



## Can a Muslim be excused for his ignorance about `Aqidah (creed) issues?

Fatwa No. (11043) :

**Q: In our country, the worship of graves is rampant;**

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there are many advocates who claim that the worshippers of graves among Muslims will be excused due to their ignorance. Therefore, there is nothing wrong with establishing marriage relationships with them, being led by them in congregational Salah (Prayer) and to acknowledge their rights as full Muslims. Moreover, these advocates denounce any one who describes grave worshippers as disbelievers and label them as innovators. They claim that your Eminence excuses grave worshippers for their ignorance and that you approved a memorandum prepared by a person called Al-Ghubashy, in which he seeks excuses for the grave worshippers due to their ignorance. Would you please send us a clear-cut statement showing the cases in which someone can be excused for their ignorance? Kindly, provide a list of some related references that can be consulted on this particular question. Many thanks for your efforts!

**A:** Excusing someone due to ignorance of some religious issues, depends on how well-informed he is, and whether the issue in question is clear or not, and based on the varying levels of understanding.

When someone beseeches the dead to relieve their distress or ward off evil, they should be informed that their actions are considered Shirk. If, after making this point clear to them and showing them counter evidence in fulfillment of the duty of Da`wah, they persist, they will be regarded as Mushriks (those who associate others with Allah in worship) who should be treated as Kafirs in terms of worldly affairs. Moreover, they will deserve the painful punishment in the Hereafter if they die while still in this particular state of affairs. Allah (may He be Exalted) says, ﴿ Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning in order that mankind should have no plea against Allâh after the (coming of) Messengers. And Allâh is Ever All-Powerful, All-Wise. ﴾and

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﴿ ... and We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning). ﴾He further says, ﴿ ... this Qur`ân has been revealed to me that I may therewith warn you and whomsoever it may reach ... ﴾It was authentically reported from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, ﴿ By Him in Whose hand the soul of Muhammad is, any Jew or Christian amongst this Ummah (nation) who hears about me, but does not affirm his belief in that with which I have been sent and dies in this state (of disbelief), he shall be but one of the inhabitants of Hellfire. ﴾ (Narrated by Muslim). There are many other Ayahs and Hadiths showing the obligation of clarifying issues and establishing the evidence before blaming those involved in disobedience. Whoever lives in

a country which Da`wah (calling to Islam) has reached, but does not believe in it and does not seek the truth in its sources is the same as the person to whom Da`wah reaches but persists in disbelief. The general intent of the above mentioned Hadith narrated by [Abu Hurayrah](#) (may Allah be pleased with him) stands as a proof of this view. Additionally, the story of the People of Musa (Moses) affirms this view as well. It narrates that Al-Samiry misguided the people to worship the calf. At that time Harun was appointed a deputy of Musa who had gone in fulfillment of Allah's appointment to him. When Harun reproached them for worshipping the calf, the people said, "We will never cease being devoted to the calf until Musa returns to us." They preferred responding to the caller of Shirk than to the caller of Tawhid (monotheism). Therefore, their act was inexcusable because

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of the presence of the call of Tawhid and the recentness of Musa's Da`wah.

Here is another example that strengthens this view. Allah relates the discussion between Satan and the dwellers of the Hellfire. Satan lets them down and denies their act as Allah (may He be Exalted) says, ﴿ And Shaitân (Satan) will say when the matter has been decided: "Verily, Allâh promised you a promise of truth. And I too promised you, but I betrayed you. I had no authority over you except that I called you, and you responded to me. So blame me not, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor can you help me. I deny your former act in associating me (Satan) as a partner with Allâh (by obeying me in the life of the world). Verily, there is a painful torment for the Zâlimûn (polytheists and wrong-doers)." ﴾ They were not excused for trusting the Satan's promise and following the Shirk that he tricked them into, despite the fact that he confuses the truth with falsehood and makes Shirk attractive to them, because this occurred at the same time as Allah's promise to them of great reward for those who fulfill their covenant with Allah by following the straight path and adhering to Shari`ah.

In the countries where Islam has spread, we find its people are divided into two groups taking different ways. One group calls to different Bid`ahs (rejected innovation in religion) that lead to Shirk and other misdeeds. They confuse people and attract them to their Bid`ahs by any possible means including narrating unauthentic Hadith and strange stories in interesting ways. The other group calls to the truth and guidance, providing evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah and exposing the falsehood of the opposing group.

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Although they are less in number, the clarification and knowledge provided by this group are enough to establish the evidence. What matters is presenting the truth supported by evidence irrespective of the number of its proponents. Therefore, wise people who may happen to live in these countries will be able to find the truth by referring to its people, while being serious in this pursuit and keeping away from bias and tribalism; those who are not deluded by the wealth of the rich or by the power of the leaders; those whose thinking is not perverted and whose reasoning has not been impaired. They will be the farthest from those that Allah (may He be Exalted) described and mentioned in the Qur'an as, ﴿ Verily, Allâh has cursed the disbelievers, and has prepared for them a flaming Fire (Hell). ﴾ Wherein they will abide forever, and they will find neither a Walî (a protector) nor a helper. ﴾ On the Day when their faces will be turned over in the Fire, they will say: "Oh, would that we had obeyed Allâh and obeyed the Messenger (Muhammad peace be upon him)." ﴾ And they will say: "Our Lord! Verily, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they misled us from the (Right) Way. ﴾ Our Lord! Give them double torment and curse them with a mighty curse! ﴾

On the other hand, whoever lives in a non-Islamic country and does not hear about the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Qur'an or Islam takes the same ruling as that of Ahl Al-Fatrah (everyone to whom Da`wah has not reached in an uncorrupted manner). It is obligatory for the Muslim scholars to inform them of the Islamic Shari`ah in its totality; leaving no excuse of ignorance for them and acquitting themselves from the guilt of hiding knowledge in the sight of Allah. On the Day of Resurrection, such people will be judged as those who do not meet the conditions to be held legally accountable for their actions, due to insanity or immaturity. With regard to the subtle rulings of Shari`ah in terms of implication or the contradiction of supporting evidence, they cannot be held as good criteria for judging people as believers or disbelievers. Rather, it will be a matter of exerting effort to reach the correct view; meanwhile those who miss the right judgment are to be excused while those who hit the truth are to be rewarded.

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As far as such kinds of questions are concerned, people are of varying degrees in terms of their level of understanding, knowledge of the Arabic language, and the scope of reading the literature on Shari`ah (the Qur'an and Sunnah) including abrogating and abrogated texts, authentic and weak narrations and the like.

Therefore, it is impermissible for the adherents of Tawhid (monotheism), who hold that the worshippers of graves are disbelievers, to call their fellow monotheists Kafirs (disbelievers) when the latter take their time in establishing proofs and clarification before issuing a judgment of Kufr against the grave worshippers. Their hesitation in issuing such a judgment is justified; they deem it necessary to establish evidence and make things clear to the grave worshippers before finally declaring them disbelievers. On the other hand, the case of the Jews, the Christians, the communists and their likes is crystal-clear; there is no room for doubtfulness of their disbelief and the disbelief of whoever declines to call them disbelievers. May Allah grant us success, set right the affairs of all Muslims, bestow on them good understanding of the religion, protect us and them from the evils within ourselves and from our misdeeds and from saying anything about Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) without knowledge. He is the One Who is Capable of doing so.

May Allah grant us success! May Peace and blessings of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

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