

6. Performance Of Prayer And Supplication Near Graves Of The Holy Personalities

Among the matters that has been discussed and debated in the books of Wahhabis is the issue of performing prayer and recitation of *du'a* near the graves of the holy personalities and the matter of lighting candles over their graves.

The founder of Wahhabi school of thought says in the treatise of *Ziyarat Al-Qubur* as such:

لم يذكر أحد من أئمة السلف أن الصلاة عند القبور وي مشاهدا مستحبة ولا أن الصلاة والدعاء هناك افضل بل إتفقوا كلهم على أن الصلاة في المساجد والبيوت افضل منها عند قبور الأولياء والصالحين

“No one from the past leaders has said that salat near the graves is mustahab (recommended) or that salat and du'a at these places are more superior to other places. Instead all of them are of the same view that salat in mosques and houses are more useful than reciting them near the graves of the awliya' and virtuous people.”¹

Moreover, in a reply attributed to the scholars of Medina we read as such:

أما التوجه إلى حجرة النبي (صلى الله عليه وآله) عند الدعاء فالاولى منعه كما هو معروف من معتبرات كُتب المذاهب ولأن افضل الجهات ، جهة القبلة

“At the time of supplication, it is better to stop from concentrating over the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) and what is well-known in the reliable books is its prohibition. Moreover the best direction is the direction of qibla.”

This matter, over the passage of time has reached the level of *shirk* (polytheism) from the level of prohibition and at present they consider such an action to be *shirk* and its performer a *mushrik*

(polytheist).

We remind you that anyone who performs *salat* for and worships the one in the grave or takes his grave as a *qibla* will undoubtedly be called a *mushrik*.

But no Muslim from anywhere in the world performs such an action near the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) and the *awliya'*. They neither worship them nor take their graves as *qibla*.

Therefore the idea of *shirk* is no more than an imagination. The motive of Muslims in performing *salat* and *du'a* near the graves of the *awliya'* is the very intention of *tabarruk* to the place where the beloved one of Allah has been buried.

They imagine that since such a place beholds a special dignity due to the burial of the beloved one of Allah, their actions will consequently be having a great reward.

Now it is necessary to discuss whether a place enjoys sanctification due to the burial of some virtuous and pious person or not?

If such a judgment is proved through the Qur'an and *sunnah*, then naturally performing *salat* and *du'a* near the graves of the divine leaders will be considered as commendable acts. And, even in other case, we cannot declare it to be prohibited and *haram*. Instead, like all the other places, performing *salat* and reciting *du'a* in those places too will be permitted and lawful even though it may not be considered admirable.

In this section we shall now focus our discussion on whether the burial places and graves of the Prophets and *awliya'* are possessing special superiority and dignity or not and whether any proof exists in the Qur'an and *sunnah* about this matter or not?

This reality can be known by paying attention to the following verses:

1. About the grave of 'Ashaab Al-Kahf', the group of monotheists, gave their views as such:

لَتَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَسْجِدًا

...For we will set up a place of worship over them. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Kahf, 18:21)

Their aim in considering the graves as mosques was nothing but to perform their religious obligations or, so to speak, their prayer and *du'a* over there.² They imagined that this place possessed a special dignity keeping in mind the fact that it contained the dead bodies of the beloved servants of Allah. They thought of seeking *tabarruk* from the superiority of that place and hence a greater reward.

Qur'an narrates this matter from the group of monotheists and does not say anything more. If this action

was unlawful, vain and useless, then Qur'an would have never remained silent. It would have certainly found fault with it and not kept silent which is naturally the sign of approval.

2. The Holy Qur'an commands the people visiting the House of Allah to recite *salat* at *Maqam Ibrahim* i.e. the place where Ibrahim (a) was standing.

Thus it says:

وَاتَّخِذُوا مِنْ مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى

And appoint for yourselves a place of prayer on the standing-place of Ibrahim. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2: 125)

If you place this verse before anyone they will not understand anything from it except that this place has achieved superiority and dignity due to the standing of Ibrahim (a) over this spot and perhaps his worshipping of Allah in that place. Due to the auspiciousness and dignity this spot possesses, the Holy Qur'an orders the Muslims to recite *salat* at that spot and seek '*tabarruk*'.

