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Tawassul

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Fatwa no. 315

Q: There is a grave in our village which is said to belong to one of the righteous people. A house was built over this grave and there are two people appointed to take care of it. These people inherited this mission from their fathers. They tell people: "This night, the dweller of this grave said so and so and asked for so and so. They have attracted people's hearts that live beside the grave. People believe everything that is said by these two people. Therefore, people make Tawaf (circumambulation) around the grave, sacrifice animals for its sake, etc. What is the ruling on a person who thinks that this Waliy (pious person) brings benefit or causes harm? Is it permissible to vow or sacrifice for the sake of this Waliy? What should someone do if they know that these things contradict Shari`ah (Islamic law) especially if they live with these people?

A: The guidance of the Messenger (peace be upon him) in visiting the graves is clear in Sahih Hadiths (Hadiths that have been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish). Muslim reported in his Sahih Book of Hadith that Buraydah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: *(The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to teach them when they went out to the graveyard to say: 'Peace be upon the inhabitants of the graves from among believers and Muslims. Verily we will, In Sha`a-Allah (if Allah wills), join you. I beg of Allah peace for us and for you. You have preceded us.*

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We ask Allah to give us and you good.') Imam Ahmad and Al-Tirmidhy related, and the latter considered it to be Hasan (a Hadith whose chain of narration contains a narrator with weak exactitude, but is free from eccentricity or blemish), on the authority of Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) that he said: *(The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) passed by the graves at Al-Madinah. He turned his face towards them and said: 'May you be granted safety, O dwellers of the graves. May Allah forgive us and you. You have preceded us, and we are to follow.'*)

The four Rightly-Guided Caliphs followed the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as did those who followed them in righteousness. If those who visit graves go there to make Du`a' (supplication) to Allah believing that this may be more beneficial in answering their Du`a' and want to use them as a means or intercessors with Allah, then these deeds are prohibited as they are not ordained by Shari`ah. Means have the same ruling as ends. Allah (Exalted be He) says: *(Say: (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم to polytheists, pagans) "Call upon those whom you assert (to be*

associate gods) besides Allāh, they possess not even an atom's (or a small ant's) weight either in the heavens or on the earth, nor have they any share in either, nor there is for Him any supporter from among them.) The Ayah (Qur'anic verse) denotes that those who are called upon beside Allah are either possessors or not; if they are not possessors, then they may be partners; if they are not partners, they may be helpers; if they are not helpers, they may be intercessors without Allah's permission. All four things are false and invalid. Therefore, we can only go by the fifth thing i.e. no one

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intercedes except with Allah's permission. The saying of Allah (Exalted be He): [\(…and they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased.\)](#) Proves that Allah's satisfaction and permission to the one who intercedes is a condition for Shafa`ah (intercession). Those are the two conditions for Shafa`ah. The Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with them) did not perform Tawassul (supplicating to Allah through a means) with the Prophet (peace be upon him). They used to ask him to make Du`a' to Allah for them. Seeking the help of a living present person who is able to do so is permissible provided that he is not asked any thing that is due to Allah. This is the rule for those who are alive. On the contrary, dead people should not be asked or sought as intercessors as this is one of the avenues that lead to Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship).

As for the people who stay beside graves, they are of two kinds:

Firstly: In case that the aim of staying beside the grave is to offer `Ibadah (worship) to Allah Alone, it is still not permissible as it combines between the sin of staying beside the grave and the sin of offering `Ibadah to Allah beside the graves. This is also one of the ways that leads to Shirk that was prohibited by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). As for the prohibition of staying beside graves, Al-Tirmidhy related a Hadith in his book al-Jami` and considered it to be Sahih on the authority of Abu Waqid Al-Laythy that he said: [\(We went out with Allah's Messenger \(peace be upon him\) on the campaign to Hunayn and we had just abandoned Kufr \(disbelief\) for Islam. Mushriks \(those who associate others with Allah in worship\) had a Sidra \(lote-tree\) that they would stay there and hang their arms on, called Dhat Anwat. When we passed by a Sidra, we asked: 'O Messenger of Allah, will not you make for us another Dhat Anwat just like their Dhat Anwat?' Allah's Messenger \(peace be upon him\) said: 'Allah is the Most Great! Verily these are the ways of earlier nations. By the One \(Allah\) Who holds my soul in His Hand,](#)

