



The Urs

Anniversary on The Departure of

A Saint

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IN PROOF OF URS

The literal meaning of Urs is *wedding*, and it is for this reason that the bride and bridegroom are called 'Uroos'. The date of demise of the Friends of Allah and Buzurgs is called Urs because, when the angels who question in the grave (Nakeerain) test the deceased and find him to be successful, they say, "Sleep like a bride who will not be awakened by anyone except for the person who is most beloved to her." ¹

Because these angels have called them 'Uroos' on that date, it therefore becomes the day of 'Urs'.

Another reason is because, on this day, the angels will reveal the beauty and splendor of Rasoolullah ﷺ and ask him, "What did you say about this man?" He will reply, "He is the Uroos (adorned personality) of all creation. The entire creation has attained splendor through him." Meeting the beloved is the day of 'Urs', and it is for this reason that the day is called Urs.

Urs merely means to visit the grave on the date of demise every year, convey the reward of the recitation of the Holy Quran and give charity. The source of Urs is found in the Ahadith and rulings of the Jurists. Shaami states, "Ibn Abi Shaiba رضي الله عنه states that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to go to the graves of the martyrs (Shuhadaa) of Uhud every year." ²

Tafseer-e-Kabeer and Durre-Mansoor state, "It is proven that the Prophet ﷺ used to go to the graves of the martyrs every year and make Salaam to them. The four Khulafaa used to also do this."

Shah Abdul-Azeez Muhaddith Dehlwi رحمته الله writes, "Secondly, many people gather and, after completing the Quran and Fatiha on the Sheerini, distribute it amongst those present. This part was not practiced in the Holy Prophet's ﷺ time or during the era of the Khulafaa-e-Raashideen, but there is nothing wrong in

¹ Mishkaat, Baabu Ithbaatil-Qabr

² Vol. I, Baabu Ziyaaratil-Quboor

someone doing so. Rather, the deceased attain benefit from the actions of the living."³

Answering Maulwi Abdul-Hakeem Siyaalkoti, Shah Abdul-Azeez Muhaddith Dehlwi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ writes, "This taunt is because people are unaware of conditions. No one accepts anything else to be Fardh except for what the Shariah has classified as so. Yes, attaining barkat from the graves of the pious, reciting the Holy Quran and Isaal-e-Thawaab and distributing sweetmeats and food to assist them (in thawaab) is good according to the Consensus of the Ulama. The day of Urs is appointed to remind people of his demise. Otherwise, on whatever day these acts are done is good."⁴

Hadrat Shaikh Abdul-Qudoos Gangoohi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ writes to Maulana Jalaaluddin, "The Urs of Peers, according to their method with Samaa and cleanliness, should be practiced."⁵

Haaji Imdaadullah Muhaajir Makki رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, the Peer of Maulwi Rashid Ahmed and Ashraf Ali Thanwi, notably stresses the permissibility of Urs and, while explaining his practices, writes, "The practice of this Faqeer (i.e. myself) in this matter is that I make Isaal-e-Thawaab to the soul of my Peer every year. Firstly, Quran is recited, and if there is enough time, Moulood Sharif is read. Thereafter the reward of this is conveyed."⁶

Maulwi Rashid Ahmed Gangohi also accepts Urs to originally be permissible. He writes, "There are many things that were permissible originally but were then prohibited at a later time. Gatherings of Moulood and Urs are examples of this. It is known from Arabs that they used to commemorate the Urs of Hadrat Sayed Ahmed Badawi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ on a large scale with much pomp. The Ulama of Madina used to especially observe the Urs of Sayyiduna Ameer Hamza رحمۃ اللہ علیہ, whose grave (Mazaar) was at the mountain of Uhud. In short, Muslims throughout the globe including the Ulama, pious and especially the people of Madina

³ Fataawa Azeezia, Pg. 45

⁴ Zubdatun-NasaaihfiMasaailiz-Zabaiih

⁵ Maktoob, Letter no

⁶ Faisla Haft Mas 'ala

used to strictly observe Urs, and that which is good according to Muslims is good in the sight of Allah ﷻ" ⁷

Rationally speaking holding the Urs of the Saints should also be a good action. Firstly, the Urs is a celebration of visiting the graves and giving charity. Both of these actions are Sunnah, so how can the collection of two Sunnahs be Haraam? The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said. "I had previously stopped you from visiting the graves. *Now, you may definitely visit them*" ⁸

This confirms the permissibility of visiting the graves in every manner. They can be visited daily or annually, alone or in a group. Thus, when someone emplaces his own restrictions to this (e.g. visiting the graves in a group is prohibited, or visiting it after appointing a date for it every year, etc.), it is inconsequential. The practice is permissible with or without specifying a date or day.

