

Urs is the day of the passing away of the noble Saints and Prophets. The word **Urs** has been taken from the Hadith: "Sleep just like the bride." (Mishkhat) The Angels say to the Pious in the grave, "Sleep with restfulness and comfort just like a bride."

On the day of the passing away of a Saint or on a specific date, his admirers, disciples, followers and relatives assemble together at the grave of the Saint to obtain spiritual benefit and celebrate the anniversary with rejoice.

It is also very worthy to recite the Quran Shareef and pass on the Sawaab (reward) to their soul and to recite Fateha and distribute sweetmeat among those present.

The object of fixing the day and time of **Urs** is that the people become aware of this auspicious occasion, gather together and that they should make **Du'a** and obtain the full spiritual benefits.

There is no harm for fixing up the day for a permissible affair. To cite a few examples:

The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) himself has commanded to observe fast on the Day of 'Arafat, **Ashura** and the 15th of Shabaan, and he has also commanded to perform the prayer of Ishraq (sun-rise).

Similarly, he has commanded to perform the child's Aqeeqah on the 7th day.

Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) went to Ghazwa-e-Tabook on a Thursday and he preferred to journey on a Thursday.

He used to keep fast on Mondays and Thursdays.

The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) would go every Saturday to Masjid-e-Quba.

The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has fixed the timings of all these things; had it been non-permissible, he would not have fixed the timings.

After the Holy Prophet's (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) demise, Hazrat Abu Bakr (radi Allahu anhu) prepared a good deal of food on the 12th day, and on reading Fateha, he entertained the people of Madinah with it. He had so much of food prepared that it was enough for the people of Madinah. People began to enquire, "What is today?" Those who were knowing replied, "Today is the 'Urs of the Messenger of Allah, today is the 'Urs of the Messenger of Allah." It has become evident from this that the noble Companions celebrated the 'Urs of the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). (Fathul Ma'ani)

It has been stated in the Holy Quran that Hazrat 'Isa (alaihis salaam) said: "O Allah! Our Lord, send down upon us a tray from the Heaven so that it should be a festival for us, for the first one of us and the last one of us ... ." This verse indicates that we should rejoice on the day of receiving a bounty, and honouring and respecting that it is counted among the teachings the Prophets (alaihimus salaam), and a source of Allah's Pleasure. (Tafseer Kabeer, Tafseer Roohul Bayan)

To rejoice on the day of the demise of the noble Saints and the pious men is far much better than and meritorious because it is the day that they get "union" with Allah Ta'ala.

Hazrat Maulana Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dehlwi (radi Allahu anhu) has written that if the day of ❖Urs is meant for invocation or reminding for the deceased one, there is no harm. That gives benefit to the living as well as the deceased ones. (Fatawa Aziziyah)

Those who object to the ❖Urs celebrations say that we are practising Polytheism (Shirk) by worshipping a dead person, calling us "Qabar Pujaris". We, the Ahle Sunnah Wa Jama'ah, do not ever take the person in the grave (whether he be a Wali or a Prophet of Allah) to be the permanent and real authority. We do not believe that the person in the grave to be a partner of Allah Ta'ala.

On the date of the ❖Urs of a Wali or some special date set aside for its celebration, people go to the graves of the Friends of Allah Ta'ala to seek blessings and out of love for them, stand before the graves of the Saints and pray to Allah Ta'ala through the intercession of the Wali in the grave, whom they supplicate to intercede with Allah Ta'ala on their behalf. Doing so can never be called grave-worship or Shirk (associating partners with Allah).

#### PLACING OF GHILAF ON THE GRAVE

Ghilaf or Chadar (cloth) is placed on the grave of a Wali or pious Muslim for the benefit of the visitors so that they may understand and realise the status of the deceased Muslim.

It is allowed to put on a Ghilaf on the graves of Awliya and Ulema when it is recognised that the majority respect the person in the grave. People are also aware of the holy person's status and gain auspiciousness from the holy person who is resting in the grave.

In the famous book, "Raddul Mukhtaar", it is stated: "It is permissible to place a cloth on the Qabar of a Wali or pious Muslim so that visitors be more respectful when visiting the grave. We should also realise that the basis of action is upon the intention".

#### THE BURNING OF INCENSE STICKS, LOBAAN, ETC.

To light incense sticks (agarbatti) and lobaan in the Mazaar of the Awliya (or the gatherings of Khatams) and for the benefit of the visitors is permissible.

One should bear this in mind that it is done not for the deceased but rather for the comfort of the visitors, as they will feel better in a sweet-scented environment.

The action of doing good deeds for others is also a means of Sadaqa and the deceased also receive the Sawaab of this Sadaqa performed by those who are living.

#### PLACING OF FLOWERS OF THE GRAVE

The placing of flowers on the grave of an ordinary or a pious Muslim is permissible.

The flowers or plants are a creation of Allah Ta'ala and as long as they remain fresh they continuously recite the Tasbih of Allah Ta'ala, praising and glorifying Him. The heart of the deceased is satisfied. Allah Ta'ala says in the Holy Quran: "There is not a thing but celebrates His praise". (Bani Israeel: 44)

It is recorded in Sahih Bukhari Shareef that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) once broke a green branch in two pieces and placed each of them on separate graves. Hazrat Sheikh Muhaddith Dehvi (radi Allahu anhu) states with regard to this: "This very Hadith has been accepted by the Ulama as proof in placing flowers on the graves". (Ashatul Lam'aat)

Allama Tahtawi (radi Allahu anhu) states: "Some among our preceeding Ulama have given a legal verdict that the action of placing flowers or fresh branches is Sunnat and is proven from Hadith".

Wet grass should not be removed from the grave because the wet grass prays the Tasbih of Allah Ta'ala and gives solace to the buried. If it is removed then you have committed an unjust deed for the deceased.

#### KISSING OF THE GRAVE AND MAKING TAWAAF

It is forbidden to kiss or perform circumbulation around the grave. (Bahar Shariat, Ash'atul Lam'aat).

#### TIME AND DAY OF VISITING

It is Sunnat to visit the graves. One should go once a week, either on a Friday, Thursday, Saturday or Monday. The best time is on a Friday morning.

While visiting the Mazaar of a Wali, if you see something there which is against the Shari'ah, such as facing women or hearing music, then do not stop going, but think of it as bad and try and avoid it because to stop a pious act because of seeing bad things is not correct.

It is a wise thing that women should be stopped from visiting the graves. (Radd-ul-Mohtar; Fatawa-e-Razvia)