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[You have said exactly as the Children of Israel said to Musa \(Moses, peace be upon him\): 'Make for us a god just as their gods.' He said: 'Verily you are a people who know not.' Certainly you will follow the ways of those who were before you.'](#))

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told them that asking for a tree to stay beside and to hang their arms on it seeking its blessings is similar to the request of the Children of Israel when they asked Musa to make a god for them. Staying beside graves is similar to that. Al-Tirmidhy, Abu Dawud and Ibn Majah related in their Sunan (Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: [\(Do not make your houses graves, and do not make my grave a place of celebration but invoke blessings on me, for your blessings reach me wherever you may be.\)](#) Offering `Ibadah to Allah beside graves is prohibited by the Prophet (peace be upon him). Al-Bukhari and Muslim related on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: [\(Let Allah destroy the Jews for they have taken the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.\)](#) The prohibition of using graves as Masjids

(mosques) includes using them as places for offering `Ibadah to Allah or to anyone other than Allah whether it is in a Masjid or not.

Coming to the dweller of this grave and making Du`a' to him believing that they bring benefit and cause harm is an act of Al-Shirk-ul-Akbar (major form of associating others in worship with Allah). Whoever indulges in such practice is either aware of its ruling or not.

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In case that they persist in committing such grave sin though they know its ruling, they are regarded as Mushriks who are out of the fold of Islam. If he does not know the truth, he has to be shown the truth. On the other hand, in case that they accept the truth after being pointed out to him, they are not to be blamed. But in case that they insist on their views, they are regarded as Mushriks. There are many proofs for this. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿Say: (O Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم to these Mushrikûn and Kâfirûn): "O Al-Kafirûn (disbelievers in Allâh, in His Oneness, in His Angels, in His Books, in His Messengers, in the Day of Resurrection, and in Al-Qadar!)﴾ ﴿"I worship not that which you worship,﴾ Allah (Exalted be He) says ﴿"And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him."﴾ It is reported in a Hadith Qudsy (Revelation from Allah in the Prophet's words): ﴿If anyone does anything in which he associates anyone else with Me, I shall abandon him with one whom he associates with Allah.﴾ Moreover, it is impermissible to build a decorated house over the grave as it is a means of glorifying the person who is buried in it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised Aly ibn Abu Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) saying: ﴿Spare no portrait unwiped out, and leave not a high grave unleveled.﴾

It is authentically reported that: ﴿He (peace be upon him) forbade plastering graves, using them as sitting places (for people), or building over them.﴾ The duty of individual Muslims towards the foregoing is pointed out

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by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his saying: ﴿Whoever, among you, sees something abominable should rectify it with his hand; and if he has not strength enough to do it, then he should do it with his tongue; and if he has not strength enough to do it, (even) then he should (abhor it) from his heart, and that is the least of Faith.﴾ This building should be removed if it is possible to do so. As to living among these people, one should not live among them as long as they can live in another place. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can﴾ Regarding sacrificing and vowing for the sake of a Waliy, doing so is tantamount to Al-Shirk-ul-Akbar because these acts are forms of `Ibadah and Rights of Allah that should not be dedicated to any one other than Him. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿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."﴾ The Prophet (peace be upon him) says: ﴿"Whoever vows that he will be obedient to Allah, should remain obedient to Him; and whoever made a vow that he will disobey Allah, should not disobey Him."﴾ and ﴿A man vowed to slaughter camels in Buwanah and asked the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) about that. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Did the place contain any idol worshipped in pre-Islamic times?" They (the people) said: "No." He asked: "Was any pre-Islamic festival observed there?" They replied: "No." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

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"Fulfil your vow, for a vow to do an act of disobedience to Allah must not be fulfilled, neither must one do something over which a human being has no control.")

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

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