

Ruling On Reciting The Quran In Graveyards

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(Dawateislami)

Question

What do the scholars of Islam say regarding the following matters:

1. What is the ruling regarding recitation of the Quran in graveyards, and conveying its reward to the deceased?
2. Is reciting the Quran in a graveyard Makruh (disliked) according to Imam Abū Ḥanifah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ؟
3. A hadith explains how we should recite Sūrat al-Baqarah in our homes, and not make them graveyards (in summary). A certain deduction is then made from this. Some say, when not reciting the Quran in our homes makes the latter graveyards, this means one cannot recite the Quran in graveyards at all. What is the reality of such an inference?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

1) Reciting the Quran in a graveyard or seated near a grave, and conveying its reward to the deceased in the grave and other deceased believers, is permissible without doubt. Its permissibility is established from the Quran and hadith. Anyone reciting near a grave should take precaution to not tread or sit on any grave.

Elucidation

Any righteous action a believer performs, whether obligatory or supererogatory, such as salah, reading the Quran, reciting the kalimah, sending ṣalāt upon the Prophet, fasting, performing ḥajj, giving zakāt, charity, etc., he can transmit its reward to other living or deceased Muslims. There is no specification of place for this. If a person recites the Quran in a graveyard, near a grave, at home or in any other place, observing the dictates of Islamic law; there is no problem in this at all. In fact, the permissibility of reciting at a grave is established in light of numerous hadith.

In relation to donating charity on behalf of the deceased and their attainment of its reward, it is mentioned in a hadith of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī:

ان رجلا قال للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ان أمي افتلتت نفسها وأظنها لو تكلمت تصدقت فهل لها أجران تصدقت عنها قال نعم

Translation: A man mentioned to the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ, ‘My mother died suddenly. I think if she could speak, she would give charity. Will she receive reward if I give charity on her behalf?’ He replied, “Yes.”

The reward of Nafl Salah may also be conveyed. As mentioned in Sunan Abū Dāwūd, the Companion Abū Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said to those departing for ḥajj:

من يضمن لي منكم ان يصل لي في مسجد العشار ركعتين، او اربعا، ويقول هذه لابن هريرة

Translation: Who amongst you will guarantee me they shall offer two or four units 'of salah' in Masjid al-‘Ashshār and say, ‘These are for Abū Hurayrah’?

Commenting on this, the hadith scholar ‘Abd al- Ḥaqq Dīhlawi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ writes:

This highlights how acts of worship at sacred places, and offering salah thereupon, earns the doer more reward. We also learn it is permissible to donate the reward earned from physical acts of worship, to others. This is a view held by the majority of scholars. As for worship involving the expending of wealth, conveyance of its reward is permissible by agreement.

There are also clear statements relating to recital of the Quran by a graveside. It is narrated in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari on the authority of the Companion Ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ:

مر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بقبيرين فقال: انهما ليعذبان وما يعذبان في كبير اما احدهما فكان لا يستتر من البول واما الآخر فكان يمشى بالنبيبة ثم أخذ جريدة رطبة، فشقها بنصفين، ثم غرز في كل قبر واحدة، قالوا: يا رسول الله! لم صنعت هذا فقال لعله أن يخفف عنهما ما لم

يبسا

Translation: The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ passed by two graves and explained, “These two are indeed being punished, but not for any major sin. One did not protect himself from droplets of urine, and the other told tales.”

He then took a fresh date tree branch, broke it into two pieces and planted one on each grave. The Companions asked, “O Messenger of Allah! Kindly inform us why you did this.” He replied, “As long as these two (the branches) do not dry, Allah will lessen the punishment of these two (the individuals in their graves).”

Imam Nawawi رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ comments on this hadith by saying:

استحب العلماء قراءة القرآن عند القبر لهذا الحديث، لأنه إذا كان يرجى التخفيف بتسبيح الجريد فتلاوته أولى

Translation: Scholars have deemed recital of the Quran at a graveside to be a commendable action, due to this hadith. When the tasbīḥ made by a date tree branch bears hopes of a lessening in punishment, then hope for the same due to Quranic recitation is of a higher degree.

In a blessed hadith:

من مر بالمقابر فقرأ احدى عشرة مرة قل هو الله احد ثم وهب اجره الاموات اعطى من الاجر بعدد الاموات

Translation: Whoever passed a graveyard, recited Sūrah al-Ikhlās eleven times and gifted its reward to the deceased, will be rewarded according to the number of the deceased.

