

Death

Common Funeral-Related Innovations

Islam has provided a complete set of instructions for both the dying individual, as well as those who are present at the person's death. These instructions should be common knowledge among Muslims, since death often comes when it is least expected. This article is written to provide Some of the Common Funeral related Innovations prevalent among less informed Muslims.

1. Turning the dying person's body to face the qiblah.
2. The removal of menstruating women from a dead or dying person's presence.
3. Leaving dying men among the women and only coming to collect their bodies after they have died.
4. Recital of the Qur'aan for money at the time of the person's death.
5. Placing lit candles near the dead body until the morning.
6. Putting cotton in the throat, nostrils and anus of the dead person.
7. Clipping the fingernails of the dead body and shaving its pubic hair.
8. Recital of Surah al-Fatiha, al-Baqarah and the last two verses of Surah al-Baqarah, based on a fabricated narration falsely attributed to Ibn 'Umar. [Abdullah ibn 'Umar is reported to have said that he heard the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) say, **“When one of you dies, do not keep his body for long, but take him quickly to his grave, and have the opening verses of Surah la-Baqarah recited at his head and the concluding verses of the same Surah recited at his feet.”** Collected by al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab al-Imaan*. See *Mishkat al Masabih*, vol. 1, p. 358]
9. "Whoever recites Surah al-Ikhlaas 1000 times will be safeguarded from Hell." Is a fabricated tradition.
10. Instructing (talqeen) those who have already died to recite the declaration of faith: laa ilaaha illa-laah. [This practice is of no use to the dead. The Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) recommended that those who are dying should be encouraged to recite the declaration of faith.]
11. Writing du'aas on the shroud.
12. Making absent funeral prayers (salaatul-gaha'ib) for people for whom funeral prayers were made in the location in which they died.
13. Transferring the body of the deceased over long distances in order to bury the person near the graves of pious or in their home countries.
14. Reciting aloud Qur'aan, poems or words of remembrance while carrying the bier.
15. Excessive talking in loud voices during he time of burial.

16. Sprinkling rose water when placing the body in the grave and everybody covering the grave with sand while reciting specific prayers.
17. Recitation of the Shahadah three times after closing the grave and sprinkling of water on it.
18. Placing flowers, twigs etc. on the graves, based on Prophet Muhammad's (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) action. [Ibn 'Abbaas reported that the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam) once passed by the graves of two people who were being punished in their graves and said, one regularly didn't protect himself from the splatter of his urine and the other used to spread rumors." He then took a green leaf of a date-palm tree, split it into two pieces, and planted one on each grave. The people asked, "O Messenger of Allah! Why have you done this?" He replied, "Perhaps it will reduce their punishment as long as it remains green." (Sahih al-Bukhari, vol. 2, pp. 249-50, no. 443)]. What the Prophet did was special for him and he did not do it for every grave.
19. Building structures over graves or placing gravestones to indicate the name and family of the dead.
20. Commemorating the 1st, 3rd, 7th, 20th, or 40th day following someone's death.
21. Gathering at the home of the dead person and obliging the family of the deceased to provide food for the guests.
22. Reciting of the athaan at the graveyard. How this practice came into being is unknown, especially when there is no athaan or iqamah for the funeral prayer.
23. Recital of Soorah Yaaseen at the graveyard.
24. Putting flag poles with white flags outside the home of one who has died to indicate that death has occurred in the family. This is a practice of Hindu origin found amongst Muslims in Southern Philippines.
25. Avoiding the celebration of 'Eed because of a death in the family. Refusing to visit people on 'Eed for the same reason.
26. Visiting the graves of one's parents every Jumu'ah.
27. Visiting the graves in the middle of the month of Sha'baan.
28. Visiting the graves specifically every 'Eid, or in the months of Rajab, Sha'baan or Ramadan.
29. Dedicating the reward for certain acts of worship like Salaah and Qur'anic recitation to the dead or to the Prophet (sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam)
30. Circumambulating the Prophet's grave or any other grave.
31. Touching or wiping the tombs of the righteous in the belief that blessings will be gained from this act.