below:

*The tawassul ritual is based on the arguments of the Qur'an and also the Hadith. The tawassul ritual is an amaliah of the Shufis with the aim of getting closer to Allah. Therefore the ritual of tawassul can make it*

*easier for our prayers and requests, and hopes to Allah to come true. The tawassul ritual can be through the mediation of selected humans such as the Prophet, and righteous people; even the tawassul ritual can be with other than humans; examples of good deeds as the words of the Prophet Muhammad saw. about the story of three young men who were trapped in a cave but finally able to get out of the cave safely through the intercession of their good deeds (Informan HA)*

Then one of the other habits, who is also one of the influential administrators in the AlKhairaat organization, also said that tawassul could be carried out because the arguments in the Qur'an and Hadith support it. Tawassul can be done through pious people or through good deeds that make it easier for Allah to grant them, as stated below:

*The ritual of tawassul is permissible because apart from being supported by the arguments of the Qur'an and Hadith. The tawassul ritual can also function as a mediator in order to make it easier for prayers and requests to be answered. The tawassul ritual can be carried out through the intercession of the Prophet, righteous people, or even through good deeds that the perpetrators of the tawassul ritual concerned have carried out. I practice the tawassul ritual through the intercession of reading RaatibulHaddaad, through this reading of RaatibulHaddaad, God willing, our various prayers and wishes can be easily granted by Allah (Informan HSA)*

Some of the arguments of the Al-Qur'an that are used by people who practice tawassul can be explained, among others, in the Al-Qur'an surah al-Ma'idah verse 35, which explains that "those who believe are recommended and even commanded (because the sentence uses an imperative verb) to fear Allah and to achieve that piety, then seek a wasilah (intermediary) and strive in Allah's way so that you will be successful. This is relevant to the interpretation of Sufyan al-Tsauri quoted by Ibn Kathir in his book Tafsir al-Adzim that verse 35 of surah al-Maidah in the sentence *وابتغوا اليه الوسيلة*, actually means "be close to Allah through obedience and good deedsthat pleases Allah", and can also means something with which take someone to his or her objectives.

Al-Qur'an surah al-A'raf verse 180 also explains that Allah has ninety-nine (99) great and noble names or names. Therefore, ask, and pray to Allah by using (mentioning) these names of Allah. The verse, "*wa lillab al-asma' al-busna*" which means Allah has ninety-nine noble names, while in verse "*fa ud'uhu biha*" it means "ask Allah through the intercession of the height and glory of His names". Likewise, surah al-Isra verse 57 explains that the people ask for help in their prayers; they themselves also ask and hope for Allah's mercy through another person's *wasilah* (intermediary) among those who are closest to Allah; thus, in following the verse is said:

أولئك الذين يدعون يبتغون

الى رحمة الوسيلة أيهم أقرب ويرجون رحمته ويخافون عذابه

interpreted by Muhammad Husain al-ThabaThabaiyin his book *al-Mizān fi Tafsiri al-Qur'an* which means as follows:

يستعملون أيهم أقرب حتى يسلكوا سبيله ويقتدوا بأعما له ليتقربوا اليه تعالى كتنقربه

"those who pray are those who consist of polytheists, Angels, Jinn, and Humans, they all hope to be close to Allah their Lord through wasilah or through intercession which of them is the closest to Allah for them to follow so that they can be close to the Highest, namely Allah".

Thus the ritual of tawassul, as described in the Qur'an in surahs al-Maidah, al-A'raf, and al-Isra, is the legal basis that is apparently praying or asking Allah through the intermediaries of his

<sup>22</sup>. Al-Sayyid Muhammad Husain al-ThabaThabaiy. *Al-Mizān fi Tafsiri al-Qur'an*. Bairut: Muassasah al-A'lamiy Li al-Mathbu'ah Juz. 13, 1991: 127.

prayers pious people are trusted and believed to be able to facilitate the fulfillment of desires, prayers, and hopes that are made to Allah. This was then carried out by the majority of the people of Palu City through two remembrance assemblies and one Islamic boarding school as a representative of the group that practices the tawassul ritual.