Secondly appointing a date for Urs eases the gathering of people. They gather together and collectively recite the Holy Quran, Zikr, Durood, etc and, through this, many blessings are attained.

Thirdly, all of the mureeds of a Peer gather on the date of his demise and come to know of each other's conditions. They meet unceremoniously and love is increased through this.

Fourthly, those who wish to become disciples of a Peer are aided in their search of one because a single gathering of Urs is attended by many Mashaaiikh, Ulama and Sufiya. When he sees them, he may commit (bai't) to whoever he is drawn to.

Even in Hajj and the visiting (ziyaarat) of Madina Sharif are there specifications of dates. The abovementioned benefits are also incorporated in this. I have seen the graves of Deobandi elders. They have no beauty and there is none to make Fatiha or Isaal-e-Thawaab for them. Neither is there any person wanting to attain benefit from them nor is there someone to give guidance to others. This is the result of stopping good works.

⁷ Fataawa Rashidia, Vol. 1. Pg. 92

⁸ Mishkaat, Baabu Ziyaaratil-Quboor

OBJECTIONS & ANSWERS TO URS

OBJECTION 1

You believe the person whom you bury to be a Saint (Wali) and even host his Urs afterwards. How do you know that he is a Wali? We don't even know for certain whether a person died a Muslim, so how can the sainthood (wilaayat) of a deceased be known? There have been many pious people who passed away as Kaafirs.

Answer - The visible rulings of life are emplaced after death, so he who was a Muslim in his lifetime will be deemed to be one after death as well. As a result, Namaaz-e-Janaazah, Kam, Dafn, etc. will all be completed. Regarding he who was a Kaafir in his lifetime, he will not be given Ghusal, Kam, etc and his Salaatul-Janaazah will not be made. The command of the Shariah applies to the evident. A mere possibility has no credibility. Likewise, he who was a Saint in his lifetime is also a Saint after death. If commands of the Shariah are applied to possibilities, then Janaazah-Salaah of Kaafirs should also be read as it is possible that they died as Muslims. While we are at it, we should also burn Muslims after death because it's possible they didn't die as Muslims.

Once a Janaazah, which was praised by people, passed before the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He said, "It has become Waajib." Another Janaazah which was spoken badly of passed by him a little later and he said the same thing. When Hadrat Umar رضي الله عنه asked him what had become Waajib, Sayyiduna Rasoolullah صلى الله عليه وسلم explained, "Jannat for the first and Jahannam for the second." He continued, "You are the witness of Allah ﷻ on earth." ⁹

This proves that he who is deemed to be a Friend of Allah (Wali) by the general body of Muslims is also a Wali in the sight of Allah ﷻ. Muslims bring to mouth only that which is established in the sight of Allah ﷻ. Similarly, anything which

⁹ Miskhaat, Kitaabul-Janaaiz, Baabul-Mashyi bil-Janaazah

Muslims think to be thawaab and Halaal is worthy of reward and permissible according to Allah ﷻ because Muslims are the witnesses of Allah ﷻ. The Hadith, “ما رآه المؤمنون حسناً فهو عند الله حسن” establishes this. The Holy Quran states, "We have made you the just nation so that you may give witness on people." ¹⁰

A Muslim is a witness on both the Day of Qiyaamat and in the world. In proving the Holy Quran and Prophet ﷺ to be true, Allah ﷻ presents the testimony of Hadrat Abdullah ibn Salaam رضي الله عنه and other Buzurgs, “مثله وشهد شاهد من بني اسرئيل على” ¹¹

If prophethood can be proven through the testimony of pious Muslims, sainthood can be proven through it even more effectively. Similarly, when this testimony can prove the entire Quran, surely it can prove a rule of Shariah more thoroughly.

Note — This question was posed in the Haram of Makkah Sharif by a Najdi Imam. I gave the same answer to him in a vast gathering. In reply to it, he said, "This is only the quality of the Sahaaba. Whatever they bear witness to is correct because the Quran says "Antum" (You). We are not included in this because we weren't present with the Sahaaba." I replied, "The very same Mishkaat states at the same place, "Another narration says that the Muslims are Allah's ﷻ witnesses on earth." This doesn't have 'Antum' in it. Also, all commands of the Holy Quran begin with an address (e.g. "Perform Salaah", "Give Zakaat", etc.) and we were not present at the time of the Holy Quran being revealed. Therefore, according to you, we are free from following these commands and only the Sahaaba have to read namaaz, not us." The Holy Quran and Hadith addresses all Muslims until Qiyaamat. Alhamdulillah, this answer angered the Imam very much, but he was unable to answer.

