

# النفس الأخير

ما قبله و ما بعده

تفسير مبسط لما يجب القيام به عند الموت

## The Last Breath Before and After

*A simple explanation of what is to  
be done at the time of Death*

COMPILED BY  
**UMM ABDUL AHAD**

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*This compilation is dedicated to my parents. May Allâh subhanahu wa ta'ala have mercy upon them, grant them forgiveness, save them from the trials of the grave, illuminate their graves, accept from them and grant them Jannatul-Firdaws.*

# CONTENTS

## CONTENTS

I.	FOREWORD	1
II.	PREFACE	13
III.	INTRODUCTION	16
IV.	TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM OF ARABIC WORDS	26
V.	CHAPTERS 1 – 22	28-242
VI.	REFERENCES AND SOURCES	243
<b>CHAPTER 1: SICKNESS</b>		<b>28</b>
1.	The blessings of sickness	28
2.	Sickness is a test	29
3.	Sickness is a bonus for the patient	30
4.	Visiting the sick	31
5.	Rewards for visiting the sick	32
6.	Supplications for the sick	34
<b>CHAPTER 2: THE REALITY OF DEATH</b>		<b>37</b>
7.	The reality of death	37
8.	Every soul will taste death	38
9.	The five stages of life	39
10.	The acceptance of repentance	41
11.	Regret at the time of death	41
12.	Remember often the destroyer of pleasures	42
13.	The benefits of remembering death	43
<b>CHAPTER 3: A STEP BY STEP QUICK GUIDE ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE UPON DEATH</b>		<b>44</b>
14.	At the time of dying	44
15.	Soon after death	45
<b>CHAPTER 4: DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS DEATH APPROACHES</b>		<b>48</b>
16.	Duties to fulfil before death	49
17.	Importance of writing the Will	50
18.	The agonies of death	51
19.	What should be done as death approaches	52
20.	Hope in Mercy of Allâh and the desire to meet Him should be more than the fear of Allâh at this time	54

# CONTENTS

21.	The help of Allāh for the believers at the time of their death	56
22.	Encouraging the dying person to say the <i>shahādah</i>	57
23.	The dying person sees what we don't see	58
<b>CHAPTER 5: WHILE VISITING A DYING PERSON</b>		<b>60</b>
24.	While visiting a dying person	60
25.	Etiquettes of visiting a dying person	61
26.	Say only good things in the presence of a dying person	62
27.	Etiquettes of visiting a non-Muslim patient	62
28.	Recitation of <i>Sûrah Ya Sîn</i> in the presence of the dying person	63
29.	The ruling of turning the body towards the <i>Qiblah</i>	63
30.	Innovations at the time of dying	64
<b>CHAPTER 6: UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL</b>		<b>65</b>
31.	Upon death and before burial	66
32.	What we should do when we hear the death of a person	67
33.	The angels say <i>Āmîn</i> to whatever is said at the time of death	70
34.	Death in the state of <i>ihrām</i>	70
35.	Delaying the burial is not from the <i>sunnah</i>	71
36.	Ruling of burial during the night	72
37.	Transferring the dead body to another city without reason	73
38.	Ruling of informing and announcing about the death	73
39.	Importance of paying off the debts of the deceased	74
40.	Displaying patience	76
41.	Endurance is valid if it is shown at the first blow	77
42.	Etiquettes of displaying grief	78
43.	Rewards for patience at the death of children	78
44.	Some innovations after death	79

# CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 7: A QUICK GUIDE TO THE WASHING AND SHROUDING PROCEDURE</b>		<b>80</b>
45.	A quick guide to the washing procedure	80
46.	A quick guide to the shrouding procedure	82
	a) Shrouding of a male	82
	b) Shrouding of a female	83
<b>CHAPTER 8: THE WASHING PROCEDURE</b>		<b>84</b>
47.	Rulings of washing the deceased	85
48.	Taking care of the deceased is the collective responsibility of Muslims	85
49.	Importance of knowing the method of washing the deceased	86
50.	Who should be washed	86
51.	Who may wash the deceased	88
52.	When should <i>tayammum</i> be given and how	90
53.	Guidelines for the washers	90
54.	Pre-washing requirements	93
55.	Preparing the body for washing	94
56.	The <i>ghusl</i> procedure	96
57.	Practical tips for the washing procedure	100
58.	Innovations during the washing procedure	103
<b>CHAPTER 9: THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE</b>		<b>104</b>
59.	Requirements of the shroud	105
60.	Preparing the shroud	107
61.	The steps of shrouding	107
	a) Alternate way of shrouding	109
	b) Shrouding sheets for a woman	111
62.	A few practical tips	115
63.	Innovations related to shrouding	117

# CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 10: TRANSPORTING THE <i>JANÁZAH</i></b>		<b>118</b>
64.	Transporting the <i>janâzah</i> is a communal obligation	<b>118</b>
65.	Virtues of transporting the <i>janâzah</i>	<b>119</b>
66.	Etiquettes of transporting the <i>janâzah</i>	<b>119</b>
<b>CHAPTER 11: THE <i>JANÁZAH</i> PRAYER</b>		<b>122</b>
67.	The <i>janâzah</i> prayer	<b>123</b>
68.	<i>Janâzah</i> prayer for those who commit major sins openly	<b>123</b>
69.	<i>Janâzah</i> prayer for a child	<b>124</b>
70.	<i>Janâzah</i> prayer for martyrs	<b>124</b>
71.	<i>Şalâtul-ghâ'ib</i>	<b>125</b>
72.	<i>Janâzah</i> prayer for the disbelievers	<b>125</b>
73.	The times when the <i>janâzah</i> prayer should not be performed	<b>125</b>
74.	Performing the <i>janâzah</i> prayer over a grave	<b>126</b>
75.	Where should the <i>janâzah</i> prayer be performed	<b>127</b>
76.	The <i>janâzah</i> prayer by women	<b>127</b>
77.	Who should lead the <i>janâzah</i> prayer	<b>128</b>
78.	The reward of more people praying for the deceased in the <i>janâzah</i> prayer	<b>128</b>
79.	The number of rows in the <i>janâzah</i> prayer	<b>129</b>
80.	Where the deceased should be placed	<b>129</b>
<b>CHAPTER 12: HOW TO PERFORM THE <i>JANÁZAH</i> PRAYER</b>		<b>131</b>
81.	How to perform the <i>janâzah</i> prayer	<b>131</b>
<b>CHAPTER 13: THE BURIAL</b>		<b>138</b>
82.	The burial	<b>125</b>
83.	The times when burying the deceased is not permissible	<b>126</b>
84.	The two types of graves	<b>126</b>
85.	Who can lower the deceased into the grave	<b>129</b>



# CONTENTS

86.	The etiquettes of burial	130
87.	Innovations related to burial	137
<b>CHAPTER 14: MOURNING</b>		<b>152</b>
88.	Mourning – The do’s and don’ts	152
89.	Wailing is a torment for the dead	154
90.	Period of mourning	155
91.	Period of mourning for a widow	155
<b>CHAPTER 15: CONDOLENCE</b>		<b>159</b>
92.	Condolence	159
93.	How to offer condolence	160
94.	Up to when can condolence be offered	162
95.	Etiquettes of offering condolence	162
96.	Providing food for the family of the deceased	163
97.	Arranging gatherings for mourning and receiving condolences	164
98.	How to praise the deceased person	165
<b>CHAPTER 16: ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES</b>		<b>167</b>
99.	Benefit of visiting graves	167
100.	Etiquette when visiting graves	168
101.	Women visiting graves	170
102.	Visiting the grave of a disbeliever	171
103.	Innovations related to visiting graves	172
<b>CHAPTER 17: TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE</b>		<b>174</b>
104.	Trials and punishments of the grave	174
105.	Some reasons for the punishments in the grave	176
106.	Who are protected from the torture of the grave	178
<b>CHAPTER 18: SIGNS OF A GOOD AND BAD END</b>		<b>181</b>
107.	Types of ending	181
108.	Signs of a good end	182
109.	Signs of a bad end	194
<b>CHAPTER 19: DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD</b>		<b>201</b>
110.	Deeds of a person	201
111.	Deeds for which rewards will continue after death	203

# CONTENTS

112.	Deeds that benefit the dead	205
<b>CHAPTER 20: THE WILL (BEQUEST)</b>		<b>210</b>
113.	The importance of writing the Will	210
114.	The Islamic inheritance	212
115.	The Will ( <i>Waṣiyyāh</i> )	213
116.	It is not permissible to include the heir in the <i>Waṣiyyah</i>	215
117.	<i>Waṣiyyah</i> as a means of <i>ṣadaqah al-jāriyah</i>	216
118.	The Will can also be for upholding <i>Tawḥīd, sunnah,</i> good deeds	217
119.	<i>Waṣiyyah</i> to and from a non-Muslim	219
120.	Witnessing the Will	220
<b>CHAPTER 21: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH</b>		<b>221</b>
121.	At the time of death	221
122.	During the journey to the Heavens and back	227
123.	During the final test	230
124.	Events after the test	232
<b>CHAPTER 22: FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATION</b>		<b>236</b>
125.	Finally, in contemplation .....	236

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

تقريظ لكتاب أحكام الجنائز للأخت نسرين أم عبد الأحد  
الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على سيد الأنبياء  
والمرسلين نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين ومن تبعهم  
بإحسان إلى يوم الدين..

وبعد، فإن الموت حقيقة لا خيال، كل نفس ذائقة الموت،  
أينما تكونوا يدرككم الموت ولو كنتم في بروج مشيدة،  
فالموت مفرق الجماعات وهازم اللذات، والحاجز بين النفس  
والشهوات.

الموت ليس له سن معلوم، ولا زمن معلوم، ولا مرض  
معلوم، وذلك ليكون المرء على أهبة من ذلك، مستعداً لذلك.

كفى بالموت مقرحاً للقلوب، ومبكياً للعيون، ومفرقاً  
للجماعات، وهازماً للذات، وقاطعاً للأمنيات.

الموت إعلام بنهاية دنيا كل إنسان وإشعار ببداية آخرته،  
فمن مات فقد قامت قيامته، والموت كاشف الأغشية عن  
العيون والأبصار، ورافع الحجب والأستار، ومظهر  
الحقائق والمغيبات.

وكل إنسان موقن بأن مصيره في التراب في آخر المطاف،  
لكن الغفلة تنسي مصيره، والشهوة تعمي بصره، والحرص  
يطيل أمله، ينظر إلى الناس يموتون ويدفنون، لكن زهرة

الدنيا الفانية وزخرفتها تعميهِ وتصم، يتلذذ بمصائبها وهو  
في عذاب لا يشعر،

لقد وصف الخليفة الراشد عمر بن عبد العزيز رحمه الله  
الحياة الدنيا فقال:

بقائها قليل ، وغنيها فقير ، وشابها يهرم ، وحيها يموت ،  
فلا يغرنكم إقبالها مع معرفتكم بسرعة إدارها فالمغرور من  
اغتر بها ، الركون إليها خطر ، والثقة بها غرر ، كثيرة  
التغير، سريعة التناكر ، أمانيتها كاذبة ، وآمالها باطلة ،  
عيشها نكد ، وصفوها كدر ، والمرء منها على خطر ، إن  
أضحكت قليل أبكت كثيرا ، وإن سرّت يوماً ساءت أشهراً  
وأعواماً ، غناها مصيره إلى فقر ، وفرحها يؤول إلى ترح ،  
وهيئات هيئات أن يدوم بها قرار.. .

تُسْرُّ بما يَفْتَنِي وتَسْتَعْل بالصبا      كما غُرَّ بالذات في النوم  
حالمٌ

نهارك يا مغرور سهوٌ وغفلة      وليك نوم والردي  
لك لازم

وتعمل فيما سوف تكره غبه      كذلك في الدنيا  
تعيش البهايم

والموت أكبر واعظ للغافل ، وأشدّ زاجر لتترك المعاصي،  
وأسرع باعث على فعل الخير، وأصرخ نداء إلى التوبة  
والإنابة إلى الله

فالذكي الكيس من دان نفسه وعمل لما بعد الموت، والعاجز  
من أتبع نفسه هواها وتمنى على الله الأماني، فإن الحياة الدنيا

مجال للعمل والكسب، وما بعد الموت فمجال للحساب  
والجزاء.

أخي القارئ!

**إن في الإكثار من ذكر الموت فوائد منها :**

- أنه يحث على الاستعداد للموت قبل نزوله.
- أن ذكر الموت يقصر الأمل في طول البقاء، وطول الأمل من أعظم أسباب الغفلة.
- أنه يزهّد في الدنيا ويرضي بالقليل منها.
- أنه يرعّب في الآخرة ويدعو إلى الطاعة .
- أنه يهوّن على العبد مصائب الدنيا .
- أنه يمنع من الأشر والبطر والتوسع في لذات الدنيا .
- أنه يحث على التوبة واستدراك ما فات .
- أنه يرقق القلوب ويدمع الأعين، ويجلب باعث الدين، ويطرد باعث الهوى.
- أنه يدعو إلى التواضع وترك الكبر والظلم.
- أنه يدعو إلى سل السخائم ومسامحة الإخوان وقبول أذارهم.

وقال الدقاق: من أكثر من ذكر الموت أكرم بثلاثة أشياء:  
تعجيل التوبة، وقناعة القلب، ونشاط العبادة، ومن نسي  
الموت عوقب بثلاثة أشياء: تسويف التوبة، وترك الرضى  
بالكفاف، والتكاسل في العبادة.

### الأسباب الباعثة على ذكر الموت

- زيارة القبور، قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم : (زوروا القبور فإنها تذكركم الآخرة) أحمد وأبو داود وصححه الألباني.
  - زيارة مغاسل الأموات ورؤية الموتى حين يغسلون.
  - مشاهدة المحتضرين وهم يعانون سكرات الموت وتلقينهم الشهادة.
  - تشييع الجنائز والصلاة عليها وحضور دفنها.
  - تلاوة القرآن والتدبر فيه والاعتاظ به.
  - الشيب والمرض، فإنهما من رسل ملك الموت إلى العباد.
  - الكوارث الكونية التي يحدثها الله تعالى تذكيراً لعباده بالموت والقدم عليه سبحانه كالزلازل والبراكين والفيضانات والانهيارات الأرضية والعواصف المدمرة.
  - مطالعة أخبار الماضين من الأمم والجماعات التي أفنأهم الموت وأبادهم البلى.
- ثم إن هذا الكتاب المسمى بـ

(النفس الأخير - ما قبله و ما بعده)

تفسير مبسط لما يجب القيام به عند الموت

واسمه في الإنجليزية:

The Last Breath - Before and After

A simple explanation of what is to be done at  
the time of Death

عملٌ ثالثٌ مباركٌ من جمع وتأليف الأخت الفاضلة أم عبد  
الأحد في أحكام الجنازة، جمعتُ فيه مسائل مهمة عديدة من  
كتب مختلفة، فقد بذلت وسعها في جمع كل ما وجدت،  
وذكرت منها ما ثبتت صحته إلى الشارع الحكيم في أحكام  
الميت بأسلوب سهل مبسط، واستوعبت جميع ما يتعلق  
بالموضوع، مراعية في ذلك الدقة وحسن الترتيب والتبويب.

