CHAPTER ONE: THE DYING PERSON

If one finds oneself on his or her deathbed or what appears to be the deathbed, one is obliged or recommended to do certain acts of worship and people around the dying individual are encouraged to be supportive and to provide certain basic services.

1. The Shahaadah

Those people who are present should encourage the dying person to repeat after them the Declaration of Faith (Shahaadah) until he or she passes away confirming Allaah’s unique oneness (Tawheed). Both Aboo Sa’eed al-Khudree and Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (r) as saying,

لَقَنَا مَوْتُكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَمَنْ كَانَ أَخَرَ كَلَامُهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ عَنْ الدُّنْيَا وَالْأَخَرَ

“Prompt your dying ones (to say): laa ilaaha il-lal-laah1 and whoever’s last words before dying are: laa ilaaha il-lal-laah, will enter paradise one day, even if he is afflicted before that by punishment.” 2

This prophetic statement does not simply mean that the Shahaadah should be mentioned by others in the presence of the one who is dying. The dying person, himself or herself, should be instructed to say the Shahaadah, as is evident from the Prophet’s statement “whoever’s last words are: laa ilaaha il-lal-laah”. The following hadeth narrated by Anas indicates the Prophet’s practise in this regard:

2 This addition is only found in Saheeh Ibn Hibbaan and it is authenticated in Irwaa al-Ghaleel, vol.3, p.150.
Anas ibn Maalik reported that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) visited a man from among the Ansar and said to him, “O Uncle, say: laa ilaaha il-lal-laah. The man asked, “Am I a maternal uncle or a paternal uncle?” and the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “Indeed you are paternal.” The man then asked, “Is it better for me to say: laa ilaaha il-lal-laah?” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, ‘Yes.’”

Muslims are also encouraged to be present when non-Muslims are dying in order to present Islaam to them, in the hope that they would accept Islaam prior to their death. For the acceptance of Islaam at this point to be of any benefit, it must be based on knowledge, it must be expressed sincerely and with certainty, and it must take place before the actual throes of death begin. This point is evident in the Prophet’s (ﷺ) attempt to get his uncle Aboo Taaalib to bear witness to Allaah’s oneness when the latter was on his deathbed. Aboo Taaalib knew about Allaah, Islaam, and the Prophet (ﷺ) very well. Similarly, the following incident involving the Prophet’s servant is one of a person who knew about Allaah and the Prophet (ﷺ).

3 Collected by Ahmad and authenticated in al-Fat-h ar-Rabbaanee, vol.7, p.57, no.34 as well as in Alkaamul-Janaa ‘iz, p.11.
4 Know that there is no god worthy of worship besides Allaah.” Chapter Muhammad, (47):19.
5 The were only commanded to worship Allaah, making the religion sincere for Him alone.” Chapter al-Bayyinah, (98):5.
6 Aboo Hurayrah reported Allaah’s Messenger as saying, “I testify that there is no god worthy of worship but Allaah and that I am the Messenger of Allaah. Any servant who meets Allaah with those two [testimonies], having no doubt in them, will enter paradise.” (Sahih Muslim, vol.1, p.20, no.41)
7 The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar to have said, “Allaah, Most Great and Glorious, will accept His servant’s repentance until the throes of death begin.” (Collected by at-Tirmithi and Ibn Maajah and authenticated in Saheeh Sunan Ibn Maajah, vol.2, p.418, no.3430. See also Riyadh-us-Saleheen, vol.1, p.12, no.18, for an English translation of this hadeeth).
8 See Sahih Muslim, vol.1, p.18, no.36.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
Anas also reported that, “When a Jewish youth, who used to serve the Prophet (ﷺ) got sick, the Prophet (ﷺ) visited him. The Prophet (ﷺ) sat by his head and said to him, “Accept Islaam.” The boy looked at his father who was near him and the man said, “Obey Abul-Qaasim.” So the boy accepted Islaam and the Prophet (ﷺ) left saying, “All praise is due to Allaah who saved him from the Fire.” ⁹ (When the boy died the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Make salaah for your comrade.”) ¹⁰

2. Good Words

People present may pray aloud for the dying person, letting them hear their concern and compassion for them. Those present should also avoid saying anything in the dying person’s presence which is not good. Negative words will only increase the difficulties which the sick and dying are facing. On the other hand, good words and positive thoughts will make the process of dying easier and the recovery from illness more bearable.

Umm Salamah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “If you are in the presence of a sick or dying person, you should say good things for verily the angels say “Aameen” to whatever you say.” ¹¹

---


¹⁰ This addition is found in Musnad Ahmad and is authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, p.11.

When Umm Salamah asked the Prophet what should she say, he replied:

(Qały: اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لي وَلَهُ وَأَعْفِّي مِنْهُ عَفْوًا حَسَنًا)

“Say: Allaahumma-ghfir lee wa lahu wa a‘qibnee minhu ‘uqba hasanah [O Allaah, forgive him and me, and grant me a good substitute after him].”12

3. Soorah Yaaseen

The practice of specifically reading the 36th chapter of the Qur’aan, Soorah Yaaseen, in the presence of the dying has no basis in the authentic Sunnah.13 Neither the Prophet (ﷺ) nor his companions did it or recommended that it be done. However, it does fall under the general heading of ‘good things’ which could be said in the presence of one who is dying, but it carries with it no special value. Reciting this chapter is like reciting any other chapter in the Qur’aan. Consequently, one may read it for the dying, if one wishes to do so, or if the dying person requests it due to his or her personal preference for it. However, to specify that Soorah Yaaseen should be read for the dying and to believe that doing so has special value is considered Bid’ah; a sinful innovation in the religion.

4. Facing Qiblah

Turning the body of one who is dying so that he or she faces the Qiblah [Makkah] has no foundation in the practise of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions. The body should be turned to face Makkah when it is placed in the grave, according to the Prophet’s instructions. However, at the time of dying, there were not such instructions. Turning the body, became a custom after the time of the Prophet’s companions, but was objected to by the scholars of that time. For example, Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayyib,14 one of the leading scholars among

14 Sa‘eed ibn al-Musayyib ibn Hazn (634-713CE), from the Madeenite tribe of Makhzoom, was one of the seven leading legal scholars of Madeenah. He was known as the most knowledgeable
the students of the Prophet’s companions, openly expressed his dislike for this practise. Zar’ah ibn ‘Abdir-Rahmaan reported that he saw Aboo Salamah ibn ‘Abdir-Rahmaan with Sa’eed ibn al-Musayyib when he was on his deathbed. When Sa’eed lost consciousness, Aboo Salamah instructed that his bed be turned towards the Ka’bah. When Sa’eed regained consciousness he asked, ‘Did you move my bed?’ When they replied that they had done so, he looked at Aboo Salamah and said, ‘I think it was done with your knowledge?’ He replied, “I told them to do so.” Then Sa’eed instructed them to return his bed to its original position.”

5. Acceptance of Fate

The dying individual is obliged to accept his lot gracefully so that it becomes a source of reward and blessing for him on the Day of Judgement. The Prophet (ﷺ) taught that patiently bearing the trials of this life is an act of righteousness which expiates sins. 

‘Abdullaah stated that he visited Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) while he was suffering from a high fever and said to him, “O Messenger of Allaah, you have a high fever.” He replied, “Yes, I have a fever equal to what two of your men experience.” I asked, “Is it because you will have double the reward?” He replied, “Yes, it is so. Any Muslim who is afflicted with the harm of a thron prick or more will have, as a result of it, some of his sins expiated the way a tree sheds its leaves.”

15 Collected by Ibn Abee Shaybah in al-Musannaf and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, p.11, nt.15.


http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
Pitying those who are dying is counterproductive, because pity will only make it more difficult for those dying to accept their fate. Instead, those on their deathbed should be encouraged to think positively by being told that they are fortunate. They should be informed that, according to the Prophet (ﷺ), Allaah has chosen them for a special reward.

Aboo Hurayrah stated that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Whoever Allaah wishes good for, He afflicts with trials.”\(^{17}\)

Those on their deathbeds should be instructed to avoid questions like, “Why me?” and statements like, “I’m too young to die!” and “It’s not fair!” as all of these indicate Kufr (disbelief). They should be reminded that it is all for the best, if only they remain patient.

Suhayb reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “A believer’s affair is amazing; it is all for the good and that is not the case of anyone besides the believer. If good times come to him, he is thankful and thus it is good for him, and if bad times befall him, he is patient and, thus, it is also good for him.”\(^{18}\)

The dying individuals should also have good thoughts about Allaah and be convinced that Allaah has chosen the most appropriate time and way for them to die. In that way, they are able to protect their faith from doubts and fears.

\(^{17}\) Sahih Al Bukhari, vol.7, p.373, no.548.

\(^{18}\) Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1541, no.7138. See also Mishkat Al-Masabih, vol.2, p.1098.
Jaabir ibn ‘Abdillaah reported that he heard Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say, three days before his death, “None of you should die except thinking the best of Allaah.”\(^\text{19}\)

Among those who will die with bad thoughts about Allaah are those who were only cultural Muslims. The only do some of the Islamic rites and rituals because it is the custom of their people without ever accepting true faith in their hearts throughout their lives. When death approaches, they will not want to accept their fate and their deathbed doubts will often tear down their false claims of belief, leaving them expressing statements of clear disbelief as death overcomes them. It will be a big surprise for those around them, for everyone assumed that they were Muslims destined for paradise, based on their practise of some or most of the basic religious rites. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) addressed this phenomenon as follows:

\[
\text{‘La ilaha ill-}
\text{laah,}
\text{wala}
\text{hu}
\text{mu}
\text{al}
\text{lah}
\text{ill-}
\text{laah,}
\text{mu}
\text{al}
\text{lah}
\text{la}
\text{lah}
\text{mu}
\text{al}
\text{lah}
\text{ill-}
\text{laah.
\text{}}
\]

Sahl ibn Sa’d quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, “Indeed a man may appear to people to do the deeds of the people of paradise, yet he will be of the people of hell.”\(^\text{20}\) And in another narration related by Aboo Hurayrah, he quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, “Surely, a person may do the deeds of the people of paradise for a long time, then terminate his deeds with the deeds of the people of hell.”\(^\text{21}\) Since everyone’s deeds were already recorded in the book of destiny, prior to the creation of the world, the change in deeds from good to bad was also referred to by the Prophet (ﷺ) as the record or destiny overtaking the individual.

\[
\text{‘La ilaha ill-}
\text{laah,}
\text{wala}
\text{hu}
\text{mu}
\text{al}
\text{lah}
\text{ill-}
\text{laah,}
\text{mu}
\text{al}
\text{lah}
\text{la}
\text{lah}
\text{mu}
\text{al}
\text{lah}
\text{ill-}
\text{laah.
\text{}}
\]

\(^{20}\) Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1395, no.6408.  
\(^{21}\) Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1394, no.6407.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com 9
‘Abdullaah ibn Mas‘ood quoted Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ), the truthful, as saying: “One of you may do the deeds of the people of paradise until only an arm’s length remains between him and paradise, then what was written overtakes him and he does the deeds of the people of hell and enters hell.”\(^\text{22}\)

6. Between Fear and Hope

The dying person should be in a psychological state between fear and hope. The person should fear Allaah’s punishment for his or her sins and, at the same time, hope for Allaah’s mercy and forgiveness. The true believer is not sure about whether he or she is going to paradise, no matter how good his or her life may have been, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said that no one would enter Paradise solely on the basis good deeds.\(^\text{23}\) Every human makes many errors during his or her lifetime. Although a person may consider some of his or her errors insignificant, they may have had exceedingly bad results. The dying person also should not give up hope in Allaah’s mercy, no matter how great his or her sins may have been, for Allaah is able to forgive all sins as He said,

\[
\text{لَا تَقْنَطُوا مَنْ رَحْمَةٌ ﺍﷲَ إِنَّ ﺍﷲَ ﻋَفَرَ ﺍﻟْذُّنُﻮبَ ﺗَﺠْﻤِﻊَ}
\]

“Do not lose hope of Allaah’s mercy, for verily Allaah forgives all sin.”\(^\text{24}\)

The only exception to that rule being the sin of Shirk, as it negates the very purpose of creation:

\[
\text{إِنَّ ﺍﷲَ ﻋَفَرَ ﻋَنْ ﻋَشْرَكَ ﺑِهِ ﻋَفَرَ ﻋَنْ ﻣَا دُوَّنَ ﻣِنْ ﻣَآءٍ ﺗَﺸَاءَ}
\]

“Verily Allaah will not forgive Shirk but He forgives anything besides it for whomsoever He wishes.”\(^\text{25}\)

\(^\text{22}\) Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.9, pp.411-2, no.546 and Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1391, no.6390.
\(^\text{23}\) Sahih Muslim, vol.4, pp.1473-4, nos.6390 & 6770.
\(^\text{24}\) Soorah az-Zumar 39:53.
Anas reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) visited a dying youth and asked him, “How do you find yourself?” He replied, “By Allaah, O Messenger of Allaah, verily I hope for the best from Allaah and fear my sins.” Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Whenever two come together in the heart of a slave (of Allaah) in such a situation, Allaah gives him what he hopes for and protects him for what he fears.”26

7. The Death Wish

No matter how severe the pain of the sickness may become, one is not allowed to hope or wish for death. The death wish reflects a belief that Allaah has burdened one beyond his capacity and indicates a lack of patience. The longer people live, the more opportunity they have to do good and improve their lot.

Umm al-Fadl reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) came to see them while the Prophet’s (ﷺ) uncle ‘Abbaas, was complaining (of his sickness). When ‘Abbaas wished for death the Prophet (ﷺ) told him, “O uncle, don’t wish for death, for verily if you were good and your death is delayed, it will add more good to your previous goodness and it will be better for you; and if you were bad, find fault in your bad (and seek forgiveness) and it will be better for you, so don’t wish for death.”27

27 This narration is found in al-Mustadrak, vol.1, p.339 and is authenticated in Abkaamul-Janaa’iz, p.4.
As Anas reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “None of you should wish for death because of some harm which has afflicted him. But if one must do it, let him say: Allaahumma ahyyine maa kaanatil-hayaatu khayran lee [Oh Allaah keep me alive as long as living is best for me] wa tawaffanee ithaa kaanatil-wafaatu khayran lee [and take my life if death is better for me].”

8. Debts

If dying individuals have in their possession certain rights belonging to others, they should return them, if they are able to do so, in order to avoid having to pay them back from their good deeds on the Day of Judgement. The Prophet (ﷺ) warned his followers of this reality as follows:

“Whoever has with him a wrong taken from the honor of his brother Muslim or from his wealth, should return it before the Day of Judgement when neither dirham nor deenaar will be accepted; if he has righteous deeds, it will be taken from them, and if he doesn’t have righteous deeds, it will be taken from his friends bad deeds and put on him.”


