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A Warning Against Building Mosques Over Graves

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A Warning Against Building Mosques Over Graves

لِسَمَاحَةِ الشَّيْخِ العَلَّامَةِ
عَبْدِ العَزِيزِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ بَازٍ
رَحِمَهُ اللهُ

Author His Eminence Shaykh
‘Abdul-‘Azīz ibn ‘Abdullāh ibn Bāz

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Tenth Treatise:
A Warning Against Building Mosques Over Graves

In the Name of Allah, and praise be to Allah, and may Allah's peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah.

To proceed: I have reviewed what was published in the third issue of the Journal of the Islamic Sciences Association in the section (News of the Muslims in A Month): that the Islamic Sciences Association in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan intends to construct a mosque over the cave that was recently discovered in the village of Ar-Rahīb, which is said to be the cave where the People of the Cave, mentioned in the Noble Qur'an, rested, end quote.

Given the obligation to offer sincere advice for the sake of Allah and His servants, I deemed it appropriate to address a message in the same magazine to the Islamic Sciences Association in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Its content is: Advising the association against carrying out its intention to construct a mosque over the aforementioned cave. This is because the construction of mosques over the graves of

prophets and the righteous, and their relics, is something that the perfect Islamic Shariah has prohibited and warned against and has cursed those who do so, as it constitutes a means to Shirk (polytheism) and excessive reverence for the prophets and the righteous. The reality testifies to the truth of what Shariah has brought, which is evidence that it is from Allah, Glorified and Exalted be He. It is clear proof and a decisive argument for the truthfulness of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in what he conveyed from Allah Almighty to the Ummah. Whoever contemplates the conditions of the Islamic world and the Shirk and excessive reverence that have occurred due to the construction of mosques over tombs, their veneration, furnishing, and beautification, and appointing custodians for them, will know with certainty that these are means of Shirk. It is among the merits of Islamic Shariah to prohibit them and warn against their construction.

This is supported by a Hadīth narrated by the two Shaykhs, Al-Bukhāri and Muslim (may Allah have mercy upon them), in which ‘Ā’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى، اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ، قالَتْ عَائِشَةُ: يُحَذِّرُ مَا صَنَعُوا، قالَتْ: وَلَوْلَا ذَلِكَ لَأُبْرِزَ قَبْرُهُ، غَيْرَ أَنَّهُ خُشِيَ أَنْ يُتَّخَذَ مَسْجِدًا».

"May Allah curse the Jews and the Christians; they took the graves of their prophets as places of worship." ‘Ā’ishah said: He wanted to warn against what they did. She added: Had it not been for that, his grave would have been made prominent, but it was feared that it might be taken as a place of worship." It is reported in the Two Sahīh Collections that ’Umm Salamah and ’Umm Habībah (may Allah be pleased with both of them) mentioned to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) a church they had seen in the land of Abyssinia and the images contained therein. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«أُولَئِكَ إِذَا مَاتَ فِيهِمُ الرَّجُلُ الصَّالِحُ؛ بَنَوْا عَلَى قَبْرِهِ مَسْجِدًا، وَصَوَّرُوا فِيهِ تِلْكَ الصُّوَرَ، أُولَئِكَ شِرَارُ الْخَلْقِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ».

"Those people, when a righteous man among them died, they would build a mosque over his grave and make those images inside it. They are the most evil creatures in the sight of Allah."

In Sahīh Muslim, Jundub ibn ‘Abdullāh (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), five days before his death, saying:

«إِنِّي أَبْرَأُ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِي مِنْكُمْ خَلِيلٌ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدِ اتَّخَذَنِي خَلِيلًا، كَمَا اتَّخَذَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا، وَلَوْ كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذًا مِنْ أُمَّتِي خَلِيلًا، لَاتَّخَذْتُ أَبَا بَكْرٍ خَلِيلًا،

أَلَا وَإِنَّ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانُوا يَتَّخِذُونَ قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ وَصَالِحِيهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ، أَلَا فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْقُبُورَ مَسَاجِدَ، فَإِنِّي أَنْهَاكُمْ عَنْ ذَلِكَ».

"I stand acquitted before Allah that I should take any one of you as an intimate friend, for Allah has taken me as an intimate friend just as He took Abraham (Ibrāhīm) as an intimate friend. Had I taken anyone from my Ummah as an intimate friend, I would have taken Abu Bakr as an intimate friend. Beware! Those who were before you used to take the graves of their prophets and righteous ones as places of worship. Beware! Do not take graves as places of worship, for I forbid you from that." The Hadīths in this regard are numerous.

The eminent scholars from all four Madh'habs (schools of Fiqh) and others have explicitly stated the prohibition of taking graves as places of worship, warning against this practice. This is in adherence to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and as a sincere counsel to the Ummah, cautioning it against falling into the same errors as the extremists among the Jews and Christians, and their likes from among the misguided people of this Ummah.

It is incumbent upon the Islamic Sciences Association in Jordan, and upon other Muslims, to adhere to the Sunnah, follow the path of the Imams, and beware of what Allah Almighty and His

Messenger have warned against; for therein lies the reformation, happiness, and salvation of people in this world and the Hereafter. Some people have relied on the words of Allah Almighty in the story of the dwellers of the Cave:

﴿...قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ غَلَبُواْ عَلَىٰٓ أَمۡرِهِمۡ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيۡهِم مَّسۡجِدٗا﴾

{Those who prevailed in their matter said, "We will surely build over them a place of worship."} [Surat al-Kahf: 21]

The response to this is to say: Allah Almighty has informed about the leaders and those in power at that time that they made this statement, not as an endorsement or approval of them, but rather as a condemnation and criticism to dissuade from their actions. This is evidenced by the fact that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), upon whom this verse was revealed and who is the most knowledgeable of its interpretation, forbade his Ummah from taking graves as places of worship, warned them against it, and cursed and condemned those who did so.

If it were permissible, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would not have imposed such a severe prohibition, nor would he have gone to the extent of cursing those who did it, and informing them that they are among the worst of creation in the sight of Allah Almighty. This is sufficient and convincing for the seeker of truth. If we assume that building mosques

over graves was permissible for those before us, it is not permissible for us to emulate them in this matter, because our Shariah abrogates the previous laws, and our Messenger (ﷺ) is the Seal of the Prophets, and his Shariah is complete and universal. He prohibited us from building mosques over graves, so it is not permissible for us to oppose him. We are obliged to follow him, adhere to what he brought, and abandon what contradicts that from the old laws and the customs deemed good by those who practiced them, for there is nothing more perfect than the Shariah of Allah, and no guidance better than the guidance of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

We ask Allah Almighty to grant us and all Muslims steadfastness in His religion and adherence to the Shariah of His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), in words and deeds, both outwardly and inwardly, and in all matters until we meet Allah Almighty. Indeed, He is All-Hearing and All-Near.

And may Allah's peace and blessings be upon His slave and Messenger Muhammad, his family, his Companions, and those who are guided by his guidance until the Day of Judgment.

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