في العالم المزدهم بالأعمال والمحن اليوم، تجد قلة قليلة جدا  
من الناس من يعمل لأجل خدمة الدين وقضاء الوقت الثمين  
في الدراسات والبحوث، لذا أود أن أشكر الأخت الفاضلة أم  
عبد الأحد، التي قامت بهذه المبادرة العظيمة.

والجدير بالذكر أن مؤلفة هذا الكتاب هي زوج أختنا الفاضل  
المفضل الخادم لدين الله، والحريص على نشر الخير ونفع  
الناس، والذي له أيادي بيضاء في نشر الوعي الديني في  
العامة والعلوم الدينية والدنيوية في شباب الأمة عبر مشاريع  
عديدة، أعني صاحب السعادة سيد ذاكر أحمد بن عبد الغفور  
مؤسس ورئيس معرض ومؤتمر عالمي (السلام بروية

الإسلام)، ومعهد السلام الإسلامي العالمي، وكلية السلام العالمية وغيرها من المؤسسات التعليمية والتوعوية.

أسأل الله سبحانه أن يتقبل من مؤلفة الكتاب وزوجه كل ما يقدمانه لخدمة الدين الحنيف والأمة الإسلامية، ويجعل جهودهم في موازين حسناتهم يوم القيامة، ويجعلهم وآبائهم وأمهاتهم وذرياتهم من ورثة جنة النعيم آمين.

كما أسأله سبحانه أن يوفق لصاحبة الكتاب مزيدا من التوفيق للعطاء العلمي المستمر وإثراء المكتبة الإسلامية بالإنجليزية ونفع العامة والخاصة آمين.

كتبه

الدكتور/ أركي نور محمد بن أركي محيي الدين

مدير كلية السلام العالمية في شناي بالهند



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Commendation for the book ‘Rulings of the Funerals’**

All praise is due to Allâh, the Lord of the worlds.

May peace and blessings of Allâh be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family, his companions and who follow them until the Day of Judgment.

Indeed, death is a reality, not imagination. Every soul will taste death. Wherever you may be, death will overtake you; even if you are within the towers of lofty constructions.

Death is the divider of groups, a destroyer of pleasures and a barrier between soul and desires.

Death knows no age, knows no time, and knows no disease. It arrives as decreed by Allâh. It is because of this a person should prepare for it and be ready for it.

Enough is death to soften hearts, to make eyes shed tears, and to make this life seem insignificant.

Death is a declaration of the end of the world of every human being and the start of the Hereafter. Whoever dies, his judgment has started.

Death removes the covering from the eyes and discloses the facts of the Unseen.

## FOREWORD

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Every man is certain that his destiny is in the dust at last, but negligence causes to forget the destination, desire causes the sight to be blind, and greed prolongs his false hopes. He sees the people dying and being buried, but the enchantment of this worldly life makes him blind and deaf, enjoying its calamities, while he actually is being punished.

**Caliph Omar bin Abdul Aziz described the worldly life and said:**

**Its durability is little. Its rich are poor. The one who is young will grow old, and the one who is alive will die. Let not the world deceive you as you are aware that it will soon depart. The deceived is the one who is deceived by it; relying on it is a danger, and trusting it is a risk; it is more changeable; it is fast to deny; its wishes are false, and its hopes are fake; living in it is a trouble; its elite is dirty. Man is always in danger from it. If it makes you laugh a little, it will make you cry more; if it makes you happy for a day, it will make you sad for months and years. Its rich will go back to poverty; its joy will go back to grief. It's impossible for it to be stable.**

Death is the greatest preacher for the one who is unaware, and the best deterrent to give up sins, and an effective call for repentance and turning to Allâh.

So the wise man is the one who calls himself to account (and refrains from doing evil deeds) and does noble deeds to benefit him after death; the foolish person is the one who subdues himself

## FOREWORD

---

to his temptations and desires and seeks from Allâh the fulfillment of his vain desires.

The life of this world is an opportunity to work and earn because after death it is only account and recompense.

### **Indeed, in the remembrance of death, there is a lot of benefit:**

- It encourages to prepare for death before it comes.
- It shortens the hope for lengthy stay because the length of hope causes the greatest negligence.
- It helps to refrain from greed and be happy with little.
- It develops interest in the Hereafter and calls toward obedience.
- It eases the calamities of this world.
- It softens the heart, brings tears to the eyes and brings people towards religion.
- It protects from bad deeds as it decreases the desire for worldly pleasures.
- It encourages to repent and to rectify the wrong.
- It calls towards humility and giving up the arrogance and injustice.
- It calls towards forgiving the brothers and accepting their excuses.

Abu Amr ad Daqqaq says: Whoever remembers death much, will be honoured with three things: hastening towards repentance,

satisfaction of heart, and active worship, and whoever forgets death, will be punished with three things: delaying of repentance, dissatisfaction, and laziness in worship.

### Things that help to remember the death

- Visiting the graves; the Prophet ﷺ said: (Visit the graves, for it reminds you of the Hereafter) Ahmad, Abu Dawood and Sahih by Albani.
- Visiting the bathing place of dead person and watching him while being bathed.
- Seeing the one who is near to death while they are suffering the intoxication of death and instructing them on the testimonial.
- Following the Janazah and offering the Janazah Salah and being present at burial.
- Reciting the Qur'an, pondering on it and taking lessons from it.
- White hair and disease are the messengers of the Angel of Death.
- Universal disasters like earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, landslides and strong storms which Allâh makes are to remind the slaves of death.
- Reading the history of the past nations and groups that death has destroyed and exterminated.

This book is named:

**The Last Breath - Before and After**

**A simple explanation of what is to be done at the time of  
Death**

النفس الأخير - ما قبله و ما بعده

تفسير مبسط لما يجب القيام به عند الموت

This is the third blessed work of collecting and compiling by the respected sister, Umm Abdul Ahad. Regarding the funeral rules, she has collected many important issues from different books. She has done her best to collect all what she found, and mention what is authentic in a simplified and an easy manner. She has covered all that which is related to the subject with finesse.

In today's busy world, which is full of tribulations, there are very few people who serve the deen and spend their precious time in studies and research. Therefore, I would like to thank the sister, Umm Abdul Ahad, who took this great initiative.

It is worth mentioning here that the author of this book is the wife of our gentle brother, and servant to the religion of Allah, who is keen on spreading the good and benefiting the people, and who has experience in spreading religious and general education amongst young pupils through numerous projects. I mean the excellent brother Syed Zakir Ahmed, son of Syed Abdul Ghafoor, founder and president of the global exhibition and conference (Peace Vision of Islam), Peace Academy, and Peace College and other educational institutions.

## **FOREWORD**

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I ask the Almighty Allâh to accept from the author of this book and her husband whatever they bring forward to serve the religion and nation, and make their efforts count in their scale of good deeds on the Day of Judgment, and make them, their parents and their offspring inheritors of the blessed Paradise, Aameen.

I also ask Allâh subhanahu wa taaala to bless the author with continuous guidance and knowledge to enrich the Islamic libraries in English language and to benefit everyone. Aameen.

Dr. R.K. Noor Mohammed Omari Madani

Director, Kulliyatussalam al Arabiyyah, Chennai, India.

## PREFACE

All praise and thanks are due to Allāh ﷻ, the One and Only One worthy of worship. His bounties are unlimited, and His blessings are incalculable. I do praise Him and thank Him for what He has bestowed upon us from His plenitude. May Allāh's Mercy and Blessings be upon His Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, his kin, his companions and his followers.

Al-ḥamdu lillāh, this simplified janāzah guide is the third in the series of my compilations. My knowledge of janāzah rituals was primarily from what I had learnt from others and witnessed during my visit on the occurrence of a person's death. I then wished to explore and learn more on this subject, and thus started compiling a concise step by step guide from authentic sources on what needs to be done upon a person's sudden death. There have been occasions when I received requests for my "compiled papers". It was then that I decided to compile it in the form of a book. The contents of this book are from what I have read and collected over the years. This guide was initially intended purely for my use as I was particular that I educate myself with authentic knowledge on janāzah rituals.

By the grace of Allāh, Islam has not only provided us with a complete set of instructions on what needs to be done for the dying individual, but also for those present at the time of death as well as for those responsible for preparing and burying the deceased. Apart from constantly reflecting upon the fact that inevitably, we will all have to die one day, it is incumbent upon us that we have the knowledge of carrying out the janāzah rituals in the prescribed authentic manner, thereby giving our fellow Muslims their rights

## PREFACE

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when they die before us. In fact, the rituals of janâzah is Farḍ al-Kifâyah (a collective responsibility on Muslims if there is no one to claim the body) upon the Muslim community.

In this book, I have attempted to present a concise and simplified compilation of the rules and regulations regarding funeral rites in accordance with authentic Islamic teachings which have been explained step by step and with a few important illustrations. These procedures should be common knowledge amongst Muslims, since death often occurs when it is least expected: at any time; at any place. Learning the rulings of funerals helps us to know what should be done with the deceased from the time of death until the burial and how to avoid many of the innovated acts in the funeral rituals.

My humble and wholehearted gratitude is to Allâh ﷻ for blessing me with supportive parents and family who have always stood by me. All praise and thanks are to Almighty Allâh for having blessed me with my husband Syed Zakir Ahmed who has always been a source of strength and support and who took the responsibility of bringing out this book. I wish to acknowledge with sincere thanks, the encouragement and support given to me by Dr. R.K. Noor Mohammad Madani, for correcting this book and offering invaluable advice despite his busy schedule. My sincere thanks to my dear sisters Umm Haroon and Umm Zuleika for checking the book and making many valuable suggestions, Sister Parveen for very patiently aligning the book and Brother Ibrahim for helping with the illustrations in the book and uploading it on the website.

This book was brought out with the sole intention of spreading the knowledge of Islam through which benefit may be obtained, of



## PREFACE

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acquiring ṣadaqah al-jâriyah (ongoing charity) and for seeking the pleasure of my Rabb, and may Almighty Allâh reward everyone associated with it. Âmîn.

May Allâh, Rabbul-‘Âlamîn, make us among those who are protected from the painful pangs of death, from the torment of the grave and who, when questioned by the questioning angels, Munkar and Nakîr, are able to answer the questions correctly and with ease and who are thereafter clothed with the garments of Paradise. May Allâh accept all our efforts, overlook our shortcomings, shower His blessings upon all of us; His humble slaves and envelop us with His mercy in this world and in the Hereafter. We ask Allâh by His Great and Beautiful Names and Attributes to accept this endeavour and make it beneficial for its readers. Âmîn.

Umm Abdul Ahad

Chennai, India

## INTRODUCTION

Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân:

*[Every soul will taste death, and you will only be given your (full) compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained (his desire). And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.]*<sup>1</sup>

And,

*[Every soul will taste death. Then to Us will you be returned.]*<sup>2</sup>

Allâh ﷻ also says in the Qur'ân:

*[And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.]*<sup>3</sup>

Islam is the only religion that explains the event of death in detail; how it happens, and what we as Muslims should do before, during, and after the death of a Muslim and the respect that must be accorded to a human being even after death. In Islam, specific rites are observed at every stage of the process of caring for the dying, preparing for the burial and the burying of the dead. It shows high respect for a human being even after death.

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<sup>1</sup> [Sûrâh Âli 'Imrân 3:185]

<sup>2</sup> [Sûrâh al-'Ankabût 29:57]

<sup>3</sup> [Sûrâh Luqmân 31: from verse 34]

## INTRODUCTION

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By the grace of Allâh ﷻ, Islam has provided a complete set of instructions for the dying individual, for those who are present at the time of death, as well as for those who are responsible for burying the deceased.

These include how to care for a person when he dies - by making *du‘â* for him, washing and shrouding his body, performing *Ṣalât al-Janâzah* for him, and then burying him. Aside from constantly reflecting upon the fact that we too will inevitably die one day (perhaps even this moment), we should also know the rights the living owe to the dead so we can correctly discharge our duties to our fellow Muslims when they die before us. A Muslim is expected to be prepared for death at any instant and ready to meet the Lord of the worlds for the Final Judgement. One way of preparing ourselves is to fulfil the collective obligation of administering the last rites to a fellow Muslim who has died even though it is only *Fard al-Kifâyah* and not obligatory on every Muslim.

Very often, due to the lack of knowledge of family members, washing and shrouding is left to be done by someone who is not part of the family. Quite often, people just do not know what to do; neither from a religious point of view nor in terms of the practical steps that need to be completed to bury one's loved ones. Since death often occurs when it is least expected, it is highly advisable that these regulations should become common knowledge amongst Muslims.

## INTRODUCTION

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It is precisely to dispel the wrong notion that the *janâzah* duty must be performed only by experienced people and cannot be done by just anybody, that this book that deals with this serious topic that concerns every Muslim has been compiled.

It is my hope that the simple explanations in this book make it possible for every reader to personally use this information practically when the need arises and not depend on others to do a deed that has such immense rewards. This book is a concise compilation of rules and regulations regarding funeral rites in accordance with authentic Islamic teachings. Islamic law governs most aspects of a Muslim's life and death. While cultural customs may vary, Islamic law has specific rulings for the preparation of the body, burial and funeral rites of a Muslim. Very often cultural and family practices overrule what is prescribed in our religion and many innovations take place if a person of knowledge is not within reach. Learning the rulings of funerals helps one to avoid falling into the many acts innovated in the ceremonies of the funeral and explains what should be done with the deceased from just before their death until they are buried. Sometimes there are uncertain/difficult issues facing the family members and relatives of the deceased. It becomes relatively easier if the family of the deceased is familiar with these issues at all times since death can approach anyone at any given time or place. Many a time, children growing up in a non-Muslim country know almost nothing about Islamic regulations and rites that are associated with death; hence it is our responsibility to teach them these regulations, to help them take care of family members after death in the correct manner so

## INTRODUCTION

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that they are protected from innovations or ignorant acts that they may come up with. It is also imperative that one writes their *wasīyyah* and explains to their children or inheritors what is in it/of its contents. Also, a Muslim should be aware of the great rewards in performing the different rites of the *janâzah*.

This compilation highlights some rulings related to the funeral and the deceased and is intended to address the serious lack of knowledge and awareness of such a vital aspect of a Muslim's life. It will *in shâ' Allâh* explain everything we need to do in a simple step-by-step process so that we are equipped with correct knowledge for whenever the time comes. It will make us aware that, like all acts of worship, *janâzah* rituals too must be performed with a sincere and pure intention, directing them solely to Allâh ﷻ and seeking His pleasure through them.

The following points have been taken into consideration while compiling this book:

- 1- The *ahādīth* referred to are established (i.e., authentic).
- 2- Only a brief mention of one or two sources has been made when documenting the *hadīth* to make the book easy to refer to.
- 3- Transliteration of the Arabic *du'â's* have been rendered to facilitate its reading for non-Arabic readers, as well as a translation true to the original.
- 4- Arabic words are highlighted in italics.
- 5- Diacritical marks have been included to facilitate reading.

## INTRODUCTION

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The 22 chapters of this book cover almost all that is needed to be known when death occurs. For further clarifications, like rulings on inheritance etc., it is advisable that scholars are consulted. The 22 chapters are as follows:

Chapter 1 – This chapter briefly deals with some aspects relating to sickness like glad tidings and blessings for the sick; virtues and etiquette of visiting the sick; some supplications to make for the sick. Sickness can become a means for us to earn great rewards in the *Ākhirah*.