If those that are dying are unable to pay back their debts, they should, at least, have the sincere intention to do so and should inform their relatives about their debts. Either, one of their relatives will repay their debts after their death, or the Prophet (ﷺ) will take responsibility for the debts. The Prophet (ﷺ) established the basic principle of divine accounting that if a person intends to do a good deed but is unable, they are rewarded by God for their intention. Consequently, he said,

"There are two types of debt: whoever dies intending to repay them, I will be responsible for them, and whoever dies with no intention to repay them, will have it taken from his good deeds. There will not be any deenaars or dirhams on that Day."

9. **Waṣeeyah (Will)**

Before dying, everyone should write or dictate a will giving away up to one third of their wealth to those who would not inherit from them based on the inheritance laws. This recommendation was instituted by the Allaah to protect the rights of non-inheriting relatives and friends. It is under this principle of waṣeeyah that Muslims may leave wealth for non-Muslim relatives or receive wealth from dead non-Muslim relatives. According to Islamic law, wealth obtained by waṣeeyah is not considered to be inheritance. Islaam considers inheritance to be the portions of the deceased’s wealth which the law assigns to various family members in the absence of a will. According to the system of Islamic inheritance laws (Faraa’id), non-Muslims cannot be classified as heirs of Muslims. Likewise, Muslims have no right to take portions of their dead non-Muslim relatives’ wealth allotted by non-Islamic systems of inheritance. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported to have said, “A Muslim must not inherit from a disbeliever, nor should a disbeliever inherit from a Muslim.”

---

30 Collected by at-Tabaranee and authenticated in Ahkaamal Janaa ’iz, p.5.
Consequently, the Prophet (ﷺ) encouraged Muslims to record a will and keep it as soon as the need arises.

"It is not right for a Muslim who has something to bequeath to pass two nights without having it in writing with him." 

---

CHAPTER TWO: AFTER DEATH

Obligatory Actions on Those Present

Once the person expires, the relatives and those present are obliged to perform particular services for him or her.

1. Closing the Eyes and Du’aa (Supplication)

The eyes of the dead person should be closed and a du’aa made for him based on the following hadith of Umm Salamah:

"Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) came in and found Aboo Salamah’s eyes staring so he closed them and said, “Verily when the soul is snatched, the eyes follow it.” Some people from his family began to scream so he said, “Do not call on yourselves except good for verily the angels say “Aameen” to whatever you say,” He then prayed:

Allaahummagh-fir li Abee Salamah warfa‘ darajatahu fil-mahdeeyeen [O Allaah, forgive Aboo Salamah and raise his level among the rightly guided.] wakhlufhu fee ‘aqibihi fil-ghaabireen [and let his remaining offspring be like him.] wagh-fir lanaa walahu yaa Rabbal-‘Aalameen [Forgive us and forgive him, O Lord of all the worlds] wafsah lahu fee qabrihee wa nawwir lahu feeh [and expand his grave and illuminate it for him.]

---


http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
2. Covering the Body

A sheet of cloth large enough to cover the whole body of the deceased should be drawn over body. This was the approved practise of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the recorded practise of the Prophet’s companions.

Jaabir said, “After the Battle of Uhud, my father - who had been mutilated - was brought and placed in front of the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ). He was covered in a cloth and I wanted to uncover him, but the people forbade me. The Prophet (ﷺ) instructed that he be uncovered and when the cloth was lifted, he heard the voice of a woman crying. He asked, ‘Who was that?’ They replied that it was ‘Amr’s daughter or sister and he said, ‘Don’t cry, for the angels were shading him with their wings until [his soul] was lifted up.”

‘Aa’ishah reported that a striped Yemeni cloak was drawn over the Prophet’s body [when he died]. 

In the case of someone who dies in a state of Ihraam during Hajj or ‘Umrah, neither the head nor face should be covered by a sheet.

---

3. *Saheeh Sunan Abee Daawood*, vol.2, p.766, note.1. The style of cloak called *hibarah* had green stripes and was made of cotton from Yemen.
Ibn 'Abbaas said, “While a man was standing at ‘Arafah, he fell off his horse and his horse trampled him to death. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Wash him with water and lotus blossoms, wrap him in his two sheets of cloth but do not put perfumed oil on him, nor cover his head and face, for verily Allaah will resurrect him on the Day of Resurrection making *Talbeeyah*.””

3. Hasten the Burial

Once death is evident, the body should be prepared and taken out of the house for prayer and burial as soon as possible. In this way, contact with the dead body is minimized which, in turn, keeps the grief and hurt of seeing the dead down to a minimum. Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

> “Hasten the funeral rites.”

4. Location of Burial

The dead should be buried in the same area where they died. Transporting the body to another area or another country is not permissible, because it contradicts the Prophet’s (ﷺ) order to hasten the burial and it also necessitates

---

5 *Ihraam* represents the consecrated state of one who has made the intention for pilgrimage and has put on the specified garments.

6 *Talbeeyah* a the prayer repeated aloud by pilgrims at the beginning of ‘Umrah or Hajj.


---

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
unnecessary aditional expenses. Furthermore, the Prophet (ﷺ) specifically forbade his followers from transferring of bodies from the local in which they died.

"If the dying person requests writes in his will that his body be transported to another country, it should not be fulfilled. Because transporting the dead to another local is haram according to the authentic position held by most scholars."

Jaabir ibn ‘Abdillaah said, “On the day of the Battle of Uhud, the dead were being carried [back to Madeenah] for burial in al-Baqee’, when the Prophet’s (ﷺ) announcer called out: Allaah’s Messenger orders you to bury the dead where they lie.” This [announcement came] after my mother had already tied my father and uncle to the sides of her camel, in order to bury them in al-Baqee’. However, she returned them to where they were killed (for burial).”

Imaam an-Nawawee in his book, al-Athkaar, said, “If [the dying person] requests writes in his will that his body be transported to another country, it should not be fulfilled. Because transporting the dead to another local is haram according to the authentic position held by most scholars.”

5. Debts

All outstanding debts of the dead person should be repaid from the wealth he or she left behind, even if it consumes all of the inheritance. If dead person was without wealth or the inheritance was not sufficient to cover all of his or her debts, the state will be responsible to repay the remainder, if the dead person had made serious efforts to pay it. ‘Aa’ishah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) had said,

---

9 Uhud is a volcanic hill with a plain stretching before it on the western outskirts of Madeenah. The Quraysh defeated the Muslims there in the third year of the Hijrah (625 CE). (The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, p.68).

10 The name given to the city of Madeenah’s graveyard.


“Whoever among my Ummah carries a debt and strives to repay it, but dies (before being able to do so), I will be responsible for it.”

Allaah identified the ghaarimoon (debtors) as being among those eligible to receive Zakaah. If, however, the state was unable to do repay the dead person’s debts, any Muslim may voluntarily repay the debts as a act of charity.

Sa’d ibn al-Atwal reported that his brother died and left behind him three hundred dirhams and a family, and he, Sa’d, wanted to spend it on his brother’s family, but the Prophet (ﷺ) informed him, “Verily your brother is imprisoned by his debt, so go and pay it off.” Sa’d went and paid it off, then came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, “I have paid it all off except for two dinars claimed by a woman who does not have any proof.” The Prophet (ﷺ) told him, “Give it to her for verily she is truthful.”

Permissible Actions by Those Present

1. Uncovering the Face and Kissing it

Those present at the individual’s death or those who come to see the dead person for the last time are allowed to uncover the face and kiss it. Kissing the
face of the dead is considered a part of the *sunnah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions.

‘Aa’ishah reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) came to see ‘Uthmaan ibn Math‘oon after he had died, he uncovered his face, bent over him and kissed him.¹⁵

‘Aa’ishah said, “Aboo Bakr came riding on his horse from his home in Sunh. He dismounted and entered the masjid without saying anything to the people until he entered ‘Aa’ishah’s house. He then went to the Prophet (ﷺ), who was covered in his striped yemeni cloak, uncovered his face, then bent over and kissed him [between his eyes][between his eyes]¹⁶ and cried.¹⁷

### 2. Crying

Those present and the relatives of the deceased are allowed to cry for a maximum period of three days.

---


¹⁶ This addition is found in *Sahheeh Sunan an-Nasaa’e*, vol.2, p.396, no.1735.

¹⁷ *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol.2, p.188, no.333. The colour of the cloak was green see footnote.16.
The Prophet (ﷺ) delayed coming to visit Ja’far’s family for three days after his death, then he came to them and said, “Do not cry for your brother after today.”

In the previous hadeeth of ‘Aa’ishah’s concerning ‘Uthmaan ibn Math’oon she mentioned that the Prophet (ﷺ) cried until tears over flowed from his eyelids.

Anas ibn Maalik also reported that they went with the Prophet (ﷺ) to visit Aboo Sayf, the husband of Ibraaheem’s19 wet nurse, and the Prophet (ﷺ) took Ibraaheem, cuddled him and kissed him. When they later went back to visit him, Ibraaheem was breathing his last and the Prophet’s (ﷺ) eyes became filled with tears. ‘Abdur-Rahmaan ibn ‘Awf asked, “Even you, O Messenger of Allaah?” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “O son of Awf, verily it is a mercy.” His eyes again became filled with tears and he said, “Verily the eyes become filled with tears and the heart feels sorrow, but we only say that which pleases our Lord. Indeed, we are sorrowful at your parting, O Ibraaheem.”20

---

19 Ibraaheem was the Prophet’s son by his Egyptian Coptic wife, Maria.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
3. Patience

Relatives of the deceased are obliged to be patient, practice self restraint, and gracefully accept Allaah’s decree because Allaah has already promised mankind that He would test them.

ولَنَبْلُوْنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْحَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَفْسٍ مِّنَ الأَمْوَالِ } {، وَالأَنْفُسُ وَالْثَّمَراتِ وَبِشَرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

“Verily I will test you with some fear, hunger and a loss of wealth, life and the fruit (of your labor) so, give glad tidings to the patient ones.”

Among the glad tidings for those who are patient when loved ones are lost is a home in paradise. Aboo Moosaa al-Ash‘aree quoted Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying:

إِذَا مَاتَ وَلَدُ الْعَبِيدِ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى لِمَلاَكِهِ قَبْضَتُمْ وَلَدَ عَبْدِي فِي قُوَّةِ فِي قُوَّةِ قَبْضَتُمُ نَمَّرَةٌ فَوَادَهُ فِي قُوَّةِ فِي قُوَّةِ مَا ذَا قَالَ عَبْدِي فِي قُوَّةِ حَمَّادَةٌ وَاسْتَرْجَعَ فِي قُوَّةِ اللَّهُ أَبْنَا عَبْدِي بِيَتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَسَمَّتَهُ بَيْتٍ الْحَمَّادَةُ.

“If a child of [Allaah’s] slave dies, Allaah will say to His angels: You took My slave’s child. They will reply: Yes. He will then say: You took the love of his life, and they will reply: Yes. He will then ask: What did My slave say? and they will reply: He praised you and said, ‘Surely, we belong to Allaah and to Him we will return.’ Allaah will then say: Build a house in paradise for My slave and call it the house of praise.”

However, true patience for which Allaah’s promises reward is that which is practised when the calamity first strikes. The real test of patience is at the time of

21 Literally “we” known in English as the “majestic we” or the “royal we”, used by those of great importance.
22 Soorah al-Baqarah 2:155
23 Literally “the fruit of his heart”.
the calamity. Being patient after the initial shock and reaction has worn off, is not considered real patience.

ʿAnṣar ibn Malik related that once the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a woman crying beside a grave and said to her, "Fear Allaah and be patient." She replied, "Get away from me, for you haven’t been afflicted with my misfortune. And you don’t even know what it is!"] She then ran to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) door - where she did not find any guard - and called out, “O Messenger of Allaah, verily I didn’t know it was you.” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “Verily patience is with the first shock.”

Patience and self restraint at the death of children have especially great rewards because of the severity of their death on their parents. Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

"Allaah will put any two Muslims who have three children that die, before reaching maturity, in paradise along with them due to His mercy. The children

25 This addition is in the narration of Sahih Muslim.
will wait at the gates of paradise. When they are told to enter, they will reply, ‘Not until our two parents come.’ They will be told to enter paradise along with their parents by Allaah’s mercy.’”

Aboo Hassaan reported: “I said to Aboo Hurayrah that my two children had died. Would you narrate to me anything from Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) a hadeeth which would soothe our hearts in our bereavements? He said: Yes. Small children are the fowls of paradise. If one of them meets his father, he would grab his garment, and he will not remove his hand from it until Allaah causes his father to enter paradise.”

Allaah has promised a special additional reward for women who lose three children. Because she suffers even more than her husband when a child dies. It is she who carries the child within her for nine months, gives birth to him, nurses him, etc. If she is patient, she will be granted an even greater reward than her spouse.

Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) as saying to a group of Ansaaree women, “Any woman who has three children that die will be shielded

---

28 *Saheeh Sunan an-Nasaa’ee* vol.2, p.405 no.1770.

29 The narrator added, “or he demonstrated with his hand saying: the way I take hold of the hem of your garment.”

30 The narrator added, “or he said: his parents”.

31 *Sahih Muslim*, vol.4, p.1385 no.6370.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
by them from the Hellfire.” When a woman asked about two children, he replied that would also shield her.\(^{32}\)

4. Al-Istirjaa\(^{\dagger}\)

When the news of death in the family reaches the relatives and friends, they should say:

\[
\text{إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَ إِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ}
\]

“Inna lil-laahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji’oon [Verily we belong to Allaah and verily to Him we must return.]

In the case of the husband or wife they should add: \text{Allahumma ajirnee fee museebatee wakh-luf lee khayran minhaa} (or \text{minhu} if it is the wife saying it) [Oh Allaah grant me refuge in my affliction and replace her (him) with someone better.]

\[
\text{أَنَا أَبَيِّنَاءُ، عِنْدَكْ أَيُّهَا الَّذِيَ حَمِيتْكَ، فَأَتِمْ عَلَيْكَ سَلَامًا إِلَّا أَنْ نَصْبُهُ بِعَدْلِكَ فِي أَمْرِكَةً.}
\]

Umm Salamah reported that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “For any Muslim who is afflicted with a misfortune and says: “Innaa lil-laahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji’oon, Allahumma ajirnee fee museebatee wakh-luf lee khayran minhaa,


\(^{33}\) Soorah al-Baqarah 2:156. This \text{du'aa} is known in Arabic as \text{al-Istirjaa’}.
Allaah will replace it with something better.” She then said, “So when Aboo Salamah died I asked myself: ‘Who among Muslims is better than Aboo Salamah, the first family to make the Hijrah?’ When I said [the prayer], Allaah replaced [Aboo Salamah] with Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ).” Haatib ibn Abee Balta’ah was sent by Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) to propose to me and I said, “I have a daughter and I am very jealous.” The Prophet (ﷺ) said, ‘As for her daughter, we ask Allaah to make her benefit Umm Salamah, and I ask Allaah to remove her jealousy.”

5. Al-Hidaad: Mourning

Women are allowed to avoid all forms of beautification as a sign of mourning for their husbands, children or relatives. This does not contradict the recommendations for patience, as long as the mourning does not exceed three days for her child or relative and four months and ten days for her husband.