When the *Qiyam* (standing) of Ibrahim (a) in one place gives holiness and dignity to such a place then, does not the burial of the bodies of martyrs and virtuous people become the source of dignity and excellence and does not prayers in such a place possess a greater value and dua's get better answered?

Is it true that this verse has been revealed only in the case of Ibrahim and we cannot derive a general judgement from it!?

Dawaniqi³ entered into a debate with Imam Malik (the founder of Maliki School of thought) in the mosque of the Holy Prophet (S) and said: "*Should we stand facing the qibla at the time of du'a or should we face the grave of the Holy Prophet (S)?*" Malik replied: "*Why should you turn away from the Holy Prophet (S) while he is your channel and your father, i.e. Adam's (a) channel?! Instead turn towards the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) and take him as your intercessor and request him to intercede on your behalf.*"⁴

This conversation and discussion shows that *du'a* near the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) was having no problem and difficulty and the question of Mansur to the leader of Medina was about the preference of one (act) over the other and Imam Malik replied that paying attention to the grave is like paying attention to the *qibla*.

3. Reference to the incident of *mi'raj* will make this fact more evident since it has come in the traditions of *mi'raj* that the Holy Prophet (S) recited *salat* in places like Taiyyaba, Mount Sinai and Bethlehem.

Jibra'eel came to him and said: 'O Prophet! Do you know the place where you recited *salat*? You have

performed your prayer at the birth place of 'Isa' (Jesus).[5](#)

From this tradition we come to know that performing *salat* in places that have been in contact with the body of a Prophet have great significance and *tabarruk* to this particular place was because of Hazrat Isa's birth in that place and nothing else.

4. 'Hajar' and 'Ismail', due to their patience in the path of Allah and their forbearance for being away from home, reached to such position that the places where they used to walk became the places of worship (i.e. the places between Safa and Marwa).[6](#)

The following is the saying of the student of Ibn Taymiyyah.

"If really the places of strides of these two persons who, because of their patience and forbearance in the path of Allah became so much Holy that the Muslims have been ordered to worship God in these places, then why the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) who has exhibited the greatest of patience and steadfastness on the path of rectifying the society cannot be considered as Holy and sacred and why salat and du'a cannot be recited near such a place?"

5. If truly performing *salat* near the grave is unlawful, then how *Umm Al-Mu'minin* (Ayesha) during her remaining life time performed *salat* and worshipped in her chamber where the Holy Prophet (S) was buried.

The meaning of the Holy Prophet's tradition: (*"God has cursed the Jews and the Christians for considering the graves of their Prophets as mosques"*[7](#)) which the Islamic traditionists narrate and which the Wahhabis utilize for proving the prohibition of *salat* near the graves of *awliya'* is because they were prostrating over the grave of their Prophets or that they were taking their graves as *qibla* both of which were unlawful. If the meaning of the tradition is what they say then why Ayesha, narrator of the tradition, performed *salat* in her chamber for approximately fifty years.

6. If the burial place of the Holy Prophet (S) is not having any special significance, then why the two Sheikhs insisted that they should be buried in that place?

Why Al-Hasan ibn Ali (a) mentioned in his will that his Holy body should be buried near his great grandfather and if not possible due to his enemies, he should be buried in the cemetery of Baqi'!?

And what relation this tradition has with the actions of the Muslims who perform *salat* for the sake of God, facing the *qibla* near the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) and their motive is only to derive virtue from that place!

The daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) whose happiness as per the decree of traditions of *Sihah* is the happiness of her God and Messenger and her anger is the anger of her God and Messenger used to visit every Friday the grave of her Uncle Hamza (r) and perform *salat* and mourn in that place. Here is the text of history[8](#):

كانت فاطمة رضى الله عنها تزور عمها حمزة كل جمعة فتصلي وتبكي عنده

These reasons jointly show us the path of the Muslims who were always reciting *salat* and supplications in places where the beloved ones of Allah and the self-sacrificers on the path of truth had been buried and gives the message that *salat* and supplication in such places enjoy more honor and superiority and the motive is only to seek *tabarruk* from that sacred place.