Chapter 2 – Death can come upon us at any moment; no one can escape death. Are we prepared for it? Do we know what we are going to be facing?

Chapter 3 – A step by step concise guide, for easy reference, as to what should be done Islamically when death occurs. There are specific acts legislated in the *sunnah* to be followed when preparing for the funeral of a believer. The following chapters explain in detail each of the steps for a Muslim funeral mentioned in this chapter.

Chapter 4 – Explains what should be done by the dying person and those around him, just before his death. If a person appears to be nearing death, he is obliged or recommended to do certain acts of worship and people around the dying individual are encouraged to be supportive and assist the dying person as his soul leaves the body.

## INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 5 – This chapter explains the etiquette to be followed when visiting a dying person. It is *sunnah* to visit a dying person and say good things to him and to pray for Allāh’s mercy and forgiveness for him. People around the dying individual are encouraged to be supportive and to provide them with certain basic services. This chapter also highlights some of the innovations that must be avoided at the time of dying.

Chapter 6 – Describes what should be done with the deceased right after death and before burial. When the soul leaves the body, there are certain obligations to be fulfilled, and then preparations are made for bidding him the last farewell.

Chapter 7 – This is a concise quick guide to the washing and shrouding procedures. The following two chapters explain in detail with some illustrations, how to wash and shroud a dead person.

Chapter 8 – This chapter describes in detail, the procedure for washing the deceased in preparation for his burial. The body of the deceased is handled with respect, and great care and gentleness. To bathe, shroud and bury a deceased person is the sign of respect for him. Islam gives importance to the extraordinary value of a person and this status remains for a person even after his death. Islam recognises the sacredness of a Muslim’s body and therefore it must be treated with dignity and respect. The washing and shrouding is a tremendous, virtuous and dignified task that all Muslims should strive for. We should rush to grab the opportunity to bathe a deceased Muslim and lower him into his grave. Both actions carry a lot of reward.

## INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 9 – Describes and depicts in detail, the procedure of shrouding the deceased in preparation for his burial.

Chapter 10 – This chapter gives guidance on how to transport the *janâzah*. It highlights the *sunnah* in following the *janâzah*, and the rewards for doing so. Prophet ﷺ and his companions would accompany the deceased until he was laid in the grave. We must educate ourselves in advance on the proper method of washing and shrouding a Muslim's corpse and lowering him into the grave, so as to attain the reward. These deeds also serve to remind us of the future that we should be preparing ourselves for.

Chapter 11 – Guidance about the funeral prayer. The deceased Muslim should be carried to receive the funeral prayer from Muslims when it will be the last time he enters the *Masjid*. *Ṣalât al-janâzah* is held over the dead body of every Muslim, young or old, even of infants who have lived only for a few minutes or seconds.

Chapter 12 – Explains how to pray *Ṣalât al-janâzah*. The funeral prayer should be performed in congregation; it is an act that earns rewards and believers should not hesitate to participate in any funeral prayer; even those of people not known to them. Prophet ﷺ and his companions stood in lines in the *janâzah* prayer praising Allâh ﷻ and invoking Him for mercy, forgiveness and pardon for the deceased. *Ṣalât al-janâzah* is a petition for mercy and forgiveness for the deceased. This is a duty everyone owes to the dead.



## INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 13 – Explains the *sunnah* followed in burying the deceased. Prophet ﷺ guided us how to be kind and gentle with the deceased, such as preparing the funeral in the best manner for the journey to Allâh ﷻ. Burials in Islam are characterized by humility and simplicity. The simple grave and the cemetery in Islam is characterized by economy in costs and avoids glorifying the dead with elaborate monuments. All Muslims, rich, poor, king or commoner are all buried following the same procedure. Making sure that the proper procedures are followed will show respect for the departed and comfort his loved ones. Prophet ﷺ and his companions accompanied the deceased until he was laid in the grave. Then they stood by the grave of the deceased, invoking Allâh ﷻ to make his feet firm for when he would need firmness the most.

Chapter 14 – *Sunnah* instructions to be followed during mourning. The death of person is often a time of great stress and emotion for his family and friends. Islam insists that death be handled with dignity and acceptance of Allâh's decree, for no amount of wailing or grieving can change the situation or bring the dead back to life.

Chapter 15 – *Sunnah* instructions to be followed while offering condolences. The instructions in Islam extend to the deceased's relatives and friends, on how to comfort his family, and offering them condolences, sympathy and support.

Chapter 16 – This chapter highlights the etiquette to be followed when visiting graves. Visiting graves is recommended in Islam so that the living may reflect on the shortness of this life and the closeness of the next. The visit to the grave of a Muslim should be

## INTRODUCTION

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to ask Allâh ﷻ to forgive him and have mercy not only on him but on all departed souls, in hope that they may find peace in the life to come.

Chapter 17 – The punishments of the grave. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ has unquestionably informed us that the trial of the grave is true. Are we prepared for this trial? Have we reflected and pondered over the consequences of being ill-prepared for what awaits us in the grave and the Day of *Qiyâmah* that follows it? Yes, there is a trial, followed by punishments and rewards in the grave, before the punishments and rewards of the Day of Resurrection.

Chapter 18 – There are signs that signify a good end, some of which are seen by the dying person as he is dying, and some which may be visible to other people. These signs should be a reminder for us to do righteous deeds that lead to a good end. There are also some signs that signify an evil end and dying with any of them is a sign of a bad end for the deceased. May Allâh protect us.

Chapter 19 – Highlights the deeds that will benefit the deceased. The dead person benefits from his own actions when he was alive and also from some actions of others after his death.

Chapter 20 – The Islamic Will, *al-waṣiyyah* is a set of instructions that come into effect after a person's death. The Will is acted upon after the payment of funeral expenses and any outstanding debts. No Muslim should feel comfortable sleeping at night without having prepared a Will. We never know when we will die, and the Will is an important record to ensure that our wishes are respected after we die.

## INTRODUCTION

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Chapter 21 – What happens to the soul upon death? The knowledge of the journey of the soul is one of the blessings that Allah ﷻ has favoured this *ummah* with, through the Qur'an and the words of the Prophet ﷺ. We have been informed of these matters of the unseen and it is this extremely important matter that we should make preparations for.

Chapter 22 – Finally, in contemplation..... Faith in life after death is the last of the fundamental principles in Islam. The Hereafter (*al-Ākhirah*) is not a mystery that suddenly manifests itself beyond the grave; it begins in this life. For the good, the Heavenly life; and for the wicked, a life in Hell. The journey begins here in this life, though the limitations of this life do not allow most people to realize this. We should accept the reality of a future life, when every deed shall reap its full reward and so step up our performance of good deeds. The stronger the faith in the good or bad consequences of a deed, the greater is the urge to do or withhold a deed.

*Al-ḥamdu lillāh*, we have the guidance of our Prophet ﷺ for every situation in life, and likewise in death and its rituals. We should strive for the understanding of the *dīn* through this guidance so that we gain authentic beneficial knowledge and act upon it and that Allāh ﷻ makes our questioning easy and grants us *Jannat al-Firdaws*. May Allāh ﷻ help us in obtaining such useful knowledge. *Āmīn*.

**TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM OF ARABIC WORDS**

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**TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM OF ARABIC WORDS**

Arabic Script	Symbol	English words having similar sounds
أ	'	at, it, oh
ب	b	bless
ت	t	true
ث	th	three, moth
ج	j	judge
ح	h	ahem
خ	kh	_____
د	d	dear
ذ	dh	this, there, mother
ر	r	road
ز	z	zoo
س	s	safe
ش	sh	show
ص	ʃ	_____
ض	d	_____

**TRANSCRIPTION SYSTEM OF ARABIC WORDS**

ط	t	_____
ظ	z	_____
ع	'	_____
غ	gh	_____
ف	f	free
ق	q	coffee
ك	k	kick
ل	l	light
م	m	moon
ن	n	nice
هـ	h	health
و	w	wealth
ي	y	youth
ـَ	â	long vowel "a" man, sad
ـُ	û	long vowel "u" root, flute
ـِ	î	long vowel "i" seed, piece

**CHAPTER 1**  
**SICKNESS**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**CHAPTER 1**  
**SICKNESS**

1.	The blessings of sickness	28
2.	Sickness is a test	29
3.	Sickness is a bonus for the patient	30
4.	Visiting the sick	31
5.	Rewards for visiting the sick	32
6.	Supplications for the sick	34

**1. THE BLESSINGS OF SICKNESS**

Allâh ﷻ has blessed us with favours that we can't even count. He says in the Qur'ân,

*[And if you should count the favours of Allâh, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, Allâh is Forgiving and Merciful.]*<sup>1</sup>

Even if we spend all our lives praising Allâh just for one single blessing, we wouldn't be able to thank Him enough. Our health is the foremost favour and one of the greatest blessings of Allâh ﷻ on us. Very often, it is sickness that wakes people up from heedlessness, guides them to give up their sins, reminds them of the Hereafter and leads them to piety, makes them more thankful

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<sup>1</sup> [Sûrah an-Nahl 16:18]

## CHAPTER 1

### SICKNESS

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to Allâh, and teaches them the necessity of taking better care of their health and making better use of their life – something they did not realize before. It teaches them to understand other sick people better, to feel sympathy for them and reach out to help them and raises their ranks and degrees to a higher level in the Hereafter. Many people are unaware of the fact that in Islam sickness, grief, sorrow and other difficulties that we undergo in this worldly life are a blessing for the patient servants and well-behaved Muslims who do not get agitated, and endure difficulties with grace because they know that sickness comes from Allah. They do not question the destiny of Allah nor do they complain. There are many rewards for the sick. Sickness becomes a source of purification from sins. Man commits minor and major sins all the time, but the afflictions faced by him become the atonement for his sins and in this way, he is cleansed of his sins in this very world.

#### **2. SICKNESS IS A TEST**

Sickness means that a person has been deprived of good health, and Muslims should know that sickness is an affliction with which we are tested by Allâh ﷻ. If we are patient and content with the decree of Allâh, then we will be rewarded for it. A person who is sick should regard his sickness as a gift and a special sign of mercy from Allâh ﷻ. Sometimes when a person becomes ill, incorrect and harsh statements are uttered by him as well as those who treat and take care of him. There is also no harm if a person complains about pain in the body. However, when he complains bitterly and objects to the decree of Allâh ﷻ showing disrespect, it amounts to

## CHAPTER 1

### SICKNESS

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ingratitude to Him and will destroy rewards due to him as a sick person. We should use the opportunity to seek forgiveness for our sins, remain patient and seek blessings during the affliction.

The rewards of being afflicted by sickness are many.

Narrated ‘Abdullâh: “I visited Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ while he was suffering from a high fever. I said, ‘O’ Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ, You have a high fever.’ He said, ‘Yes, I have as much fever as two men of you.’ I said, ‘Is it because you will have a double reward?’ He said, ‘Yes, it is so. No Muslim is afflicted with any harm, even if it were the prick of a thorn, but that Allâh expiates his sins because of that, as a tree sheds its leaves.”<sup>2</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ said, “No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor hurt, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick he receives from a thorn, but that Allâh expiates some of his sins for that.”<sup>3</sup>

### 3. SICKNESS IS A BONUS FOR THE PATIENT

Usually, when a believer falls sick, he would not be able to do the same amount of good deeds that he used to do when he was well. But Allâh, out of His great mercy, continues to record for him the good deeds that he was forced to stop doing because of his sickness. Prophet ﷺ said, “When a person becomes sick or goes on a journey, then those (good) deeds are written down in his

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<sup>2</sup>[al-Bukhâri]

<sup>3</sup>[al-Bukhâri]



## CHAPTER 1

### SICKNESS

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favour which he used to perform when he was at home and in good health.”<sup>4</sup>

‘Uqbah bin ‘Âmir reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Each day’s deeds are sealed with it. Thus, when a believer gets sick, the angels say, ‘Our Lord! Your servant such and such; You have restrained him (from doing good this day).’ And the Lord replies, ‘Seal his day in accordance with his (usual) deeds, until he is cured or dies.’”<sup>5</sup>

#### 4. VISITING THE SICK

It is of the Islamic etiquette to visit the sick Muslim, to provide him with moral support and to make sure that he or she is well taken care of. In visiting the sick there is joy for the heart and removal of loneliness, decrease of pain, and comfort for the sick person and his family. Visiting the sick does not involve only those whom we know, rather it is prescribed for those whom we do not know too.

- There is no sin in a man visiting a sick non-*maḥram* woman, or a woman visiting a sick non-*maḥram* man, so long as the following conditions are met: proper covering, no risk of *fitnah*, and not being alone together.
- There is no sin in visiting a *mushrik* (disbeliever) who is sick if the purpose is to call the person to Islam, or to restrain his evil, or to soften his heart, and so on.

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<sup>4</sup>[*al-Bukhārī*]

<sup>5</sup>[*Aḥmad*]

## CHAPTER 1 SICKNESS

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- If sickness prevents one from seeing people it is obligatory for people to visit him. If he is sick but he is still going out and seeing people, then it is not obligatory to visit him. <sup>6</sup>
- By visiting the sick, the rights of our Muslim brother are fulfilled. The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “The rights of one Muslim over another are six.” It was said: “What are they, O’ Messenger of Allāh?” He said: “If you meet him, greet him with *salām*, if he invites you, accept the invitation, if he asks for advice, give him sincere advice; if he sneezes and praises Allāh, say *Yarhamuk Allāh* (may Allāh have mercy on you); if he falls sick, visit him; and if he dies, attend his funeral.” <sup>7</sup>
- This *ḥadīth* indicates that it is obligatory for a Muslim to visit the sick. The correct view is that it is a communal obligation, like feeding the hungry and freeing the captives. <sup>8</sup>

### 5. REWARDS FOR VISITING THE SICK

- The reward attained by the one who visits the sick is likened to the harvest reaped by one who gathers fruit. There are many *aḥadīth* which speak of its virtues. In the words of the Prophet ﷺ: “When the Muslim visits his (sick) Muslim brother, he is harvesting the fruits of Paradise until he returns.” <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>[*al-Sharḥ al-Mumtī*’ 5/171]

<sup>7</sup>[*Muslim*]

<sup>8</sup>[*Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymīn* رحمته الله, said in *al-Sharḥ al-Mumtī*’ 5/173]

<sup>9</sup>[*Muslim*]

## CHAPTER 1

### SICKNESS

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- The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ has also said: “Whoever visits a sick person is plunging into mercy until he sits down, and when he sits down he is submerged in it.”<sup>10</sup>
- The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “There is no Muslim who visits a (sick) Muslim early in the morning but seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until evening comes, and if he visits him in the evening, seventy thousand angels send blessings upon him until morning comes, and he will have a garden in Paradise.”<sup>11</sup>
- The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Whoever visits a sick person or visits a brother in Islam, a caller cries out to him: ‘May you be happy, may your walking be blessed, and may you occupy a dignified position in Paradise.’”<sup>12</sup>
- In a part of a *ḥadīth qudsī*, the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Allāh (Mighty and Sublime be He) will say on the Day of Resurrection: “O’ son of Âdam, I fell ill and you visited Me not. He will say: O’ Lord, and how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant so-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him?”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>[Classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by *al-Albānī* in *al-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah*, 2504]

<sup>11</sup>[Classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by *al-Albānī* in *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Tirmidhī*]

<sup>12</sup>[Classified as *ḥasan* by *al-Albānī* in *Ṣaḥīḥ at-Tirmidhī*]

<sup>13</sup>[*Muslim*]

## CHAPTER 1 SICKNESS

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### 6. SUPPLICATIONS FOR THE SICK

- Making *du‘â* for the cure of those who are unwell, whether related to us or not, is a great act of worship. When we visit the sick at a time that is convenient for them, even if it is for only a few minutes only, it is rewarded by Allâh ﷻ. Saying a kind word of support and encouragement to the sick and their care-givers returns with great warmth to us. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “If a man calls on his sick Muslim brother, it is as if he walks reaping the fruits of Paradise until he sits, and when he sits he is showered in mercy, and if this was in the morning, seventy thousand angels send prayers upon him until the evening, and if this was in the evening, seventy thousand angels send prayers upon him until the morning.”<sup>14</sup>

One of the times supplications are hopefully granted is in the presence of the sick, so we should make use of this time to supplicate for the sick person, for ourselves and the believing men and women. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “If you are in the presence of a sick or dying person, you should say good things for verily the angels say *Âmîn* to whatever you say”.<sup>15</sup> *Du‘â* should be made for the sick person in the manner specified in the *sunnah*.