Zaynab bint Abee Salamah reported that when she went to see Zaynab bint Jahsh after her brother died, she asked for some perfume. After wearing it, she said, “I don’t need any perfume, except that I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: It is not allowable for any woman who believes in Allaah and the Last Day to mourn for the dead for more than three (days), except in the case of her husband, in which case she may do so for four months and ten days.”

---


35 The Prophet’s wife and cousin.

Forbidden Actions by Those Present

1. Wailing

The Prophet (ﷺ) strictly forbade wailing and screaming, or the hiring of mourners. Furthermore, he identified such practices as acts of Kufr (disbelief), because they indicate displeasure with what Allaah has decreed. Eemaan (faith) includes the belief that Allaah is the source of all good and all of His actions are wise. Proper Eemaan would never allow those who possess it to commit such acts of ignorance.

Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, “There are two practices found among people, both of which indicate Kufr: ridiculing the ancestry (of others) and wailing over the dead.”

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar also reported that Hafṣah cried when ‘Umar died and he said to her “Take it easy. Don’t you know that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said,

(إن الميت يعذب بتلك عهله عليه)"

“Verily the dead are punished in their grave by the wailing of their family over them.”

The dead will suffer due to the wailing of relatives in two cases:

---

37 Reported by Aboo Hurayrah and collected by Muslim and al-Bayhaqee Sahih Muslim, vol.1, p.44 no. 128.
38 Hafṣah was one of the Prophet’s wives and daughter of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, the second caliph.
(a) When the deceased requested mourning prior to his death.
(b) If the deceased knew that it was the practice of the people and he did not request that they do not do so over him.

2. Striking Cheeks and Tearing of Clothes

It was the practice in Arabia at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) for women in mourning to slap or scratch the cheeks of their faces and to rip their clothes. These acts were strictly forbidden as well as all similar practices which involved self punishment and the destruction of material wealth. These practices all aim at heightening the pain and sorrow accompanying death while Islaam seeks to minimize it. Ibn Mas’ood reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Whoever slaps his face, tears his clothes or invites (others) to an un-Islamic slogan is not of us.”

3. Shaving the Head or Dishevelling the Hair

Since the woman’s hair is considered a part of her beauty, and women in mourning would shun all forms of beauty, they used to either shave off all of their hair or mess it up and leave it in a state of disarray.

In Islaam women are allowed to shun various forms of beautification, but the shaving of the head and dishevelling of the hair is forbidden, as these go beyond normal bounds and are associated with pre-Islamic concepts.

---


41 i.e. messing it up and leaving it that way.
Aboo Burdah ibn Abee Moosaa reported that Aboo Moosaa was overcome by severe pain and lost consciousness while his head was in the lap of one of the women of his family. The woman began to scream, but he was unable to say anything to her. When he regained consciousness he said, ‘I am blameless of what Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) declared himself blameless; the wailing woman, the one who shaves her head and the one who tears her clothes.’

One of the woman who made the pledge to the Prophet (ﷺ) before the Hijrah said, “Among the things which the Prophet (ﷺ) made us pledge not to disobey him in was that we should not scratch or slap our faces nor call out ‘woe’, nor rip our clothes nor dishevel our hair.”

Those who normally shave but who let their beards grow for a few days to indicate their sorrow, fall under this category of dishevelling hair as the intent is similar. This practice is also bid’ah, an innovation in the rites of Islaam, which is also forbidden.

4. The Announcement of Someone’s Death

---


43 The Prophet’s migration to the city of Madeenah.

It is forbidden in Islaam to make a big affair about announcing anyone’s death, such as proclaiming it from the minarets of the masjids, announcing it in the market streets etc;

If someone died, Huthayfah ibn al-Yamaan used to say, “Do not proclaim his death to anyone, for I fear that it may be a death announcement and I heard Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) with my own two ears forbid the death announcement.”

However, a calmly expressed general announcement is allowed

Aboo Hurayrah reported that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) announced the death of the Najaashee to his companions on the very day that he died, then he stepped forward and they lined up behind him and he made [a funeral prayer consisting of] four takbeers.

5. Gathering to Give Condolences

The practise of organizing gatherings in the home, at the grave or in the masjid to give condolences to the family of the dead person is against the sunnah of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

---

45 Collected by at-Tirmithee and Sunan Ibn-i-Majah vol.2, p.382 no.1476.
Jareer ibn ‘Abdillaah al-Bajalee said, “We used to regard gathering at the home of the deceased’s family and their preparation of food an aspect of wailing.”

Imaam ash-Shaafi‘ee said, “I dislike gatherings, even if there is no wailing or crying. For it only renews the [family’s] feelings of sorrow and puts burdens on their food supplies.”

Imaam an-Nawawee related that the leading scholars prohibited organized gatherings based on it being an innovation.

6. Preparing Food by the Family of the Deceased

The obligation placed on the family of the dead person to prepare food for gatherings is incorrect based on the previously mentioned statement of the Prophet’s companion, al-Bajalee. Furthermore, it contradicts the Prophet’s explicit instruction to relatives, friends and neighbours to send food to the bereaving family.

‘Abdullaah ibn Ja‘far said: When the announcement of Ja‘far’s death came, the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said, “Prepare food for Ja‘far’s family, for something has happened to them which is distracting them [from their needs].”

‘Urwah related that ‘Aa’ishah used to recommend talbeenah for the sick and those grieving over a death. She used to say: I heard Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say,

---

“Indeed, *talbeenah* relaxes the heart of the sick and removes some of his sorrow.”

Recommended Actions by Those Present

1. Preparing Food for the Family of the Deceased

It was the practise of the Prophet to have his family prepare food for the relatives of the dead.

Asmaa bint ʿUmays said: When Jaʿfar was killed, Allāh’s Messenger returned to his family and said, “Jaʿfar’s family is distracted by the affairs of their dead, so prepare some food for them.” ʿAbdullaah ʿAbdullaah ibn Abee Bakr was one of the later narrators of this hadith. 53 said: That remained the sunnah until it became an innovation and was abandoned. 55

2. Praising the Dead

It is recommended that righteous Muslims who knew the deceased well, and were among his or her neighbours, should testify to others about the good qualities of the deceased. This is a means of reminding others of righteousness and spurring them on to good deeds. The Prophet (ﷺ) personally encouraged this practice and pointed out that such praise is of benefit to the dead person.

51 *Porridge* made from flour, bran and honey.

52 Sahih Al Bukhari, vol.7, p.401, no.593 and Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1202, no.5491.

53 ʿAbdullaah ibn Abee Bakr was one of the later narrators of this hadith.

54 People later elaborated on this practice until it became an exaggerated ritual with much pomp and show. Later scholars considered its distorted form an innovation and abandoned it.

Abul-Aswad related that he came to Madeenah during the time of an epidemic and he sat next to ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab. When a bier passed by, the people praised the person and ‘Umar said, “It has been affirmed.” Another bier passed by and the people praised the person and ‘Umar said, “It has been affirmed.” When a third bier passed by, the people spoke badly of the deceased and ‘Umar said, “It has been affirmed.” Abul-Aswad asked him what was affirmed and he replied, “I said what the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allaah will put in paradise any Muslim for whom four have testified to his goodness.”

Anas also related that the Prophet said, “For any Muslim who dies and four of his close neighbours testify that they have known him to be good, Allaah - the Blessed, the Highest - will say, “I have accepted your testimony and forgiven him for what you do not know about.”

The practice of requesting witnesses after the burial prayer and the bearing of witness by those who do not even know the deceased is bid’ah and futile, for false witness will never benefit anyone in the next life.

---


57 Collected by Ahmad (Saheeh) See Ahkaamul Janaaiz, pp.45-6.
CHAPTER THREE: PREPARING THE BODY

There should be no delay in the washing, shrouding and burial of the individual once he or she has died, as was mentioned earlier and supported by the Prophet’s instruction, “Hasten the funeral rites.”

A. Injunctions Concerning Washing

Washing the dead body prior to shrouding and burial is obligatory, according to numerous recorded instructions given by the Prophet (ﷺ). For example, when his daughter, Zaynab, passed away, he told the women who were preparing her for burial:

اَغْسِلْنَهَا

“You should wash her...”

This obligation is however considered Fard Kifayah (a collective responsibility), if there is no one to claim the body. If someone performs the washing, the community is freed from the obligation, but if no one does it, the whole community is considered sinful.

As a general rule, males should take the responsibility of washing males, and females should wash females. This rule is to avoid the arousal of any undesirable feelings during this delicate procedure. The only exception to the rule is in the case of husband and wife, or small children. Permission for husbands to wash their wives and visa versa is based primarily on the fact that

---


there is no prohibition from doing so. It is also based on statements of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his wives.

‘Aa’ishah reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) returned from a funeral at al-Baqee’, she was suffering from a headache and said, “Oh my head.” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “No, it is I who is in pain from whatever hurts you. If you were to die before me, I would wash you, shroud you, pray for you and bury you.”  

‘Aa’ishah said, “If I had known beforehand what I came to know after, only the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) would have washed him.”

Those who take on the responsibility of washing the dead should be the most knowledgeable of the procedures, preferably from among the deceased’s immediate family members or relatives. Such was the case of those who took charge of washing the Prophet (ﷺ). They were his cousins, ‘Alee, al-Fadl ibn ‘Abbaas and Usaamah, the son of the Prophet’s adopted son, Zayd ibn Haarithah.

Alee ibn Abee Taalib is reported to have said, “When he bathed the Prophet (ﷺ), he began to search for traces of impurities which are usually found on dead bodies, but he did not find any. So he said, “May my father be a ransom for you. You are the most pure. You were clean and pure in life and you are clean and pure after your demise.”

If relatives are not available, it is recommended that those who wash the body be among the pious, due to the delicate nature of this procedure. Those who deal with the dead in hospitals and morgues, usually become quite callous and rough or disrespectful in their treatment of the corpses. The same is true of those hired to wash the dead. Consequently, God-fearing individuals should be chosen in order to ensure proper treatment of the dead.

Those who wash the dead are recommended to take an Islamic bath (ghusl) afterwards, based on the following hadeeths:

Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever washes the dead should take a ghusl and whoever carries the corpse should make wudoo.”

The order in the above-mentioned hadeeth is understood as a recommendation due to the following hadeeth in which Ibn ‘Abbaas quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,


“You are not required to make ghusl if you have washed your dead, for verily your dead are not impure. It is sufficient for you to wash your hands.”

Ibn ‘Umar was also reported to have said, “Whenever we used to wash the dead, some of us used to make ghusl while others would not.”

Method of Washing

First: The body should be laid out, stripped of its garments and it’s joints loosened, if possible. A cloth should be placed over the private parts, between the navel and the knee, and the stomach should be pressed to expel any remaining impurities.

Second: A rag should be used to wash the body and the washing should begin with the places on the right side of the body washed during wudoo.

Umm ‘Atteeyah said: The Messenger of Allaah came among us while we were bathing his daughter and he said, “Begin with the her right side and the places of wudoo.”

---

8 The Arabic najis means ritually impure according to Islaam.
9 Collected by al-Bayhaqee and al-Haakim and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, p.54.
10 Collected by al-Daraqutnee and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, pp.53-54.
Third: After completing the wudoo, the woman’s hair should be undone if it was braided and the hair thoroughly washed. Then the rest of the body should be washed, turning the body on its side so as to complete the right side before washing the left.

Umm ‘Ateeyah said that they plaited the hair of the Messenger of Allaah’s daughter in three braids. They first undid her hair, washed it and then plaited it in three braids.¹³

Fourth: The body should be washed a minimum of three times and the water should have in it some cleaning agent like soap or disinfectant. The final washing should have in it some perfume like camphor or the like.

Umm ‘Ateeyah said: Allaah’s Messenger came among us while we were washing his daughter and said, "Wash her three, or five or more times¹⁴ using lotus water and put in the last washing camphor."¹⁵

---

¹⁴ ‘Seven times’ and ‘an odd number of times’ were mentioned in other narrations collected in Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.2, pp.196-7, no.349.
Fifth: The body should then be dried and the hair combed out. In the case of women, the hair should be plaited into three braids one from the front and two from the sides and placed behind her head. This practice is based on Umm ‘Ateeyah’s statement,

\[
\text{ضَفْرَنَا شَعرَ بُنتِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ نَعَنَى ثَلَاثَةٌ فُرُونٍ } \quad \text{وَقَالَ وكِيْعَ: قَالَ لِسُفِيَانَ: نَاصِبِئِهَا}
\]

\[\text{وَقَرْنِئِهَا.} \]

“We braided the Prophet’s daughter’s hair in three braids.” Wakee‘ quoted Sufyaan as saying: One [braid] from the forelock and two at the sides.\(^{16}\)

Sixth: Exceptions

The Pilgrim: In the case of person who died in the state of Ihraam,\(^{17}\) perfume should not be used in washing his or her body.

\[
	ext{عَنِ ابن عَبَّاس رَضِي الله ﷺ عَنْهُمَّ أن رَجَلًا وَقَصَتَهُ بَعْيَرًا وَنَحْنُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَهُوَ مَحْرَمَ}
\]

\[\text{فَقَالَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ: (إِغْسِلُوهُ بَيْعَةٍ وَسَدِرٍ وَكِفْتُوهُ فِي ثَوْبَيْنِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهُ طَبُبًا وَلا تَخْمَرُوا}
\]

\[\text{رَأْسَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يِبْعَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مُنَبِّيًا).} \]

Ibn ‘Abbaas reported that a man in a state of ihraam was thrown by his camel while they were with the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said, “Wash him with water and [ground leaves of the] lote-tree,”\(^{18}\) and shroud him in two pieces of cloth. But


\(^{17}\) One who has made the intention for Hajj or ‘Umrah and donned the garments.

\(^{18}\) The Arabic term ‘sidr’ refers to the lote-tree of which there are two species; one grows in cultivated lands and its ground leaves are used in bathing (ghusl) and its fruit (nabq) is sweet; and the other grows in the desert, its leaves are not used and its fruit juicy. (Arabic-English Lexicon, vol.1, p.1331).
don’t put perfume on him nor cover his head, for Allaah will resurrect him on the day of judgement calling out the talbeeyah.”\(^{19}\)

**The Martyr:** In the case of the martyr (shaheed), his body should not be washed at all, but should be buried as it is.

Jaabir also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said regarding those killed during the battle of Uhud, “Do not wash them for verily every wound will emit musk on the day of Judgement.” And he did not offer the funeral prayer for them.\(^{20}\)

**B. Injunctions Concerning the Shroud (Kafn)**

1. Shrouding the body is obligatory based on the commands of the Prophet (ﷺ) to do so. The body should be shrouded immediately after it is washed and dried.

Ibn ‘Abbaas reported that a man in a state of ihraam was thrown by his camel while they were with the Prophet (ﷺ) and he said, “Wash him with water and [ground leaves of the] lote-tree, and shroud him in two pieces of cloth.”\(^{21}\)


\(^{20}\) Collected by Ahmäd and authenticated in Alkaamil-Janaa’iz, pp.54-5 nt.32.