Furthermore, we will discuss the reasons for the permissibility of performing the tawassul ritual based on existing hadiths. The permissibility of tawassul based on the Hadith of the Prophet is also accompanied by examples in Islamic history. These examples can strengthen the opinions of people who have practiced tawassul in their lives so far. The practice of tawassul has become a habit that is carried out in various prayer rituals.

The first is *tawassul* through the intermediary of the Prophet Muhammad, which was carried out by a man so that the Prophet would pray to Allah to send rain. The Hadith is narrated by Anas bin Malik. This is explained by Imam Muslim in the book Sahih Muslim as follows:

عن أنس بن مالك أن رجلا دخل المسجد يوم الجمعة من باب كان نحو دار القضاء ورسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قائم يخطب، فاستقبل رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قائما ثم قال يا رسول الله هلكت الأموال وانقطعت السبل، فادع الله يغثنا. قال: فرفع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يديه ثم قال، اللهم أغثنا، اللهم أغثنا، قال أنس ولا والله، ما نرى في السماء من سحاب ولا قزعة، وما بريح نأوي من بيت ولا دار، قال فطلع رت من ورائه سحابة مثل الترس، فلما تَوَسَّطَتِ السَّمَاءُ انترت رت ثم أمطرت<sup>23</sup>

Anas bin Malik said that, in fact, a man entered the mosque on Friday from the door facing the outside, at that time, the Messenger of Allah. Standing up to deliver the khatbah, the man stood facing the Messenger of Allah while saying, "O Messenger of Allah, our property has been damaged by drought. The roads are also damaged. Therefore O Messenger of Allah, ask Allah to help us, then the Messenger of Allah raised their hands and prayed, O Allah, help us, O Allah, help us, O Allah, help us. Anas said by Allah before the Prophet prayed, we did not see any clouds or clouds in the sky, but after the Prophet prayed then, suddenly clouds were covering the houses like shields, and when the sky was covered with clouds, it then rained.

Second, *tawassul* through the intercession of the Prophet Muhammad, which was carried out by the people at the time of the Prophet for the prolonged drought, they asked the Prophet to pray and ask Allah to send rain. The hadith is as narrated by Anas bin Malik as explained by Abi Bakr Jabir al-Jazairiy in the following book Shahih al-Azkar:

وعن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت شكوا الناس الى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قحروا الرقطر فأمر بمنبر فوضع له في المصلى ووعده الناس يوما يخرجون فيه، فخرج رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حين بدا حاجب الشمس فقعد على المنبر فكبر وحمد الله عزوجل ثم قال انكم شكوتم جدب دياركم واستخار المطر عن ابائ<sup>24</sup>

Tawassul through the intermediary of good deeds. The ritual of tawassul through the intercession of good deeds is in accordance with the Hadith narrated by Abdullah bin Umar that he once heard the Prophet say that once three young men were trapped in a cave because the door was covered with a large rock that fell from the top of the cave. This resulted in the three youths not being able to get out of the cave. Finally, the three of them prayed and begged Allah

<sup>23</sup>. Abi al-Husain Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Qusyairiy al-Naisaburiy, *Shahih Muslim*, Jilid 2. Beirut Libanon: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah. 1971. 612-613.

<sup>24</sup>. Abi Bakr Jabir al-Jazairiy, *Shahih al-Azkar*, Riyadh: Dar al-Asal. 1998. 228-229.

by mentioning their respective good deeds as intermediaries (Tawassulnya) in the hope that Allah would grant the wishes of the three of them to get out of the cave.

his This story is like the Hadith of the Prophet saw, which was stated by Imam al-Bukhariy in book Sahih al-Bukhari as follows:

