



Fatwa No. 5339:

Q: A celebration called `Urs is held every year in our country. This celebration takes place around the grave of a man whom people claim was one of the Awliya` (pious people). Since the purpose of such celebrations is to grant the deceased a reward, people slaughter cows and sheep and feed every one. However, the so-called `Urs is not only an invitation to have food but a way to draw closer to Allah through Tawassul (supplicating to Allah through a means) by the deceased.

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All the graves of the Awliya' (pious people) are lit up with colored lamps during the celebration. Leveled graves and their surroundings are decorated with marble and cement. Media and people and journalists are invited to join in the celebration. A stick is lit, the birthday of the Prophet (may peace be upon him) is celebrated, and people invoke Allah's peace and blessings on the Prophet loudly while standing and sitting. They chant songs of thanking and praising Allah (may He be Exalted) without using musical instruments. People call the foregoing Dhikr Jaliy (apparent Remembrance of Allah). They touch the graves claiming that they are blessed by doing so, and they recite the Qur'an around the graves and perform Salah (Prayer) beside them.

During this celebration both gifts and money are accepted and the latter is spent on buying courtyards, constructing houses for visitors to stay in, or building Masjids (mosques) over or above the graves. The visiting men, women, and children hope for Allah's Mercy and ask Him to grant them children and wealth, relieve their distresses, and cure their sick. The deceased family or the organizer of the celebration calls on the visitors to give their pledge of allegiance that they will follow the tradition of the deceased. This is the main aim of the whole celebration because people believe that this pledge of allegiance leads to right guidance and they use it for making Tawassul. People undertake long distance journeys to visit the graves. Some people come from outside the country so that photos and the news of their arrival are published in newspapers. People are called to hasten to give gifts

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and money. They are also urged to accept the gifts that the organizers of the celebration give to them before leaving. Visitors usually receive gifts of flowers from the grave of the deceased, his garden, or the garden of the person who looks after the grave. Moreover, the organizers of this celebration send out printed letters to different people around the world including the people of the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. This is something that I have personally seen. Some of these letters have been written to Bangladeshi and Pakistani Muslims in their languages and sent to them in Saudi Arabia where they live and work. The letters that I have seen were sent by a representative called Ajmiz Al-Sharif who wrote from India explaining the rituals of the celebration, i.e.

the way and time of doing (Tawaf, circumambulation around the grave) and the way and time on which the (door of Jannah; Paradise) - that is claimed to be by the end of the grave's site - is open. We seek refuge with Allah from all this. Any way, the organizers encourage people to send gifts along with the addresses of their friends, whatever they might be, to be contacted by them. They also warn people that they will receive a divine punishment if they do not send gifts or do what they are ordered. Thus, people yield to such commands lest they should be punished thinking that they are doing good. Also, in our country there is a stream beside the grave of a pious man who passed away seven hundred years ago. This man was Da'iyah Ila Al-Islam (One who calls people to Islam). His name was Shah Jalal Al-Yamany (may Allah be merciful with him) who lived in Salmat and he is famous historically. However, the fish of this stream are said to be holy so when it dies people perform Funeral Prayer on it and bury it. Moreover, most of the people of this region do not eat pigeons; or rather, they are prevented from eating them for some people claim they are ascribed to that righteous man. Some people believe that the pigeons of this region are

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owned by Shah Jalal so they do not eat them. Moreover, in our country a turtle is claimed to be holy and there are some other things that are very sad. To give an example, a very strange thing happened earlier this week. A man, who follows a shaykh about whom we know nothing, announced that he will do `Urs for his shaykh. Thus, he imported 25 camels from Pakistan (camels are very rare in our country and we only read about them in stories about the deserts and the Arabs). He bought thousands of cows and sheep and put them in exhibitions in the capital so that the people could see them. He marked and garlanded all those animals. The people were fascinated by this. They came to these exhibitions in huge numbers along with the full army and ran in rows in front of and behind the animals. Hundreds of thousands of common people joined this `Urs, which continued for three days. It was also attended by a large number of heads of state and high military and civilian authorities both inside and outside the government who came by car and helicopter. The guiding representative took the pledge of allegiance from them all. By Allah this abominable incident actually happened! We have never seen the like of it before. We are afraid that our Iman (faith) may be weak for people always follow the way of their kings; or that our leaders reflect the level of our weak Iman. May Allah forgive us for, verily, He is the Oft-Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

