



Fatwa no. 7901

Q: I was in Madinah and went to visit Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy (the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah). I stood before the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and greeted him. I, then, invoked peace upon him from the booklet of a person standing there. The book includes no statements entailing Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship), but Allah knows best. We seek refuge in Allah from this! It includes statements of praise of the Messenger (peace be upon him), his family and Sahabah (Companions). It is the blue booklet currently circulating in the market. While reading in the book, I began to cry for I was sincerely praising the Prophet (peace be upon him) and invoking peace upon him. I once read in a book, whose name I do not recall, that when visiting the grave of the Messenger (peace be upon him), one should stand before the grave and greet the Messenger (peace be upon him) with reverence and sound faith

(Part No. 1; Page No. 760)

as if they are standing before him while he was still alive. I also heard a Hadith which means that Allah returns the soul of His Messenger (peace be upon him) to his body to return the greeting of whoever greets him. I felt nothing strange in what I did. However, a few days after this visit, I attended a religious lecture in Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy in which the lecturing shaykh warned against committing sinful deeds - as is stated in a Madh-hab (school of jurisprudence) - when visiting Al-Masjid Al-Nabawy. The shaykh added that visitors have to turn their backs to the grave and direct their faces towards the Qiblah (Ka`bah-direction faced in Prayer).

The shaykh warned against raising the hands in Du`a' (supplication) while standing at the grave and asking for the intermediation of the Messenger (peace be upon him). He even warned against other deeds which entail Al-Shirk-ul-Akbar or Al-Shirk-ul-Asghar (major or minor form of associating others in worship with Allah). At this point, I began to recall what I did on that day lest I might have committed something unlawful - may Allah save us. Since then, Satan has been bewildering me regarding what I did. I only invoked peace upon the Messenger (peace be upon him) and praised him. I was even standing with my left side towards the grave, casting a look at it from time to time. After the invocation of peace, I surprisingly found myself crying. I do not know why, was it because of the Muslims' status after the Prophet (peace be upon him) or because of my love for him? My mind was wavering with many thoughts and emotions while invoking peace upon him. May Your Eminence answer the following questions:

1- Did any of my actions entail Al-Shirk-ul-Akbar or Al-Shirk-ul-Asghar - may Allah save us?

(Part No. 1; Page No. 761)

2- What are the deeds entailing Al-Shirk-ul-Akbar and Al-Shirk-ul-Asghar? May you illustrate with examples of each?

3- Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says in the following Ayah (Qur'anic verse):

Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim (In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful) ﴿Say: "O 'Ibâdî (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allâh: verily, Allâh forgives all sins.﴾ **Allah is Most Truthful. Some Mufasssirs (exegetes of the Qur'an) state that Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) forgives all sins, including Shirk. Does the intended Shirk refer to Al-Shirk-ul-Asghar or Al-Shirk-ul-Akbar or to both of them?**

A: Firstly: It is permissible to invoke peace upon Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) while facing his grave. It is a good sign to cry while doing this only if you were crying due to your love for the Messenger (peace be upon him) and your noble feelings towards him and the wavering thoughts that filled your heart and mind did not entail Shirk. For example, you were just thinking of his being engaged in Da`wah (calling to Islam) and Jihad (fighting in the Cause of Allah), enduring hardships for the sake of making truth supreme, and other non-extremist thoughts.


As for Du`a' and raising the hands, they should be made while facing the Qiblah. In addition, Du`a' has to be for Allah Alone and should not be sought at the grave.

Secondly: Al-Shirk-ul-Akbar takes a person beyond the fold of Islam - may Allah save us. Examples are seeking help from the Messenger (peace be upon him) or from other dead persons,

(Part No. 1; Page No. 762)

making vows to anyone other than Allah, sacrificing for anyone other than Allah, making Sujud before anyone other than Allah, etc.

On the other hand, Al-Shirk-ul-Asghar is the greatest major sin. However, it does not take a person out of the fold of Islam. Examples are committing mild Riya' (showing-off), swearing by anyone other than Allah, and addressing a person saying, for example, "what Allah and you will" or "I put my trust in Allah and on you".

Thirdly:  Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿Say: "O 'Ibâdî (My slaves) who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allâh: verily, Allâh forgives all sins. Truly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.﴾ In this Ayah, Allah prohibits His servants from despairing of His Mercy and assuredly promises them that He forgives all sins, whether major or minor. He even forgives acts entailing Shirk if the doer repents of them. Thus, the Ayah is general as it signifies the forgiveness of any sin if the doer repents of it. Allah (Exalted be He) says: ﴿And verily, I am indeed forgiving to him who repents, believes (in My Oneness, and associates none in worship with Me) and does righteous good deeds, and then remains constant in doing them, (till his death).﴾

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

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