OBJECTION 2

A Hadith states, "Do not make my Qabr an Eid." This proves that people gathering at a grave and having festivities

¹⁰ Surah Baqarah, Verse 143

¹¹ Surah Yusuf, Verse 26

there is prohibited because 'Eid' means fair. Gathering and festivities occur in Urs functions. Thus, it is Haraam.

Answer — How do you conclude that 'Eid' refers to the gathering of people and that the Hadith means, "Do not gather at my grave. Come individually to it"? On the day of Eid, people commemorate happiness, decorate homes and enjoy the company of one another in play and amusement. This is what is meant in the above Hadith, i.e. "When you present yourselves at my grave, be respectful and do not make a noise or have fun and amusement there." If gathering at the grave was what the Messenger ﷺ was referring to, what about the caravans of people who go to Madina and gather and present Salaam every day after the five daily Salaah?

Discussing the subject of Urs, Haaji Imdaadullah Muhaajir Makki رحمته اللہ علیہ writes, "The correct meaning of this Hadith is that holding fairs at the Qabr, having fun and amusement and making provisions to decorate it are all prohibited. It doesn't mean that gathering at a grave is impermissible. Otherwise, caravans of people go to Madina to visit the blessed Rauza. This would now become prohibited, and surely this can't be. Therefore, the truth is that visiting graves, whether individually or in groups, is correct. The Hadith may also mean, "Come to my grave as soon as possible. Do not come to it after an entire year like an Eid." ¹²

OBJECTION 3

In general gatherings of Urs, there is intermingling between men and women, dancing and the singing of Qawaali. In short, the Urs of the Saints are collections of several Haraam acts. This is why it is Haraam.

Answer - The concise answer to this is that that the joining of Haraam things in anything proven to be Sunnah (masnoon) or a permissible action does not make the originality of Halaal change into Haraam. Halaal is Halaal and Haraam is Haraam. Allama

¹² Faisla Haft Mas 'ala

Shaami رحمته الله writes, "Visiting graves shouldn't be abandoned if impermissible actions take place there (such as the intermingling of males and females) because even with such impermissible actions, preferable actions are not omitted. Rather, it is necessary on the person to visit the graves and prohibit the Bidat. This is supported by the previous rule that going with the Janaazah should not be aborted though there may be women wailing and lamenting (nauha) in the procession." ¹³

Prior to the Conquest of Makkah, there were idols in the Kaaba and at Safa & Marwa but Muslims didn't forsake making Tawaaf because of them. Yes, when Allah ﷻ gave them strength, they eventually destroyed the idols. Today, there is intermingling between men and women in the marketplace, on public transports and in worldly gatherings. In the transports for Haajis at Mina, Muzdalifa and even while making Tawaaf, open intermingling between the two genders can be seen. However, no one rules the original action (Hajj, etc.) to be prohibited because of these things. There are even shortcomings in Deeni Madrassahs at times. These institutions are not closed due to this.

Similarly is the matter of Urs. Both women going there (in the graveyard) and dancing is Haraam. However, because of these actions, how does the original gathering of Urs become Haraam? The correct approach is to go there, stop these impermissible acts and try to make people understand the values of Islam.

The hypocrite, Ibn Qais, submitted, "Do not take me with in the Battle of Tabuk because the western women of Rome are very beautiful. I fear that they will lead me towards fitna since I am very fond of women." The Quran however, rejected the excuse in the following manner, "الافتنة سقطوا وان جهنم لمحيطة بالكافرين" ¹⁴

¹³ Raddul-Muhtaar, Kitaabul-Janaaiz, Discussion on Visiting the Graves

¹⁴ Surah Tauba, Verse 49

Allah ﷻ did not accept this excuse and classified it as a means of infidelity (kufr) and Jahannam (Refer to Tafseer-e-Kabeer and Roohul-Bayaan). This is the very excuse Deobandis cling to in stopping the gatherings of Urs.

In the present day, there are numerous Haraam practices in weddings. These actions destroy Muslims and make them sinners. However, no one rules Nikah to be Haraam and stops it because of what goes on within them.

