

Etiquette of visiting graves

Article taken and slightly adapted from: abdurrahman.org

Adapted from Mukhtasar Ahkaam al-Janaa'iz by Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question :

If I want to visit my father's grave, what should I do? What is the etiquette of visiting graveyards? Are there any things I should pay attention to?

Answer: Shaykh al-Albaanee (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹:

It is prescribed to visit graves in order to learn a lesson from that and to remember the Hereafter. That is subject to the condition that one does not say anything that will anger the Lord, such as calling upon the one who is buried or seeking his help instead of Allaah, or praising him and saying that he is for certain in Paradise, etc. The purpose of visiting the graves is twofold: (a) The visitor benefits from remembering death and the dead, remembering that their destiny will be either Paradise or Hell. This is the primary purpose of the visit.

(b) The deceased also benefits and is treated kindly by the visitor greeting him with salaams, making du'aa' for him, praying for forgiveness for him. This applies only to Muslims. Among the du'aa's that may be recited is:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ، نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ

“Assalaamu ‘alaykum ahl al-diyaar min al-mu’mineen wa’l-Muslimeen, insha’allaah bikum laahiqaan, as’al Allaaha lana wa lakum al-‘afiyah

(Peace be upon you O people of the dwellings, believers and Muslims, Insha’allaah we will join you, I ask Allaah to keep us and you safe and sound).”

It is permissible to raise the hands when reciting this du'aa', because of the hadeeth of 'Aaishah, the Mother of The Believers (رضي الله عنه)², who said: “The Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم)³ went out one night, and I sent Bareerah to follow him and see where he went. She (رضي الله عنه) said, ‘He went towards Baqee’ al-Gharqad [the graveyard in Madeenah], and he stood at the bottom of al-Baqee’ and raised his hands, then he went away.’ Bareerah came back to me and told me, and when morning came I asked him about it. I said, ‘O Messenger of Allaah, where did you go out to last night? He said, ‘I was sent to the people of al-Baqee’, to pray for them.’” But you should not face the grave when making du'aa' for them; rather you should face the direction of the Ka'bah, because the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade prayer (salaah) facing graves, and du'aa' is the heart and soul of salaah, as is well known, and is subject to the same rulings. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: “Du'aa' is worship”

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah have mercy on him

² (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) (rad iyallaahu `anhaa) May Allaah be pleased with her

³ (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) (sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him

Etiquette of visiting graves

then he recited the aayah (interpretation of the meaning): **“And your Lord said: “Invoke Me [i.e. believe in My Oneness (Islaamic Monotheism) and ask Me for anything] I will respond to your (invocation).”⁴ You should not walk between the graves of the Muslims wearing your shoes. It was narrated that ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Aamir (رضي الله عنه)⁵ said: “The Messenger of Allaah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said: ‘If I were to walk on hot coals or on a sword, or if I were to mend my shoes using my feet, that would be better for me than if I were to walk on the grave of a Muslim. And it makes no difference to me if I were to relieve myself in the midst of the graves or in the middle of the market-place [i.e., both are equally bad].”⁶**

We ask Allaah, the Most High, the Omnipotent, to have mercy upon our dead and the deceased Muslims.

⁴ Soorah Ghaafir [40:60]

⁵ (رضي الله عنه) (rad iyallaahu `anhu) May Allaah be pleased with him

⁶ Narrated by Ibn Maajah, 1567