

9979 - Ruling on reading Quran over the grave of a dead person

the question

Some people in our village bring together some shaykhs who know how to read Quran well, and they read Quran on the grounds that this Quran will benefit the deceased and bring mercy to him. Some others invite one or two shaykhs to read at the grave of a particular person, and others organize big gatherings where they invite one of the famous readers to read over loudspeakers, to commemorate the anniversary of a loved one's death. What is the Islamic ruling on that? Does reading Quran at the graveside or elsewhere benefit the deceased? What is the best way to benefit the dead? Please advise us, may Allah reward you greatly on our behalf, and we thank you very much.

Detailed answer

This action is bid'ah (reprehensible innovation) and is not permissible, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Whoever innovates anything in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) that is not a part of it, will have it rejected." (Saheeh – agreed upon). And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever does anything that is not a part of this matter of ours (i.e., Islam) will have it rejected." (Narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh). And there are many similar ahaadeeth.

It is not the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or the way of his rightly-guided successors (the Khulafaa' al-Raashideen – may Allah be pleased with them) to read Quran over graves or to have gatherings to commemorate the anniversary of a person's death. All goodness is to be found in following the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and his rightly-guided successors, and those who followed their path, as Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And the foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhaajiroon and the Ansaar and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with

Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success” [al-Tawbah 9:100]

And the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “I urge you to adhere to my way (Sunnah) and the way of the rightly-guided Khulafaa’ who come after me. Adhere to it and bite onto it with your eyeteeth (i.e. cling firmly to it). Beware of newly-invented matters, for every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is a going-astray.” And it was reported in a saheeh hadeeth that he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said in a Friday khutbah: “The best of speech is the Book of Allah and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The most evil of things are those which are newly-invented, and every innovation is a going-astray.” And there are many similar ahaadeeth.

According to the saheeh ahaadeeth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explained the things that will benefit the Muslim after he dies. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “When a man dies, all his good deeds come to a halt, apart from three: ongoing charity (sadaqah jaariyah); beneficial knowledge; or a righteous child who will pray for him.” (Narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh). A man asked the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “O Messenger of Allah, is there anything that I can do to continue honouring my parents after they die?” He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Yes: pray for them, ask for forgiveness for them, fulfil their last wishes (wasiyah or will), honour their friends and uphold the ties of kinship which you would not have were it not for them.” The last wishes (wasiyah or will) expressed by the person before he or she died should be fulfilled so long as they are in accordance with sharee’ah. Other ways of honouring one’s parents is to give in charity on their behalf, to make du’aa’ for them and to perform Hajj and ‘Umrah on their behalf. And Allah is the Source of strength.