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<sup>14</sup> [Authenticated by *al-Albâni, Şaḥîḥ Ibn Mâjah 1/244 and Şaḥîḥ at-Tirmidhî 1/286*]

<sup>15</sup> [Muslim]

## CHAPTER 1 SICKNESS

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- The following are some of the supplications the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to make whenever he visited the sick.

1. اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ النَّاسِ أَذْهِبِ الْبَأْسَ وَاشْفِ أَنْتَ الشَّافِي لَا شِفَاءَ إِلَّا  
شِفَاؤُكَ شِفَاءً لَا يُعَادِرُ سَقَمًا.

*Allāhumma Rabb an-nās, adh-hibil-ba'sa washfi, Anta ash-Shâfi lâ shifâ' illâ shifâ'uka, shifâ'an lâ yughâdiru saqamâ.*

O' Allāh! Lord of mankind, remove the disease and grant cure; You are the Healer; there is no cure except from You – a cure (that will) not leave behind any sickness. <sup>16</sup>

2. امْسَحِ الْبَأْسَ رَبَّ النَّاسِ بِيَدِكَ الشِّفَاءُ لَا يَكْشِفُ الْكَرْبَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ.

*Imsaḥil-ba'sa, Rabb an-nās, bi-yadikash-shifâ', lâ yakshiful-karba illâ Anta.*  
Rub away the affliction, O' Lord of the people. In Your Hand is the cure, and no one can remove the distress except You. <sup>17</sup>

3. This *du'â'* for healing should be said three times.

اللَّهُمَّ اشْفِ..... *Allāhummm-ashfi* ..... – Three times

O' Allāh! Cure (so and so). <sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>17</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim, Aḥmad]

<sup>18</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

**CHAPTER 1**  
**SICKNESS**

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4.                      أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ الْعَظِيمَ رَبَّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ أَنْ يَشْفِيكَ.

*As'alullâhal-'Azîma Rabbal-'arshil-'azîmi an yashfiyaka.* – Seven times

I ask Allâh, the Almighty, Lord of the Magnificent Throne, to cure you. <sup>19</sup>

5.                      لَا بَأْسَ طَهُورٌ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ .

*Lâ ba'sa, ṭahûrun in shâ' Allâh.*

Do not worry. It will be a purification (for you), if Allâh wills. <sup>20</sup>

6.                      اللَّهُمَّ اشْفِ عَبْدَكَ يَنْكَأُ لَكَ عَدُوًّا أَوْ يَمْشِي لَكَ إِلَى صَلَاةٍ.

*Allâhumashfi 'abdaka, yanka' laka 'adûwwan, aw yamshî laka ilâ ṣalât.*

O' Allâh! Cure your servant so that he can ward off an adversary for You or walk to prayer (or funeral) in obedience to You.” <sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> [Abû Dâwûd, authenticated by al-Albânî in at-Tirmidhî]

<sup>20</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

<sup>21</sup> [Abû Dâwûd, authenticated by al-Albânî in al-Mishkât]

**CHAPTER 2**  
**THE REALITY OF DEATH**

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**CHAPTER 2**  
**THE REALITY OF DEATH**

7. Every soul will taste death	38
8. Regret at the time of death	41
9. Remember often the destroyer of pleasures	42
10. The acceptance of repentance	41
11. The benefits of remembering death	43
12. The five stages of life	39
13. The reality of death	37

**7. THE REALITY OF DEATH**

Imâm ibn al-Jawzî in his letter of advice to his son, said: “Know, dear son, that days are but hours, and hours are but breaths, and every soul is a container, hence let not any breath pass without any benefit, such as on the Day of Judgement you find an empty container and feel regret!

Be aware of every hour and how it passes, and only spend it in the best possible way; do not neglect yourself, but render it accustomed to the noblest and best of actions, and send to your grave that which will please you when you arrive to it.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [*Lafîat al-Kabîd ilâ Naşîhat al-Walad*]

## CHAPTER 2 THE REALITY OF DEATH

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### 8. EVERY SOUL WILL TASTE DEATH

Death is a harsh and fearful reality faced by everyone who lives. No one has the power to avoid it, nor does anyone around the dying person have the ability to prevent it. We do not know when and where or how we will die. Knowledge of the reality of death helps us understand it and prepare ourselves for it. Almost every day we hear of the death of someone, yet most people are not affected by the inevitable reality that one day they too will die. They go on with their lives as if they will not be touched by death while in fact death should be a daily reminder for us all. It should be a constant reminder so we make the effort to control our desires and restrain our greed. We do not know if today will be our last day in this world. Every person's time of death has already been decreed and Allâh ﷻ alone knows when we will take our last breath. We should always have caution and fear for as long as we remain in this world, since we do not know when we will meet Allâh ﷻ, even if we have performed every good deed. We may have a large family, much wealth, good health and happiness, but when we begin to seriously think about death, i.e., the coming of the angel of death, the taking out of our soul, the questioning in the grave, the punishment for those who lived their life heedless of these realities, then we realize that what we have of family and wealth is insignificant. As soon as we die, our identity becomes a body. People use phrases like: bring the body, take the body to the graveyard, lower the body into the grave. People don't even call us by our name; not even those whom we tried to impress during our



## CHAPTER 2 THE REALITY OF DEATH

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whole life, not even our loved ones. When our life is over, all that will help us are our faith and deeds. So, a balanced view of life can be maintained by us by remembering death constantly. Neither would we let despair in the face of afflictions, nor arrogance and carelessness when favoured by an easy life, rule our lives. The difference between this world and the Hereafter is that in this life there is death, while in the Hereafter there is no death. The inhabitants of *Jannah* will live forever and the inhabitants of *Jahannum* (Hell-fire) will also abide therein forever.

### 9. THE FIVE STAGES OF LIFE

Life is divided into five stages: before conception, life in the womb, life in this world, life in the grave and life in the Hereafter. It starts from before one was born, to the end when one will be in either *Jannah* or *Jahannum* eternally.

- 1) The first stage is the creation of souls before the creation of bodies. Souls have been created much before the birth of human beings; the souls that are acquainted with one another before coming into this world also get acquainted with one another after coming into this world.
- 2) The second stage is the life in the womb when the soul is breathed into an embryo in the womb of its mother, and now the soul is referred to as “*nafs*”.
- 3) The third stage is the life in the *dunyâ*. The newly born baby is clean, innocent, free from sins, grows, develops, learns and is brought up in Muslim or non-Muslim families. Those who believe

## CHAPTER 2 THE REALITY OF DEATH

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in the Oneness of Allâh, His Prophets, His Books, His Angels, the Day of Judgment, the next life, that the good or bad comes from the predestined decree of Allâh, the existence of Hell and Heaven, reward for good and punishment for bad are called Muslims. Therefore, this stage is a very important testing ground for humankind. The soul rests in the human body for doing deeds, and those deeds determine the soul's final destination.

4) The fourth stage is the life in the grave. The soul remains in the body throughout the worldly life and causes the body to have life. Death occurs when the soul departs. The grave is the abode of the body after death. Whoever dies enters *al-Barzakh*. *Al-Barzakh* is the transitional period between a person's death and his being brought back to life on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever dies as a Muslim obeying Allâh will be in a blessed state, and whoever dies as a *kâfir* disobeying Allâh, will be subjected to punishment right from this stage.

5) The fifth stage is the life in the *Âkhirah* that begins with the Resurrection followed by the Day of Judgement and the eternal life in Heaven or Hell. On the Day of Judgement, bodies will be resurrected and their souls will be blown into them once again to receive their verdicts. Believing souls will be rewarded with Paradise, wherein they will remain forever young, provided with unimagined gifts and beautiful young companions to dwell therein for eternity. This is because Allâh is pleased with the soul which is obedient to His Divine Laws and is grateful for the bounties

## CHAPTER 2 THE REALITY OF DEATH

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showered on it. Disbelieving souls are destined to the punishment of Hell forever.

### 10. THE ACCEPTANCE OF REPENTANCE

Death is a state of transition from one world to another, just as birth is. It is the stage when the soul becomes disconnected from the body. It is an act of the soul leaving the body. As the soul departs, man moves on from one world (life) to another (Hereafter). His record of deeds is closed and the opportunity for repentance comes to end.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Allâh accepts the repentance of His slave until the time of death (i.e. when the soul is departing).”<sup>2</sup>

### 11. REGRET AT THE TIME OF DEATH

If a person had been an obedient slave of Allah, he regrets that he had not done enough righteous deeds before his death; but if he had been disobedient, he regrets his transgression and wishes he could return to this life to repent and act righteously; but at this point it is too late. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur’ân:

*[(For such is the state of the disbelievers) until, when death comes to one of them, he says, “My Lord, send me back. That I might do righteousness in that which I left behind.”]*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, authenticated by al-Albânî as *hasan* in *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Jâmi’* 2784]

<sup>3</sup> [Ṣûrah al-Mu’minîn 23:99, 100]

**CHAPTER 2**  
**THE REALITY OF DEATH**

---

**12. REMEMBER OFTEN THE DESTROYER OF PLEASURES**

In a concise yet powerful statement, our Prophet ﷺ advises us: “Remember often the destroyer of pleasures.”<sup>4</sup>

And he ﷺ also said: “Remember often the destroyer of pleasures, death. For truly, none would remember it while in a tightness of living (during the time of need) but it would expand it for him, and none would remember it while in an ease of living (during prosperity) but it would tighten it for him.”<sup>5</sup>

Imâm al-Qurtubi رحمه الله said: “Our scholars رحمه الله said that this statement from the Prophet ﷺ is short, but inclusive of a great reminder, because remembering death and mentioning it frequently is likely to destroy any pleasure one may feel and prevent him from wishing for any other enjoyment in the future, making him indifferent to pleasures which he previously craved for. But since people’s hearts have become heedless, we now require longer admonitions with more decorated words; otherwise the words of the Prophet ﷺ, ‘Remember often the destroyer of pleasures, death’ and the saying of Allâh ﷻ, [*Everyone shall taste death. And only on the Day of Resurrection shall you be paid your wages in full. And whoever is removed away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise, this person is indeed successful. The life of this world is only the enjoyment of deception,*’]<sup>6</sup> is enough for those who listen and reflect.”

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<sup>4</sup> [al-Tirmidhi]

<sup>5</sup> [Ibn Hibbân, al-Bayhaqi, authenticated by al-Albâni in Irwâ’ al-Ghalil]

<sup>6</sup> [Sûrah Âli ‘Imrân 3:185]

**CHAPTER 2**  
**THE REALITY OF DEATH**

---

**13. THE BENEFITS OF REMEMBERING DEATH**

- 1) Death should not be a stranger to us and we are encouraged to remember death even in the midst of life. So, he who remembers death as it should be remembered, will hold himself accountable and question himself about his deeds and aspirations unlike the one with a heedless heart.
- 2) Remembering death discourages us from doing evil and encourages us to do good. It urges us to hold fast to the commands and to avoid the prohibitions. It reduces the temptation to commit *ḥarâm*.
- 3) Remembering death often may save us at the time of regret.
- 4) Contemplating about death restrains one from disobedience, softens hard hearts, prevents one from trusting this life and blesses one with strength and patient acceptance at the time of hardships.

No doubt, death is from amongst the greatest reminders of the temporary nature of this world. At the same time, it is a way to reflect on our affairs as individuals. “You don’t know what you got until its gone.”

**CHAPTER 3**  
**A STEP BY STEP QUICK GUIDE ON WHAT**  
**SHOULD BE DONE UPON DEATH**

14. At the time of dying	44
15. Soon after death	45

The following are simple step by step procedures as to what should be done Islamically when death occurs. Each step is explained in detail in the following chapters.

**14. AT THE TIME OF DYING**

1. Encourage the dying person to say the *shahâdah*:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ - *Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh.*

2. Make *du'â'* to Allâh ﷻ to help him go through the situation with ease and make him understand that what is happening is by the Will of Allâh ﷻ.
3. Encourage him to have positive thoughts about Allâh ﷻ and hope for His mercy and forgiveness.
4. Reciting *Sûrah Yâ Sîn* in the presence of the dying is a mistaken notion that it will benefit the dying and must not be recited with this in mind. It is not from the *sunnah* as the *hadîth* regarding this is not authentic. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Da'if al-Jâmi' by al-Albânî, 1072]

5. Turning the body of one who is dying so that he or she faces the *Qiblah* (Makkah) has no foundation in the practice of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions.

### 15. SOON AFTER DEATH

6. When death is confirmed, the first thing which should be said is the following Qur'anic verse,

﴿ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴾ (156)

[*Innâ lillâhi wa innâ ilayhi râjî'ûn*]

Indeed, to Allâh we belong, and indeed to Him we will return.

In the case of the husband or wife, one should add,

اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا.

*Allâhumma'jurni fî muşibatî wa akhlif li khayran minhâ* (or *minhu* if it is the wife saying it).

O' Allâh! Reward me for my affliction, and replace it for me with that which is better.

7. Close the eyelids and make this *du'â'* asking Allâh ﷻ to forgive him. The angels say *Âmîn* to whatever is said at the time of death.

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ (لِفُلَانٍ وَيَذْكُرُهُ بِاسْمِهِ) وَارْفَعْ دَرَجَتَهُ فِي الْمَهْدِيِّينَ وَأَخْلِفْهُ فِي عَقِبِهِ فِي  
الْغَابِرِينَ وَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلَهُ يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَأَفْسَحْ لَهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ وَتَوَرَّ لَهُ فِيهِ.