The shroud or its cost should be taken from the wealth left behind by the deceased, if it is enough money to purchase garments which can cover all of the body.

Khabbaab said, “Mus’ab ibn ‘Umayr died during the Battle of Uhud and we couldn’t find anything to shroud him in except his cloak.”

The shroud should be sufficient to cover the whole body. If not, those preparing the body should supply a proper shroud.

Jaabir narrated that one day the Prophet (ﷺ) gave a sermon in which he talked about one of his companions who had died and had been shrouded in a short shroud and buried at night. He warned against burying [a person] at night, before the funeral prayer could be made for him, unless one were forced to do that. The Prophet (ﷺ) then said, “If any of you shrouds his dead brother (Muslim), he should shroud him well.”

If the shroud is not large enough to cover the whole body and no substitute is available, the head and body should be covered by the shroud and the feet can be covered with twigs.

---


Khabbaab said, “We migrated along with the Prophet for the sake of Allaah so our reward was ensured by Allaah. Some of us died without accumulating any material possessions, like Mu’sab ibn ‘Umayr, while others gained rewards. Mu’sab ibn ‘Umayr died during the Battle of Uhud and we couldn’t find anything to shroud him in except his cloak. When we covered his head, his feet were exposed and when we covered his feet, his head would be exposed. So the Prophet instructed us to cover his head [with his cloak] and cover his feet with twigs.”

If the number of dead is great or the cloth used for shrouding is insufficient for all of the bodies, more than one body may be wrapped in the same shroud at a time.

---


Anas ibn Maalik related that Allaah’s Messenger passed by the mutilated body of Hamzah\(^{26}\) and said, “Were it not that Safeeyah\(^{27}\) would have grieved, I would have left him until the birds and wild animals devoured him so he would be resurrected in their bellies.” The garments were scanty and the slain were in great number. So one, two and three persons were shrouded in one sheet of cloth.\(^{28}\) The narrator, Qutaybah, added: They were then buried in one grave. Allaah’s Messenger asked: Which of the two knew the most Qur’aan? And the one who had done so was placed in front, facing the Qiblah.\(^{29}\)

In the case of the martyr, his or her garments are not removed. The shroud is wrapped over the garments in which the person was killed.

5 The number of sheets used to wrap the body can be as few as one sheet, based on Umm ‘Ateeyah’s hadeeth in which she said,  

\[
فَأَعْطَانَا حَرْطَةٌ فَقَالَ اسْمَعِرْنَاهَا إِيَاهُ مَعْتَيْنُي إِزَارَةً
\]

“He [the Prophet (ﷺ)] threw us his lower wrapper”\(^{30}\) and said, ‘Shroud her in it.”\(^{31}\)

\(^{26}\) Hamzah ibn ‘Abdil-Muttaalib was the brother of Aboo Taalib, and an uncle of the Prophet (ﷺ). He was known for his bravery, thus his acceptance of Islaam in Makkah greatly strengthened the position of Muslims there. He was killed during the Battle of Uhud, and Hind bint ‘Utbah, the wife of Aboo Sufyaan, mutilated his body and ate his liver in revenge for her father’s death in the Battle of Badr. (The Life of Muhammad, pp.83,131, 385).

\(^{27}\) Safeeyah bint ‘Abdil-Muttaalib was the sister of Hamzah and paternal aunt of the Prophet (ﷺ). She was also the mother of az-Zubayr ibn al-Awwaam. (The Life of Muhammad, pp.387-8 & 513).

\(^{28}\) Ibn Taymeeyah was of the opinion that they were not literally shrouded in a single sheet of cloth, but that a single sheet was torn and pieces used to shroud two or three bodies individually, even if it did not completely cover them, due to necessity. He argued that if they were in a single sheet, the Prophet (ﷺ) would have asked about the most knowledgeable before shrouding them, to avoid having to undo the shroud and re-shroud them. (‘Awn al-Mu’bood, vol.3, p.165).


\(^{30}\) The izaar, also called a ‘waist-wraper’, is a sheet of cloth wrapped around the waist like a skirt. It is called a lungi in India and Pakistan, and a sarong in Malaysia and Indonesia.

It could also be two sheets as in the hadeeth of the muhrim who was killed by his horse at ‘Arafah. The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“... and shroud him in two sheets.” 32

In the case of the male who dies while in a state of ihraam, the two sheets will be the two sheets of his ihraam. Ibn ‘Abbaas quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying,

“Wash the muhrim in the sheets in which he entered the state of ihraam; wash him with water and lote-tree leaves; and shroud him in his two sheets.” 33

The preferable number is generally considered to be three sheets based on the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) was shrouded in three. However, since the use of one or two sheets were suggested and approved by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself, the companion’s choice of three sheets cannot be considered more preferable than two or one.

‘Aa’ishah reported that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was shrouded in three sheets of Yemeni cotton cloth from Sahool 34 and there was not among them a shirt or a turban. 35

34 Sahool is the name of a town in Yemen (an-Nihaayah, vol.2, p.347).
Point of note: There is no difference between the man and woman in the number of sheets used.\(^{36}\) The Prophet (ﷺ) did not specify a particular number for women and another for men as is commonly held among Muslims today.

6 The preferable color is white, since Ibn ‘Abbaas quoted the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) as saying,

\[
\text{بَسَّوا مَنْ ثَيَابَكُمْ الْبَيَاضَ فَأْنَهَا مِنْ خَبْرِ ثَيَابِكَمْ وَكَفَّنَّا فِيهَا مَوْتَكَمْ}
\]

“Wear white clothes, for verily it is among the best of your garments and shroud your dead in it also.”\(^{37}\)

It is also recommended that the cloth or at least one of the sheets be striped. Jaabir related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

\[
\text{إِذَا تَوَفَّيْ أحَذَكُمْ فَوُجِدَ شِئُنَا فَلْيَكْفِنَّ درْبَبَ حِيْرَةً}
\]

“If one of you dies and some cloth is available, let him be shrouded in striped cloth.”\(^{38}\)

7 It is recommended that the shroud be perfumed with incense thrice, except in the case of the muhriim, as was previously mentioned. Jaabir quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying:

\[36\] Laylaa bint Qaa’if ath-Thaqafeeyah’s hadeeth regarding the Prophet’s daughters shroud [used as evidence for the use of five sheets for females] is unauthentic. Sunan Abu Dawud, vol.2, p.897, no.3151. It is rated unauthentic in Da’eef Sunan Abee Daawood, p.319 no.691 due to the presence of the unknown narrator, Nooh ibn Hakeem ath-Thaqafee, in its chain of narration.
\[38\] Collected by Ahmad and Aboo Daawood (Sunan Abu Dawud vol.2, p.896 no.3144.)
When you burn incense by your dead, do it three times.”

Spending large sums of money on the shroud the way that non-muslims compete with each other in buying the most expensive coffins, is strictly forbidden in Islaam. The sheets should be normal cloth, preferably cotton and not synthetics so that it decomposes quickly along with the body and the number of sheets should not exceed three. A noted scholar, Abut-Tayyib, said that if it were not for the fact that the shroud was ordered in Islaam primarily to cover the private parts of the body, it would be considered wastage of wealth since it is of no benefit to either the living or the dead. Therefore, both the use of many sheets and expensive cloth should be avoided.

Al-Mugheerah ibn Shubbah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Verily Allaah has forbidden you from harming your mothers, giving then taking back what you have given, and killing your daughters. And he despises your statements: ‘It is said’ and ‘he said’ excessive questioning and wasting your wealth.”

C. Injunctions Concerning the Funeral Procession

39 Collected by Ahmad (Musnad Ahmad, vol.3, p.331), al-Haakim, and al-Bayhaqee and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, p.64.
40 Ar-Rawdah an-Nadeeyah, vol.1, p.165.
41 These are the introductory statements for gossip.
1 Following a Muslim’s bier is among the obligatory rights due to every Muslim from all Muslims who witness his funeral procession. Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Every Muslim has five rights due to him from his fellow Muslims: Returning his greetings of salaam [peace], visiting him when he is sick, following his bier, praying for his well being when he sneezes⁴³ and giving him advice if he seeks it.”⁴⁴

This practice is recommended because it helps to keep Muslims in touch with the reality of death and the after-life. The believers all need to be reminded about death from time to time, because the material needs, pleasures and distractions of this life easily causes humans to forget about the life to come. Aboo Sa’eed reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

“Visit the sick and follow the biers, for it reminds you of the next life.”⁴⁵

2 Method of Following the Bier: There are two ways by which the bier can be followed:

a) Following it from the family’s home until the funeral prayer is made for the deceased.

b) Following it from the family’s home until the body has been buried.

---

⁴³ Saying: 


⁴⁵ Collected by al-Bukhaaree (al-Adab al-Mufrad, p.75) and Ahmad (Musnad Ahmad, vol.3, p.27) and authenticated in Ahkaamul Janaa’iz, pp.66-7.
Both ways were done by the Prophet (ﷺ), but he favoured the second method by indicating that its reward was greater. Aboo Hurayrah quoted him as saying,

"Whoever follows a Muslim’s bier, out of Eemaan and seeking to increase his account of good deeds, until he makes the funeral prayer for it will have a Qeeraat’s worth of reward. And he whoever follows it until it is buried, will get two Qeeraats."

He was then asked what two Qeeraats were and he replied, “They are equivalent to two huge mountains; [the smaller of the two is like Mount Uhud].”

3 The Participation of Women: The virtue of following the bier is basically for men alone. Women are not encouraged to take part, based on the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited their participation. However, his prohibition was one of dislike rather than complete forbiddance as is evident from the following narration of a female companion of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Umm ‘Ateeyah said, “[Allaah’s Messenger] forbade us from following the bier, but he did not demand that we obey.”

The crowds which sometimes follow funeral processions and the crush of bodies associated with it represent an unsuitable circumstance for women. Where the crowds are absent and women can follow the bier without being pushed and trod upon, they may take part in the funeral procession.

---

46 This addition is found in Muslim’s narration.
The Dirge⁴⁹: Following the bier with wailing, chants, dirges, burning incense etc., are all forbidden and considered bid‘ah (religious innovation). The way of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions was to maintain silence while walking with the bier. Silence at this time allows those present to contemplate the realities of life and death and extract from their participation real lessons.⁵⁰ Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

"Do not follow the bier with voice or fire."⁵¹

This prohibition includes thikr; chants using Allaah’s names or attributes. Qays ibn ‘Ibaad said that the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) used to despise the raising of voice near the bier.⁵² It is also the practise of some religions to make a lot of noise during the funeral procession and Muslims are instructed to avoid imitation of the religious practises of other nations.

Haste in Carrying the Bier: Those carrying the bier are required to walk quickly with it from the deceased’s house to the masjid and from the masjid to the graveyard. The Prophet (ﷺ) was reported by Aboo Hurayrah to have said,

⁴⁹ A song sung at a burial or for a dead person.
⁵⁰ Al-Athkaar, p.203.
⁵² Collected by al-Bayhaqee and authenticated in Aḥkamul-Janaa ’iz, p.71.
“Hasten with the bier for if the deceased was righteous, what you are taking him to is good for him; and if he was not then you are removing evil from your necks.”

Accompanying the Bier: Those walking with the bier are allowed to walk in front, behind or on either side of it, while those riding should be behind it. Al-Mugheerah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(الراكب يسير خلف الجنازة والمشي يمشي خلفها وأمامها وعن يمينها وعن يسارها قريبًا مننها)

“The rider should go behind the bier while those on foot can walk behind it, in front of it, on its right and on its left, keeping near to it.”

Saalim quoted his father as saying that he saw the Prophet (ﷺ), Aboo Bakr and 'Umar all walk in front of the bier.

---


Anas ibn Maalik related that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ), Aboo Bakr and ‘Umar all used to walk in front of the bier and behind it.56

However, it is preferable to walk behind the bier based on the many prophetic statements in which he told his followers to ‘follow’ the bier. The preference for walking behind the bier is also supported by a statement from ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib in which he was reported to have said, “Walking behind the bier is superior to walking in front of it, like the superiority of a man’s prayer in congregation over his prayer alone.”57

Standing for the bier when it passes by was practiced by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the early days of Islaam, but he later abolished it. Waaqid ibn ‘Amr said, “I witnessed a bier of the Salamah tribe so I stood up until Naafi’ ibn Jubayr said, “Sit down and I will give you some reliable information on this matter.” (When I sat down, he said) “Mas’ood ibn al-Hakam az-Zarqee told me that he heard ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib in Koofah Square say,

“ Allaah’s Messenger used to order us to stand for the bier at first then later he used to sit and ordered us to sit also.”58

Transporting the Bier in a funeral coach or vehicle (hearse) according to the traditions of non-Muslims is forbidden. Carts which could have been used to transport the dead existed in the Prophet’s time, but he instructed his followers to walk and carry the bier with their own hands. The Prophet (ﷺ) explicitly instructed his followers on numerous occasions to differ in their religious and social customs from non-Muslims.59 For example:

56 Collected by at-Tahhaawee (1/278) and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, pp.73-74.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
Ibn ‘Umar quoted Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, “Whoever imitates a people becomes one of them.”

The Prophet (ﷺ) also warned his followers against imitating others by prophesying that future generations of Muslims would imitate the practices of other religious groups and customs of other nations.

Aboo Sa’eed al-Khudree related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “You will follow the ways of those nations who were before you, inch by inch, yard by yard, so much so that if they entered a lizard’s hole, you would follow them.” We asked: O Messenger of Allaah, [do you mean] the Jews and Christians? He replied, “[If not them] who else?”

In another narration by Aboo Hurayrah in which the Prophet made a similar statement about following the customs of other people, his companions asked: O Messenger of Allaah, [do you mean people] like those of Persia and Rome? He replied, “Who are the people besides them?”

Furthermore, the Prophet’s instructions to follow the bier becomes difficult, if not impossible, in some cases, and the goal of remembering the next life is often lost as people are distanced from the dead. Al-Mugheerah narrated that the

---

59 Al-Albaanee collected most of the narrations prohibiting imitation in his book Hijaab al-Mar’ah al-Muslimah fil-Kitaab was-Sunnah.


Prophet (ﷺ) said, “The rider should go behind the bier while those on foot can walk behind it, in front of it, on its right and on its left, keeping near to it.”\(^{63}\)

In countries where Muslims are a relatively new minority, like America, England, France and Germany, where there are virtually no Muslim neighbourhoods with mosques and Muslim graveyards nearby, the use of motorized transportation for part of the funeral procession is unavoidable. In fact, in some of these countries, the laws specify that a hearse must be used to transport the dead. Such circumstances represent exceptions to the general rule. However, Muslims in these lands should still try their utmost to avoid imitation to whatever degree they can.

CHAPTER FOUR: FUNERAL PRAYER

A. Injunctions Concerning the Prayer

The performance of Salaah al-Janaazah is considered Fard Kifayaah (a communal duty). If someone is buried without it being performed, the whole community is held responsible, but as long as some gather and perform it, the obligation is removed from the community as a whole.