الله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: انطلق ثلاثة رهط ممن كان قبلكم حتى أووا لمبيت إلى غار فدخلوه فأنحدرت صخرة من الجبل فسدت عليهم الغار فقالوا: انه لا ينجيكم من هذه الصخرة الا أن تدعوا الله بصالح أعمالكم فقال رجل منهم اللهم كان لي أبوان شيخان كبيران وكنت لا أغقب قبلهما أهلا ولا مالا فنأى بي في طلب شئ يوماً فلم أرح عليهما حتى ناما فحلبت لهما غبوقهما فوجدتهما نائمين وكرهت أن أغقب قبلهما أهلاً أو مالا فلبثت والقدح على يدي أنتظر استيقاظهما حتى برق الفجر فاستيقظا فشربا غبوقهما اللهم ان كنت فعلت ذلك ابتغاء وجهك ففرج عنا ما نحن فيه من هذه الصخرة فانفجرت شيئاً لا يستطيعون الخروج. قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: وقال الآخر اللهم كانت لي بنت عم كانت أحب الناس إلى فأردتها عن نفسها فامتنعت مني حتى ألت بها سنة من السنين فجاءتني فأعطيته عشرين ومائة دينار على أن تخلي بيني وبين نفسها ففعلت حتى اذا قدرت عليها قالت: لا أحل لك أن تنفض الخاتم الا بحقه فتخرجت من الوقوع عليها فانصرفت عنها وهي أحب الناس إلى وتركت الذهب الذي أعطيتها اللهم ان كنت فعلت ابتغاء وجهك فافرج عنا ما نحن فيه فانفجرت الصخرة غير أنهم لا يستطيعون الخروج منها قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: وقال الثالث اللهم اني استأجرت أجراً فأعطيتهم أجرهم غير رجل واحد ترك الذي له وذهب فثمرت أجره حتى كثرت منه الأموال فجاءني بعد حين فقال يا عبد الله أد إلى أجري فقلت له كل ماترى من أجرك من الابل والبقر والغنم والريق فقال يا عبد الله لا تستهزئ بي فقلت اني لا أستهزئ بك فأخذه كله فاستاقه فلم يترك منه شيئاً اللهم فان كنت فعلت ذلك لبتغاء وجهك فافرج عنا ما نحن فيه فانفجرت الصخرة فخرجوا يمسون<sup>25</sup>

The young man who first prayed O Allah, I used to have both elderly parents, I intended to give milk to both of them, but because both of them were fast asleep, I finally waited while continuing to hold the milk all night until dawn came when they both woke up, and I drank milk for both. O Allah, if You value my service as sincere service, then save me from this cave based on my sincerity.

The second young man prayed. O Allah, there used to be a woman who I loved very much, one time the woman and I intended to commit adultery, but I discouraged myself from doing so because I was afraid of You, O Allah, if my actions to leave adultery were the right action, then let it go and save me from this cave.

The third youth prayed. O Allah, there used to be someone who worked for me, but suddenly he left and disappeared while he had not taken his salary; because of that, I increased his salary for a long time so that it doubled in value, and that's when he came and asked for his salary, I gave him his salary and the entire development proceeds from his salary. O Allah, if You judge my actions as a trust that I have carried out, then save me from inside this cave because I have fulfilled that mandate, then come out and be safe for them. The Hadith is an argument or argument that



someone can ask, beg and pray to Allah by saying the good deeds he has done as Tawassul or intermediary in the hope that Allah can grant his prayers and requests. The Prophet's Hadith about the story of the three young men was also explained by al-Imam al-Hafidz Muhyuddin Abi Zakariah Yahya bin Syaraf al-Nawawiy al-Dimasyqi in his book entitled al-Azkar<sup>26</sup>

### Perception of communities who do not practice tawassul

Community groups that do not practice *tawassul* come from highly educated people or academics. They tend to be more rational and prioritize reason in viewing the practice of tawassul. Their views also refer to the A-Qur'an verses and Hadiths. They say that in the Qur'an, a number of verses do not justify the existence of the tawassul ritual. For example, Al-Qur'an surah al-Mu'min verse 60 and surah Ghafir verse 60. These two verses explain that "And Allah said, "pray to Me, I will surely grant your prayers, verily those who are arrogant do not worship Me." I will surely go to hell in a humiliated state." According to Wahbah al-Zuhailiy, these verses have the following meanings:

أخبر الله أنه ان دعاه العبد وعبدته بحق استحباب له فان الدعاء مع العباد, الدعاء في نفسه عبادة والدعاء هو السؤال يجلب النفع ودفع الضرر, والدعاء غير الله لا يفيد شيئاً, فان القادر على اجابة الدعاء هو الله, والله سبحانه هو الذي أمر عباده بدعائه ووعدهم بالاجابة ووعدده الحق<sup>27</sup>

*God informs that if a servant prays to God seriously, then his prayer will be granted by God. Actually, prayer is worship. Prayer itself is a request that will bring benefits and keep difficulties away. As for praying to other than Allah, it is an act that does not provide the slightest benefit. Indeed, the one who has the power to grant prayers is Allah. Therefore, Allah commands His servants to pray, and Allah's promise to grant prayers is a definite truth.*

Furthermore, people who do not practice tawassul also said that in the Al-Qur'an surah al-Najm, verse 39 explains that humans will not get anything except the results of the efforts they have made. Muhammad Mahmud Hijazi interpreted with the following meaning "This verse explains that in fact, humans will not get anything except what they have worked for," while in the next verse, interpreted by Muhammad Mahmud Hijazi with the meaning "indeed, on the day after all human efforts will get a reward".

Likewise, in the Qur'an letter, Yunus verse 106 explains, "And do not worship other than Allah what does not benefit you and does not harm you, because if you do that, then you are indeed among the wrongdoers. In verse "*wa la tad'u min dun Allah*", which means do not pray or supplicate to other than Allah, M. Quraish Shihab interprets it as "do not worship other than Allah." then he interpreted it as follows "After the previous verse prohibits shirk, this verse confirms the prohibition while explaining why the attitude of associating with Allah is very reprehensible, by stating "and do not pray in any form to worship anything other than Allah Almighty and The Almighty is what does not benefit you, and even if you do not worship it, it does not harm you, and even if you ignore it and do not worship it, because if you do that, then surely you are one of the wrongdoers<sup>28</sup>.

The interpretation of Quraish Shihab can be understood that does not pray or supplicate to other than Allah because that is a real spirit. Regarding this interpretation of Quraish Shihab, an informant who came from an education official in the city of Palu said the following:

<sup>26</sup>. Muhyuddin Abi Zakariah Yahya bin Syaraf al-Nawawiy al-Dimasyqi, *al-Azkar*, Surabaya: al-Hidayah. thn. 1995. 355

<sup>27</sup>. Wahbah al-Zuhailiy, *al-Tafsir al-Munir. Fi al-Aqidatima al-Syari'abwa al-Manhaj* Juz.23 Bairut: Dar al-Fikr alMa'ashirith. 1991. 151.

<sup>28</sup>. M. Quraish Shihab. *Tafsir al-Misbab* Jakarta. Penerbit Lentera Hati. volume 6, th.2005. 173.

*Tawassul can also lead to falling into acts of shirk when a person prays to other than Allah. For example, when a person prays to Allah but is done through the intercession of a righteous person who has died. Praying through the intercession of a dead person like this is an act of shirk. Because it is safer if someone prays directly to God (Informant HR)*

This kind of understanding can be interpreted as when a person prays or supplicates to other than Allah, then at that time, he has actually committed an act that can be categorized as an act of shirk because he has double-crossed God. Likewise, he has committed persecution or tyranny against himself because he has prayed to something without the power to grant prayers. Indeed, the Almighty and the Most Answering all prayers is only Allah SWT. Apart from Allah, no one has the power to grant the prayers and requests of Allah's servants and all of His creatures.

Therefore, people who do not practice tawassul believe that prayer should be conveyed directly to Allah SWT. Praying directly to God has also shortened the hierarchy of prayer because it is done without intermediaries from other people. For example, an informant from the academic community said the following:

*Pray or ask Allah, preferably directly to Allah; you don't need to go through an intermediary because only Allah is the One who grants all requests and prayers. Praying directly also shortens the path of prayer requests because there is no other person's intermediary. Likewise, if you pray and or supplicate to other than Allah, it can potentially lead to acts of shirk because you have prayed and or begged other than Allah (informant MA)*