Today, the general and popular method of Qawaali (wherein dirty stanzas are sung, sinners and Amrads (boys without beards) gather and in which Ruqs (spiritual movement) is made only on the beauty of voice) is totally Haraam. However, if all of the conditions of Qawaali are first met by the reciters and listeners and then it is hosted, it cannot be called so. Eminent Sufiya have ruled Qawaali to be permissible for those who are worthy (Ahl) of listening and reciting it, not for those who aren't. The source of this is the following Hadith: A slave girl was beating a daff (small tambourine) in front of the Holy Messenger ﷺ. When Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ came to the Prophet's ﷺ court, she continued beating it and didn't stop even when Hadrat Uthman ؓ arrived. When Hadrat Umar ؓ arrived, however, she stopped beating it, placed it on the floor and sat down. The Noble Messenger ﷺ then said, "O Umar ؓ Shaitaan fears you!"¹⁵

One may ask: is beating the daff the practice of Shaitaan or not? If it was, was the Holy Prophet ﷺ Hadrat Abu Bakr ؓ and Hadrat Uthman ؓ not feared by Shaitaan? What meaning will the saying of Rasoolullah ﷺ have? The answer to this is before Hadrat Umar ؓ arrived, this action was not a Shaitaanic act but was leading towards one. When Hadrat Umar ؓ did arrive, it became a Shaitaanic act and was stopped.

This is why the Sufiya have emplaced 6 conditions on Qawaali. One of the conditions is that anyone who isn't worthy of

¹⁵ Mishkaat, Kitaabul-Fadhaail, Baabu Manaqibi Umar

it should not be in its gathering. Otherwise, Shaitaan will join in it just as how he joins the gathering of a meal wherein a person doesn't recite "Bismillah" before eating. This doesn't necessarily mean that the rank of Hadrat Umar رضي الله عنه was less. Rather, the character and method of each Sahaabi was different. Some of them were drawn towards adherence while others were immersed in the emotion of love. This is why the effects which they produced were different. If a Ghaus or Qutb began eating without saying "Bismillah", Shaitaan also joins in the meal. This is in no way disrespect to the Ghaus or Qutb. Shaami states,

”يقصدون يسماً عنها امور اهم اعلم بها فلا يبأدر المعترض بالانكار كي لا يجرم
بركتهم فاتهم السادة الاخير الله ومنها الا ترى ان ضرب تلك الالة بعينها احل
تارة وحرم اخرى وفيه دليل لسادتنا الصوفية الذين الة الله ليست محرمة لعينها
بل لقصد“¹⁶

Under the ayat, ”ومن الناس من يشترى لهو الحديث“ Tafseeraat-e-Ahmadiya has thoroughly researched Qawaali. At the end of his study, Mulla Jeewan رضي الله عنه rules that it is permissible for those who are worthy of it (Ahl) and Haraam for those who are not. He then writes,

”جهاد اكبر فيحل لهم خاصة انتهي ملخصاً لرسول الله وكانوا معتدوين لغلبة الحال
ويستكشرون السماع للغنا، وكانوا يحسبون ذلك عبادة اعظم وبه ناخذ لانا شهدنا
انه نشاء. من قوم كانوا عرفين ومحبين“¹⁷

Speaking about the Qawaali in gatherings of Urs, Haaji Imdaadullah رضي الله عنه writes, "The opinion of Scholars is that Qawaali is allowed if its conditions of permissibility are found and if the factors which prohibit it are removed. Otherwise, it is not."¹⁸

Maulwi Rashid Ahmed has also stated, "Listen to Qawaali that is free from music. Song is permitted if the reciter is not a concentration of mischief and if whatever he reads doesn't go

¹⁶ Vol. 5, Kitaabul-Karaahiyat

¹⁷ Tafseeraat-e-Ahmadia

¹⁸ Faisla Haft Mas 'ala

against the Shariah. If whatever is read is in accordance to the rhythmic beat of music, then there is no problem."¹⁹

In short, Qawaali, with its conditions, is permissible for the person who is worthy but prohibited for the person who isn't. Allama Shaami رحمته اللہ علیہ has listed 6 conditions for Qawaali,

1. The gathering must be free from Amrads (boys without beards) and the entire congregation should be people who are worthy (Ahl) of it, not those who are not.
2. The intention of the reciter (Qawaal) should be sincere. He shouldn't intend taking compensation for his recital.
3. The congregation should not have the intention of eating and amusement when coming to it.
4. Without true Wajd (spiritual concentration), no one should stand up.
5. The verses shouldn't contradict or go against the Shariah.
6. An *Ahl* (one worthy of Qawaali) is one who does not feel the strike of a sword to the body in the state of Wajd.²⁰

