

Building a Solid Grave

Q: Janaa'iz-28: (1) Does the Shari'ah permit a person to build a solid structure on his parent's graves?

(2) If this is not permissible, can a person build four walls around the grave. Leaving the centre open?

(3) If even this is not permissible, can a person then place a stone on the grave with the name of the deceased person on it and the date on which he passed away?

Answer: The Shari'ah does not permit one to build a solid structure on the grave. A Hadith clearly states that Rasulullaah SAW. prohibited people from solidifying graves, from building solid structures on top of graves and from sitting on graves.'

As a result, the Fuqahaa have mentioned that it is prohibited to use baked bricks on graves, to build a wall around the grave and to take fire to a grave as well as anything baked in fire.

There is benefit for the deceased in having a simple grave of sand because such a grave is more worthy of attracting the mercy of Allaah. It also has a greater effect on the hearts of those visiting it. It reminds them of death and presents them with a glimpse of the fleeting nature of the world. The purpose of visiting the grave will therefore be accomplished.

Love for the deceased does not mean that one should solidify and decorate the grave because none had greater love for another than the Sahabah RADI. had for Rasool SAW. They would not even allow the water falling from his limbs in wudhu to touch the ground and would scoop it up to wipe over their faces and bodies. However, despite their intense love for him, they did not plaster or solidify his grave in any way. May we also be guided to follow in their footsteps. Aameen.

If one wishes to maintain the semblance of the grave, one may occasionally throw sand over it. The name and date of death may also be indicated on the grave so that people may accord it respect and not walk over it. Although the Fuqahaa have allowed this as an exception, it is still best not to have anything written on the grave.

A Hadith states that Rasulullaah SAW. forbade the plastering of graves, writing on them and trampling upon them.

There are many benefits and great wisdom in the laws of the Shari'ah. Had the Shari'ah allowed building upon graves, we would have been surrounded by built-up graves and would scarcely find place to erect buildings and sow fields. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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