

## Visiting the graves of pious people

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Question:** What is the ruling of Sharee'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 part of a day, and sometimes until early morning. The grave is 20 km, more or less, away from the house.

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 Allaah was mentioned on slaughtering the animal, some of them say that this meat is as Haram (prohibited) as eating pork. However, Allaah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: **[So eat of that (meat) on which Allaah's Name has been pronounced (while slaughtering the animal)]**. The purpose of this journey, from its beginning to its end, is only to approach Allaah through visiting the grave of this pious man and supplicating there, seeking his blessings, and seeking to draw close to Allaah (Tawassul) through him. When a dispute arises between two people, they take oaths at the grave of this pious man. 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 pious people, or if one of us becomes mentally ill or seriously ill, our relatives take us to the graves of 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 ruling on this? Please enlighten us, may Allaah be merciful to you.

**Answer:** **Firstly**, it is not permissible to undertake a journey to visit graves because the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم)<sup>1</sup> instructed, saying: **No journey should be made except to three Masjids (mosques): This Masjid of mine (Al-Masjid Al-Nabawee in Madinah), Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Makkah), and Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa (the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem).**

**Secondly**, visiting graves is only lawful for men, not women, if the grave is in the same area, i.e. can be visited without having to travel. This applies as long as the purpose of the visit is to take admonition and supplicate to Allaah for those buried there, if they are Muslims. The

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<sup>1</sup> (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

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Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said in this regard: **I had forbidden you to visit graves, but you may visit them, for they remind you of the hereafter.**

Graves should be visited following the example of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) when he visited those buried in Al-Baqee' and the martyrs of Uhud, by greeting the occupants with peace and supplicating to Allaah for them.

**Thirdly**, 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 Allaah in His Divinity or worship that takes the Muslim out of Islam).

**Fourthly**, slaughtering animals as sacrifice to Allaah at graves to obtain blessings from their occupants, supplicating to Allaah particularly there, staying there for a long time in the hope of attaining blessings from their occupants, performing Tawassul (seeking to draw close to Allaah through means) through their honour or right, are all acts of Bid'ah (innovation in religion) and can lead to major Shirk. Therefore, it is Haram (prohibited) to do any of these acts and those who do this should be advised to refrain from such practices.

**Fifthly**, slaughtering animals specifically at graves, seeking the blessings of those buried there, is Munkar (unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law) and Bid'ah. Consequently, it is unlawful to eat this meat to block all means and ways leading to Shirk. If the sacrificial animal is slaughtered with the intention of pleasing and drawing closer to those buried in the grave, it is an act of major Shirk, even if the Name of Allaah is mentioned on slaughtering it. This is because the action of the heart is more significant than the physical action (words) of the tongue; it constitutes the basis in all acts of 'Ibaadah (worship).

**Sixthly**, recovery of some sick people who have had contact with or been to graves does not provide evidence for the permissibility of these acts. The recovery might just have coincided with the time predestined by Allaah for healing, which causes some ignorant people to believe that it occurred by the aid of the pious man buried in the grave. It might also be the work of Satan who fulfils some needs of the worshippers of idol and Jinn. Therefore, this cannot be used as evidence for the permissibility of doing so. These actions are actually Shirk, even if some needs are fulfilled, because the devils may be luring these people through such traps into persisting in acts of Shirk. Actually, cure happened only because it coincided with the time predestined by Allaah for getting cured.

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

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