*Allâhumma-aghfir (name of the dead person) warfa' darajatahu fil-mahdiyyîna, wakhluṭhu fî 'aqibihi fil-ghâbirîna, waghfir lanâ wa lahu yâ Rabb al-'âlamîna, wafsaḥ lahu fî qabrihi wa nawwir lahu fîhi.*

### CHAPTER 3

#### **A STEP BY STEP QUICK GUIDE ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE UPON DEATH**

8. Tie a piece of cloth from below the lower jaw, to the top of the head along the sides of the face so that the mouth does not open.
9. Tie together the big toes of both feet.
10. The entire body and face should be covered with a sheet of cloth or garment.
11. Feeling sad, shedding tears and weeping quietly is permitted. What is not permitted is shouting or wailing loudly or indulging in other exaggerated displays of grief and anger.
12. Inform people of the death, especially close relatives.
13. Hasten to prepare the body for washing, shrouding and burial.
14. Invite as many people as you can to pray the *janâzah* prayer; the more the people who pray, more the *du'âs* will be made for the forgiveness of the deceased.
15. During the burial, people who attend should remain quiet, have fear of Allâh, and avoid discussing worldly affairs.
16. The body should be laid in the grave on the right side, with the face towards the *Qiblah*.
17. The men who lower the body into the grave should say:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَىٰ مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

*Bismillâhi, wa 'alâ millati Rasûlillâhi*



**CHAPTER 3**  
**A STEP BY STEP QUICK GUIDE ON WHAT SHOULD BE DONE UPON DEATH**

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OR

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى سُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

*Bismillâhi, wa ‘alâ sunnati Rasûlillâhi.*

18. After the grave is closed with bricks, it is recommended for those by the grave to throw three double handful of soil.
19. After completing the burial, the people present are recommended to stand near the grave supplicating Allâh ﷻ to grant the deceased mercy, forgiveness and to inspire him to be firm in giving the right answers to the questions of the angels in the grave.
20. As soon as possible, the deceased’s debts should be paid off from whatever wealth he has left behind, even if it were to wipe out all the wealth. If he doesn’t have enough wealth, and if he was known to strive in paying his debts, then his closest relatives and other Muslims may pay on his behalf.
21. The Will, if any, of the deceased should be honoured and executed.
22. The family of the deceased should be counselled to have patience, and may be provided with food and drink for the three-day period of mourning.
23. Expecting and burdening the family of the deceased to arrange food for the people who come to offer condolences is not a part of the *sunnah*.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

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**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT**  
**SHOULD BE DONE AS DEATH APPROACHES**

16.	Duties to fulfil before death	49
17.	Importance of writing the Will	50
18.	The agonies of death	51
19.	What should be done as death approaches	52
20.	Hope in Mercy of Allâh and the desire to meet Him should be more than the fear of Allâh at this time	54
21.	The help of Allâh for the believers at the time of their death	56
22.	Encouraging the dying person to say the <i>shahâdah</i>	57
23.	The dying person sees what we don't see	58

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

**16. DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH**

Death is inevitable. It is a very painful episode in every human's life. Yet, as a Muslim, one must not shy away from this certainty, but instead strive to keep his affairs in order and fulfil his duties before death overtakes him.

Before death overtakes him, a true believer (*mu'min*) should fulfil his obligations towards other people and make sure that his affairs are in order. Not only will he not leave this world with the burden of unfinished business, but he will also not pass on this burden to his offspring /inheritors and those who mourn for him.

Whatever the dying person has borrowed must be returned, otherwise he will have to pay to the lender from his good deeds on the Day of Judgement.

If, however he is unable to repay his debts, he should at least have had the sincere intention to do so and should have informed his relatives about them. It will then be incumbent on the relatives to honour and clear the debts from whatever wealth the deceased has left behind, even if it depletes his wealth entirely. Or, as an act of charity, the relatives of the deceased or any Muslim for that matter, can of their goodwill, voluntarily repay the debts.

Prophet ﷺ established the basic principle of divine accounting whereby, if a person intended to do a good deed but is unable to, he is rewarded by Allah ﷻ as if he had done the good deed, for he had intended to do it.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

He ﷺ said, “There are two types of debt: whoever dies intending to repay it, I will be responsible for it, and whoever dies with no intention to repay it, will have it taken from his good deeds. There will not be any *dînârs* or *dirhams* on that Day.”<sup>1</sup>

He ﷺ also said “Whoever has an act of oppression towards his brother from his honour or his money, then let him repay it to him before the Day of Judgement, when neither *dirham* nor *dînâr* 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 friend’s bad deeds and put on him.”<sup>2</sup>

### **17. IMPORTANCE OF WRITING THE WILL**

Many people keep locked up in their hearts, information about their property, wealth, and debts and do not disclose it to anyone even before they die. Some however, do discuss these affairs with their families, but fail to write a Will, thereby causing a lot of discord in the family. A written Will, prevents a multitude of problems - legal as well as personal. Prophet ﷺ encouraged Muslims to record and keep their Wills with them at all times so that it could be accessible when the need arose. It is of the *sunnah* for a Muslim to have his Will made. He should make sure that his Will is updated and that he is at ease with its contents. If he is in the possession of any wealth, even if it is very minimal, it becomes

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<sup>1</sup> [aṭ-Ṭabarâni and authenticated in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]

<sup>2</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

mandatory (*wājib*) on him to write a Will. A Will is not obligatory, but it is recommended if one wishes to bequeath anything.

Prophet ﷺ said, “It is not right for a Muslim who has something to bequeath to pass two nights without having it in writing in his possession.”<sup>3</sup>

- His final statements to his family, friends and other people around him, should be to remind them of Allāh ﷻ, and exhort them to fulfil his obligations after his death. By doing so, he safeguards himself from any wrong doing by his successors. He should also instruct his relatives to follow the *sunnah* in funeral rites and to avoid innovations.<sup>4</sup>

### **18. THE AGONIES OF DEATH**

- Death has its agonies, the extent and severity of which cannot be comprehended by those who have not yet experienced it. A dying person sees what we do not see. When the person dies, the Angel of Death takes the soul starting from his feet. He pulls the soul from every cell and vein, up until it reaches his throat. At that moment the dying person makes a gargling sound. It’s at this point repentance will not be accepted. He may drift in and out of consciousness. He may become very weak; can hear, but unable to reply. This is known as the “death struggle” (*sakarât al-mawt*) and it is reported to be filled with agony we cannot understand. We may see a dying person in front of us but don’t feel what he’s going

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<sup>3</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim, Abu Dâwûd]

<sup>4</sup> [See Chapter 20 about Wills]

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

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through. He's going through a very severe situation due to two things:

- 1) The pain of the soul being pulled out of his body.
- 2) Seeing the face of the Angel of Death with his own two eyes. And no one can see him except the dying person.

**19. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS DEATH APPROACHES**

• There are some things that can be done to ease a dying person's mind and help him cope with this struggle.

- 1) He should never be left alone. Wetting his lips or putting a few drops of water in his mouth may ease his suffering to an extent.
- 2) We should encourage him to seek the help of Allâh ﷻ at the time of his departure from this world. Prophet ﷺ was overwhelmed by the intensity of his illness and experienced extreme agony in his last moments. He made *dhikr* and *du'â's* to Allâh for its alleviation and sought His help.

- 3) Some of the supplications that he ﷺ said are:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَهُ  
الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ.

*Lâ ilâha ill-Allâhu wallâhu Akbar, lâ ilâha ill-Allâhu waḥdahû lâ sharîka lahu, lâ ilâha ill-Allâhu lahuḥ-mulku wa lahuḥ-ḥamdu, lâ ilâha ill-Allâhu wa lâ ḥawla wa lâ qûwwata illâ billâh.*

There is none worthy of worship in truth except Allâh, Allâh is the Greatest; there is none worthy of worship in truth except Allâh

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

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alone, without any partner; there is none worthy of worship in truth except Allâh, to Him belong all sovereignty and praise; there is none worthy of worship in truth except Allâh, and there is no power or might except by Allâh. <sup>5</sup>

or

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَارْحَمْنِي وَأَلْحِقْنِي بِالرَّفِيقِ الْأَعْلَى.

*Allâhummm-aghfir lî warḥamnî wa alḥiqnî bir-rafiqil-â'lá.*

O' Allâh! Forgive me and have mercy upon me and join me with the highest companions (in Paradise). <sup>6</sup>

or

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِنَّ لِلْمَوْتِ سَكَرَاتٍ.

*Lâ ilâha ill-Allâhu inna lil-mawti sakarâtin.*

There is none worthy of worship in truth except Allâh, surely death has its agonies. <sup>7</sup>

4) A dying person should remain patient and have good thoughts and hopes of his Lord, remembering His generosity, and looking forward to His blessings and forgiveness.

5) He should be encouraged very gently to repent. The gate of repentance is open for every one until the soul reaches his throat.

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<sup>5</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, Ibn-Mâjah, authenticated by al-Albânî in *aş-Şaḥîḥah* and *Şaḥîḥ al-Jâmi'*]

<sup>6</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>7</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

- 6) He should be reminded about all the good deeds that he did, about Allâh's mercy, and Allâh's forgiveness so that he may anticipate Allâh's mercy.
- 7) He should refrain from accusing or cursing Allâh for his misfortunes.
- 8) He should be convinced that Allâh ﷻ has chosen the most appropriate time and way for him to die. Nothing comforts the soul more than reminding him of what Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said three days before his death:

“None of you should die except thinking the best of Allâh.”<sup>8</sup>

**20. HOPE IN THE MERCY OF ALLÂH AND THE DESIRE TO MEET HIM SHOULD BE MORE THAN THE FEAR OF ALLÂH AT THIS TIME**

- Often when a person is close to death, he begins to feel a sense of fear remembering all the sins that he has committed during his lifetime. While it is normal for a person to be afraid in these last moments, this fear should not overwhelm the sense of hope in the mercy of Allâh ﷻ. He should have firm conviction that he is returning to a Generous, Compassionate and Merciful Lord, Who will reward him for his good deeds; Who will pardon his sins and bad deeds with His mercy and forgiveness, and will surely admit him into Paradise. He should have fear as well as hope; fear of Allâh's punishment for his sins, and hope that by His mercy, He

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<sup>8</sup> [Muslim, *Abû Dâwûd*]



**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

will forgive them all. This will happen only if he is a believer who trusts Allâh ﷻ and whose heart is humble. He must put his trust in Allâh, with firm conviction that Allâh's decree is without a doubt the most just and the best. In these moments, it is our duty to remind the person of how merciful Allâh ﷻ is, and that he should have more hope in the kindness of Allâh ﷻ rather than fear His wrath.

Prophet ﷺ visited a dying youth and asked him: "How do you find yourself?" He replied: "By Allâh, O' Messenger of Allâh, verily I hope for the best from Allâh and fear my sins." Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Whenever two come together in the heart of a slave (of Allâh) in such a situation, Allâh gives him what he hopes for and protects him for what he fears." <sup>9</sup>

So, the dying person should never give up hope in Allâh's mercy, no matter how great his or her sins may have been. Allâh's mercy supersedes His wrath and He forgives all sins. Allâh ﷻ says, *[“O’ My servants who have transgressed against themselves (by sinning), do not despair of the mercy of Allâh. Indeed, Allâh forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.”]*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, Ibn Mâjah, authenticated in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]

<sup>10</sup> [Sûrah az-Zumar 39:53]

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

- As death approaches, a true believer (*mu'min*) will have a strong desire to meet his Lord. This desire will overcome any other attachment to life or fear of death.

Prophet ﷺ said: “When death comes to a believer, he is given the tidings of Allâh’s mercy, acceptance and *Jannah*. Nothing is dearer to him than what lies ahead of him; he loves meeting Allâh, and Allâh loves meeting him. But when death comes to a disbeliever, he is given the tidings of Allâh’s anger, torture and punishment. Nothing is then more hateful to him than what lies ahead of him; he hates meeting Allâh, and Allâh hates meeting him.”<sup>11</sup>

**21. THE HELP OF ALLÂH FOR THE BELIEVERS AT THE TIME OF THEIR DEATH**

- The angels comfort the believers at the time of their death. Allâh ﷻ says,

*[“Indeed, those who have said, ‘Our Lord is Allâh’ and then remained on a right course - the angels will descend upon them, [saying], ‘Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.’”]*<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [*al-Bukhârî, Muslim*]

<sup>12</sup> [*Sûrah Fuşşilat 41:30*]

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

**22. ENCOURAGING THE DYING PERSON TO SAY THE**  
**SHAHĀDAH**

- He should be gently but firmly prompted to supplicate to utter the *shahādah*, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ – *Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh* (There is none worthy of worship in truth except Allâh) by himself until he or she passes away, so that this testimony becomes the last that he speaks. This prompting in Arabic is known as *talqîn*. The *talqîn* is necessary only when the dying person is unable to utter the *shahādah* by himself.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Prompt your dying ones (to say): “*Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh*.” Whoever’s last words before dying are: “*Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh*”, he will enter Paradise at some point, no matter what befalls him before that.”<sup>13</sup>

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “If a person’s last words are “*Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh*”, Paradise will be guaranteed for him.”<sup>14</sup>

- However, if after saying the phrase of purity, the *shahādah*, he talks of a worldly matter, he may be reminded to say it again so that those will be his last words before death and he may enter Paradise.

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<sup>13</sup> [Muslim, *Abū Dāwūd*, *Ibn Hūbbān*, *Irwā’ al-Ghalīl*, classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by *al-Albānī* in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’*]

<sup>14</sup> [Aḥmad, *Abū Dāwūd*; classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by *al-Albānī* in *Irwā’ al-Ghalīl*]

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

**23. THE DYING PERSON SEES WHAT WE DON'T SEE**

- Prophet ﷺ had said about how the soul of a person passes away:

“When a believer is about to leave this world and go forward to the next world, angels with faces white as the sun come down to him from the Heaven with one of the shrouds of Paradise and some of the perfume of Paradise and sit away from him as far as the eye can see. Then the angel of death arrives and sits at his head and says, ‘O’ good soul, come out to forgiveness and acceptance from Allāh.’ Upon hearing this, the soul leaves the body as water drops flow from a water-skin, and he seizes it; and when he does so they do not leave it in his hand for an instant, but take it and place it in that shroud and that perfume, and from it there comes forth a fragrance like that of the sweetest musk found on the face of the earth. Then they take it up.

Then he ﷺ said about the disbelievers: “But when a disbeliever is about to leave this world and proceed to the next world, angels with black faces come down to him from the Heaven with hair-cloth and sit away from him as far as the eye can see. Then the angel of death comes and sits at his head and says, ‘Wicked soul, come out to the displeasure of Allāh.’ Then it becomes dissipated in his body, and he draws it out as a skewer is drawn out from moistened wool. He then seizes it, and when he does so they do not leave it in his hand for an instant, but put it in the fabric (from

**CHAPTER 4**  
**DUTIES TO FULFIL BEFORE DEATH AND WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AS**  
**DEATH APPROACHES**

---

the Fire) and from it comes forth a stench like the most offensive corpse found on the face of the earth. They then take it up. <sup>15</sup>

And, our Prophet ﷺ said: “When anyone of you dies, his destination is displayed before him in the forenoon and in the afternoon, either in the Fire or in Paradise, and it is said to him, ‘That is your place till you are resurrected and sent to it.’” <sup>16</sup>

So, when a believer (*mu'min*) sees his place in Paradise, he longs to go to his real home and waits eagerly for the Day of Resurrection. On the other hand, the disbelievers are shown their place in Hell and pray that the Day of Resurrection is delayed.