EXCEPTIONS

A Child Below the Age of Puberty: A child born dead or aborted after the fourth month, or one that dies before reaching puberty, does not have to have a funeral prayer because they have been guaranteed paradise by Allaah and His Prophet ( ﷺ). This fact is borne out by ‘Aaeshah’s statement,

"The Prophet’s son Ibraheem died when he was eighteen months old and the Prophet (ﷺ) did not make salaah for him.”

Although the funeral prayer is not fard (compulsory) in this case, it is still legally a part of the Sharee‘ah, recommended and was done by the Prophet (ﷺ) on other occasions. For example, al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(وَالسَّقِطُ يُصَلِّى عَلَيْهِ وَيُدْعَى لَوَالِدِيْهِ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ وَالرَّحْمَةِ).

---

“Salaah is made for the aborted child and forgiveness and mercy is asked for his parents.”

‘Aa’ishah also reported that a dead child from the Ansaars was brought to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he led salaah for it.

A Child Aborted Before the Fourth Month: If the child was aborted before the fourth month, there is no funeral prayer for it since it was not considered living in the human sense. This ruling is based on the hadeeth related by Ibn Mas’ood in which the Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted as saying,

(( إِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ يَجْمَعُ فِي بَطْنِ أُمَّةٍ أَربَعِينَ يوْمًا ثُمَّ عَلَفَةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ ثُمَّ يُكُونُ مُضَغَّةً مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ ثُمَّ يَبْعِثُ اللَّهُ مَلِكًا قَوْمٍ بَارِزِقَهُ وَأَجْلِهُ وَشَفِيعًا أَوْ سَعِيدًا.))

“Verily the creation of each one of you comes together in his mother’s stomach for forty days, then he becomes a leach-like clot for a similar period, then he becomes a clump of flesh for a similar period, then an angel is sent to him and the angel blows his soul into him.”

The Martyr (Shaheed): Salaatul-Janaazah is also not required for one who dies or is killed while fighting for the cause of Islaam. Such an individual can be buried without Salaatul-Janaazah as was mentioned earlier in the case of the martyrs of the Battle of Uhud. However, the funeral prayer may be made for martyrs since the Prophet (ﷺ) did perform Salaatul-Janaazah for those who died in battle on other occasions.

---


3 Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1400, no.6436 and Sunan Ibn-i-Majah, vol.1, pp.48-9, no.82.

4 Abkaamul-Janaa ’iz, p.81.

5 Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.8, p.387, no.593 and Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1391, no.6390.
Shidaad ibn al-Haad reported that one of the Bedouins came to the Prophet (ﷺ), accepted Islaam and made Hijrah along with him. He stayed in Madeenah for a short time then he went out to fight the enemy. During the battle he was killed by an arrow. After the battle his body was brought to the Prophet (ﷺ). The Prophet (ﷺ) shrouded him in his own cloak then stepped forward and led the salaah for him.⁶

An Executed Criminal: One who voluntarily confesses to a crime whose punishment is death should be prayed for, since such a confession is an unparalleled form of true repentance.

‘Imraan ibn Huṣayn reported that a woman pregnant from adultery, from the Juhaynah tribe came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said, ‘I have committed a capital offense so apply the law to me.” The Prophet (ﷺ) called her guardian and said, “Treat her well, and when she delivers bring her back to me.” When he brought her back, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered that her clothes be drawn tight around her, then he ordered that she be stoned to death. After that he led the funeral prayers for her, so Umar asked him, “Will you pray for her, O Prophet of Allaah, even though she committed adultery?” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “Verily she repented such a

great repentance that if it were divided up among seventy residents of Madeenah it would have been more than enough for all of them.”

3 The Corrupt: The funeral prayer should be held even for those who were known to be corrupt, like alcholics, drug addicts, adulterers, and those who abandoned prayer and Zakaah, while acknowledging that they are compulsory duties. However, it is preferable that the scholars and the pious do not join in the funeral prayer for them as a punishment for them and discouragement for others like them. It was the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) not to pray for those who committed major sins, although he did allow others to do so. Aboo Qataadah said:

"If the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) was invited to lead a funeral prayer, he would ask about the dead person. If good was said about the person, he would get up and lead the prayer. But if other than that were said, he would tell the family, “It is your affair to deal with.” and he would not take part in the funeral prayer for the person."

8 Those who deny that prayer or Zakaah is obligatory become disbelievers, in which case no funeral prayer may be held for them.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
Jaabir Ibn Samurah reported that when a man got very sick and his family began screaming, his neighbour went to the Prophet (ﷺ) and told him that the man had died. The Prophet (ﷺ) asked him what made him think so and he replied that he saw him. The Prophet (ﷺ) then told him that he was not yet dead. When he returned, the man’s family again screamed and his wife told the neighbour to go and inform the Prophet (ﷺ). The neighbour asked Allaah to curse the man and then went to look at him. He found that he killed himself with a broad blade, so he went and informed the Prophet (ﷺ) that he was dead. When the Prophet (ﷺ) asked him how he knew, he described how he found him. The Prophet (ﷺ) then asked the neighbour if he saw the dead man with his own eyes and when he replied that he had, the Prophet (ﷺ) then said, "In that case, I won’t make salaah for him."  

Debtors: In the beginning, the Prophet (ﷺ) refused to lead the funeral prayer for those who died leaving behind debts and no means to pay them. This was done to emphasize the importance of clearing one’s debts. However, he later led prayers for them and paid off their debts from charity.  

Aboo Hurayrah related that when the body of a person who died owing debts was brought to Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ), he would ask whether he had left enough property to clear his debt. If the property left was sufficient, the Prophet would lead the funeral prayer for him, otherwise [he would not, and] he would tell his companions, “Do the prayers for your companion.” When Allaah opened the

---


http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
gateway of victory for him, he said: *I am closer to the believers than their own selves,*\(^{11}\) so if anyone dies leaving a debt, its payment is my responsibility, and if anyone leaves a property, it goes to his heirs.*\(^{12}\)

5 **Burial without Salaah:** It is allowable to perform the funeral prayer by the grave of someone who was buried without Salaatul-Janaazah being performed for him.

6 **Salaatul-Ghaa’ib:** If someone dies in a country or situation where there is no one to perform the Salaatul-Janaazah for him, it is permitted for a group of Muslims to make a funeral prayer for him in his absence. This prayer is known as Salaatul-Ghaa’ib.

Ibn ‘Abbaas reported that a man whom the Prophet (ﷺ) used to visit died and was buried at night. When they informed the Prophet (ﷺ) in the morning, he asked what prevented them from telling him and they said that they did not want to place an unnecessary burden on him. The Prophet (ﷺ) then went with them to his grave and led them in salaah for him.\(^{13}\)

---

\(^{11}\) This statement is in reference to verse 6 of chapter al-Ahzab (33).

\(^{12}\) Sahih Muslim, vol.3, p.855, no.3944.

Abu Hurayrah reported that when Allaah’s Messenger announced the death of the Najaashee\(^\text{14}\) to his companions while they were in Madeenah and they lined up behind him and prayed [the funeral prayer] for him.\(^\text{15}\)

**Disbelievers:** The performance of funeral prayers or even seeking forgiveness or mercy for those who die in open disbelief or *Nifaaq* (subtle disbelief) is strictly forbidden based on the following instruction of Allaah in the Qur’aan:

\[
\text{وَلاَ تَصَلُّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُم مَّاتٍ أَيْدًا وَلَا تَقْمِعُ عَلَى قُبْرِهِ إِنَّهُم مَّكَرُوا}
\]

بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

“Do not ever pray for any of them who die, and do not stand by their graves, for verily they have disbelieved in Allaah and His Messenger and died in sin.”\(^\text{16}\)

This verse was revealed when the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed the funeral prayer for ‘Abdullaah ibn Ubayy, the leader of the hypocrites of Madeenah. Umar reported that, after that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) never prayed for a *Munaafiq* nor stood by his grave until Allaah took him.

\[\text{عَنِ ابْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ جَاءَ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بِنِّ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بِنِّ أَبِي} \\
\text{اللَّهِ بَنِ أَبِي إِلَى النَّبِي} \text{ﷺ} \\
\text{حِينَ مَاتَ أَبُوهُ فَقَالَ} \\
\text{أَعْطَنِي قِمِيصَكَ إِنَّكَ إِلَى النَّبِي} \text{ﷺ} \\
\text{عَلَيْهِ وَقَضَفْنَاهُ لَهُ فَأَغْطَتَهُ قَمِيصَةً وَقَالَ إِذَا فَرَغَطْنَاهُ فَأَذَانَوْنَي} \\
\text{فَلَمَّا أَرَادَ أنْ يَصَلِّي جَنَّةَ عَمَّرَ وَقَالَ أَلِيَّ قَدْ نَهَى اللَّهُ أَنْ تَصَلِّي عَلَى الْمَنَافِقِينَ فَقَالَ:} \]

---

\(\text{14} \) ‘Negus’ (Ar. *Najaashee*) was the title of the Ethiopian ruler with whom a group of eighty three Muslims from Makkah sought refuge prior to their migration to Madeenah. He converted to Islaam after listening to a reading of chapter 19 from the Qur’aan (The Life of Muhammad, pp.146-155).


\(\text{16} \) Soorah at-Tawbah (9):84
Ibn ‘Umar narrated that when ‘Abdullaah ibn Ubayy died, his son came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allaah, give me your shirt to shroud him, lead his funeral prayer and ask forgiveness for him. So Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) gave him his shirt and said, “Inform me (when the prayer is ready) and I will lead the prayer for him.” When he informed him and the Prophet (ﷺ) was about to lead the funeral prayer, ‘Umar took hold of his hand and asked: Hasn’t Allaah forbidden you to pray for the hypocrites? He replied, “I have two choices: ask for their forgiveness or do not ask for their forgiveness.” So he led the funeral prayer and the verse: “Do not ever pray for any of them who die...” was revealed.

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar reported that, after that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) never prayed for a Munaafiq nor stood by his grave until Allaah took him.

Al-Musayyib ibn Hazn reported that when Aboo Taalib was on his deathbed, the Prophet (ﷺ) went to him while Aboo Jahl and ‘Abdullaah ibn Abee Umayyah were with him. He said, “O uncle, say: There is no god worthy of worship but Allaah, so that I may plead your case with it before Allaah.” On hearing that, Aboo Jahl and ‘Abdullaah ibn Abee Umayyah said: O Aboo Taalib, will you renounce the religion of [our father] ‘Abdul-Muttalib? The Prophet then said, “I

---

17 This is in reference to chapter at-Tawbah (9):80.
19 See Sahih Muslim, vol.4, pp.1457, no.6681.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
will continue to ask forgiveness for you as long as I am not prohibited.” Then Allaah revealed the verse: “The Prophet and Believers should not seek forgiveness for the idolators even if they were near relatives, once it is made clear that they are inhabitants of the Hell-Fire (9:113).”

B. The Jamaa‘ah (Congregation)

1 Salaatul-Janaazah, like the five daily compulsory prayers, must be performed in congregation. This was the only way in which the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companion did it and the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

\[\text{وَصَلُّوا كَمَا رَأَيْتُمْ نِيَّ أَصْلِيًَّا} \]

“Pray as you saw me pray.”

The only exception to this rule was in the case of the funeral prayer for the Prophet (ﷺ) in which the Prophet’s companions all prayed separately due to the uniqueness of the situation and their state of confusion at the time.

2 Three Rows: It is preferable that those behind the Imaam form at least three rows, as this was the Sunnah when the number was insufficient to fill the masjid. Aboo Umaamah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) led the salaah for the dead along with seven people and he made them form three rows, two of which had two people in them.22 Maalik ibn Hubayrah also reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

\[\text{ما مِن مُسلمٍ يَمُوت فَيُصَلِّي عَلَيْهِ ثُلَاثَة صُفُوف مِن المُسْلِمِينَ إلَّا أَوْجَبَ} \]

“All Muslim who dies and three rows of Muslims make salaah for him, will be forgiven.”

20 Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.6, p.158, no.197 and Sahih Muslim, vol.1, p.18, no.36.
22 Ahkaamul-Janaaiz, p.99 with support of following hadeeth.
Two Men: If there is only one man besides the Imaam, he should pray behind the Imaam and not beside him as in the case of all other salaahs.

‘Abdullaah ibn Abee Talhah reported that Aboo Talhah called for the Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) when ‘Umayr Ibn Abee Talhah died. The Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) came and made salaah for him in their house. Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) stepped forward and Aboo Talhah stood behind him, and Umm Sulaym stood behind Aboo Talhah. There was no one else there with them.

The Imaam: The Ameer or his assistant has more right to lead the funeral prayer than the deceased’s walee.25 Aboo Haazim said, “Verily I was present on the day of al-Hasan ibn ‘Alee’s death and I heard al-Husayn ibn ‘Alee say to Sa’eed ibn al-‘Aas,26 “Go forward [and lead the salaah] for, if it was not [in accordance with the] Sunnah, I wouldn’t have put you forward.” He said that because there was some ill feeling between them.27

If neither the Ameer nor his representative is present, the one who has memorized the most Qur’aan should lead the funeral prayer, even if he is a child.

23 Sunan Abu Dawud, vol.2, p.899 no.3160 and Mishkat Al-Masabih, vol.1, pp. 353-4. This is authentic as a saying of the Sahabee and not as the Prophet’s saying. See Da’eeef Sunan Aboo Daawood, pp.320-1, no.695 and Da’eeef Ibn Maajah, p.113 no.327. Also see Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, p.100.


25 Nearest male relative.

26 Sa’eed ibn al-‘Aas was the Ameer of al-Madeenah at that time. He was a Sahabee and one of those who wrote out copies of the ‘Uthmaanee Qur’aan.

27 Collected by al-Bayhaqee and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, pp.100-01.
‘Amr ibn Salamah reported that when a delegation from his tribe, which had come to the Prophet (ﷺ), prepared to leave they asked, “O Messenger of Allaah, who should lead us in salaah?” He replied, “The one who has memorized the most Qur’aan.” Since none of the tribe had memorized more than me, they put me forward - even though I was only a youth [of six or seven at the time].”

Whenever I was present at a gathering, I was made the Imaam and I have lead the salaah on their dead until today.”

A Number of Dead: If there are a number of dead people, a single Salaatul-Janaazah can be made for all of them. However, if there are males and females, the female bodies are placed in front of the Imaam and the males behind the Imaam even if they were young children.

Naafi’ reported that Ibn ‘Umar led the funeral prayer for nine dead Muslims, the dead males behind him and the women in front of him in one row. When the bier of Umm Kulthoom bint ‘Alee and her son Zayd was brought together and the youth was placed behind the Imaam, he disputed it and looked to Ibn ‘Abbaas,

---

28 This addition found in Sahih Al Bukhari, vol.5, pp.413-4, no.595.
30 Also the wife of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab.
Aboo Hurayrah, Aboo Sa’eed and Aboo Qataadah and asked, “What is this?” They replied, “It is the Sunnah.”

