

WOMEN VISITING GRAVES

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Women Visiting Graves

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Question: Are women allowed to visit the graveyards?

This is a disputed matter. Some Ulamā' consider it Harām, some consider it Makrūh, and some consider it permissible. The summarized answer on this is that it's permissible for women to visit the graveyards, and with the intention of remembering the Life After, it's Mustahabb — so long as no type of Fitan or Munkarāt occur, and it shouldn't be frequent. There should be no free-mixing, no wailing over the grave, no loud shouting and crying, and so on. And I'll briefly mention why this is the correct position. 'Abdullāh Ibn Abi Mulaykah رحمه الله تعالى saw 'Ā'ishah walking out of the graveyard, so he inquired about that. He asked 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها where she came from, and she said she was visiting the grave of her brother, 'Abd Ar-Rahmān Ibn Abi Bakr. 'Abdullāh Ibn Abi Mulaykah said,

أليس كان رسولُ الله صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ؟

Didn't the Messenger ﷺ forbid visiting the graves?

She said,

نعم، ثُمَّ أَمَرَ بِزِيَارَتِهَا

Yes, but then he ordered it.

This occurred decades after the death of the Messenger ﷺ. 'Abdullāh Ibn Abi Mulaykah was an 'Ālim and a Mufti, and amongst the biggest of the Tābi'īn. He was born during the time of 'Ali رضي الله عنه or shortly before that. Meaning, this occurred way after the death of the Messenger ﷺ, and it's also been documented

that her brother, 'Ā'ishah's brother 'Abd Ar-Rahmān — the brother that she went to visit — he lived to attend the funeral of Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqās. Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqās died during the Khilāfah of Mu'āwiyah, 55 years after the Hijrah, رضي الله عنهم أجمعين. So that means her brother, 'Abd Ar-Rahmān Ibn Abi Bakr, whom she went to visit, lived more than 55 years after the Hijrah. This incident occurred nearly half a century after the death of the Messenger ﷺ, because 'Abd Ar-Rahmān Ibn Abi Bakr As-Siddīq, 'Ā'ishah's brother whom she went to visit, died around half a century after the death of RasūlAllāh ﷺ. Now, 'Ā'ishah cleared the issue 'Abdullāh Ibn Abi Mulaykah had pertaining to visiting the graves. It was forbidden, and then the Messenger ﷺ ordered it. 'Ā'ishah was walking out of the graveyard from visiting her brother, so it's a weak rationale to allege that she was talking about men only. Keep in mind 'Ā'ishah's high Fiqh and knowledge status that everyone knows about. That's in general, everyone knows about her high status in Fiqh, but in this specific matter, she also has specific knowledge and great knowledge, because she also narrated the Hadīth on what to say when visiting the graveyard. In Sahīh Muslim, under the chapter of ما يقال عند دخول القبور — there's a chapter in Sahīh Muslim, 'What's to be Said When You Visit the Graveyard'.

And in a long Hadīth in Sahīh Muslim, it starts off where the Messenger ﷺ spent the night at 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها's house and he didn't want to wake 'Ā'ishah up, so he left the house quietly and he gently closed the door in order not to wake 'Ā'ishah up. 'Ā'ishah was alert رضي الله عنها, and she wanted to know where the Messenger ﷺ went. It's very late at night. So she got dressed up and followed him. The Messenger ﷺ had gone to the Baqī'. After they returned, they had a short discussion, and he told her ﷺ, he said that the Angel Jibrīl came and told me *"Your lord orders you to go visit the occupants of the Baqī'."* Here's our point, at the very end of the Hadīth. 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها asked the Messenger ﷺ,

كَيْفَ أَقُولُ لَهُمْ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟

How should I pray for them? (How do I make Du'ā for them?)