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<sup>15</sup> [From the *ḥadīth* of *al-Bara' bin 'Āzib* in *Aḥmad*]

<sup>16</sup> [*al-Bukhārī*]

**CHAPTER 5**  
**WHILE VISITING A DYING PERSON**

24.	While visiting a dying person	60
25.	Etiquettes of visiting a dying person	61
26.	Say only good things in the presence of a dying person	62
27.	Etiquettes of visiting a non-Muslim patient	62
28.	Recitation of <i>Sûrah Ya Sîn</i> in the presence of the dying person	63
29.	The ruling of turning the body towards the <i>Qiblah</i>	63
30.	Innovations at the time of dying	64

**24. WHILE VISITING A DYING PERSON**

- Death is a very painful and emotional time both for the dying and the loved ones left behind. Family members of the dying person and his most pious friends should be informed and should be present at his side to help him turn his thoughts to Allâh.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**WHILE VISITING A DYING PERSON**

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- When death is preceded by sickness, it is the duty of the Muslims who happen to know the sick person, to pay him a visit and make supplications to Allâh ﷻ for his recovery. A sick Muslim has a right to be visited by other Muslims who are acquainted with him.

**25. ETIQUETTES OF VISITING A DYING PERSON**

- When visiting a dying person, we should supplicate sincerely for him and speak good and positive words that give him glad tidings. We should remind him to recall all his good deeds so that he may eagerly hope to earn Allâh's mercy, forgiveness and favours, and gently encourage him to repent sincerely, and remind him of the Hereafter. We can pray that Allâh gives him patience, makes his death easy, protects him from the trials of the grave, forgives him, grants him Paradise, protects him from Hellfire and gives his family patience. We should avoid negative words which will only increase the difficulties faced by the sick and dying. We must avoid pitying him, for it will only make it more difficult for him to accept his fate. On the other hand, we should mention those words that will be pleasant and comforting for him to hear. Good words and positive thoughts will aid in the recovery from illness or ease the process of dying. We should make *du'â'* to Allâh ﷻ to forgive him and help him go through the situation easily or make other invocations as the angels say *Âmîn* to the *du'â'* made at such times.

## **26. SAY ONLY GOOD THINGS IN THE PRESENCE OF A DYING PERSON**

- One of the most important things to remember about a sick or injured believer is that the angels gather around him. The words spoken at the bedside should be gentle, kind words, full of supplications because the angels gathered there respond by saying *Âmîn*.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “If you are in the presence of a sick or dying person, you should say good things for verily the angels say *Âmîn* to whatever you say”.<sup>1</sup>

## **27. ETIQUETTES OF VISITING A NON-MUSLIM PATIENT**

- When a Muslim visits a non-Muslim patient, he should seek help from Allâh and invite him towards Islam with wisdom and prudence, because the patient is better disposed and inclined to accept the truth during illness. So, Muslims are encouraged to be present when non-Muslims are dying in order to present Islam to them, in the hope that they will accept Islam prior to their deaths. For the acceptance of Islam 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.

Prophet ﷺ said, “Allâh, the Greatest and Glorious, will accept His servant’s repentance until the throes of death begin.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Muslim]

<sup>2</sup> [aṭ-Ṭirmidhî, Ibn Mâjah]



## **28. RECITATION OF *SŪRAH YA SĪN* IN THE PRESENCE OF THE DYING PERSON**

- Those in the presence of the dying person should avoid acts of disobedience and practices that are not substantiated by the authentic *sunnah*.
- The practice of specifically reading *Sūrah Ya Sīn* in the presence of the dying has no basis in the authentic *sunnah*. 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 the one who is dying, but it carries with it no special value. But to believe that doing so has special value, is considered *bid'ah*, a sinful innovation in the religion.

## **29. THE RULING OF TURNING THE BODY TOWARDS THE QIBLAH**

- Turning the body of one who is dying so that he or she faces the *Qiblah* (Makkah) has no foundation in the practice of the Prophet ﷺ and his companions. The body should be turned to face the *Qiblah* when it is placed in the grave, according to the instruction of the Prophet ﷺ. However, there are no authentic narrations for turning the dying towards the *Qiblah*. Turning the body of the dying became a custom after the time of the companions of Prophet ﷺ, and was objected to by the scholars of that time. For example, Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib ر.ح.ه 3, one of the

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<sup>3</sup> [Sa'īd ibn al-Musayyib ibn Hazn (634-713CE), from the Madīnite tribe of Makhzūm, (Master of Tābi'in) who was one of the seven leading legal scholars of Madīnah. He was known as the most knowledgeable

**CHAPTER 5**  
**WHILE VISITING A DYING PERSON**

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leading scholars among the students of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ, openly expressed his dislike for this practice. Zar‘ah ibn ‘Abdir-Raḥmān reported that he saw Abû Salamah ibn ‘Abdir-Raḥmān with Sa‘îd ibn al-Musayyib when he was on his death bed. When Sa‘îd lost consciousness, Abû Salamah instructed that his bed be turned towards the *Ka‘bah*. When Sa‘îd regained consciousness he asked, “Did you move my bed?” When they replied that they had done so, he looked at Abû Salamah and said, “I think it was done with your knowledge?” He replied, “I told them to do so”. Then Sa‘îd instructed them to return his bed to its original position.”<sup>4</sup>

**30. INNOVATIONS AT THE TIME OF DYING**

- The following practices are among the most common innovations at the time of dying and must be avoided:
  - 1) Turning the dying person to face the *Qiblah*.
  - 2) Putting the Qur’ân under the head of a dying Muslim.
  - 3) Asking those who are in the state of *janâbah* (those who did not take a shower after marital intimacy) or menstruating women, to leave the room.

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*scholar about ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb’s legal principles and his rulings. He lived on what he earned from the sale of olive oil and he never accepted grants. (al-‘Ālâm, vol.3, p.155) Collected by Ibn Abî Shaybah in al-Musannaf and authenticated in Ahkâm al-Janâ‘iz, pg 11]*

<sup>4</sup> [Collected by Ibn Abî Shaybah in al-Musannaf and authenticated in Ahkâm al-Janâ‘iz pg. 11, nt. 15]

**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

31.	Upon death and before burial	66
32.	What we should do when we hear of the death of a person	67
33.	The angels say <i>Âmîn</i> to whatever is said at the time of death	70
34.	Death in the state of <i>ihrâm</i>	70
35.	Delaying the burial is not from the <i>sunnah</i>	71
36.	Ruling of burial at night	72
37.	Transferring the dead body to another city without reason	73
38.	Ruling on informing people and announcing the death	73
39.	Importance of paying off the debts of the deceased	74
40.	Displaying patience	76
41.	Endurance is valid if it is shown at the first blow	77
42.	Etiquettes of displaying grief	78
43.	Rewards for patience at the death of children	78
44.	Some innovations after death	79

### **31. UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

- Death is a relief (*râḥah*) for the believer. A funeral passed by Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ who said, “relieved (*mustarîḥ*) or relieving (*mustarâḥ*)?” The people asked, O’ Allâh’s Apostle! What is relieved and relieving? He ﷺ said, “A believer is relieved (by death) from the troubles and hardships of the world and leaves for the Mercy of Allâh, while (the death of) a wicked person relieves the people, the land, the trees, (and) the animals from him.” <sup>1</sup>

How can death be a relief when we all fear it? ‘Â’ishah ﷺ asked a similar question to the Prophet ﷺ and he said, “When the time of the death of a believer approaches, he receives the good news of Allâh’s pleasure with him and His blessings upon him, and so at that time nothing is dearer to him than what is in front of him. He therefore loves the meeting with Allâh, and Allâh loves the meeting with him. But when the time of death of a disbeliever approaches, he receives the evil news of Allâh’s torment and His requital, whereupon nothing is more hateful to him than what is before him. Therefore, he hates the meeting with Allâh, and Allâh too hates the meeting with him.” <sup>2</sup>

We need to sincerely introspect and contemplate as to how we conduct ourselves while dealing with people. When we die will people feel “relieved” or will they truly miss us? A believer is one who is relieved when he has to leave this *dunyâ* and not he of

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<sup>1</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

<sup>2</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

---

whom the *dunyâ* feels relieved of. May Allâh ﷻ not make us of those commit injustice on themselves and others, *Âmîn*.

**32. WHAT WE SHOULD DO WHEN WE HEAR THE DEATH OF A PERSON**

- Upon the news of death, the first thing which should be said is the following Qur’ânic verse with understanding and sincerely reflecting on its meaning:

﴿ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴾ (156)

[*Innâ lillâhi wa innâ ilayhi râjiûn.*]

[Indeed, to Allâh we belong, and indeed to Him we will return.] <sup>3</sup>

In the case of the husband or wife, one should add,

اللَّهُمَّ أَجْرُنِي فِي مُصِيبَتِي وَأَخْلِفْ لِي خَيْرًا مِنْهَا.

*Allâhumma’jurni fî muşîbatî wa akhlif li khayran minhâ* (or *minhu* if it is the wife saying it).

O’ Allâh! Reward me for my affliction, and replace it for me with that which is better.

If a person says that with faith, sincerely seeking the reward for patience in the face of suffering, then Allâh will reward him for that and compensate him with something better. Umm Salamah ﷺ said: “I heard Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ saying: ‘If any slave to whom a misfortune occurs then says: “[*Innâ lillâhi wa innâ ilayhi râjiûn.* *Allâhumma’jurni fî muşîbatî wa akhlif li khayran minhâ*”], Allâh

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<sup>3</sup> [Sûrah al-Baqarah 2: from verse 156]

**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

---

will then surely replace it for him with that which is better.’ When Abû Salamah ﷺ died, I said as the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ had told me to, and Allâh gave me better than him. He, Allah the Exalted, gave me the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ.”<sup>4</sup>

Commenting on these verses of the Qur’ân, Ibn ‘Abbâs ﷺ said: “Allâh, the Almighty and Exalted, informs us that when a believer is patient and resigned after a misfortune visits him and invokes Allâh, Allâh will grant him three (good) merits: blessings, mercy, and guidance to the right path.”

- The next step is to close the eyes of the dead person and make *du‘â’* for him. When the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ entered upon Abû Salamah, his eyes were fixedly open. So he closed them and said:

“When the soul is taken away, the sight follows it.” The members of his family cried. He ﷺ said: “Do not pray for yourselves anything but good, for the angels say *Âmîn* to what you say.” He ﷺ then made this *du‘â’*:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ (أَبُو سَلَمَةَ - لِفُلَانٍ وَيَذْكُرُهُ بِاسْمِهِ) وَارْفَعْ دَرَجَتَهُ فِي الْمَهْدِيِّينَ وَاخْلُفْهُ فِي عَقِبِهِ فِي الْغَابِرِينَ وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَلَهُ يَا رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَأَفْسَحْ لَهُ فِي قَبْرِهِ وَتَوَرَّ لَهُ فِيهِ.

*Allâhumm-aghfir [(Abû Salamah) – name of the dead person] warfa’ darajatahu fil-mahdiyyîna, wakhluṭhu fî ‘aqibihi fil-ghâbirîna, waghfir lanâ wa lahu yâ Rabb al-‘âlamîna, wafsaḥ lahu fî qabrihi wa nawwir lahu fîhi.*

O’ Allâh! Forgive (name of the dead person), elevate his position among the guided ones, let his remaining offspring be like him

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<sup>4</sup> [Muslim]

**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

---

(i.e., be a successor to whom he has left behind). Forgive us and him, O' Lord of the worlds. Expand his grave and illuminate it for him.<sup>5</sup>

- The joints of the body should be relaxed immediately after death, so that it will be easy to move the body around, to wash it and to shroud it. This is done by gently bending and straightening the joints of the person shortly after death (the elbows, shoulders, fingers, knees and hip joints).
- To keep the mouth closed, so that the features of the face do not become distorted, a narrow piece of cloth may be tied from under the chin, along the sides of the face to the top of the head.
- The entire body and face should be covered with a sheet of cloth or garment. The objective here is clearly to safeguard the respect and dignity of the deceased in death from prying eyes and against the exposure of his or her body to the idle curiosity of those looking for changes in its physical condition and features.
- It is permissible to briefly uncover the face to see or kiss the deceased, but this applies only to those who could have lawfully done so while he or she was alive. It is human nature that a person may want to kiss his dead family member one last time before he is buried. It is from the abundant mercy of Allāh that this practice is not only permissible in Islam but is from the *sunnah*.

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<sup>5</sup> [Muslim]

### **33. THE ANGELS SAY *ÂMÎN* TO WHATEVER IS SAID AT THE TIME OF DEATH**

- *Du‘â‘* should be made at the onset of a calamity. At the time of death, angels will fill the place, to the area where your eye extends. So pray to Allâh for the deceased person, and the angels will say *Âmîn*, and the same for you. The angels say *Âmîn* to whatever is said at the time of death; so we should avoid irrelevant, unnecessary talk in the presence of a dead person. This is the time of acceptance of *du‘â’s*. This is an opportunity to make sincere *du‘â‘* for the deceased, to ask Allâh ﷻ to forgive and have mercy on him, to grant him the highest level of Paradise, to fill his grave with *nûr* (light) and the fragrance of *Jannah*, and to allow him into His *Jannah*. We can pray to Allâh ﷻ that he rests peacefully in his grave, and that Allâh eases the pain and suffering of the loved ones he left behind. It is not necessary to restrict the supplication only for the deceased; rather it is also recommended to make *du‘â‘* for other Muslims too.

### **34. DEATH IN THE STATE OF *IHRÂM***

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

Ibn ‘Abbâs said: “While a man was standing at ‘Arafâh, he fell off his horse and his horse trampled him to death. The Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Wash him with water and lotus blossoms, shroud him in his two sheets of cloth but do not perfume him, nor cover his head



**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

---

and face, for verily he will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection making *ṭalbiyah*.”<sup>6</sup>

**35. DELAYING THE BURIAL IS NOT FROM THE *SUNNAH***

- Hasten to prepare the body for burial, and then bury it as quickly as possible.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Make haste with the body of the deceased. For if he was righteous, then it is good that you are taking him to, and if he was other than that, then it is an evil that you are removing from your necks.”<sup>7</sup>

If a person is meant to go to *Jannah*, then the earlier his burial happens, the quicker he begins to enjoy the pleasures of *Jannah*, since his grave is made spacious, the doors of *Jannah* are opened for him and he begins to smell the fragrance of *Jannah*. In case the deceased is destined to be punished, then the burial of this sinner is an evil burden lying on our shoulders. So in either case, the deceased should be buried as soon as possible.

- Prophet ﷺ has instructed us to bury the deceased immediately. He ﷺ said “Hasten the funeral rites.”<sup>8</sup>

It is *makrûh* (disliked) for Muslims to delay the burial in order for the maximum number of relatives to see the deceased, as is common practice among other communities. Once death is confirmed, the body should be prepared and taken for prayer and

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<sup>6</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim, Abû Dâwûd]

<sup>7</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>8</sup> [al-Bukhari, Muslim, Abû Dâwûd, Ibn Mâjah]

**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

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burial as soon as possible. In this way, contact with the dead body is minimized, which keeps the grief and pain of seeing the dead to a minimum. Sometimes when family members, e.g. children of the deceased, are in other countries the burial is delayed till their arrival, so that they can pay their last respects. This may be done even after the burial, when the deceased is in his or her grave. In any case, one should not intend to make his visit to deceased parents his last, as every Muslim is asked to visit the graves of his parents and make *du‘â* for them whenever he is able to.

The only case in which delay in burial may be allowed is when there is a legal issue related to death, e.g. if there is some sort of investigation to be done or the identity of the deceased needs to be established.

