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Fatwas of Ibn Baz

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Q 2: In some Islamic countries, we notice that there are people who circumambulate graves not knowing that this is wrong. What is the religious ruling on those people, and can we consider them Mushriks (those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity or worship)?

A: The religious ruling on any person who calls upon idols, asks them for help and the like is obviously clear, all praise be to Allah. These acts are major Kufr (disbelief that takes the Muslim out of Islam), unless the person does this under the assumption that their circumambulation of the grave is intended as worship of Allah (Exalted be He) just as when they circumambulate the Ka`bah, thinking that it is permissible to circumambulate the graves. If they do not mean by this act to draw themselves closer to their occupants; rather, they mean to draw closer to Allah Alone, in such a case the person who commits this is considered a Mubtadi` (one who introduces innovations in the religion), but not a Kafir (disbeliever). Circumambulating graves is a condemned Bid`ah (innovation in the religion) just like offering Salah (Prayer) at the graves. All such acts are means leading to Kufr. In most cases, grave worshippers intend to approach their occupants by circumambulating their graves. They sacrifice animals and make vows for their sake in order to draw closer to them. Such acts are major Shirk (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship that takes the Muslim out of Islam).

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Anyone who dies while persisting in such practices is a Kafir. They should not be washed, have the Funeral Prayer performed for them, or be buried in Muslims' graveyard. In the hereafter, their case is for Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) to judge. If they are one of those to whom Da`wah (call to Islam) has not reached, they carry the same ruling as Ahl-ul-Fatrah (people having no access to Divine Messages). The evidence for this is drawn from what happened to the Prophet's mother, as she died before she witnessed the era of prophethood. She was of the religion of her people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked the Permission of his Lord to seek forgiveness for his mother, but he (peace be upon him) was not permitted to ask forgiveness for her; because she died while embracing the religion of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance) and so was his father. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked by some person about his father, he said: [﴿Verily, my father and your father are in the Fire.﴾](#) His father died in Jahiliyyah as a follower of the religion of his people, so he was judged to be a Kafir (disbeliever). But anyone who has not received the Da`wah in the life of this world and died ignorant of the truth will be tested on the Day of Resurrection, according to the most correct opinion maintained by scholars. If they succeed (by accepting the truth), they will be admitted into Paradise. But if they oppose the truth, they will be cast into Hellfire.

This applies to all people categorized as Ahl-ul-Fatrah who have not received Da`wah, according to the Words of Allah (Exalted be He): [﴿And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger \(to give warning\).﴾](#)

Regarding those whom the Qur'an or the mission of the Messenger (peace be upon him) has reached but they did not respond, the evidence established against them leaves no excuse for those who reject it. Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) says: [﴿...this Qur`ân has been revealed to me that I may therewith warn you and whomsoever it may reach.﴾](#) This Ayah (Qur'anic verse) means that whomsoever the Qur'an has reached, they have been warned thereby.

Allah (Exalted be He) says: [﴿This \(Qur`an\) is a Message for mankind \(and a clear proof against them\), in order that they may be warned thereby﴾](#) Therefore, those to whom the Qur'an and Islam have reached but they did not embrace them, take the ruling of Kafirs. It has been authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: [﴿By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, any Jew or Christian of this nation who hears about me and dies unbelieving in what I have been sent with, will be among the dwellers of Hellfire.﴾](#) (Related by Muslim in his Sahih) In this Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarded the fact of having heard about his mission as evidence against the hearer (who rejects it).

To sum up, anyone who shows Kufr while being in Muslim lands will come under the same ruling as Kafirs. As to whether or not they shall be saved on the Day of Resurrection, this is up to Allah (Glorified and Exalted be He) Alone. If the person is one of those to whom the Da`wah has not reached or has never heard about the mission of the Messenger (peace be upon him), they will be tested on the Day of Resurrection.

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According to a Hadith narrated by Al-Aswad ibn Sari`, a neck-like flame of fire will be presented to them, then it will be said to them: "Get into it." If they comply, the flame of fire will turn into coolness and safety for them. But if they refuse, the flame of fire will coil around them and they will be taken into the Fire. May Allah safeguard us.

In conclusion, anyone who did not know about the Da`wah whether for having been in the distant outskirts of this world or was born and died before the time of the Da`wah or whoever knew about the Da`wah but was insane, mentally ill or too old to perceive it - they and those like them and the children of the Mushriks who died in their childhood before reaching the age of puberty - their fate will be in the Hands of Allah. Verily, Allah (Exalted be He) knows well what they would have done (during their life). That was the answer of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he was asked about such people. On the Day of Resurrection, Allah (Exalted be He) will make His Knowledge about them evident by testing them. Whoever succeeds will be admitted into Paradise, and whoever fails will be admitted into Hellfire. Indeed, there is neither might nor power except with Allah.

Q 3: What is the ruling on amulets consisting of words of the Qur'an or other things?

