



## Patani Scholars' Views on Tawassul with the Prophet and Righteous: Analysis of Abd al-Qadir bin Wangah's *Risalah Irsyad Al-Jawiyyin*

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**Abstrak:** This study explores the theological concept of *Tawassul* in the Islamic tradition of the Nusantara region, focusing on Patani scholars' perspectives, particularly in Abd al-Qadir bin Wangah's manuscript "*Risalah Irsyad Al-Jawiyyin Ili Sabilil Al-Ulama' Al-'Amilin*." The manuscript's context is set in a period of theological debates between the Salaf and Khalaf schools, addressing Quranic interpretations, Hadith studies, and practices like *Tawassul*. The qualitative research methodology involves transcribing the original Jawi script into the Roman alphabet, translating it into English, and performing a detailed textual analysis. This approach aims to uncover the nuances of *Tawassul*, as discussed in the manuscript, making it accessible to a broader audience. The study reveals Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir's in-depth discourse on *Tawassul*, particularly relating to Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu' alaihi wasallam* and other righteous individuals. It underscores the permissibility and varied forms of *Tawassul*, reflecting the intricate layers of Islamic jurisprudence and cultural practices in the Nusantara region. The manuscript offers significant insights into the diversity of Islamic thought within the Nusantara region. It bridges historical theological discourse with contemporary religious practices, enriching the understanding of *Tawassul*'s role in Islamic worship and spirituality. The study situates Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir's perspectives within broader Islamic theological discussions, highlighting the dynamic and interpretive nature of Islamic theology.

**Keywords:** *Tawassul*; *Islamic Theology*; *Nusantara Region*; *Patani Scholars*; *Qualitative Research*; *Manuscript Analysis*, *Salaf and Khalaf*, *Cultural Legacy*.

### Introduction

*Risalah Irsyad al-Jawiyyin ila Sabilil al-Ulama' al-'Amilin* represents a pivotal piece of Malay Manuscript heritage, providing an authentic depiction of the cultural legacy of the Islamic community in the Nusantara region, with a particular emphasis on the Muslim society in Southern Thailand. This work was composed during a period marked by significant theological disputes between the Salaf and Khalaf schools of thought within the Southern Thailand Muslim community. These debates revolved around the interpretation of Quranic verses and Hadiths concerning divine attributes, the celebration of Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam*'s birthday (Maulid), and the practice of *Tawassul* (seeking intercession) through the deeds of righteous individuals, among other topics.

This study presents a textual analysis of the manuscript written by Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir bin Haji Wangah, focusing specifically on the discourse of *Tawassul* with Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam* and the impacts of righteous individuals. Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir bin Haji Wangah, a renowned figure in the field of Islamic creed (Aqidah), is noted for his scholarly contributions. The manuscript is originally penned in the Malay language using the Jawi script, specific to the Fatani region. This study

aims to transcribe and interpret these data, converting the original Jawi script into the Roman alphabet to make the content more accessible to a broader audience.

"Risalah Irsyad al-Jawiyiin ila Sabilil al-Ulama' al-Amilin" is a significant document in the study of Islamic theology and practices in the Nusantara region, particularly Southern Thailand. Authored by Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir bin Haji Wangah, an eminent Islamic scholar in Aqidah (creed), it offers critical insights into the religious practices and theological debates of the time. This study involves an in-depth analysis of Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir's discussions on Tawassul, underscoring the manuscript's importance in understanding the nuances of Islamic thought in the Malay Muslim community. The transcription and translation of this Jawi-scripted manuscript into the Roman alphabet further aim to broaden its accessibility and contribute to the preservation and appreciation of Malay Islamic literature and heritage. This work not only enriches our knowledge of Islamic scholarship in the Nusantara but also highlights the cultural and religious diversity within the Muslim community of Southern Thailand.

The manuscript encapsulates the theological nuances and religious practices during significant doctrinal debates. Its examination offers a window into the complex interplay of religious, cultural, and social dynamics within the Southern Thailand Muslim community. The study of such a manuscript, penned by a significant Islamic scholar, is crucial for a deeper understanding of regional Islamic thought, practices, and evolution. It sheds light on how religious beliefs and practices were understood, debated, and lived within the community, making it valuable scholarly research.

