

Writing Epitaphs on Graves

Q: Janaa'iz-114: Is it permissible to write the name and date of death on the grave? Please reply with substantiation.

Answer: It is permissible to have the name and date of death on the grave to preserve the semblance of the grave and when there is fear of the grave being trampled upon and shown disrespect. This applies especially if the grave is one of a pious person. Writing anything more than this is not permissible, especially not writing the verses of the Qur'aan. Kalimahs or the like (anything with the names of Allaah and Rasulullaah SAW.). However, even though the Fuqahaa have permitted this, it is

still best to leave the grave simple and, if need be, with a rock to mark the grave. Otherwise a tree may be used to mark the place, but it should be a tree that animals would not chew on (such as the henna tree).

Hadhrat Jaabir RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. forbade them from plastering graves, from writing on them and from trampling on them.

A Hadith states that when Hadhrat Uthmaan bin Madh'oon RADI. passed away, Rasulullaah SAW. placed a rock on his grave as a mark of recognition and said, "This is to mark the spot because I wish to bury my relatives close by." Rasulullaah SAW. later buried his son Hadhrat Ibraheem RADI. there.

The prohibition for writing on the grave is when there is no need to do so and the permissibility is when a need arises.

Simple graves attract more of Allaah's mercy and writing an epitaph or plastering a grave does not necessarily mean that one has love for the deceased. However, it is common for people from places like the Surat, Bharoj and Balsaar districts to move to Africa, Britain and other foreign countries. When they often return home, they have the desire to visit the graves of family and friends who have passed away in their absence. If the graves are marked with the name, it will be so much easier for them to recognise the graves, thus giving them much satisfaction. Although this need is not an urgent one, it must nonetheless not be ignored, especially when the deceased is a saintly person whom people are attracted to. With this in mind, it will be permissible to write the name and date of death on the grave without adding any verses of the Qur'aan, titles to poems. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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