It is also allowable that Salaatul-Janaazah be performed on each person individually as this was also done on occasion by the Prophet (ﷺ) and it is the original practice.

Ibn ‘Abbaas said: When Allaah’s Messenger came across Hamzah, he asked for him and his body was prepared and placed in the direction of Makkah. He then prayed the funeral prayer using nine takbeers. Then the bodies of the other martyrs were brought. Each martyr’s body was placed beside Hamzah’s body, one at a time, and he prayed for each along with Hamzah’s body until he completed seventy-two funeral prayers.

C. Location of the Prayer

According to the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ), there are two locations where the funeral prayer may be held; inside the masjid or outside the masjid at a prayer place reserved for it.

1. Inside the Masjid

---


Abbaad, the son of ‘Abdillaah ibn az-Zubayr, related that ‘Aa’ishah [and the Prophet’s wives]\textsuperscript{33} requested that the bier of Sa’d ibn Abee Waqqaas be brought to the masjid so that they could also pray for him. [Those carrying the bier brought it and placed it in front of their apartments\textsuperscript{34} and they offered prayer for him. When the people heard about it, they began to criticize them and say that it was \textit{Bid’ah} (innovation) and that the bier shouldn’t be taken into the masjid. When ‘Aa’ishah heard that,\textsuperscript{35} she said, “How quickly people have forgotten that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) only prayed for Suhayl ibn Baydaa [and his brother]\textsuperscript{36} inside the masjid.”\textsuperscript{37}

2. Outside the Masjid

It is however preferable to have a place (\textit{musalla}) set aside for the funeral prayer outside the masjid as this was the usual practice of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Aboo Hurayrah reported that when Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) announced to them the death of the ruler (\textit{najaashee}) of Ethiopia on the day on which he died, he

\textsuperscript{33} This addition is in \textit{Sahih Muslim}, vol.2, pp.460-1, no.2124.

\textsuperscript{34} The doors of the apartments of the Prophet’s wives opened into the masjid.

\textsuperscript{35} This addition is in \textit{Sahih Muslim}, vol.2, pp.460-1, no.2124.

\textsuperscript{36} This addition is in \textit{Sahih Muslim}, vol.2, p.461, no.2125.

said: “Ask forgiveness for your brother,” and had them line up in rows at the musalla and prayed for him using four takbeeres.38

‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar also reported that the Jews came to the Prophet (ﷺ) with a man and woman who had committed adultery so he ordered that they be stoned near the place for funeral (prayers) beside the masjid.”39

3. Between the Graves

It is forbidden for the Salaatul-Janaazah to be performed for the dead between the graves according to the hadeeth narrated by Anas ibn Maalik in which he said:

(安宁的先知ﷺ禁止在两墓之间为死者祈祷) (“The Prophet (ﷺ) forbade the performance of the salaah for the dead in between the graves.”40

D. The Method of Prayer

1 Position of the Imaam: The Imaam should stand, facing the Qiblah, behind the head of the dead man and behind the middle of the dead woman.

---

39 Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.2, pp231-2, no.413.
40 Collected by at-Tabaraanee and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa ‘iz, p.108, no.72.
Naafi’ Aboo Ghaalib said: While I was in Sikkatul-Mirbad⁴¹ a bier passed by with a large number of people accompanying it. They informed me that is was the bier of ‘Abduallah ibn ‘Umayr, so I followed it. I noticed [among them] a man wearing a thin cloak riding on a mule. He had a piece of cloth on his head to protect himself from the sun. I asked who this important man was and they replied that it was Anas ibn Maalik. When the bier was set down, Anas stood up and led the funeral prayer for him. I was standing immediately behind him with nothing between him and I. He stood near his head and made four takbeers. He neither lengthened the prayer nor make it hastily. When he went to sit down, they said to him: O Aboo Hamzah, [here is the bier of] an Angaree woman. They brought her near to him and there was a green colored na ‘sh on her bier. He stood opposite her hip⁴² and led the funeral prayer in the same way as he done for the dead man. He then sat down. Al-‘Alaa ibn Ziyaad⁴³ asked: “O Aboo Hamzah, did Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) make the funeral prayer for the dead as you

---

⁴¹ Sikkah literally means ‘a wide street’ or ‘an even road’ in which the houses are in rows on either side, and mirbad literally means ‘an enclosure for camels, sheep or goats’ or ‘a place in which dates are put to dry after cutting’ (Arabic-English Lexicon, vol.1, pp.1010 & 1386). Sikkatul-Mirbad was the name of a subdivision in Basrah.

⁴² Literally ‘ajeezah means buttocks, backside, posterior.

⁴³ He was among the most reliable narrators of hadeeth among the Taabi’oon from Basrah.
did, using four *takbeers* and standing opposite the head of a man and the hips of a woman? He replied “Yes” ⁴⁴

### Number of Takbeers:

It is possible to do either four, five, six, seven or nine *takbeers* as all of them are recorded in authentic *hadeeths*.

**Four:**

```
ﺍﻟﻠﱠﻪِ ﻭلَ ﻡِﺩِﺭِﺍ ﺭَﺍ ﺍﻟﻠﱠﻪِ ﻥَﻌَي النَّجَاشِي فِي ﺍﻟْيَوْمِ ﺍﻟْﺫِﻱ ﻗَامَ ﻓِيهِ

وُجِّهَ ﺃَلْدِ إِلَى ﺍﻟْمَصْلَى ﻓِصَدَّ ﻓِيهِ ﻭَكِبْرَ ﻋَلَى أَرَبَعٍ ﺖَكْﺒِيرَاتِ
```

Aboo Hurayrah related that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) announced the Najaashee’s death on the day on which he died and went out with them to a place designated for large congregational prayers. He arranged them in rows and pronounced *four* *takbeers* during the funeral prayer. ⁴⁵

**Five:**

```
ﺍﻟﻠﱠﻪِ ﻟَ ﺍﻟْﺩِﺭِﺍ ﺭَﺍ ﺍﻟﻠﱠﻪِ ﻥَﻌَي ﺍﻟْبَدْ представлен ﻋَلَى ﻋَلَى أَرَبَعٍ ﺖَكْﺒِيرَاتِ

いただける ﺍﻹِنْ ﺃَلْدِ إِلَى ﺍﻟْمَصْلَى ﻓِصَدَّ ﻓِيهِ ﻭَكِبْرَ ﻋَلَى أَرَبَعٍ ﺖَكْﺒِيرَاتِ
```

‘Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Abee Laylaa said, “Zayd ibn Arqam used to make four *takbeers* on our dead, but once he made five so we asked him about it. He replied, ‘Allaah’s Messenger used to do it and I would not give it up for anyone after him, ever.’” ⁴⁶

---


http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
Six:

‘Abd Khayr said, “‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib used to make six takbeers [when he led funeral prayers] on those who took part in the Battle of Badr, five takbeers on the Prophet’s companions, and four takbeers on the rest of people.”

Seven:

Moosaa, the son of ‘Abdullaah ibn Yazeed, said that ‘Alee ibn Abee Taalib made the funeral prayer using seven takbeers for Aboo Qataadah, who was among those who took part in the Battle of Badr.

Nine:

‘Abdullaah ibn az-Zubayr reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) made the funeral prayer for Hamzah using nine takbeers.

3 Raising the Hands: It is permissible to either raise one’s hands with each takbeer, or to do so only for the first takbeer.

---

47 Collected by al-Bayhaqee and ad-Daaraqutnee and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa ’iz, p.113.
48 Collected by al-Bayhaqee and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa ’iz, pp.113-4.
49 Collected by at-Tahaawee and at-Tabaraanee and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa ’iz, p.114.
Ibn ‘Abbaas reported that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to raise his hands for the first takbeer in the funeral prayer, then not repeat it.\footnote{Collected by ad-Daaraqutnee and authenticated in Ab\'kaamul-Janaa'iz, p.116.}

It was also reported that Ibn ‘Umar used to raise his hands with every takbeer of the funeral prayer.\footnote{Collected by al-Bayhaqee (4/44) and authenticated in Ab\'kaamul-Janaa'iz, p.117. See also Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.2, p.228, Chapter 55.}

4 Placing the Hands: The right hand should be placed on the left on the chest as in regular prayer since there are no authentic hadeeths to indicate otherwise.

The Prophet’s companion, Sahl ibn Sa'd, “The people were ordered to place their right hands on their left forearms in salaah.”\footnote{Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.1, pp.396-7, no.707 and Mishkat Al-Masabih, vol.1, p.161.} Taawoos\footnote{Taawoos ibn Keesaan was among the middle level students of the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).} also said, “Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to place his right hand on his left and tighten them on his chest when in salaah.”\footnote{Sunan Abu Dawud, vol.1, p.194, no.758 and authenticated in Saheeh Sunan Abee Daawood, vol.1, p.144, no.687.}

5 Recitation: Immediately after the first takbeer, the chapter al-Faatihah should be read as this is what is recorded in authentic hadeeths.

\text{\textbf{\textit{tulqatul harameen}}\textendash{}\textit{al-\textit{ifikr}}}
Talhah, the son of ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Awf, said: I prayed the funeral prayer behind Ibn ‘Abbaas for a dead person and he recited [aloud] the Faatihah and said, “Know that [what I have done] is the sunnah.”

The only thing which should be read prior to the Faatihah is the "Refuge" and the “basmalah”.

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنِ الشَّيَاطِينِ الرَّجِيمِ مِنْ نَفْخِهِ وَتَغْفِيْهِ وَهَمْرِهِ

A’oothu bil-laahi minash-shaytaanir-rajeem min nafakhihi wa nafathih wa hamzih[I seek refuge in Allaah from the accursed Shaytan, from his pride, his poetry and his madness].

There are no hadiths neither authentic nor weak to support the reading of the Du’aa al-Istiftaah (the opening du’aa: subhaanakaal-laahumma).

It is also permissible to recite another chapter after reciting Faatihah. This is based on another narration of Talhah’s statement in which he said:

"I prayed the funeral prayer behind Ibn ‘Abbaas and he recited Faatihah al-Kitaab and another chapter loudly enough that we heard it. So when he finished I took a hold of his hand and asked him about it. He replied, “I said it loudly in order that you all would know that it was Sunnah and correct.”

The recitation should be done quietly based on Aboo Umaamah ibn Sahl’s statement:

---

The Sunnah in Salaatul-Janaazah is to quietly recite Ummul-Qur’aan59 after the first takbeer; to then make three takbeers and tasleem at the end of the last takbeer.”60

Prayer for the Prophet (ﷺ): Immediately after the second takbeer, the salaah for the Prophet (ﷺ) should be made according to one of the various patterns used in regular salaah. Aboo Umaamah in describing the funeral prayer went on to say, “Then the salaah for the Prophet (ﷺ) should be made.”61

“Allaahumma sallii ‘alaa Muhammadin wa ‘alaa aali Muhammad, [Oh Allaah, praise Muhammad and his family] kamaa sallayta ‘alaa Ibraaheema wa ‘alaa aali Ibraaheem,[as you have praised Ibraheem and his family.] innaka hameedun-majeed. [Verily you are the Most Praised and Glorious.] Allaahumma baarik ‘alaa Muhammadin wa ‘alaa aali Muhammad, [On Allaah bless Muhammad and his family] kamaa baarakta ‘alaa Ibraaheema wa ‘alaa aali Ibraaheem [as you have blessed Ibraheem and his family.] innaka hameedun majeed [Verily you are the Most Praised and Glorious.]”62

59 Ummul-Qur’aan is among the names of the first chapter.
60 Sahheeh Sunan an-Nasaa’ee vol.2, p.428, no.1880.
61 Collected by an-Nasaa’ee (Saheeh) See the last reference and also Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz.
Du’aa for the Dead: After each of the remaining two or more takbeers, sincere prayers should be made for the dead, their relatives and the living.

No, Qur’aan should be recited following these remaining takbeers. Aboo Hurayrah reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

(إذا صلىتم على الميت فأخليصوا له الدعاء)

“When you make funeral prayers for the dead, make sincere du’aa for them.”

The following are some authentic du’as any of which could be said after the third and fourth takbeers:

1. Allaahum-maghfir lahu war ‘hamhu ‘aafihee wa ‘anhu wa akrim nuzulahu wa wassi‘ madkhalah, [Oh Allaah forgive him, have mercy on him, make him well, overlook his faults, make his place of rest a noble place and expand (the door of)his entrance (into paradise);] washil-hu bil-maa wath-thalj wal-barad wa naqqihu mina-khaṭayya kamaa yunnaqath-thawbul-abyad u minad-danas [wash him with water, snow and hail and purify him of his sins the way a white cloth is purified of dirt.] replace his home with a better home, his family with a better family and his wife with a better wife; put him in Paradise and give him refuge from the punishment of the grave and the fire.


2. *Allaahumma maghfir lilhayyinaa wa maysitinaa wa shaahidinaa wa ghaab ‘ibinaa wa sagheerinaa wa kabeerinaa wa thakirinaa wa un-thaanaa.* [Oh Allaah forgive our living and our dead, those of us who are present and those of us who are absent, our young ones and our elder ones, our males and our females.]

*Allaahumma man ah-yaytahu min-naa fa ah-yihee ‘alal Islaam wa man tawaffayatahu min-naa fa tawaffahu ‘alal Eemaan.* [Oh Allaah, whoever from among us that you keep living, keep him living in Islaam and whoever among us that you cause to die, take his life in a state of Eemaan.] *Allaahumma laa tahrimnaa ajrahu wa laa tudhah.* [Oh Allaah do not deprive us of his reward and do not misguide us after him.]

3. *Allaahumma ‘abduka wabnu ummatik ihtaaja ilaara rahmatik wa anta ghaneeyun an athaabih.* [Oh Allaah, a slave of yours and a son of your nation needs your mercy and you have no need for his punishment.] *in kaana muhsinan fazid-hu fee hasanaatih.* [If he was good, increase his good deeds] *wa in kaana musee’an fatajaawaz ‘anh.* [and if he was bad, overlook them.]

---


66 Reported by Yazeed ibn Rukaanah and collected by al-Haakim and Maalik (*Muwatta*, pp.107-8, no.529) and authenticated in *Ahqaaqul-Janaa’ iz* p.125.
8 **Tasleem**°: There are two ways by which the *tasleems* to close the *salaah* may be given:

a) Either by saying: *As-salaamu alaykum wa rahmatullaah* [May Allaah’s peace and mercy be upon you] to the right side only, as in Aboo Hurayrah’s *hadeeth*:

\[
\text{((}}\text{أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صُلِّي عَلَى جَنَازَةٍ فَكَبَّرَ عَلَيْهَا أَرَابَةَينَ، وَسَلَّمَ تسليمةً واحِدَةً)}\text{((}}
\]

“Allaah’s Messenger made the funeral prayer by doing four takbeers and one *tasleem*.”°°

b) Or by saying: *As-salaamu alaykum wa rahmatullaah* to both sides, as in Ibn Mas’ood’s *hadeeth*:

\[
\text{((}}\text{ثَلَاثُ حَدِيثٌ كَانَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صُلِّي عَلَيْهِمْ رَحْمَتُ اللَّهِ مَعَهُ، إِبَاحَةٌ مِنَ التَّسْلِيمِ عَلَى الْجَنازةِ}}\text{((}}
\]

“There are three things which Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to do and which people have neglected: One of them is making *tasleem* in the funeral prayer like the *tasleem* in (regular) *salaah*...”°°°

9 **Forbidden Times**: There are three times in the day when *Salaatul-Janaazah* or any other *salaah* is strictly forbidden except in the case of an emergency.