A: Amulets made of elements other than the words of the Qur'an, such as bones, talismans, cowrie shells, wolf hair and the like are all evil and Haram (prohibited) by the Nas (Islamic text from the Qur'an or the Sunnah). It is not permissible to hang them on anybody or anything, because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: [﴿Anyone who wears an amulet, may Allah not fulfill it \(i.e., their purpose\) for them, and anyone who wears a cowrie shell, may Allah not give them peace.﴾](#) According to another narration, he (peace be upon him) said: [﴿Anyone who wears an amulet has committed Shirk \(associated others with Allah in His Divinity or worship\).﴾](#)

On the other hand, if the amulets consist of words of the Qur'an or well-known good supplications, this is a controversial matter among the scholars. **Some of them said that** such amulets are permissible. This opinion was reported from a group of the Salaf (righteous predecessors) who likened it to reciting Qur'an and saying supplications over the sick seeking healing.

Other scholars said that it is not permissible. This is the opinion known to be held by `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud and Hudhayfah (may Allah be pleased with them), as well as a group of the Salaf and the Kalaf (righteous successors). They said that it is not permissible to tie amulets even if they are words of the Qur'an in compliance with the principle of Sadd-ul-Dhara'i` (blocking the means leading to sins) and to forestall acts of Shirk and act upon the general meaning of the Hadiths. The Hadiths that prohibit amulets are general and make no exception. Muslims should abide by the general ruling. Therefore, it is basically not permissible to use any kind of amulets so that people do not use other types of amulets, thus leading to confusing matters.

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It is obligatory to prohibit all types of amulets. This is the soundest opinion for the obvious evidence supporting it.

If we permit the use of amulets made from the Qur'an and good supplications, it will open the door for people to wear any form of amulets they like. Then, if they are reproved for what they do, they will say that they are amulets consisting of the Qur'an or good supplications. Consequently, the door will be opened, the cut will widen, and all types of amulets (whether words of the Qur'an or otherwise) will be worn.

There is another reason for their prohibition, which is the fact that people may enter the bathroom and other unclean places while wearing them. It is well known that the Words of Allah are too sacred to be in such places, and it is inappropriate to take them into the bathroom.

Q 4: What is the meaning of the following Hadith: "Ruqyah (recitation for healing or protection), amulets and love-charms are Shirk"?

A: This Hadith has an acceptable Isnad (chain of narrators). It was narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawud on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud. Interpreting the Hadith, scholars say that a Ruqyah which contains unintelligible words, names of devils or the like are Haram (prohibited). A love charm is a form of sorcery called "Al-Sarf (causing alienation) and Al-`Atf (causing affection)". Amulets are objects hung around children's necks in order to dispel `Ayn (the evil eye) or Jinn (creatures created from fire). They may be hung on sick or old people. Also, they may be hung on camels and other animals. We have already explained the ruling on them in the answer to the third question. Amulets that are hung on animals are called "Awtaar" (strings), which are a kind of minor Shirk (associating other partners with Allah that is not tantamount to taking the Muslim out of Islam) and have the same ruling as amulets. It has been authentically reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) [﴿in one of his expeditions sent a messenger to the army ordering, 'Any necklace of string or any other material around the necks of camels should be cut off.'﴾](#) This is supporting evidence for the prohibition of all kinds of amulets whether they consist of words of the Qur'an or anything else.

Accordingly, Ruqyahs are prohibited if they are obscure words. But if they are well known words that involve no Shirk or anything that is prohibited by Shari`ah (Islamic law), they are permissible. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used Ruqyah (i.e. Qur'an and supplications recited over the sick seeking healing) as a treatment and was treated with it. He (peace be upon him) said: [﴿There is nothing wrong with Ruqyah as long as it does not involve any Shirk.﴾](#) (Related by Muslim)

There is nothing wrong with reciting Ruqyah over some water. This is done by reciting over some water, which is then given to the sick person to drink or is poured over them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) did this. It has been authentically reported in the Sunan of Abu Dawud, Book of Medicine, that [﴿the Prophet \(peace be upon him\) recited Ruqyah over some water for Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shammas, then he poured it over him.﴾](#) The Salaf also used to do this; therefore, it is permissible.

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Q 5: It is the habit of some tribes to slaughter camels during their festivals. Does this violate the Islamic `Aqidah (creed)?

A: This requires a detailed explanation. If the camels are slaughtered as a gesture of hospitality and to provide people with food, there is nothing wrong with this and it is permissible. However, if people slaughter them when meeting kings or dignitaries in order to glorify them, this is an act of Shirk. Because, in this instance, sacrificial animals are slaughtered to other than Allah (Exalted be He). This will fall under the general meaning of the Words of Allah (Exalted be He): [﴿...on which Allâh's Name has not been mentioned while slaughtering.﴾](#) Slaughtering animals at graves to commemorate the generosity and bounty of the deceased is an act of Jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic time of ignorance). This is unacceptable and impermissible, because the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: [﴿There is no slaughtering at the graves in Islam.﴾](#)

If the slaughtering is intended to draw closer to the occupants of the graves, this is an act of Shirk, and likewise is the slaughtering of animals for Jinn and idols. All these deeds are acts of major Shirk from which we ask Allah (Exalted be He) to protect us.

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