Meaning, when we visit the graves, how do we make Du'ā for them? And the Messenger ﷺ taught her the famous Hadīth that we say when we go visit the graveyards. He said,

قُولِي السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَيَرْحَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنَّا وَالْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لِلْآحِقُونَ

Say: Peace be upon the inhabitants of this place among the believers and Muslims. May Allāh have mercy upon those who have gone on ahead of us and those who come later on, and we will join you, if Allāh wills.¹

Ai'shah رضي الله عنها visits her brother nearly half a century after the death of the Messenger ﷺ — and I stressed that so that everyone will know the timeline, so they will not say that's abrogated. She also narrated the famous Hadīth that's in Sahīh Muslim, the Du'ā that we all say when we visit the graveyards. Do you think that the Messenger ﷺ would delay telling her that women going to the graveyards is not permissible? He would have said, “*Ā'ishah, this is the Du'ā for visiting the graves, but you women are not permitted to go visit the graves.*”

The Hadīth,

لَعَنَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ زَوَارَاتِ الْقُبُورِ²

That the Messenger ﷺ cursed women who visit graves, the significance or Wajh Ad-Dalālah — we call it Wajh Ad-Dalālah — the significance that's taken from that Hadīth by some to prove that women can't go to the graveyards is weak because

¹ Muslim: 974b

² Ibn Mājah: 1575

Al-Qurtubi and others stated that it's for those that constantly visit the graveyards. Lil-Mukthirāt — consistently, always visiting the graveyards. Why? How did they come to that understanding? Because the term 'Zuwwārāt' linguistically is in an exaggerated form. Zuwwārāt. And it's possibly due to the wailing that results from women visiting the graveyards. So Al-Qurtubi said if none of that occurs, then there's no problem with them visiting the graveyards. Ash-Shawkāni commented on that, and he said that is the proper rationale that should be applied in bringing together the apparently or seemingly contradicting Hadīth on this matter. In the Hadīth in Sahīh Muslim,

نَهَيْتُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ فَزُورُوهَا

I forbade you to visit graves, but you may now visit them...³

Visit them — فَزُورُوهَا, the term “visit them”, encompasses men and women. The term encompasses men and women and they're equal in the 'Illah. They're equal in the legal Shar'ī reason. The legal Shar'ī reason for visiting the graves is to remember the life after, and men and women are equal in that. In Sahīh Al-Bukhāri and Muslim, the Messenger ﷺ passed by a woman who's crying over a grave, and he ﷺ told her,

اتَّقِي اللَّهَ وَأَصْبِرِي

Fear Allāh and be patient.

She told the Messenger ﷺ “Go away. My calamity hasn't befallen you and you don't know my circumstances and situation.” They told her, “The one who was

³ Muslim: 977a

advising you is the Messenger ﷺ.” She wasn't aware that that was the Messenger ﷺ, so she went to his door, she regretted what she had done, and she went to his house. She went to his door, she apologized to him ﷺ, and she explained that she did not know it was the Messenger ﷺ. The Messenger ﷺ said,

إِنَّمَا الصَّبْرُ عِنْدَ الصَّدْمَةِ الْأُولَى

Patience is when calamity first strikes. ⁴

The Messenger ﷺ advised her about her weeping and crying over the grave, then she went to his house, and he advised her again when he said,

إِنَّمَا الصَّبْرُ عِنْدَ الصَّدْمَةِ الْأُولَى

Do you really think in such a context he would delay advising her about not going to the graveyard *if* that was prohibited? He had two opportunities to advise her about not going to the graveyard. Once at the graveyard and when she visited him, and this pertains to visiting the graves, so he would have told her not to go visit graves at all anymore. That's similar to the earlier Hadīth where the Messenger ﷺ taught 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها what to say at the graveyard. Do you think he would teach her the Du'ā for visiting the graves but not tell her that it's not permissible for women to visit them?

There are other details, I think this is sufficient Inshā'Allāh. There are other details, not every setting is suitable to go into extreme details as we usually do elsewhere. I think this is sufficient on this matter, والله تعالى أعلم.

⁴ Bukhāri: 1283