These are the times during which the sun worshippers used to perform their rites of worship. Thus, these became forbidden times in order to avoid any resemblance to them and to prevent non-Muslims from thinking that Muslims might also be worshipping the sun.

---

® The act of completing the formal prayer by giving greetings of *salaam* [peace] is known as *tasleem*.

°° Collected by al-Bayhaqee, ad-Daaraqutnee and al-Haakim and authenticated in *Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz*, p.128, no.85.

°°° Collected by al-Bayhaqee and at-Tabaraanee and authenticated in *Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz*, p.127, no.83.
‘Uqbah ibn ‘Aamir said, “There are three times in which the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) used to forbid us from making salaah or burying our dead:

1. When the sun is rising until it is clear of the horizon.
2. When it stands in the middle of the sky until it declines.
3. When it begins to set until it disappears.”

---

CHAPTER FIVE: THE BURIAL

Injunctions Regarding Burial

1 Everyone Buried: Muslims are obliged to bury everyone who dies in areas under their jurisdiction.

‘Alee said: I told the Prophet (ﷺ): Verily, your old misguided uncle, has died. He said, “Go and bury your father, then don’t say anything until you come back to me.” So I went and buried him and came back to the Prophet (ﷺ). He then instructed me to take a bath, which I did, and he prayed for me.¹

2 Muslims Buried Separately: Muslims should not be buried besides non-Muslims, nor non-Muslims beside Muslims. Each should have their own separate graveyard.

Basheer,² the freed slave of Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: While I was walking with the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ), he passed by the graves of the pagans and said

---

² The narration explained that his pre-Islamic name was Zahm ibn Ma’bad and that when the Prophet (ﷺ) had asked him his name, he renamed him ‘Basheer’.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
three times, “They preceded a time of abundant good.” Then he passed by the graves of the Muslims and said, “They got abundant good.”  

3 Burial in the Graveyard: It was the Prophet’s sunnah to bury the dead in the graveyard of Madeenah, known as al-Baqee’.

‘Aa’ishah reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) returned from a funeral at al-Baqee’, she was suffering from a headache and said, “Oh my head.” The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, “No, it is I who is in pain from whatever hurts you.”

It was also the unanimous practice of the earlier generations of righteous Muslims scholars and their students.

The burial of the Prophet in his home was an exception based on his own indirect instructions.

‘Aa’ishah said: When Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) died they differed concerning his burial. Aboo Bakr said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) say, “Allaah only takes a prophet in the place where he likes to be buried.” So they buried him where his bed was.

---


Ibn ‘Umar related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Make some of your prayers in your homes and don’t make your homes graves.”

4 Depth of the Grave: The grave should be dug deep and wide, and well prepared.

Hishaam ibn ‘Aamir reported that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Dig the grave deep, make it spacious and prepare it well.”

5 Form of the Grave: The grave may be dug straight down (shaq) with a burial chamber in the middle or with a niche (lahd) to create the burial chamber on the side. However, in both cases a burial chamber is created from the earth, and sealed with bricks of unbaked clay. Both methods were in practice in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Anas ibn Maalik said, “When the Prophet (ﷺ) died, there was a man in Madeenah who used to prepare a niched-grave and another who used to dig a straight-grave. They said: We asked our Lord for the best, and sent for both of them on the basis

---

6 *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, vol.2, p.156, no.280.
8 See *Sahih Muslim*, vol.2, pp.458-9, no.2112.
that whoever came last would not be chosen. The one who made niched-graves came first, so they made a niched-grave for the Prophet.”

However, the Prophet (ﷺ) favored the lahd style.

Ibn ‘Abbaas related that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “The niched-grave is for us, and the straight-grave is for others.”

Number of Bodies in a Grave: Two or more bodies may be buried together in the same grave. This may be due to the large number of dead resulting from a natural calamity or plague, or the dead may be from the same family.

Jaabir ibn ‘Abdillaah related that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to put two or three men who were killed during the battle of Uhud in a single shroud and ask, “Who among them knew the most Qur’aan?” If one was pointed out, he would be placed first in the grave. He would say, “I am a witness for these men,” and instruct that they be buried without removing the blood from their bodies. He also did not pray the funeral prayer for them nor wash them.

Injunctions Concerning Placing the Body in the Grave:

---


1 **Men and not women:** It is preferable that only men should be responsible for placing the dead body inside the grave, even if the dead person is a woman. This is due to the fact that it has been the custom among Muslims from the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) until today. The process requires a certain amount of strength and men are generally stronger than women. Furthermore, if women took the responsibility, their effort to place the body in the grave would likely lead to the exposure of some parts of their bodies during the process.

2 **Near Relatives:** The blood relatives of the dead have more right to place the body in the grave based on the general meaning of the following Qur’anic verse:

> وَأُولُوَّا الأَرْحَامَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَى بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ

“Blood relatives have more right to one another in Allaah’s scripture.”

`Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Abzaa said: I prayed the funeral prayer for Zaynab bint Jahsh in Madeenah along with ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab and he made four *takbeers*. Then he sent a message to the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) asking who did they instruct should put her body in the grave. It would have pleased him to have been the one who would be responsible for that. They sent back the reply: Find

---

12 Chapter al-Anfaal (8):75.

13 One of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) who was also his cousin.
the one who was permitted to see her while she was alive\textsuperscript{14} and let him be the one to put her in her grave. ‘Umar replied: They spoke the truth.\textsuperscript{15}

The Husband is permitted to place his wife in the grave on condition that he did not have sexual relations with his wife the previous night.

Anas ibn Maalik said: We were in the funeral procession of the Messenger of Allaah’s daughter, [Ruqayyah], and Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting near the grave and I saw his eyes full of tears. He said, “Is there anyone among you who did not have sexual relations with his wife last night?” Aboo Talha\textsuperscript{16} replied that he had not, so Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) told him to get down in her grave and bury her, which he did.\textsuperscript{17} [And ‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan\textsuperscript{18} did not enter her grave.]\textsuperscript{19}

3 Feet First: It is preferable that the body be placed in the niche feet first. This was the recorded way of the Prophet (ﷺ).

\textsuperscript{14} The only males who were permitted to see the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) were their immediate blood relatives (\textit{mahaarim}).
\textsuperscript{15} Collected by at-Tahaawee and al-Bayhaqee (3/35) and authenticated in \textit{Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz}, p.148.
\textsuperscript{16} Talhah was not a close blood relative of the Prophet (ﷺ) or his daughter.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Sahih Al-Bukhari}, vol.2, p.238, no.426.
\textsuperscript{18} Ruqayyah’s husband.
\textsuperscript{19} Collected in \textit{Musnad Ahmad}, vol.3, p.229 and authenticated in \textit{Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz}, p.149.
Aboo Ishaaq said: Al-Haarith left a will that ‘Abdullaah ibn Yazeed should lead his funeral prayer. So he led his prayer, then placed him in his grave feet first and said, “This is from the sunnah.”

4 On the Right Side: It has been Muslim custom, from the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) until today, to place the body in the grave on its right side with the face of the dead person facing the Qiblah (Makkah).

5 Du‘aa: At the time of inserting the body in the grave, those handling the procedure are recommended to make one of the following short prayers:


Ibn ‘Umar said: Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) placed a dead person in his grave, he would say, “In the name of Allaah, and according to the way (sunnah) of the Messenger of Allaah.”


Ibn ‘Umar said: Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) placed a dead person in his grave, he would say, “In the name of Allaah, and according to the religion of the Messenger of Allaah.”


Hishaam said: Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) placed a dead person in his grave, he would say, “In the name of Allaah, in the path of Allaah and according to the religion of the Messenger of Allaah.”

**Throwing Dirt on the Grave:** It is recommended for those near the grave to throw three double-handfuls of dirt after the burial chamber has been sealed.

Aboo Hurayrah narrated that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) lead funeral prayers then went to the dead man’s grave and threw three handfuls of dirt in his grave opposite his head.

**After Burial**

**Raising the Grave:** It is recommended that the grave be slightly raised, no more than a palm’s width, so as to be higher than the surrounding ground. This is in order that it be distinguishable and not disrespected.

Jaabir related that a *laḥd* was dug in the Prophet’s grave and earthen bricks of earth was placed over it, and his grave was raised above the ground by approximately a palm’s width.

It is also preferable that the raised portion be rounded.

---


Sufyaan at-Tammaar said: I saw the graves of the Prophet, Aboo Bakr and ‘Umar and they were rounded.26

2 Marking the Grave: Placing a stone or something similar to identify the location of the grave is also from the sunnah. The marker will help people later locate the grave in order to bury other family members in the same vacinity.

Al-Muttaalib27 said: When ‘Uthmaan ibn Math‘oon died, he was carried out on his bier and buried. The Prophet (ﷺ) requested a man to bring him a rock, but he was unable to lift it; so the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) went to it and rolled up his sleeves. [The one who told me about Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: It is as though I can still see the whiteness of Allaah’s Messenger’s forearms when he rolled up his sleeves.] He then carried the stone, placed it near the head of the grave and said: “I am marking my brother’sgrave with it, and I shall bury beside him those of my family who die.”29

---

26 Sahih Al-Bukhari, vol.2, p.267, no.473. The addition of the graves of Aboo Bakr and ‘Umar is from Ibn Abee Shaybah’s narration.
27 Al-Muttaalib ibn Abee Widaa’ah was a well known companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) who accepted Islaam with the conquest of Makkah.
28 ‘Uthmaan was the foster-brother of the Prophet (ﷺ).
3 Structures over Graves: The building of any kind of structures over graves is strictly prohibited.

Jaabir related that Allaah’s Messenger forbade the plastering of graves, or that they be sat upon, or that any structure be built over them [or that anything be written on them].

4 Du‘aa: On the completion of the burial, it is recommended that those present at the grave-site offer prayers on behalf of the deceased:

‘Uthmaan ibn ‘Affaan said: Whenever the Prophet (ﷺ) finished burying person, he would stand at the grave and say, “Ask forgiveness for your brother, and pray for his steadfastness, for he is now being questioned.”

---

CHAPTER SIX: BENEFITTING THE DEAD

The Qur’aan established two general principles concerning the reward and punishment for deeds:

1) Each human will only be benefitted or harmed by the deeds which he or she actually did.

وَأَنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا سَبِعَي

“That humans will only have the result of their actions.”¹

2) No human can carry the sin of another.

ألَّا تُؤْتِرُ وَأَزْرَةً وَأَزْرَةً أَخْرَى

“That no one bearing sins can carry the sins of others.”²

Consequently, when a person dies, the opportunity for that person to do good ends with the person’s death. However, the chance to harvest good from deeds which were done prior to death remains.

Du’aa: The prayers of other Muslims on behalf of the dead will benefit the dead. In chapter al-Hashr (59):10, Allaah praises the believers who pray for those who have passed away before their time.

² Soorah an-Najm, (53):38.
“And those who came after them say: Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith, and do not put in our hearts any hatred against the believers. Our Lord, You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.”

Furthermore, the funeral prayer itself consists mostly of prayers for the dead.

Safwaan⁴ said: I visited Abud-Dardaa’s home in Syria, but did not find him there. Ummud-Dardaa asked [me]: Are you going to make Hajj this year? I said yes and she said: Pray to Allaah for good for us, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The prayer of a Muslim for his brother Muslim in his absence will be answered. There is an assigned angel near his head who says: ‘Amen and may the same be for you,’ as long as he prays for the good of his brother.” I left and went to the market place where I met Abud-Dardaa and he related from the Prophet (ﷺ) the same as that.⁴

2 Fasting: Fasts which the dead person missed may be done on their behalf by their close relatives. The fasts may be from Ramadaan or from oaths (nathar).

---

³ The narrator mentioned that Safwaan ibn ‘Abdillaah ibn Safwaan was previously to Ummud-Dardaa.
⁴ Sahih Muslim, vol.4, p.1429, no.6590.
‘Aa’ishah quoted Allaah’s Messenger as saying, “Whosoever died owing fasts, his guardian should fast on his behalf.”

Ibn ‘Abbaas said: A man came to the Prophet and asked: O Messenger of Allaah, my mother died owing one month of fasting. Should I do it for her? He replied, “Yes, Allaah’s debts have more right to be paid.” In another narration a woman asked about her debt of fasting and got the same reply.

### Paying Financial Debts:

Anyone may cover the debts of a dead person, whether they are relatives or not. Furthermore, the payment of outstanding debts can benefit the dead by releasing them of some of the punishment which was due to their negligence in repaying them.

---


Jaabir said: A man died and we washed him, perfumed him and shrouded him, then we brought him to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) to lead the funeral prayer for him. We said: Could you pray for him? He took a step forward then asked, “Does he have any outstanding debts?” We answered: Two deenaars. [He said: “Make the funeral prayer for your companion,” and] he began to leave. Aboo Qataadah took responsibility for [paying] them saying: The two deenaars are my responsibility. Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Will the creditor been taken care of and the dead person is no longer responsible for them?” He replied: Yes. So the Prophet (ﷺ) led the funeral prayer for him. One day later he asked [Aboo Qataadah], “What was done about the two deenaars?” He replied: He only died yesterday! The following day he returned to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: I have paid them off. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, “Now his skin has become cool.”

The Charity of Children: Parents will benefit from whatever righteous deeds their children do, without decreasing the reward of their children’s good deeds. A righteous child is considered to be a part of the parent’s earnings.

‘Umaarah ibn ‘Umayr’s aunt asked ‘Aa’ishah: I have an orphan under my guardianship. May I consume some of his wealth? She replied that she had heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say, “Among the most pleasant a man consumes is what comes from his own earnings, and his child is from his earnings.”

---

7 This addition can be found in another narration of this hadeth.
A‘a’ishah related that a man asked the Prophet ﷺ: My mother died suddenly and I think that if she had spoken [before dying], she would have given something in charity. If I give charity on her behalf, will she get the reward? He replied: “Yes.”

Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ as saying, “When a man dies, his acts come to an end, except in three cases: an on-going charity, knowledge from which people continue to benefit, and a righteous child who prays for him.”

---


CHAPTER SEVEN: VISITING THE GRAVES

Visiting the graves of those who died is recommended in Islaam in order to help the living reflect on the shortness of this life and the closeness of the next. In the Makkah period when Islaam was first being spread, visiting graveyards was prohibited. Later on the Prophet (ﷺ) later permitted it.

Buraydah related that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “I forbade you from visiting graves, but you may now visit them, for in visiting them there is a reminder of death. [So whoever wishes to visit may do so, but don’t say anything false]”.

