

Acts that are Carried out at the Tombs of Saints

Q: Imaan-73: What is the ruling of the Shari'ah concerning the annual Urs and Meelaad celebrations that are carried out at the tombs or Ghanqas of the saints on fixed days of the year or on the days in which they passed away?

Answer: It is a Sunnah practice to visit graves and tombs to take lessons, to make du'aa for forgiveness and to recite Qur'aan, etc and to confer the rewards to the deceased. These acts are permissible and not at all forbidden. It is, however, not permissible gather collectively on a specific date every year and to regard this to be a command of the Shari'ah and something that has to be done.

There has never been anything of the like practised during the time of Rasulullaah SAW. and the Sahabah RADI. This is a practice of the Ahlul Kitaab, had it been Islaamic in origin, the first Urs would have been celebrated in honour of Rasulullaah SAW. Thereafter, Urs celebrations should have taken place in honour of the other Ambiyaa ALY. and the Khulafaa Raashideen. However,? Rasulullaah SAW. clearly stated. "Do not make my grave a place of celebration. The following three factors are to be found at a celebration: (1) Specification of a date (2) gathering of people and (3) festivities. This Hadith therefore prohibits people from gathering at the graveside on specific dates and engaging in festivities.

Commenting on the above Hadith, Allaama Muhammad Taahir RAH. writes that the Hadith prohibits the gathering of people by the graveside as people gather together on the day of Eid in happiness and joy. This is contrary to the behavior that ought to be displayed at gravesides and really is a practice of the Ahlul Kitaab (Jews and Christians), which led to their hearts becoming hardened.

There is therefore no specific date in which to visit the tomb of Rasulullaah SAW. for one may visit it as often as one pleases to do so in the year. When it is not permissible to gather for any Urs celebration at the grave of Rasulullaah SAW., how can it then be permissible at the grave of any other person? It is for this reason that the Fuqahaa, the Muhadditheen and the other pious predecessors have all stated that it is not permissible to celebrate the customary Urs.

Hadhrat Qaadhi Thanaa'ullaah Paanipati RAH. who was the devoted student of Shah Wali'ullaah RAH. and successor of Hadhrat Miza Mazhar Jaanjaan RAH. writes in his Tafseer Mazhari, "The actions that ignorant people carry out by the graves of the saints and martyrs is not permissible since such acts include prostration, Tawaaf around the graves, lighting lanterns and gathering there annually for a celebration the term as Urs." The same is stated by Hadhrat Shah Muhammad Is'haaq RADI. in his Masaa'il Arba'een (P9.42) and this is also evident from the text of. Majaalisul Abraar (Majlis 17, Pg. 118).

All the above authors are also considered to be the leaders of the Bereli scholars. Apart from the issues surrounding belief, there are also the many issues concerning improper actions that have to be considered. These have forced even the Bereli scholars such as Molvi Flashmat Ali

to prohibit attending such functions (as has been quoted earlier) when he states: "It is, however, best to visit the tombs of Peeraan Kaleer, Ajmer and others after the festivities because acts of Bid'ah and other impermissible acts are often carried out during these occasions and a person may be unable to control himself. Carrying out sins in the presence of the saints makes the sin worse." (Majma'ul Masaa'il Vol.1 Pg.110).

Fatawa Rahimiyyah (Vol.1)

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