People are still building new graves here and there, and inviting others to these deviated celebrations. They call them

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to spend money on such things, and encourage and warn them with false stories about the majesty and greatness of the deceased or the Waliy (pious man). Thus, cars and processions stand beside the graves and people simply throw money there or greet the deceased. Consequently, these graves have turned into sources of making money, we seek refuge with Allah from that.

Please give us a detailed Fatwa regarding all these things in the light of the Book of Allah, the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) of His Messenger (peace be upon him), and the Ijma` (consensus) of the Muslim Ummah (nation) so as to clear away misconceptions. Success is only from Allah (may He be Exalted). We put our trust in Allah

and make Du`a' (supplication) that Allah protects us from bad deeds, Shirk (associating others in worship with Allah), and Bid`ah (rejected innovation in religion). We ask Allah to help us to offer `Ibadah to Him alone and to follow the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). May He guide the Muslims, especially those in our country, Bangladesh and in all other Muslim countries. Our Iman is weak and many of us can not resist the temptations of this world. Please tell us about our duties concerning the religious crisis mentioned above. Your Fatwa is very important. Please answer us soon because the Kafirs (disbelievers) and Satans are very quick towards Kufr (disbelief), Shirk, and Bid`ah, while we are heedless of these dangers! May Allah forgive us all.

A: All the things mentioned in the question are undoubtedly practices of Munkar (that which is unacceptable or disapproved of by Islamic law and Muslims of sound intellect), Bid`ah, and deviation. Satan inspired such practices through those who organized these sinful events. The organizers are only people who seek money and to affect those with weak minds and insight to turn them away from the Straight Path of Allah which He guided the Al-Firqah Al-Najiyah (the saved sect) to.

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It is impermissible to celebrate the birth day of any Shaykh or prophet. Also, slaughtering for the sake of other than Allah is impermissible; rather, it is Shirk Akbar (major form of associating others in worship with Allah) and any person who dies in that state will be punished eternally in Hellfire for Allah (may He be Exalted) says: ﴿ Say (O Muhammad peace be upon him): 'Verily, my Salâh, 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...) Similarly, it is not permissible to seek blessings from the rocks or dust of graves for this is a kind of `Ibadah (worship) and offering `Ibadah to other than Allah is Shirk Akbar. By the same token, it is impermissible to construct buildings over graves or to plaster or marble them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) forbade all of this. Islam does not allow any form of `Ibadah to be offered at graves whether it is Salah, recitation of the Qur'an, slaughtering animals, distributing food or Tawaf. Visiting graves is only allowed for receiving admonition and making Du`a' for those who dwell therein. Islam completely prohibits making Tawassul through the dead, their honor, or their right. Rather, this is regarded as Bid`ah and is a means to Shirk. Tawassul should only be through the Names and Attributes of Allah, His Tawhid (Oneness of Allah), Iman, and all good deeds. There is a Hadith which proves that seeking blessings from graves and those who dwell therein is prohibited and regarded as Shirk Akbar. This Hadith is related authentically by Al-Tirmidhy and others on the authority of Abu Waqid Al-Laythy who said: ﴿ We went out with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) on the campaign to Hunayn when we had just left kufr for Islam. The Mushriks (those who associate others with Allah in worship) had a Sidrah (lote tree) and they would stay there and hang their weapons upon it. It was called Dhat Anwat. When we passed by a Sidrah, we said: 'O Messenger of Allaah, make for us another Dhat Anwat just like theirs. The Messenger of Allaah said: 'Allaahu Akbar! By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, verily these are the ways of the earlier nations. You have said exactly as the Children of Israel said to Musa ﴿ Make for us an ilâh (a god) as they have âlihah (gods). ﴾ ﴾

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

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