



Fatwa no. 4521

Q: I am writing this letter to inquire about

offering Salah (prayer) in a Masjid (mosque) with a grave inside it. Some scholars say that it is impermissible to pray there and if there is no other Masjid in town, it is better to pray at home than in a Masjid with a grave inside it. Other scholars say that it is permissible to pray there, because the grave of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) is inside his Masjid, as well as the graves of his two Companions, Abu Bakr and 'Umar. This matter seems confusing to me, so I wrote this letter to inquire about the truth. I live in the countryside of Senegal where there is only one Masjid in our town in which there are four graves.

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Three of them are outside the Masjid, but they are adjacent to its southern part, whereas the fourth is completely inside the Masjid. Please inform me of the truth supported by evidence, as I know nothing about this matter, therefore I am asking you, for Allah says in His Glorious Book (what means): (So ask the people of the Scripture, if you do not know.) (Surah Al-Nahl, 16: 43).

A: First: it is impermissible to build Masjids over graves, or offer Salah in a Masjid that was built over a grave or graves, as it is authentically established that Lady `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, *“When death came upon the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), he started to cast a garment of his over his face, and when it made him short of breath, he would remove it from his face; while in that state he said, ‘May the Curse of Allah be upon the Jews and the Christians; for they have taken the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.’”* (Aisha said), *“He was warning against (doing) what they did.”* She also said, *“Had it not been for that, his grave would have been made prominent, but he feared lest it might be taken as a place of worship.”* Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. Jundub ibn `Abdullah (may Allah be pleased with him) also narrated that he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him), five days before his death, saying, *“I, before Allah, disown having taken anyone of you as a Khalil (close friend), for Allah has taken me as a Khalil as He took Ibrahim (Abraham) as a Khalil. Were I to have taken anyone from among my Ummah (nation) as a Khalil, I would have taken Abu Bakr as a Khalil. Beware! Those who came before you used to take the graves of their Prophets and righteous people as places of worship. Do not take graves as places of worship; I forbid you to do that.”* Narrated by Muslim. The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade building Masjids over graves, and cursed those who do so, which indicates that it is one of the major sins.

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Building Masjids over graves and offering Salah in them is an exceeding of the limits in religion and a means leading to Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship), we seek refuge with Allah from that; therefore, `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said, *“He was warning against (doing) what they did.”* She also said, *“Had it not been for that, his grave would have been made prominent, but he feared lest it might be taken as a place of worship.”*

Second: If the Masjid has been built over a grave, it should be demolished, because it has been established upon something other than what Allah has ordained. Maintaining the Masjid and continuing to pray in it is persistence in the sin of establishing it, also an exceeding of the limits in religion, and glorification of those upon whose grave the Masjid was built, which may lead to Shirk - we seek refuge in Allah from that. Allah the Exalted says (what means): [\(Do not exceed the limits in your religion\)](#) The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: [\(“Beware of exceeding the limits in religion, for those who came before you were destroyed because of exceeding the limits in religion.”\)](#)

If the Masjid has not been built over a grave and a dead body was buried there later, it should not be demolished; however, the body should be exhumed and buried outside in a Muslim cemetery, because burying it in the Masjid is a Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect), which can be only eliminated by removing its cause.

Third: The Prophet (peace be upon him) laid the foundation of his Masjid (Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy) on piety to Allah and His Good Pleasure.

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) was not buried there after his death, rather he was buried in the room of Lady `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her). When Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) died, he was buried with him in the same room, and when `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) died, he was also buried there. This room was not inside the Masjid or in the direction of its Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah), but to the left of the praying place, outside the Masjid. It did not become part of the Masjid when `Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) enlarged Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy, but it was included after the time of the Al-Khulafa' Al-Rashidun (the Rightly-Guided Caliphs) (may Allah be pleased with them). Therefore, Salah there is permissible; it is even better than a thousand Salah elsewhere, except in Al-Masjid Al-Haram which is not like those Masjids that have been established over graves or in which people were later buried, as Salah is prohibited in them.

Fourth: You are not allowed to offer obligatory Salah at home; you must perform it in congregation with some of your fellow Muslim brothers in any place other than the Masjid which was built over a grave, even if in an open area. You must establish another Masjid based upon what Allah has ordained in order to offer the Five Obligatory Daily Prayers in accordance with Shari`ah (Islamic law) and away from what Allah has prohibited.

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

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