

## Visiting pagan temples

Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee

Article taken and slightly adapted from: ferkous.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

**Question:** I am a student in Italy; as a part of my studies, I undertake discovery tours to archaeological temples and take pictures of them. These temples are often Christian and contain many statues, and I am –Thanks to Allaah– [Muslim] practitioner, and want to know if there is a sin in visiting churches and religious temples and taking pictures of them considering them as a part of history? And if there is a sin in posting these pictures in social Medias? May Allaah reward you.

**Answer:** All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection. This being so said:

It is neither permissible to visit churches and polytheistic temples, to witness disbelievers acts of worship, to attend their rituals, nor to participate in their feasts, for these are disbelievers own characteristics, and imitating them in such acts is prohibited by the hadeeth of the Prophet—صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "**Whoever imitates a people is one of them.**"<sup>1</sup> And because of what is included in these places, namely: magnifying their temples, paying reverence toward their acts of worship and increasing their numbers, which is also forbidden, and exposes its doer to calamities, scourges and indignation; Al-Baihaqee — رحمه الله — narrated that 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattaab — رضي الله عنه — said: "Avoid the enemies of Allaah — Jewish and Christians— in their feast, the day in which they are gathered; because the wrath [of Allaah] is descended upon them and I fear it may hit you, and do not learn their gibberish [language] thus you adopt their manners."<sup>2</sup>

Besides, it is basically inherent to a Muslim's faith and manners to glorify the sanctities and rites of Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. Therefore, he avoids his sinful and prohibited things and everything that causes the anger of Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. Thus, he does not attend the places and gatherings that contain prohibited acts and sayings. On the contrary, the Muslim has to magnify Allaah's beloved deeds that bring closer to Him, and he who magnifies and glorifies them Allaah

<sup>1</sup> Reported by Aboo Dawood (hadeeth 4031) on the authority of Ibn 'Umar — رضي الله عنهما —. This hadeeth is judged Saheeh (authentic) by Al-Albaanee in Al-Irwaa' (1269) and in Saheeh Al-Jaami' (6149).

<sup>2</sup> Reported by 'Abd Ar-Razzaaq in his Musannaf (1609) and Ibn Abee Shayba in his Musannaf (26281) and Al-Baihaqee — according to his wording— in Shu'ab Al-'Eemaan (8940, 8941) and As-Sunan Al-Kubraa (18861, 18862).

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rewards him greatly, and it shall be better for him in his life and his after life in the Sight of his Lord. And Allaah عزوجل says:

وَمَنْ يُعْظِمِ حُرْمَتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ

[Whoever honours the sacred ordinances of Allaah, it is best for him in the Sight of his Lord.]<sup>3</sup>

And says:

وَمَنْ يُعْظِمِ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

[Whoever honours the symbols of Allaah-indeed, it is from the piety of hearts.]<sup>4</sup>

And Allaah عزوجل says –describing the slaves of Ar-Rahmaan–:

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ

[And those who do not witness falsehood.]<sup>5</sup>

**Meaning:** they do not attend forbidden sayings and acts, including Shirk (polytheism) and worshiping idols. Some of the Salaf (Pious Predecessors) interpreted الزُّورَ (falsehood) as polytheists feasts<sup>6</sup>.

In addition, it is not a secret that publishing pictures of temples and churches on social Medias includes involving Muslims in it, and endearing such places to them, and praising them as a way of admiring, glorifying, and greatening them, which is –undoubtedly– against the faith and manners of a Muslim –as preceded–.

Yet it is permissible –in some cases– to enter Christians' churches and disbelievers' temples for a certain need or a religious interest or generally in purpose of investigation and confirmation –whether it was historical or else– as an exception to the principle of prohibition for a specific necessity, and this ruling is cancelled when the necessity does not exist, as prescribed in the general rules.

And perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عزوجل; and our last prayer is all the praises and thanks are to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds, and prayers of Allaah are to Mohammad and his Family, Companions and Brothers until the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers on: Dhu Al-Qa'da the 16th, 1437 H. Corresponding to: August the 19th, 2016 G.

<sup>3</sup> Soorah al-Hajj [22:30]

<sup>4</sup> Soorah al-Hajj [22:32]

<sup>5</sup> Soorah al-Furqaan [25:72]

<sup>6</sup> See: Tafseer Ibn Katheer (3/328-329).