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The fifth question of Fatwa no. 2450

Q 5: What is the ruling on performing Sujud (prostration) on graves and slaughtering sacrificial animals on them?

A: Prostrating on graves and slaughtering animals on them are pagan acts that were practiced in Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance) and also acts of major Shirk (major form of associating others with Allah in His Divinity or in worship), as both of them are acts of 'Ibadah (worship) and 'Ibadah must wholly be for Allah Alone. Anyone who performs it for other than Allah is Mushrik (one who associates others with Allah in worship). Allah (Exalted be He) enjoins saying (what means): ﴿Say (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم): "Verily, my Salât (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allâh, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists).﴾ ﴿"He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims."﴾ He (Exalted be He) also says: ﴿Verily, We have granted you (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) Al-Kauthar (a river in Paradise).﴾ ﴿Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice (to Him only).﴾ Many other Ayahs (Qur'anic verses) also emphasize that prostrating and sacrificing are acts of 'Ibadah and when dedicated to other than Allah they become acts of major Shirk. There is no doubt that visiting graves to prostrate oneself over them or to slaughter sacrifices at them is done out of glorification and veneration of them, clearly embodied and expressed through offering such worshipful acts. Muslim reported in a long Hadith, under the chapter of "Prohibition of slaughtering a sacrifice to other than Allah, the Exalted, and the cursing of its doer," on the authority of `Aly ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him), that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) told him four things: ﴿"Allah has cursed the one who slaughters (a sacrifice) for other than Allah; Allah has cursed the one who curses his parents; Allah has cursed the one who shelters an innovator (in religion); Allah has cursed the one who changes the marks of the land."﴾ Abu Dawud also reported in his Sunan (Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes), on the authority of Thabit ibn Al-Dahhak (may Allah be pleased with him), who said:

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﴿"A man vowed to sacrifice camels in Bawanah during the lifetime of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). So he came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said, 'I have vowed to sacrifice camels in Buwanah.' The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked, 'Was any of the idols of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance) worshipped there?' They said, 'No.' He asked, 'Was any of their feasts celebrated there?' They said, 'No.' The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, 'Fulfill your vow, for there is no fulfillment of a vow which involves disobedience to Allah, or with regard to a thing the son of Adam does not own.'﴾ This shows that anyone who slaughters sacrificial animals for other than Allah will be cursed. It also serves to show that it is Haram (prohibited) to slaughter sacrificial animals in a place where other than Allah, such as an idol or a grave, is glorified; or in a place where the people of Jahiliyyah used to customarily assemble, even if the act is done for the Sake of Allah. 

May Allah grant us success. May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions.

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