Imaam an-Nawawee stated that “The prohibition was due to their closeness to the pre-Islamic period of ignorance, which could have led them to make inappropriate statements at the graves. When the foundations of Islaam were firmly established, and its rules and principles had become well-known, visiting the graves was permitted. The Prophet (ﷺ) added, as a precaution, the warning, “But don’t say anything false.””

Women Visiting Graves: The recommendation to visit graves is general and includes women, just as the earlier prohibition included them without any special mention. Furthermore, women share with men the benefits of visiting the graves. In al-Haakim’s narration from Anas ibn Maalik, the Prophet (ﷺ) was quoted as saying, “Visit the [graves], because it softens the heart, brings tears to the eyes and reminds of the next life, but don’t say anything false.”

---

1 This addition is found in an-Nasaa’ee’s narration. See Saheeh Sunan an-Nasaa’ee, vol.2, p.436, no.1922.
‘Aa’ishah, wife of the Prophet (ﷺ) and one of the leading scholars among his followers, understood the permission to visit graves to include women.

‘Abdullaah ibn Abee Mulaykah said: One day when ‘Aa’ishah came from the graveyard, I asked her: O Mother of the Believers, where are you coming from. She replied, “From ‘Abdur-Rahmaan ibn Abee Bakr’s grave.” So I asked her: Didn’t Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) forbid the visiting of graves? She replied, “Yes, then he instructed that they be visited.”

When the Prophet (ﷺ) found a woman crying in the graveyard, he did not chase her out of the graveyard, but told her not to cry.

Anas ibn Maalik related that once the Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a woman crying beside a grave and said to her, “Fear Allaah and be patient.”

After mentioning this hadeeth under the heading ‘Visiting Graves’, Ibn Hajar said: The [scholars] disagreed regarding women [visiting graves]. The majority held that they are included in the general permission for visiting graves [if there is no danger of corruption]. The ruling permitting women to visit graves is supported by the hadeeth of this chapter. The source of evidence in the hadeeth is

---


---

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
the fact that he (ﷺ) did not censure the woman for sitting beside the grave and whatever he approves is proof [of its permissibility].

However, frequent visitation of graves by women is not permissible.

Hassan ibn Thaabit narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) cursed women who frequently visit graves.

Imaam al-Qurtubee said that the curse mentioned in the hadeeth is for those women who are frequent visitors as indicated by the intensive form of the word zuwwaaraat. Perhaps the reason is the negative result of frequent visits like: the husband’s rights, unnecessary public exposure of women, as well as it leading to wailing and other forbidden expressions of grief.

Visiting Non-Muslim Graves: Although participation in the funeral rites of non-Muslims is not permitted, Muslims are allowed to visit the graves of disbelievers for reflection. However, praying for those who die in a state of disbelief is totally prohibited.

“Whether you ask forgiveness for them or you do not, even if you ask seventy times for their forgiveness, Allah will never forgive them.”

---

7 Fat-hul-Baaree, vol.4, p.244.
“Do not make the funeral prayer for any of them who dies, nor stand at his grave.”

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was prevented by Allaah from praying for his own mother, because she and his father had died as a polytheists.

Aboo Hurayrah related that the Prophet (ﷺ) visited the grave of his mother and cried and caused those around him to cry. Then he said, “I asked my Lord’s permission to pray for her forgiveness and permission was not granted to me. Then I asked His permission to visit her grave and he permitted me. So visit the graves, for it makes you mindful of death.”

Anas related that a man asked: O Messenger of Allaah, where is my father? He replied, “In the hellfire.” When he turned, he called him and said, “Your father and my father are together in the hellfire.”

In fact, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had instructed one of his companions to give tidings of the hellfire whenever he passed by the grave of a disbeliever.

---


11 Sahih Muslim, vol.1, p.136, no.398.
Sa’d ibn Abee Waqqas reported that a Bedouin came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked: My father used to maintain family ties, and he was this and that. So where is he? He replied, “In the hellfire.” It was as though the Bedouin found it difficult to take, so he asked: O Messenger of Allaah, where is your father? He replied, “Wherever you pass by the grave of a disbeliever, give him tidings of hell.” The Bedouin accepted Islaam after that and later said: Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) burdened me with a tiresome responsibility. I haven’t passed by the grave of a disbeliever without giving him tidings of hell.  

3 Du‘aa: When visiting the graveyard, general prayers should be made for all of those buried there.

Muhammad ibn Qays quoted ‘Aa’ishah as saying: I asked: How should I pray for them, O Messenger of Allaah? He replied, “Say: As-Salaamu ‘ala ahlid-diyaari minal-mu’mineena wal-muslimeen [Peace be on the believers and Muslim inhabitants of this city] wa yarhamullaahul-mustaqdimeena minnaa wal-musta’khireen [May Allaah have mercy on those who went before us and those coming after] wa innaa in shaa Allaahu bikum lalaah iqoon [Indeed, we will - Allaah willing - be joining you.]”

---


13 Sahih Muslim, vol.2, pp.461-2, no.2127.
Buraydah said: Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to teach them what to say whenever they went out to the graveyard. They would say, “As-Salaamu ‘alaykum ahdadiyaar minal-mu’ineena wal-muslimeen [Peace be on you, the believers and Muslim inhabitants of this city] wa innaa in shaa Allaahu lalaah ‘iqoon [Indeed, we will - Allaah willing - be joining you.] as’alul-laaha lanaa wa lakumul-aafiyah [I ask Allaah for your well being and ours.]”

4 Recitation of Qur’aan: There is no basis for the recitation of Qur’aan in the graveyard. Neither the Faatihah (First Chapter) nor any other chapter of the Qur’aan should be read near the graves.

Aboo Hurayrah reported that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Don’t make your houses graveyards, for surely Satan flees from the house in which the chapter al-Baqarah is read.”

5 Raising the Hands in Du’aa: The hands may be raised during supplications for the dead in the graveyard.

---

15 The second chapter of the Qur’aan. The title, al-Baqarah, literally means ‘the cow’ and it refers to an incident mentioned in the chapter, verses 67-73.
16 Sahih Muslim, vol.1, p.377, no.1707.

http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com
‘Aa’ishah said: One night, Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) went out of the house and I sent Bareerah after him to find out where he went. Bareerah returned to me and informed me that he had gone to Baqee’ graveyard, stood near its beginning with his hands raised, then he left. When I got up the next morning, I asked Allaah’s Messenger where he had gone the previous night and he replied, “I was sent to the inhabitants of Baqee’ to pray for them.”18

Facing the Qiblah: During supplications for the dead, the grave should not be faced due to the general prohibition against prayer towards the graves. The supplicant should, instead, face Makkah when praying for the dead.

Aboo Marthad al-Ghanawee quoted Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) as saying, “Don’t pray towards graves, nor sit on them.”19

Since supplication (du’aa) is the essence of formal prayer, the ruling regarding the direction of prayer applies to both.

An-Nu‘maan ibn Basheer related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Supplication is worship.” Then he recited: “Your Lord said: Call on Me and I will answer you.”20

---

17 ‘Aa’ishah’s servant-girl.
18 Musnad Ahmad, vol.6, p.92 and Muwatta Imam Malik, p.115, no.569 and authenticated in Abkaamul-Janaa’iz, pp.193-4. The ‘raising of the hands’ is not mentioned in Muwatta Imam Malik’s narration.
7 Walking Between the Graves: Shoes and sandals should be removed by those walking between the graves.

Basheer, the freed slave of Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: While I was walking with the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ), he passed by the graves of the pagans and said three times, “They preceded a time of abundant good.” Then he passed by the graves of the Muslims and said, “They got abundant good.” Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) then saw a man walking among the graves wearing sandals, so he called out, “O you wearing sandals, beware. Remove your sandals.” The man looked around and when he recognized Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ), he took off his sandals and threw them away.

8 Annual Visits to Graves: Visiting graves on the anniversary of the person’s death, or at special annual festivals to perform worship at the graves of those designated as saints is all forbidden.

---

20 Soorah al-Ghaafir (40):60.
22 The narration explained that his pre-Islamic name was Zahm ibn Ma’bad and that when the Prophet (ﷺ) had asked him his name, he renamed him ‘Basheer’.
Aboo Hurayrah narrated that Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said, “Don’t make your houses graveyards, nor make my grave a place of celebration, and ask Allaah’s blessing for me, because it will reach me wherever you may be.”

9 Travel to Visit Graves: Setting out on journeys to visit graves was specifically forbidden by the Prophet (ﷺ). This practise forms the basis of idolatrous pilgrimages in other religions.

Aboo Hurayrah quoted the Prophet (ﷺ) as saying, “Don’t travel except to three masjids: al-Masjid al-Haraam (Makkah), Masjid ar-Rasool (Madeenah) and Masjid al-Aqsa (Jerusalem).”

While returning from a trip, Aboo Basrah al-Ghifaaree met Aboo Hurayrah and the latter asked him where he was coming from. Aboo Basrah replied that he was coming back from at-Toor where he had made prayer. Aboo Hurayrah said, “If only I had caught you before you had set out, for I heard Allaah’s Messenger say: Don’t travel to other than three masjids…” Aboo Qaz ‘ah also related that he had wanted to go to at-Toor, but when he asked Ibn ‘Umar about it, he quoted the Prophet’s prohibition of travel to other than the three masjids.

24 The term used in the hadeeth is ‘eed, i.e., and annual celebration.
27 Musnad Ahmad, vol.6, p.7 and authenticated in Ahkaamul-Janaa’iz, p.226.
Planting Twigs on Graves: It is not permissible to plant any flowers or twigs on the grave. The placing of wreaths and flowers is a non-Muslim ritual. The companions of the Prophet and the early generation of Muslim scholars did not practise this ritual. It is, however, authentically narrated that the Prophet did, on one single occasion, stick a palm leaf in a grave.

Ibn ‘Abbaas reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) once passed by the graves of two people who were being punished in their graves and said, “They are not being punished for a major sin. One didn’t use to protect himself from the splatter of 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 Allaah! Why have you done this?” He replied, “Perhaps it will reduce their punishment as long as it remains green.”

In Jaabir’s narration the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

“I passed by two graves whose occupants were being tormented. I wished to make intercession for them so that they may be releaved as long as these two twigs remain fresh.”

Planting leaves in a grave was an act unique to the Prophet (ﷺ), consequently, none of his early followers repeated it. Al-Khatta‘aabee said the following regarding this hadith: “It represents the [principle that the] actions of the Prophet (ﷺ) are blessed and that his supplication for a lessening of their punishment is special to Allaah. He also chose the period of freshness of the leaf to be [the length of ] the period of his request for a reduction [in their

30 Sahih Muslim, vol.4, pp.1545-9, no.7149. This text is on page 1548.
punishment]. This does not mean that a fresh leaf has any superiority over a dry leaf. It is now the custom among the masses in many countries to plant palm leaves in the graves of their dead. However, what they are doing cannot be based on the Prophet’s act.” Ahmad Shaakir in his commentary on Sunan at-Tirmithee said, “Al-Khattaabee spoke the truth. And, since then, the masses have been even more enthusiastic in doing this practice which has no valid basis in Islaam. They imitated the Christians so much, especially in Egypt, that they now put flowers on the graves. They exchange them as presents among themselves. Some people put them on the graves of their relatives and friends as greetings to them and as a courtesy to their living relatives. So much so that this custom has become similar to the international etiquettes of courtesy. Thus, whenever Muslim personalities visit a European country, they go to the graves of its former leaders or the grave of the ‘unknown soldier’ and lay fresh and artificial wreaths of flowers on them.”

This practice is an innovation in the religion (bid‘ah) which should be avoided. All such innovations are cursed. Ibn ‘Umar was reported to have said, in this regard:

كل بذعة ضلاله، وإين رأها الناس حسنة.

“Every innovation is misguidance, even if people consider them to be good.”

APPENDIX: INNOVATIONS

1. Recital of Soorah Yaseen at the graveyard.

2. Turning the dying persons body to face Qiblah.

3. The removal of menstruating women from the dead person’s presence.

4. Placing lit candles near the dead body until the morning.

5. Putting cotton in the throat, nostrils and anus of the dead person.

6. Recital of the Qur’aan for money at the time of the person’s death.

7. Celebration of the deceased’s 1st, 3rd, 7th, 20th, 40th day, anniversary of his or her death.

8. Gathering a the home of the dead person and obliging the family of the deceased to provide food for the guests.

9. Recital of Soorah al-Faatihah, al-Baqarah and the last two verses of Soorah al-Baqarah based on a fabricated narration falsely attributed to Ibn ‘Umar’s narration.¹

10. “Whoever recites the Soorah al-Ikhlaas 1000 times will be safeguarded from Hell,” is a fabricated tradition.

¹ ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar said he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say, “When one of you dies do not keep him long, but take him soorah al-Baqarah recited at his head and the concluding verses of the same soorah recited at his feet.” Collected by al-Bayhaqee in Shu’ab al-Eemaan. See Mishkat Al-Masabih, Al-Masabih, vol.1, p.358.
11. Prompting (*talqeen*) those who have already died to recite the declaration of faith *laa ilaaha illal-laah*. This practice is of no use to the dead.

12. Writing *du’aas* on the shroud.

13. Making absent funeral prayers (*salaatul-ghaa’ib*) for people for whom funeral prayers were made in the location in which they died.

14. Transferring the body of the deceased large distances in order to bury the person near the graves of the pious.

15. Reciting aloud Qur’aan or poems or words of remembrance while carrying the bier.

16. Placing flowers, twigs etc. on the graves based on Prophet Muhammad’s (*r*) action.² What the Prophet (*r*) did was special for him and he did not do it for every grave.

17. Reciting of the *Athaan* at the graveyard. How this practice came into being is unknown especially when there is no *Athaan* or *Iqaamah* for the funeral prayer.

18. Sprinkling rose water when placing the body and everybody covering the grave with sand reciting something.

---
² Ibn ‘Abbaas reported that the Prophet (*r*) once passed by the graves of two people who were being punished in their graves and said, “They are not being punished for a major sin. One didn’t used to protect himself from the splatter of 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 Allaah! 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).
19. Recitation of the Shahaadah 3 times after closing the grave and sprinkling of water.

20. Building structure over graves or placing grave stones to indicate the name and family of the dead.

21. Leaving dying men to die among the women and only coming to collect the body after they have died.

22. Excessive talking in loud voices during the time of burial.

23. 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.

24. Visiting the graves of one’s parents every Jumu‘ah.

25. Visiting the graves in the middle of the month of Sha‘baan.

26. Visiting the graves specifically on every ‘Eed, or in the months of Rajab, Sha‘baan or Ramadaan.

27. Dedicating the reward for certain acts of worship like salaah, and Qur’anic recitation to the dead or to the Prophet (ﷺ).

28. Circumambulating (ﱏ) the Prophet’s grave or any other grave.

29. Touching or rubbing the tombs of the righteous in the belief that blessings will gained from the act.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bashier, Zakaria, Sunshine at Madinah, United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1990.


http://www.islamiconlineuniversity.com