### **36. RULING OF BURIAL AT NIGHT**

The reports which indicate that it is *makrûh* to bury the dead at night are to be interpreted as referring to cases where burying a person at night may lead to the *janâzah* prayers for him not being offered properly, as was stated in the *ṣaḥîḥ ḥadîth*. Other reasons could be, because shrouding could not be done properly or the difficulty people would have to undergo to travel to attend the funeral at night time, or it could be that it is easier to give a proper burial following the *sunnah* when placing the deceased in the *lahd* (a niche in the grave) during the brightness of the day. This is in cases, where it is not essential to hasten to bury him. Otherwise we should hasten to bury him even if that is at night.

### **37. TRANSFERRING THE DEAD BODY TO ANOTHER CITY WITHOUT REASON**

All efforts should be made to bury the deceased in the city where death occurs. In order to keep the time between death and burial to a minimum, the burial should be held in the same city or area in which the person died. Transporting the body to another area or country is not permissible as it will unnecessarily delay the burial or cause financial or other hardships. When a brother of ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها died in Wādî al-Habashah and he was moved from the place where he had died, she said, “The only thing that upset me (or grieved me) was that I wished that he had been buried in the place where he died.”<sup>9</sup>

### **38. RULING ON INFORMING AND ANNOUNCING THE DEATH**

- People, especially immediate relatives and friends, must be informed about the death and righteous people may be requested to ask Allāh’s forgiveness for the deceased Muslim. But it is forbidden to make a big affair about announcing anyone’s death, such as proclaiming it from the minarets of the *Masâjjid*, announcing it in the streets, newspapers, pasting posters on the walls etc.,

If someone died, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamân used to say, “Do not proclaim his death to anyone, for fear that it may be a death

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<sup>9</sup> [al-Bayhaqî]

**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

---

announcement and I heard Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ forbid death announcement with my own two ears.”<sup>10</sup>

However, a calmly expressed general announcement is allowed, based on the practice of the Prophet ﷺ.

**39. IMPORTANCE OF PAYING OFF THE DEBTS OF THE DECEASED**

- Death does not annul a debt. If the deceased did not clear his debts before dying, they have to be cleared from his own wealth or from the wealth of family, relatives or friends immediately. This is of prime importance.

Prophet ﷺ said: “A believer’s soul remains in suspense until all his debts are paid off.”<sup>11</sup>

This means that the dead person’s soul will not be at peace until his debt is paid.

- The deceased’s debts, the foremost of these being his *zakāh* if due, should be settled as soon as possible from whatever wealth he has left behind. This is one of the best ways the family of the dead person can help him with. The settling of debts should be done before the fulfilment of bequests and distribution to the legal heirs, even if it were to exhaust all of his wealth. If he was known to strive in paying his debts, and yet the wealth that he left behind was not enough to clear his debts, his children or other relatives must try to clear all his debts. Other Muslims too, can be asked to help pay

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<sup>10</sup> [at-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah*]

<sup>11</sup> [Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, and at-Tirmidhī]

**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

---

the debts through donations. Prophet ﷺ encouraged the believers to pay the debts of the deceased.

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 *dinârs* claimed by a woman who does not have any proof." Prophet ﷺ told him, "Give it to her for verily she is truthful." <sup>12</sup>

Note however, that this does not relieve the deceased from punishment in the grave or on Judgement Day, unless he had a genuine intention and had made serious attempts to pay off his debts.

- After the death of a Muslim, four things are to be done regarding his wealth/estate:
  1. Burial expenses – The first thing to be done is to use the money to pay for funeral expenses.
  2. Settlement of debts – All of the deceased's debts must be paid; not only the debts known to the immediate family members but also those debts that are unknown. The heirs should find out if anybody is owed any money by the deceased and settle dues. Payment of debt is extremely important; however, funeral

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<sup>12</sup> [Ahmad and authenticated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah*]

**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

---

expenses take precedence over debt. This means that if there isn't enough money left, the funeral bill should be paid first.

3. Bequests – Pay bequests up to one-third of the remaining wealth.

4. Distribution according to *shari'ah* – The rest of the wealth should be distributed according to the shares described in *shari'ah*.

#### **40. DISPLAYING PATIENCE**

- Losing a close family member through death causes grief and fills one with a sense of emptiness that no words can convey. When informed of death, relatives of the deceased and close friends should be patient and practice self-restraint, especially immediately after the death of the loved one when they are given the news. Feeling sad, shedding tears and weeping quietly is permitted, whereas shouting, wailing loudly or indulging in other exaggerated displays of grief and anger are not. Wailing is a physical display of the rejection of Allâh's Decree. Everyone is obliged to be patient, practice self-restraint and gracefully accept Allâh's Decree as this is a test. In this verse, Allâh ﷻ tells mankind that He would test them:

*[“Verily I will test you with fear and hunger, and loss of wealth, life, and the fruit (of your labour), so give glad tidings to the patient ones.”]*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> [Sûrah al-Baqarah 2:155]

#### **41. “ENDURANCE IS VALID IF IT IS SHOWN AT THE FIRST BLOW”**

- True patience for which Allāh ﷻ promises reward is that which is practised when calamity first strikes. The real test of patience is at the time of calamity; being patient after the initial shock has worn off is not considered real patience.

Prophet ﷺ said, “Endurance is valid if it is shown at the first blow.”<sup>14</sup>

In addition to patience, the bereaved person should look forward to Allāh’s rewards and forgiveness for the suffering he is undergoing. And Allāh ﷻ will surely reward him for it.

Prophet ﷺ said, “If one of Allāh’s believing servants displays patience and *ihtisāb* (looking forward to Allāh’s reward and forgiveness for every affliction, regardless of its pain and suffering) when Allāh takes away from him a beloved one, Allāh will approve for him no reward less than *Jannah*.”<sup>15</sup>

Knowing that only Allāh ﷻ has the power to relieve our grief and suffering brings relief during this difficult test of our faith. Death is a test for the believer, as the pain and suffering brings one closer to Allāh ﷻ.

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<sup>14</sup> [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2178 and al-Bukhārī 1223]

<sup>15</sup> [an-Nasā’ī, authenticated by al-Albānī in Aḥkām al-Janā’iz]

#### **42. ETIQUETTES OF DISPLAYING GRIEF**

- It is natural to show grief on suffering pain or some mishap. However, care should be observed that even under the stress of extreme pain and grief, we do not curse, express anger or make inappropriate statements, nor should the virtues of patience and acceptance be forsaken.
- When the eyes of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ started shedding tears when his son Ibrâhîm was about to breathe his last, ‘Abdur-Raḥmân bin ‘Auf said, “O’ Allāh’s Apostle, even you are weeping!” He ﷺ said, O’ Ibn ‘Auf, this is mercy.” Then he wept more and said, “The eyes are shedding tears and the heart is grieved, and we will not say except what pleases our Lord, O’ Ibrâhîm! Indeed, we are grieved by your separation.”<sup>16</sup>

#### **43. REWARDS OF PATIENCE AT THE DEATH OF CHILDREN**

- Patience and self-restraint at the death of children have especially great rewards because of the severity of the loss by death on their parents. Among the glad tidings for those who are patient upon losing a child is that a home is prepared for them in Paradise.

Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “If a child of (Allāh’s) slave dies, Allāh 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

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<sup>16</sup> [al-Bukhari]



**CHAPTER 6**  
**UPON DEATH AND BEFORE BURIAL**

---

to Allâh and to Him we will return.’ Allâh will then say: ‘Build a house in Paradise for My slave and call it the House of Praise.’”<sup>17</sup>

**44. SOME INNOVATIONS AFTER DEATH**

- Whatever is not from the *sunnah* is an innovation. Every country and society has its own innovations and customs. Some of them are:
  1. The removal of menstruating women from the dead person’s presence.
  2. Breaking the bangles of the wife of the deceased.
  3. Placing lit candles near the dead body until the morning.
  4. Paying someone money to recite the Qur’ân at the time of the person’s death.
  5. Prompting (*talqîn*) those who have already died to recite the declaration of faith “*lâ ilâha ill-Allâh*”. This practice is of no use to the dead.
  6. Transporting the body of the deceased to large distances in order to bury the person near the graves of the pious.
  7. Gathering at the home of the dead person and obliging the family of the deceased to provide food for the guests.

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<sup>17</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, classified as *hasan* by al-Albânî in *as-Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥîḥah*]

**CHAPTER 7**  
**A QUICK GUIDE TO THE WASHING AND**  
**SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

45.	A quick guide to the washing procedure	80
46.	A quick guide to the shrouding procedure	82
	a) Shrouding of a male	82
	b) Shrouding of a female	83

The following is a quick guide to the procedures of washing and shrouding which is explained in detail in the following two chapters.

**45. A QUICK GUIDE TO THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

- First, the people who are going to wash the deceased must make the intention (*niyyah*) in their hearts, but not pronounce it aloud.
- Then begin the *ghusl* in the Name of Allāh.
- The body should be placed on a table and must be covered with a plastic sheet/cloth. The clothes should be removed without exposing the body at any time. The joints should be loosened, if possible.
- Start by washing the hands of the deceased.

**CHAPTER 7**  
**A QUICK GUIDE TO THE WASHING AND SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

---

- Next, the private parts should be washed. The washer should use gloves or wind a piece of cloth around his hand to clean and then dispose of the gloves or cloth.
- Then perform ablution (*wuḍû'*) for the body without letting water enter in the nose and in the mouth.
- After completing the *wuḍû'*, a woman's hair should be undone if it was braided and the head (hair and face) thoroughly washed. Wash the head, face and beard for men.
- Use water infused with the leaves of the lote tree or anything similar or with soap or shampoo for the washing procedure.
- Then wash the rest of the body a minimum of three times, by pouring the water first on the right side, then turning the body on its side so as to complete the whole right side. Then wash the left side of the body. A cloth should be used to wash the body.
- The washing may be increased up to five or seven times until the body is totally clean.
- In the final washing it is preferred to add some perfume like camphor, if available.
- 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 in the centre and two from the sides and placed behind her head.
- Dry the whole body with a towel, while still under the cover.

**CHAPTER 7**  
**A QUICK GUIDE TO THE WASHING AND SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

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- Without uncovering the body, remove the sheet that was covering the body and replace with a dry cloth covering the same area that was previously covered (*'awrah*).
- Move the body while still covered on to a clean and dry table.

**46. A QUICK GUIDE TO THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

**A) SHROUDING OF A MALE**

- The shroud of a male consists of three white wrapping sheets, large enough to cover the whole body, after having been perfumed with incense/camphor, and four tying ropes.
- The wrapping sheets should be spread out one on top of the other.
- The deceased, covered with a sheet, is lifted and laid on his back on the wrapping sheets.
- The edge of the top sheet is folded over to the deceased's right side, then the other edge over to his left side. Then the second sheet should be folded the same way. The third and largest sheet should be treated the same way.
- These sheets should be fastened with the tying ropes, one above the head and another under the feet and two around the body.

**B) SHROUDING OF A FEMALE**

- The shroud of a female should consist of five pieces; two wrapping sheets, a long loose sleeveless shirt (from shoulder to feet), a waist wrapper and head veil along with four tying ropes. They should be large enough to cover the whole body and may be perfumed with incense/camphor.
- First, spread out the two wrapping sheets; next, the long loose sleeveless shirt, then the waist wrapper and lastly the head veil.
- The deceased, covered with a sheet, is lifted and laid on her back on the shroud.
- The waist wrapper is tied in place.
- Put on the sleeveless shirt (long enough to cover the body from the shoulder to the feet).
- Put the head veil and tie in front.
- The edge of the top wrapping sheet is folded over the deceased's right side and then the other edge over her left side.
- Then the second wrapping sheet should be folded the same way.
- These sheets should be fastened with tying ropes, one above the head, another under the feet and two around the body.

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

47.	The rulings of washing the deceased	85
48.	Taking care of the deceased is the collective responsibility of Muslims	85
49.	Importance of knowing the method of washing the deceased	86
50.	Who should be washed	86
51.	Who may wash the deceased	88
52.	When should <i>tayammum</i> be given and how	90
53.	Guidelines for the washers	90
54.	Pre-washing requirements	93
55.	Preparing the body for washing	94
56.	The <i>ghusl</i> procedure	96
57.	Practical tips for the washing procedure	100
58.	Innovations during the washing procedure	103

#### **47. THE RULINGS OF WASHING THE DECEASED**

- In Islam, a Muslim is respected whether alive or dead, and when he dies, we are commanded to give his body total ablution (*ghusl*), to perfume it properly and shroud it. It is one of the most important rituals that is performed on the deceased and is a sign of a respect for him. It is a confirmation of the honoured equality of status every man has in Islam and a reminder that all Muslims have to be prepared for their last journey in an identical fashion regardless of their social or economic status.
- According to the Islamic point of view, death is not the complete end of the life of a person; but it is a new life, and it is the door to reach Allâh, the Merciful. That is why He has ordered us to wash the deceased, make him wear a simple and clean cloth and bury him under the earth, so that this action becomes the symbol of the eternity of the real life and a sign of continuity.

#### **48. TAKING CARE OF THE DECEASED IS THE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF MUSLIMS**

- Preparing the body for burial is a *Farḍ al-Kifâyah* – a collective responsibility on Muslims if there is no one to claim the body (i.e., if some members of the community undertake this duty, the rest are free from blame, but if no one does it, all will be held to blame). Washing the dead body prior to shrouding and burial is obligatory, according to numerous recorded instructions given by the Prophet ﷺ. We should educate ourselves in advance on the proper method of washing a Muslim's corpse and rush to take the opportunity to

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

bathe or lower him/her into the grave. Both actions carry a lot of reward. These deeds also serve to remind us of our own mortality that we should be preparing for.

**49. IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THE METHOD OF WASHING THE DECEASED**

- It is the responsibility of his family or other Muslims within the local community to wash the deceased according to the Islamic rites of washing the deceased. Unfortunately, many Muslims despite having witnessed *ghusl* being given on some occasions, are not confident enough to do it themselves due lack of knowledge and experience. Many a time due to the absence of a brother or sister in the family with the experience of performing *ghusl* for the deceased, the burial is delayed until someone is found with the required knowledge and experience. This causes unnecessary hardship to the grieving family and also to the deceased.

**50. WHO SHOULD BE WASHED**

- Every Muslim who dies, whether part of his body remains or the whole of it, should be washed and shrouded, with the exception of the martyr (*shahîd*), who died in a battle for Allâh's cause. His or her body should not be washed at all, but buried as it is. Concerning the martyrs, the Prophet ﷺ said: "Do not wash them, for verily every wound will emit musk on the Day of Judgement."<sup>1</sup>

Imâm ash-Shâfi'î رحمه الله said: "Burying the martyrs without washing or offering funeral prayer on them may be explained by

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<sup>1</sup> [Ahmad, al-Bayhaqî, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]



## CHAPTER 8 THE WASHING PROCEDURE

---

the fact that they shall meet Allâh with their wounds exuding fragrance like musk. The honour bestowed on them by Allâh, frees them from the need for funeral prayers by others. Moreover, it makes things easier for the surviving Muslims, who may have received injuries in battle and fear the enemy's attack, and may be concerned about the security of their families and their families' worries about them."

- The other kinds of martyrs are treated as normal cases; they are washed, shrouded and *Ṣalât al-janâzah* is done for them.
- The pilgrim who dies in a state of *iḥrâm* is washed, but perfume should not be used in washing his body. He should be shrouded in his two *iḥrâm* garments with his head and face uncovered.

