



The second question of Fatwa no. 4297

Q 2: What is the ruling of Shari'ah (Islamic law) on visiting the graves of pious people. When a man travels to the grave of a pious person, accompanied by his family and relatives, among which are women. They take a ewe with them to slaughter near the grave, then they serve food, eat, drink, and stay by the graveside for a whole day or a part of a day; sometimes until early morning. The grave is 20 km, more or less, away from the house.

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They also give some of the meat to their friends and relatives who live in another area, as a gift or Sadaqah (voluntary charity). Although people know that the Name of Allah was mentioned on slaughtering the animal, some of them say that this meat is as Haram (prohibited) to eat as pork. However, Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says (what means): (So eat of that (meat) on which Allâh's Name has been pronounced (while slaughtering the animal)) The purpose of this journey, from its beginning to its end, is only to draw close to Allah, through visiting the grave of this pious man and supplicating there, seeking his blessings, and seeking to draw close to Allah (Tawassul) through him. When a dispute arises between two people, they take oaths at the grave of this pious man and people also hold an annual commemoration of his birthday at his grave. It is also one of our customs that, when one of us becomes sick, we go to the graves of the pious people, or if one of us becomes mentally ill or seriously ill, our relatives take us to the graves of the pious people. Sometimes the people are cured of their physical or mental illness due to the visit they pay to the graves of the righteous. What is the Islamic opinion on this? Please enlighten us, may Allah be merciful to you!

A: First: It is not permissible to undertake a journey to visit graves, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed, saying: (No journey should be made except to three Masjids (mosques): This Masjid of mine (Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy in Madinah), Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah), and Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa (the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem).)

Second: Visiting graves is only lawful for men, not women. It can only be done if the grave is in the same area, i.e. can be visited without having to undertake a journey; if the purpose of the visit is to take admonition and supplicate to Allah for those buried there, if they are Muslims. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said in this regard: (I had forbidden you to visit graves, but you may visit them now, for they remind you of the Hereafter.)

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Graves should be visited following the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), when he visited those buried in Al-Baqi' and the martyrs of Uhud, by greeting the occupants with peace and supplicating to Allah for them.

Third: Calling upon the dead, seeking help and strength from them, offering sacrifices to them, or believing that they can bring benefit, avert harm, cure the sick, bring back absent ones, all these and

their like are acts of major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) that take a person out of Islam.

Fourth: Slaughtering animals as sacrifice to Allah at graves to obtain blessings from their occupants, supplicating to Allah particularly there, staying there for a long time in the hope of attaining blessings from their occupants, performing Tawassul (seeking to draw close to Allah through lawful/unlawful means) through their honor or right, are all acts of Bid'ah (innovation in religion) and also means that can lead to major Shirk. Therefore, it is Haram (prohibited) to do any of these acts and those who do so should be advised against this.

Fifth: As for slaughtering animals specifically at graves, seeking the blessings of those buried there, it is Munkar (unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law) and Bid'ah; therefore, it is unlawful to eat this meat so as to block all means and ways leading to Shirk. If the sacrificial animal is slaughtered with the intention of drawing close to those buried in the grave, it is an act of major Shirk, even if the Name of Allah is mentioned on slaughtering it. This is because the action of the heart is more significant than the physical action (words) of the tongue, as it is the basis in all acts of 'Ibadah (worship).

Sixth: As for recovery of some sick people who have had contact with or been to graves, this does not provide evidence for the permissibility of these acts.

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In fact, the recovery might just have occurred coincidentally at that time, due to the Predestination of Allah. This may cause some ignorant people to think that it occurred by the aid of the pious man buried in the grave. It may also be the work of Satan, as some needs of the worshippers of idol and Jinn may be carried by Satan; therefore, this cannot be used as evidence of the permissibility of their doing so. In fact, these actions are Shirk, even if some needs are fulfilled, because the devils may be enticing these people through this into persisting in acts of Shirk. Actually, cure happened only because it coincided with the time predestined by Allah for getting cured.

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

Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta'

Member	Chairman
`Abdullah ibn Qa`ud	`Abdul-`Aziz ibn `Abdullah ibn Baz

Source: Fatwas of the Permanent Committee