### Literature Reviews

The scholarly examination of "Risalah Irsyad al-Jawiyiin ila Sabilil al-Ulama' al-Amilin" situates itself within a rich tapestry of research concerning Islamic theological discourse in the Nusantara region. Works such as study on the Salaf and Khalaf debates provide essential background to the theological controversies of the era, particularly in the context of Quranic interpretation and Hadith studies. This research underscores the diversity and complexity of Islamic thought within the region, a theme central to Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir bin Haji Wangah's manuscript.

The manuscript's linguistic and scriptural choices are significant. Studies on the use of Jawi script in Malay Islamic literature highlight the cultural and religious significance of this writing system, demonstrating its role in disseminating religious knowledge and preserving Islamic teachings. This perspective is crucial in understanding the manuscript's impact and reach within the Malay-speaking Islamic community.

Additionally, the historical and sociopolitical context of Southern Thailand's Muslim community is integral to comprehending the manuscript's relevance. Research by [Author C] (Year) offers in-depth insights into the socio-religious dynamics of Southern Thailand during the early and mid-20th century. This work provides a backdrop against which the manuscript's discussions on *Tawassul* and other Islamic practices can be understood, especially in a region marked by religious and cultural syncretism.

Moreover, contemporary analyses of *Tawassul* in Islamic jurisprudence, such as those provided by [Author D] (Year), offer a modern perspective on this traditional practice, bridging the gap between historical theological discourses and current religious practices. These studies are instrumental in placing Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir bin Haji Wangah's views within the broader spectrum of ongoing Islamic theological discussions.

## Methods

The primary data for this study are derived from the manuscript "Risalah Irsyad al-Jawiyin ila Sabilil al-Ulama' al-Amilin," a significant work in the field of Islamic studies, particularly relevant to the Nusantara region and Southern Thailand. The manuscript provides rich textual material, encompassing theological discussions, interpretations of Islamic teachings, and historical perspectives. Additionally, secondary data sources include historical records, scholarly articles, and other relevant manuscripts that offer context and background to the primary source.

The study employs a qualitative research methodology, focusing on a detailed textual analysis of the manuscript. This involves several key steps:

The original text, written in the Jawi script, is meticulously transcribed into the Roman alphabet. This process is critical for making the text accessible to a broader scholarly audience and for accurate interpretation.

The transcribed text is then translated into English, adhering to academic standards. This step ensures that the translation retains the original meaning while being understandable to those not familiar with the Malay language or Jawi script.

The study conducts an in-depth content analysis of the translated text. This involves examining the themes, concepts, and theological arguments presented by Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir bin Haji Wangah, particularly focusing on the aspects of *Tawassul* and its implications within the Muslim community.

To provide a comprehensive understanding, the manuscript's content is compared with contemporary Islamic theological perspectives and historical contexts. This comparative analysis helps to situate the manuscript within the broader spectrum of Islamic thought and practice.

Finally, the study contextualizes the findings within the historical and cultural backdrop of the Nusantara region and Southern Thailand's Muslim society. This step is crucial for understanding the manuscript's significance in its original setting and its relevance to contemporary Islamic studies.

## Result and Discussion

### Biography Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir

Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir, also known as Aya Der Sekam, was a prominent figure in the Fatani region until the late 20th century. He was prolific in his writings, with an estimated collection of over ten manuscripts, each not exceeding 50 pages, published up until his passing in 1412 H (circa 1991). His full name was Haji Abd al-Qadir bin Haji Wangah bin Abd al-Latif bin Othman. He was born in the village of Sekam, Palas, Patani in 1340 H, corresponding to 1921 (Ahmad Fathi, 1900; Ismaie Katih, 2019).

Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir's education commenced at the pondok (traditional school) of Balur, located near his birthplace. He studied under the tutelage of Haji Ahmad bin Muhammad Dārawi, known as Tok Balur. His peers included Haji Wan Nuh bin Wan Nawang Kelaba, Haji Mat Kubang Saman, and Haji Awang Qari Pengkalan Jong. After four years, he moved to study with Haji Ahmad Kubang Pasir in Binjai Lima. Following the death of his teacher two years later, he continued his studies at the pondok Perigi under Tuan Guru Haji Ahmad bin Abd al-Wahhab al-Fusani, a renowned scholar in the fields of usuluddin (Islamic theology), qiraat (Quranic recitation), and ilmu falak (Islamic

astronomy) in Patani (Ahmad Fathi Al-Fatani, 1900; Ahmad Fathi al-Fatani, Majalah Pengasuh, 619; Ismaie Katih, 2019).

In 1949, he furthered his studies in Kelantan, learning from Tuan Guru Haji Abdullah Tahir Bunut Payong, a notable scholar in Fiqh Syafie (Shafi'i jurisprudence). During his time in Kelantan, he also studied with other scholars, including Haji Muhammad Nur Ibrahim Penambang, the Mufti of Kelantan, and Haji Ali Solahuddin Pulau Pisang at the Masjid Muhammadi in Kota Bharu (Ahmad Fathy, ibid.; Ismaie Katih, 2019; ibadurrahman99.wordpress.com/2012/01/25).

While in Kelantan, he married a woman from Kampung Putih, Kota Bharu, with whom he had a son named Ahmad Azam. Following a divorce, he returned to Patani and married Zainab binti Haji Abdullah Mayor. In 1951, during the Hajj season, he and his wife traveled to Mecca to continue his education. In Mecca, he studied for five years under various scholars, including Sheikh Wan Ismail bin Wan Abd al-Qadir al-Fatani, known as Pak Da Eil, who guided him in usuluddin and Arabic language tools (like Nahu Soraf, Balaghah, and Mantiq). His learning style in Mecca was more focused on private or small group studies rather than large halaqahs (study circles). During his time in Mecca, he was contemporary with figures such as Baba Wan Noh Kelaba and Haji Hussain Thusa. Upon completing his studies, he returned home with his wife and two children, Hafsah and Ismail (Ahmad Fathi al-Fatani, 1900; Ismaie Katih, 2019).

### The Theological Significance of *Tawassul* in Islamic Tradition

*Tawassul*, a concept rooted in Islamic theology, has been a subject of extensive scholarly discourse. This practice, which involves seeking a means of approach or intercession to Allah, is deeply embedded in the religious and spiritual life of Muslims. The linguistic foundation of *Tawassul*, as elucidated by Ibn al-Athir (1997), lies in the word "Wasala," indicating a medium or link. However, the theological implications of *Tawassul* extend far beyond its linguistic roots, embodying a complex interplay of faith, practice, and jurisprudence.

In the Qur'anic context, as referenced in Al-Maidah:35, *Tawassul* is portrayed as a pursuit of spiritual nearness to Allah. This verse has been interpreted by scholars such as Ibn Kathir (1419) and Ibn Abbas *Radiyallahu'anhu* to signify acts of worship and obedience that draw believers closer to the Divine. This understanding aligns with the broader Islamic principle of seeking Allah's favor through adherence to His commandments and the emulation of prophetic examples.

Historically, *Tawassul* has been practiced in various forms within the Muslim community. It encompasses not only the direct acts of worship but also includes seeking blessings through the righteous, including prophets and saints. This practice, rooted in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam*, has evolved over time, reflecting the diverse cultural and spiritual landscapes of the Islamic world.

The scholarly interpretations of *Tawassul* have, however, been diverse and, at times, contentious. Debates have arisen regarding the parameters and legitimacy of certain forms of *Tawassul*, especially posthumous intercession. These discussions reflect broader theological debates within Islamic jurisprudence, highlighting the dynamic nature of religious interpretation in Islam.

Contemporary scholarship continues to explore *Tawassul*, examining its roots in classical Islamic texts and its manifestations in modern Muslim practice. This ongoing

discourse underscores the importance of *Tawassul* in understanding the intricacies of Islamic worship and the multifaceted nature of Muslim spirituality.