He further writes, "Some Sufiya state that an *Ahl* of Qawaali is he who hasn't eaten for seven days and, if there is both food before him and Qawaali, he leaves the food and goes for the latter."²¹

This discussion of mine doesn't mean that the popular gatherings of Qawaali in today's times are Halaal or that people should listen to such things. Rather, I have heard people of the opposition swear the eminent and elder Sufiya merely on the grounds of Qawaali. They believe it to be Haraam like fornication. So, we submit to them - do not listen to Qawaali but don't dishonor those Auliya who have listened to Samaa. Qawaali is an elixir for sickness. He who is sick should drink this

¹⁹ Fataawa Rashidia, Vol. 1, Pg. 61

²⁰ Raddul-Muhtaar, Vol. 5, Kitaabul-Karaahiyat

²¹ Ibid

medicine and he who doesn't should not. Hadrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thaani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ states, "Neither do I do this nor do I reject it." I have heard people say, "The Hadith has censored music. Therefore, the sayings of Khwaja Ajmeri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ and Imam Ghazzali رحمۃ اللہ علیہ have no credibility against the narrations. They were all sinners." Allah ﷻ Forbid!

This is indeed very hurting to them. We have discussed this objection very concisely.

OBJECTION 4

If this rule is correct (that by the inclusion of Haraam things in a Halaal action, the action doesn't become Haraam), it implies that Taazia Daari, fairs of idol-worship, cinema, etc. are all allowed because there is definitely a permissible act somewhere in them. Why don't you say here too that going to cinemas, Taazia Daari, etc. is not Haraam, only whatever is bad in them is? Also, the Jurists state that to attend the Waleemah that has dancing and music at the time of feeding is prohibited despite the fact that it is Sunnah to accept and attend an invitation. It has become Haraam due to Haraam acts incorporated within it. Similarly is the case of Urs.

Answer - Here there are two things to understand.

1. One is an action of Haraam being included and joined within Halaal,
2. The other is to join that which is Halaal with Haraam.

Whenever Haraam becomes part of something Halaal (in the manner that the Halaal cannot be done without it), or when Halaal is done through the Haraam, its classification of Halaal doesn't remain and in this situation the Haraam will make the Halaal also become Haraam.

If Haraam isn't included in the Halaal but sometimes occurs with it and sometimes without, then this Haraam will not cause the original Halaal to become Haraam.

An example of this is clothes and water touched by urine. The urine didn't become part of the clothes but did become part of the water it touched. This causes much variation in ruling. There are many Haraam things joined with Nikah, traveling, etc. However, these Haraam things have not become part of these Halaal doings, in the manner that without them, Nikah, etc. will not be classified to be so.

Wastage, music and impermissible fairs of amusement have entered Taazia Daari to the extent that these things have become a part of it. In other words, no Taazia Daari, etc. is free from these things and, if it was, it wouldn't be classified as Taazia Daari. However, if a person builds a duplicate of the Mazaar of Karbala and keeps it at home without burying it or performing these other Haraam acts, it is allowed because making a representation of inanimate objects is permissible. Alhamdulillah, dancing, etc. has not entered Urs gatherings and there are many functions that are free from these prohibited acts but are still called Urs. The Urs Sharif of Mujaddid Alf-e-Thaani رحمۃ اللہ علیہ at Sirhind Sharif is absolutely free from these practices. Generally, people commemorate the Urs of Imam-e-Azam, Imam Zainul-Aabideen, etc. رحمۃ اللہ علیہ only with lectures by the Ulama and the distribution of food.

Also, accepting every invitation is not Sunnat. Accepting the invitation of a minor (Naa-Baaligh), of the home of the deceased or of the wealthy that have amassed only Haraam, is not permissible. Similarly, to accept the invitation of a Waleemah that has music and dancing, especially at the time of feeding, is prohibited.

This is in contrast to the visiting of graves because it is Sunnah under any circumstance. Invitation does not become Sunnah after the mixing of Haraam actions within it, but visiting the graves is Sunnah unconditionally, so it doesn't become Haraam. This can be understood by the ruling of taking part in burial under any circumstance. Even if prohibited acts are performed there, the Sunnah is not Haraam. This is a very delicate difference that needs to be understood.