The reason for rejecting tawassul by people who don't practice it is also because they feel more confident and safe if they pray directly to Allah, as stated by another informant who also came from academia as follows:

*For me, those who don't practice the tawassul ritual think that the tawassul ritual is a prayer activity that is directed directly to Allah without using intercession. Therefore, in my opinion, we must be more careful and prioritize the purification of the faith of monotheism and distance ourselves from things that can cause us to fall into acts of shirk. Therefore, we should pray and ask God directly. This attitude is safer than safe from shirk (informant AJ)*

The opinions of the informants above are in line with the opinions of experts who reject tawassul that a human being has no right to represent another person to pray to the almighty creator. Allah will bestow His grace on anyone who prays.<sup>29</sup> The informant's opinion above also shows that there are differences of opinion with groups that allow the practice of tawassul in their lives by using intermediaries in praying.

The differences between the two groups lie in understanding the meanings of the texts of the proposition rather than in the substantive aspects of the creed. Tawassul, through the intermediaries of the Prophet, righteous people and good deeds can be justified if it is carried out by people who have extensive religious knowledge and strong faith. On the other hand, the tawassul ritual should be watched out for if it is carried out by people who do not have extensive religious knowledge and do not have strong faith. This is relevant to the opinion of Ibn Taimiyah, quoted by Ibn Katsir in the book *Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*; "It is not permissible to take *istighbasab* other than Allah, it is not permissible to take *istighbasab* to the Prophet in aspects of worship, but it is permissible to make tawassul and ask for grace through the intermediary of the Prophet."<sup>30</sup>

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Thus we argue that, although the ritual of tawassul through the Prophet, good deeds and righteous people is not contrary to the faith, for the sake of maintaining the sanctity of the faith

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<sup>29</sup> Al-Islam.. "Tawassul". Accessed 14 January 2023, from <https://www.al-islam.org/messagethaqalayn/vol5-n4-2000/tawassul-seeking-way-unto-allah-abd-al-karim-bi-azar-shirazi/tawassul>

<sup>30</sup> .Imad al-Din Abi al-Fida'i Ismail ibnu Katsir al-Damsyiqiy, *Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*. Juz 14, Beirut: Dar al-kutub al-Ilmiyah.2004, 51.

from things that can damage the faith and lead to shirk, the ritual of asking for munajah or pray and the like, especially for those whose knowledge and understanding of aqidah is still weak, it is better if the prayer goes directly to Allah. Because a person who repents through the Prophet may be exaggerating, which gives the impression that the Prophet is in the same position as Allah, this is what causes this shirk to occur. Because of that, being wary of harm is far more important than just seeking relatively little good. This is relevant to the well-known usual rule, namely "*dar'u al-mafasid muqaddam 'ala jalb al-mashalih*" This rule can be interpreted broadly that "efforts to ward off potential harm are far more important than just seeking a relatively small and momentary moment of good."

### Conclusion

This research found that two community groups in Palu city had different views on *tawassul* even though they were both followers of Imam Syafii. The two groups also have the same arguments to defend their opinion. These differences of opinion occurred in groups of more religious people, especially the clergy of Middle Eastern descent and people intellectuals. The use of term more religious for Middle Eastern descent because they are closer to religious activities than participants from academic backgrounds. However, the two groups of people have the same basic opinion, namely the Qur'an and Hadith.

People with an academic background may rely more on logic in understanding *tawassul*, so they prefer to pray to Allah directly. However, people who carry out *tawassul* think that praying through pious people will be more easily answered by Allah because they are closer to Allah. The academics are of the opinion that praying with a ware or through an intermediary actually prolongs the process of conveying the prayer while praying directly will be faster.

The occurrence of a fundamental difference in understanding seems to lie in the aspect of different understandings of the meanings of the texts contained in the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith. However, there is no violation of aqidah and shari'ah, either by a group that practices it or a group that does not practice the *tawassul* ritual. Therefore, there is no sin for both of them. This is because both of them have arguments originating from the Nasal-Qur'an and Hadith. The practical contribution of this study is that the followers and non-followers of *tawassul* can use Qur'an verses and Hadith in this study as reflection sources in their daily religious activities.

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