In conclusion, *Tawassul* represents a significant aspect of Islamic theology, offering insights into the ways Muslims connect with the Divine. Its study provides a window into the rich tapestry of Islamic faith, practice, and scholarly thought, highlighting the continuous quest for spiritual closeness to Allah within the Muslim ummah.

### ***Tawassul in Risalah Irsyad al-Jawiyiin ili Sabilil al-Ulama' al-'Amilin***

In "Risalah Irsyad al-Jawiyiin ili Sabilil al-Ulama' al-'Amilin," Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir addresses the topic of *Tawassul*, metaphorically described as a ladder to higher realms of knowledge (Abd al-Qadir, 1409). He defines *Tawassul* as seeking help and creating pathways to blessings, thereby fostering a closer connection with Allah. This concept is echoed in Surah Al-Maidah (5:35) of the Quran, which advises believers to seek means (*wasilah*) to draw closer to Allah and engage in jihad (struggle) in His path for success.

Furthermore, Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir discusses a Hadith where the Prophet Muhammad *Sallalahu 'Alaihi wasallam* speaks of using his esteemed position before Allah as a means of intercession. However, he clarifies that this practice is applicable both during the Prophet's lifetime and after his passing (Abd al-Qadir, 1409). This interpretation aligns with his belief in the importance of *Tawassul* as a means to acquire blessings and as a practice endorsed by Allah.

The authenticity of this Hadith, however, has been questioned by scholars such as Imam al-Khattabi, Sheikh Muhammad Sidiq Hasan Khon, and Sheikh Ahmad Walad al-Kuuriy al-'Alawiy, who deem it unauthentic (ikhwahmedia.wordpress.com). Similarly, Ibn Taimiyyah and Sheikh al-Al-Bani have also expressed skepticism regarding its origin.

Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir further examines the practice of *Tawassul* by Umar Ibn al-Khattab *Radiyallahu'anhu*, who sought rain through Abbas bin Abdu al-Muttalib. He elucidates that *Tawassul* through individuals other than the Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam* is permissible and does not constitute shirk (idolatry) as long as it is done with the belief that any benefit comes solely from Allah.

### ***Tawassul in Islamic Scholarship: Perspectives of Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir***

According to the teachings of Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir, as elucidated in his work, several key conclusions can be drawn regarding the concept of *Tawassul* in Islam:

1. Permissibility of *Tawassul* Beyond the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam*): *Tawassul* is not restricted solely to the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam*). It is permissible to seek intercession through other righteous individuals besides the Prophet.
2. *Tawassul* With the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam*): It is allowable to practice *Tawassul* involving the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu 'alaihi wasallam*), both during his lifetime and after his passing.
3. *Tawassul* and Polytheism (Shirk): *Tawassul* does not fall under the category of shirk, as long as the belief remains that any benefit or effect originates solely from Allah Ta'ala. Mere invocation or seeking help through others does not constitute shirk unless it involves attributing divine qualities or effects to someone other than Allah Ta'ala.

Murjani's (2022) study supports the idea that *Tawassul*, through good deeds and actions, is permissible, aligning with the consensus of Islamic scholars. Moreover, *Tawassul* towards the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu' alaihi wasallam*), who holds a noble position before Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala, is also deemed permissible.

Amin Farih (2016) refers to Sayyid Ahmad ibn Zaini Dahlan's interpretation, considering *Tawassul* as a part of the prayer methodology and a way of approaching Allah. *Tawassul* is not about asking from humans or beings but seeking from Allah. It is not an obligatory act for prayer acceptance but a medium or method of supplication to Allah.

Similarly, Sayyid Muhammad bin Alwi Al-Maliki (nd) discusses various aspects of *Tawassul*. According to the Ahlussunah wal Jamaah perspective, *Tawassul* is a means of prayer and devotion towards Allah. It uses intermediaries as a bridge to draw closer to Allah. Beliefs diverging from this understanding are considered shirk. Additionally, those who practice *Tawassul* do so out of love for the intermediary and belief in Allah's love for them. If one believes that the intermediary can independently bring harm or benefit comparable to Allah, it falls into the category of shirk.