The Companion Ma‘qil b. Yasār رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reports, the Messenger of Allah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said,

اقرأوها على موتاكم يعني يس

- “Recite Sūrah Yā Sīn upon your deceased.”

The grand hadith expert, Mullā ‘Ali Qāri رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ comments on this hadith by saying,

هذا يحتمل ان تكون هذا القراءة عند البيت في حال حياته ويحتمل ان تكون عند قبره

Translation: It is possible this recital could be beside the dying person whilst they are still alive, or at their grave.

2) Imam Abū Ḥanīfah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ did issue statements expressing his dislike in this regard. People of knowledge know, however, that many varying viewpoints can be held on a singular matter in books of jurisprudence. Ultimately, only the strongest and most legally adopted viewpoints are considered part of a respective school or issue of jurisprudence.

Different views are transmitted concerning recital of the Quran besides a grave. The view of it being permissible without dislike is conveyed from Imam Muḥammad رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ and others. It is this view which is preferred and chosen in Ḥanafi jurisprudence, in light of the latter's accepted principles.

Additionally, which type of dislike is intended in the view of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ? Clarification of this is not found in any written text. If the intended meaning is makrūh tanzīhī (minor dislike), it still means Imam Abū Ḥanīfah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ considered it permissible. This is because makrūh tanzīhī is not included in the categories of impermissible and haram. If the intended meaning is makrūh taḥrīmī (prohibitive dislike), then it will be interpreted as meaning the reciter sitting on a grave or there being a stench in the graveyard; in such a scenario the ruling will be of prohibition. Consequently, if it will not result in an act prohibited by Islamic law, recital of the Quran near a grave will also be permissible according to Imam Abū Ḥanīfah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ.

It is stated in Muḥīṭ al-Burhānī:

قراءة القرآن في القبور عند أبي حنيفة رضي الله عنه تكرة وعند محمد لا تكرة قال صدر الشهيد رحمه الله: ومشاءنا اخذوا بقول محمد و
حكى عن الشيخ الامام الجليل ابى بكر محمد بن الفضل البخارى رحمه الله: ان القراءة على المقابر اذا اخفى ولم يجهر لا تكرة ولا باس به و
انما كرهه قراءة القرآن في القبورة جهرا واما المخافتة فلا باس به وان ختم وقيل ان نوى ان يؤنسه بصوته يقرا

At another juncture the author writes:

ان قراءة القرآن في القبورة هل تكرة المختار انه لا تكرة

Precaution should be taken to ensure that one does not step or sit on any grave whilst reciting. It is stated in Bidāyah Sharḥ al-Hidāyah:

لاباس بقراءة القرآن عند القبور ولكن لا يجلس على القبر

The reason behind Imam Abū Ḥanīfah's statement has been explained as follows in Majma' al-Anhur:

﴿كره الامام القراءة عند القبر﴾ لان اهل القبر جيفة وكذا يكره التعود على القبر لانه اهانة ﴿وجوزها﴾ اى القراءة عند القبر بمحمد ﴿وبه﴾ اى

بقول محمد ﴿اخذ﴾ للفتوى لبا فيه من النفع لورود الآثار بقراءة آية الكرسي وسورة الاخلاص والفاتحة وغير ذلك عند القبور

From this, it is apparent the prohibition of reciting the Quran next to graves according to Imam Abū Ḥanīfah رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ, is specific to certain scenarios. Outside of those scenarios, it

will be permissible according to him also. Hypothetically speaking, if the ruling of prohibition applied to every scenario; even then, the preponderant opinion of the Ḥanafi school is the absence of dislike.

3) In this hadith, encouragement has been given to recite Sūrat al-Baqarah in our homes. It was also mentioned homes should not be made into graveyards. Deriving that reciting the Quran is not allowed in graveyards entirely from this, is not correct. Rather, the Hadith depicts just a resemblance. In detail, this means if there is no recital of the Quran in a home, then it is like a grave in which the deceased do not recite. So do not make your homes empty of recital in similitude to graves; instead, recite the Quran in them.

The final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ said,

قرأوا سورة البقرة في بيوتكم ولا تجعلوها قبورا

“Recite Sūrat al-Baqarah in your homes and do not make them into graves.”

Allamah Munāwī رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ comments on this hadith by saying:

﴿لا تجعلوها قبورا﴾ أي كالبقابر الخالية عن الذكر والقراءة

(Do not make them into graves) i.e., like graves, empty of dhikr and recitation of the Quran.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

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