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Let us suppose that there is no proof from Qur'an and traditions that such a place possesses distinction and performing *salat* and *du'a* in such a place is honorable. But why prayer in such a place should be considered as prohibited? Why such a place should not be included in the general principles of Islam which considers all the places on earth to be the places of worshipping God⁹ so that the Muslims are able to perform prayer near the graves of the beloved ones of Allah!?

Previously, we had mentioned to you about the motive of the traditions which says that the Jews and Christians have taken the graves of their Prophets as mosques and never such a tradition includes those who perform *salat* and *du'a* facing the *qibla* for the sake of God.

The matter of lighting candles and so on over the graves of the beloved ones of God which the Wahhabis strictly prohibit is not an important matter since their references is the same tradition of *Sunan Al-Nasa'i* who narrates from Ibn Abbas that the Holy Prophet (S) has cursed the women visiting the graves and those who turn the graves into mosques and light the candles.¹⁰ This tradition is applicable in the event that lighting candles etc. is having no benefits other than wastage of money or imitating some countries of the world.

However if the aim of lighting candle etc. is to recite Qur'an and *du'a* or perform *salat* and other legal things, then certainly it will not create any problem. Instead lighting candles etc. in such places and that too for such holy purposes will be the proof to:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ

....***And help one another in goodness and piety. (Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Maida, 5:2)***

Under these circumstances why should it be considered *haram* and forbidden?

Incidentally a group of commentators of traditions have specified the same fact,

Al-Sindi mentions in the margins of *Sunan Al-Nasa'i*:

والنهي عنه لأنه تضييع مال بلا نفع

“Prohibition for lighting of candles was only because such an action leads to wastage of wealth.”¹¹

1. Ziyarat Al-Qubur, page 159–160 written by Ibn Taymiyyah in 1310 A.D.
2. In interpreting the afore-said tradition, Al-Zamakhshari in Al-Kashshaf says:
يُصَلِّي فِيهِ الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَيَتَبَرَّكُونَ بِمَكَانِهِمْ
About this verse Nishapuri writes in his Tafsir as such:
يُصَلِّي فِيهِ الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَيَتَبَرَّكُونَ بِمَكَانِهِمْ
3. Second Abbasid Caliph Abu Ja'far 'Abd Allah Al-Mansur Dawaniqi (713 – 774 A.D.). He ruled from 753 to 774 A.D. and was contemporary of Imam Al-Sadiq (a).
4. Wafa' Al-Wafa' fi Akhbar dar Al-Mustafa, volume 4, page 1376.
5. Al-Kasa'is Al-Kubra, vol. 1, p. 154 by Al-Suyuti.
6. Jala' Al-Afham fi Salat wa Al-Salam 'ala Khayr Al-An'am, p. 228 by Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyya.
7. Sunan Al-Nasa'i, vol. 4, p. 96 (Beirut edition).
لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ
8. Sunan Al-Bayhaqi (Al-Sunan Al-Kubra), vol. 4, p. 788; Al-Mustadrak, vo1. 1, p. 377 by Al-Hakim Al-Nishapuri.
9. Al-Musnad, vol. 2 page 222 by Ibn Hanbal. جَعَلْتُ لِي الْأَرْضَ مَسْجِداً وَطَهُوراً
10. Sunan Al-Nasa'i, vol. 3, page 77 (Egyptian edition) and vol. 4, page 95 (Beirut edition)
لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ زَائِرَاتِ الْقُبُورِ وَالْمُتَخَذِينَ عَلَيْهَا الْمَسَاجِدَ وَالسُّرُجَ
11. Sunan Al-Nasa'i, vol. 3, page 77 (Egyptian edition) and vol. 4, page 95 (Beirut edition). Also refer to Sharh Al-Jami' Al-Saghir, vol. 2, page 198.

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