The practice of *Tawassul* is not obligatory or coercive. The acceptance of prayers does not solely depend on *Tawassul* but on Allah's will, as stated in the Quran (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:186 and Surah Al-Isra 17:110).

In summary, according to Tuan Guru Haji Abd al-Qadir's perspective and supporting scholarly viewpoints, *Tawassul* is a valid and permissible practice in Islam, encompassing supplication through the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu' alaihi wasallam*), other prophets, saints, and righteous individuals, without attributing any independent power of causation to them.

### **Epistemological Approach and Perspectives on *Tawassul***

Sheikh Muhammad bin Alwi al-Maliki employed a blend of bayani (textual) and 'Irfan (mystical) epistemology in his discussions on *Tawassul*. This approach values religious texts as primary sources of truth but also appreciates direct spiritual experiences, even when they seem contrary to rational thought.

Ibn Taimiyah (2002) discusses *Tawassul* as seeking intermediaries to fulfil needs. Not all forms of *Tawassul* are considered erroneous; some are permitted (masyru'). According to Islamic scholars, *Tawassul* can be categorized into two main types:

1. *Tawassul* Through Faith and Righteous Deeds: This form of *Tawassul* involves seeking Allah's favour through faith and adherence to His commandments.
2. *Tawassul* Through the Supplication of the Living: An example of this is Umar bin Al Khattab's supplication through Al'Abbas bin Abdul Muthallib, the Prophet's uncle, after the Prophet's passing. This form of *Tawassul* is not through the person's essence but their supplication (Dua).

The first form of *Tawassul* is foundational to Islam and accepted by all Muslims. The second, exemplified by Umar bin Al Khattab's approach, is *Tawassul* through Dua and not the essence of the individual. The Sahabah (companions of the Prophet) sought *Tawassul* through Al'Abbas, affirming the legitimacy of seeking intercession through living individuals. The third form, which involves making oaths by the Prophet or seeking intercession through his personhood, needs more evidence and support within Islamic traditions.

## Discussion

The epistemological approach of Sheikh Muhammad bin Alwi al-Maliki highlights the multifaceted nature of Islamic scholarship, where textual evidence and spiritual experiences coalesce. This perspective aligns with the broader Islamic tradition of valuing the Quran, Hadith, and personal spiritual insights.

Ibn Taimiyah's categorization of *Tawassul* reflects a nuanced understanding within Islamic jurisprudence. The distinction between *Tawassul* through righteous deeds and living individuals versus the more contentious form of *Tawassul* directly through the essence of the Prophet Muhammad or other deceased individuals illuminates the complex nature of this practice.

In Islamic tradition, the practice of *Tawassul* is profoundly rooted and varies in form and application. While *Tawassul* is widely accepted through faith and supplication, forms that imply direct causation or effects from the intercessor without Allah's will are viewed critically. This discussion underscores the importance of maintaining the core principles of Tawhid (monotheism) in Islamic practices.

The debate around *Tawassul* reflects Islamic theology's dynamic and interpretive nature, where scholars engage with religious texts and traditions to derive meaningful and contextually relevant understandings of faith and practice.

## Conclusion

Tuan Guru Haji Abdul Qadir bin Haji Wangah was a distinguished scholar from the Nusantara region of Pattani. His full name was Syikh Abdullqadir bin Haji Wangah bin Abd al-latif bin Uthman, the final ruler of Pattani Dārussalam until the end of the 20th century. He wrote several books, particularly on the subject of faith. He was born in 1921 in Sekam village, Pattani. Tuan guru Haji Abd al-Qadir explained that his approach to *Tawassul* was "to seek assistance and a means of access to the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, and the righteous people in order to attain blessings. This is an act that Allah has ordained so that a Muslim can perform *Tawassul* with the Prophet Muhammad. May peace be upon him, both in his lifetime and after his passing, and with other prophets and messengers of Allah. One can also perform *Tawassul* with the saints and the virtuous people without attributing any power or influence to them or assuming that they can bestow benefit or harm because that belongs to Allah alone."

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