Ibn 'Abbâs reported that a man in a state of *iḥrâm* was thrown by his camel while they were with the Prophet ﷺ and he ﷺ said, "Wash him with water and (ground leaves of the) lote-tree, and shroud him in two pieces of cloth. But don't put perfume on him nor cover his head, for Allâh will resurrect him on the Day of Judgement calling out the *ṭalbiyah*." <sup>2</sup>

- A stillborn baby or miscarried foetus that is four months or more should be washed and shrouded because the *rûḥ* (soul) has been blown into it.
- Regarding how *ghusl* should be done for a person who died in an accident and his body is disfigured and some parts may have

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<sup>2</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Abû Dâwûd]

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

been cut off, Shaykh Ibn Bâz رحمه الله said: “It is obligatory to wash him, just like anyone else, if that is possible. If it is not possible then *tayammum* should be done for him, because *tayammum* takes the place of washing with water when that is not possible.”<sup>3</sup>

- The same applies while washing a burnt body, or one which is cut or autopsy performed on it.
- A non-Muslim relative is not washed nor is the *janâzah* prayer prayed for him; he is only buried.

### **51. WHO MAY WASH THE DECEASED**

- Washing a dead person is a meritorious deed that Muslims should be encouraged to take part in. It is the responsibility of the family or other Muslims to wash the deceased according to the Islamic rites of *ghusl*.
- It should be done by the person mentioned in his Will, then his father, grandfather, son or brother. For an adult female, by the person she mentioned in her Will, followed by her mother, grandmother, daughter or sister. If none of these persons are present, then any immediate family member or near relative could carry out this duty. Close relatives are encouraged to wash the body of the deceased. If no relative is present or in the position of performing the *ghusl*, then the most pious person present should be requested to carry out the *ghusl*.
- Those who take on the responsibility of washing the dead should be the most knowledgeable of the procedures. His family

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<sup>3</sup> [Majmû' Fatâwâ wa Maqâlat Mutanawwi'ah, 13/123]

## CHAPTER 8 THE WASHING PROCEDURE

---

should choose an honest, trustworthy man to do the job; and a similar ruling applies to a woman. One should be careful whom to choose for this task, for Ibn ‘Umar ؓ said: “Let only the trustworthy ones wash your dead.”<sup>4</sup>

The trustworthy one is he who is steadfast in performing his compulsory prayers in congregation, who is known for his honour, manners, trust and good dealings.<sup>5</sup> So, it is recommended that those who wash the body be among the pious in order to ensure proper treatment of the dead. The washing must be supervised by a person with the knowledge of the *sunnah*.

- If the deceased is a male, then only males should wash him. If no males are available, one of his *mahram* female can give *tayammum* to him.
- If the deceased is a female, then only females should wash her. If no females are available, one of her *mahram* males can give *tayammum* to her.
- For a married person, the spouse may perform the washing because Abû Bakr ؓ was washed by his wife; and ‘Alî bin Abî Tâlib ؓ washed his wife Fâtimah ؓ, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ. A’ishah ؓ said: “If I had known beforehand what I came to know after, no one would have washed the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ but his wives.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [Irwâ’ al-Ghalîl, al-Albâni]

<sup>5</sup> [al-Wajâzah 53-54]

<sup>6</sup> [Abû Dâwûd]

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

- For a child under the age of seven, either males or females may do the washing.

**52. WHEN SHOULD TAYAMMUM BE GIVEN AND HOW**

- When there is neither a spouse nor a person of the same gender to wash the deceased, or water is not available, or if there is no *mahram* present, *tayammum* (dry ablution) should be made on the body instead of *ghusl*. The manner of doing *tayammum* is to have the intention of doing *tayammum*, say “*Bismillâh*”, strike the ground once with the palms of the hands, then wipe the back of the right hand up to the wrist with the palm of the left, and the back of the left hand with the palm of the right, then wipe the face with both hands.
- The body of a woman should be given *tayammum* by one of her *mahârim*. If there is none present, then any other man can give her a *tayammum* by wrapping a piece of cloth around his hand.
- If it is feared that the body might deteriorate if it is washed, then *tayammum* may be performed.

**53. GUIDELINES FOR THE WASHERS**

- Those who wash the dead are not required to be in a state of purity. Consequently, menstruating women and those who are *junûb* (those who did not take a shower after marital intimacy) may perform the washing procedure.
- Usually at least three to four people will be involved with the actual *ghusl*. The washer and her/his assistants should be the only people present during the preparation of the body. The assistants

## CHAPTER 8 THE WASHING PROCEDURE

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are there to hold the covering over the body while the washer washes from underneath the cover, and to help in lifting and moving the body when necessary. If a guardian wishes to be present, she/he must be either washing or assisting, not just observing. Preferably those people who know the deceased should help with the washing.

- The washer should make sure that the *'awrah* (the intimate parts of the body, for both men and women, which must be covered with clothing) must never be uncovered or touched by the bare hands.
- The washer should be careful to conceal the body properly. It is also recommended not to mention anything disagreeable observed of the deceased, just as we would like our sins to remain concealed. However, if the body appears pleasing, looks or smells good, it is good to mention it to their family as it may comfort them.

The Prophet ﷺ said: “He who washes a Muslim and conceals what he sees (i.e. bad odours, appearance, etc.), Allâh grants him forgiveness forty times (or for forty major sins).”<sup>7</sup>

He ﷺ also said, “Whoever washes a deceased (Muslim) and covers him, Allâh will cover his sins. And whoever shrouds him, Allâh will give him silk garments (in *Jannah*).”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [al-Hâkim, al-Bayhaqî, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]

<sup>8</sup> [aṭ-Ṭabarânî, authenticated by al-Albânî in *aṣ-Ṣaḥîḥah*]

## CHAPTER 8 THE WASHING PROCEDURE

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Prophet ﷺ said: “One who washes a Muslim and conceals what he sees (bad smell, appearance etc.), Allâh ﷻ grants him forgiveness forty times, and will cover his sins. The one who digs the grave will be provided a dwelling near Him on the Day of Resurrection. The one who shrouds him; Allâh ﷻ will clothe him on the Day of Resurrection from the silk garments of *Jannah*.”<sup>9</sup>

- To earn this reward, two conditions must be fulfilled. First, he should cover the body of the deceased, making sure no one sees the deceased’s private parts, and he should not inform other people if he observes anything displeasing while washing the deceased person, for letting others know is *ghîbah* (backbiting). Second, he should only seek Allâh’s pleasure and reward, and not any other worldly reward or even appreciation from others. It is an established principle in the *sharî’ah* that Allâh ﷻ accepts only those acts of worship that are done purely for Him.
- Privacy for the deceased is a crucial and important requirement at all times during the *ghusl*. Those present must protect their gaze from unnecessarily looking at the private parts of the body. It is human nature to look at what he or she is doing when working; but when washing the deceased Muslim, we must never ever look at the private parts, and this is done by keeping the sheet that covers the private parts, in place at all times. The hands can work under the sheet. Utmost care and respect should be given

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<sup>9</sup> [al-Hâkim, al-Bayhaqî, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ’iz*]

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

when handling of the body of the deceased. One should never disclose what is seen during washing.

- Those present should always be on guard about what is said during the *ghusl*. They should only make *du‘â’* and talk about the good that the deceased did.
- Taking a bath after washing the body is an important hygienic measure introduced in Islam. It is not a requirement, it’s a recommendation for hygiene. It is *mustahabb* (recommended) for those who wash the deceased to do *ghusl* (Islamic bath), because the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever washes the dead, let him do *ghusl*, and whoever carries him, let him do *wuḍû’*.”<sup>10</sup>

#### **54. PRE-WASHING REQUIREMENTS**

The washing should be done in a clean, secluded, and private place where clean water and soap are available and the used water can be drained or swept away easily. Gloves or any complete covering must always be worn when handling and washing the deceased.

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<sup>10</sup> [Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dâwūd]

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

**Requirements for the *ghusl*:**

- 1) Sufficient quantity of lukewarm water, not hot, not cold, but warm (maybe three buckets, or five). Cooler water is better than hotter.
- 2) Jug and a large bucket.
- 3) A large plastic sheet that is not transparent, with which to cover the body from neck down. Thin material is unsuitable as it becomes transparent when wet.
- 4) Scissors.
- 5) A box of disposable surgical gloves.
- 6) Strong rubber gloves or washcloth for cleaning the private parts.
- 7) A second washcloth or strong rubber gloves for the rest of the body.
- 8) Cotton wool and buds.
- 9) *Sidr* (ground lote tree leaves) or soap, shampoo instead of it.
- 10) Ground camphor or the like to be mixed in the final rinse.
- 11) Non-alcoholic oil-based scent, like sandalwood or musk for application after washing.
- 12) A large towel to dry the body.
- 13) A large cloth to cover the body until it is transferred onto the shroud.
- 14) Bin bags for disposing of waste and for taking soiled material.

**55. PREPARING THE BODY FOR WASHING**

- The shroud (*kafan*) should be prepared before the washing starts.



**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

- The body should be carefully laid on its back on a washing table with the head slightly elevated, if possible, to ensure the washing water flows down and does not run back to the body.
- All jewellery, nail polish, hospital or mortuary ID tags, wound dressings, artificial limbs etc., should be removed. Where the false teeth and contact lenses of the deceased can easily be removed, these should preferably be taken out.
- Any tied or braided hair should be undone.
- Lightly move the deceased's limbs to loosen the joints, if possible, if it is necessary for the washing and shrouding.
- A plastic sheet or a thick cloth/towel large enough to completely cover the body and hang down the sides of the table should be placed over the *'awrah* of the deceased. It should be held by the assistants so as to conceal the body during washing. They should slightly raise the cover during washing to enable the washer to work underneath. For a woman the private area is from the neck to the ankles. For a man, the private area is from the navel to the knees.
- Next, the clothing of the deceased should be removed, cutting off whatever is not easy to remove.
- The plastic sheet should be kept over the body at all times.
- Slight pressure may be applied to the abdomen before the *ghusl*, in order to expel any remaining impurities that are close to exiting. The process may be facilitated by one person raising the

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

body from behind to a semi-upright or reclined position as the other compresses the abdomen. Working under the cover, use a gloved hand to discreetly and carefully wash away any refuse with warm water.

**56. THE GHUSL PROCEDURE**

- Firstly, the intention (*niyyah*) should be present in the hearts of those taking part in the washing, but not pronounced aloud.
- Begin the *ghusl* in the Name of Allâh (*Bismillâh*).
- Start by washing the hands of the deceased.
- Next the private parts should be washed very well with the left hand wrapped with cloth or gloves from under the covering and without looking at the area directly. (First lift and turn the deceased slightly onto his left side. Reach under the towel and clean the right side of the private area. Then turn the body onto the right side and do the same for the left, from underneath.) Then dispose of the gloves or cloth.
- Perform *wuḍû'* on the deceased in the same manner that ablutions are performed for prayer.
- Wash the hands; first right then left, each three times.
- Use wet cotton to wrap a cloth around the finger to clean the mouth. Do not pour water into the mouth and nose. Wipe the front teeth and lips.
- Roll cotton and moisten it or wrap a cloth around the finger to cleanse the nasal passages.

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

- Shielding the mouth, nose and ears with your free hand wash the face (and beards for men) three times. Moist cotton may also be used to wipe the face.
- Wash the right arm from the elbow down to the fingertips three times. Wash the left arm similarly.
- Take a handful of water, pour over forehead and wipe hair and ears. Cotton may also be used to wipe the ears.
- Lastly, wash both feet from the ankle down to the toes.
- This completes the *wuḍû'*.
- After the *wuḍû'*, mix the remaining water with ground *sidr*, the leaves of the lote tree.
- Now the hair should be thoroughly washed. If there are no ground lote tree leaves, cleansing agent like soap or shampoo is added to lukewarm water for the first wash. The head (hair and face) is washed first with this water.
- After washing the head, wash the right side of the body before the left.
- Wash the front right side first, beginning at the neck, right shoulder and work your way down – the arms, armpit, chest, legs and including the feet, taking care that the armpits, under the breast area, any folds in tissue, and behind the knees are cleansed. Then carefully turn the body on the left side so as to wash the remaining right side of the body which includes the arm, the side and back portion of the right side. Basically, we wash the entire

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

right portion of the body – front, side, and back, and including the right foot.

- Turn the body back onto its back.
- Then repeat the same starting with the front left side. Wash the front left side of the body – just as the right side was done; washing from the neck down the front left side and down to the left foot. Then carefully turn the body onto its right side so that the remaining left side of the body, which includes the arm, side, and back portion of the body including the foot is washed.
- This is considered the first wash.
- The head and body are washed again with plain water in the same way. This is the second wash.
- The final washing should have ground camphor or some other scent added to the water. This time rather than washing, rinse the body from right to left, front to back. Simply pour the mixture over the body parts.

Umm ‘Atîyyah said: “Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ came to us while we were washing his daughter and said, ‘Wash her three, or five, or more times, using water with lote tree leaves, and put camphor in the last washing.’”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

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- Camphor acts as a deodorant and a preservative, and it keeps insects away. If the deceased has wounds on the body, fill these with dry, crushed camphor.
- The body should be washed an odd number of times; the obligation is once, but the *sunnah* is a minimum of three times, and if the body needs more cleaning, continue washing five or seven times; but the total number of complete washes should be odd.
  - a) For washing the body three times: first wash with *sidr*, second with water and third with camphor.
  - b) For washing the body five times: first wash with water, second and third times with *sidr*, fourth with water and fifth with camphor.
- The body should then be dried thoroughly with a clean towel so that no moisture will soak into the shroud and make it transparent.
- The hair should be combed out gently.
- For a woman, the hair should be plaited into three plaits, one from the forehead and two from the sides and placed behind her head without pins or clips.
- Cotton is not to be inserted into the nose or any other body openings unless it is to prevent the continuous emergence of blood or other impurities. In case any impurity emerges from the private

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

parts after *ghusl* is complete, it should be simply washed away with water. If it happens after shrouding, it should be overlooked.

- In case the deceased is a female in her menstrual period or having post-partum bleeding, a sanitary napkin should be used to prevent blood from leaving the body.
- Scent (*ḥânût*)<sup>12</sup> can be applied to the whole body, but not specifically at the points of prostration. Any oil scents may also be used.
- Place another dry cloth above the body and remove the sheet that was covering the body during washing, so as to cover the same area that was previously covered (*‘awrah*).
- The body is to remain under the cover until the first stages of shrouding have been completed.

**57. PRACTICAL TIPS FOR THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

- If not a plastic sheet, use a towel or thick, dark fabric or bedsheet to cover the body while washing because a plain sheet will become see-through when wet.
- Once a person dies, the blood circulation stops in his body, and the joints become stiff within a few minutes due to the trapped blood. Rigor mortis sets in as soon as half an hour after death. This will make it very hard to wash or shroud the person and perform other burial rites. By loosening the joints of the person shortly after

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<sup>12</sup> [*Ḥânût* is a mixture of scents used to perfume a dead body and its shroud primarily consisting of musk, sandalwood, ambergris and camphor]

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

---

they die, this makes it easier to perform funeral rites. Do not put force on the body parts if they are stiff, just work with them as carefully as possible. It is incorrect to try to loosen the joints by moving them around.

- In the case of post-mortem, the body is handed over usually with the hands folded over the chest. Do not use force and put the hands to the sides as this may cause the bones to break.
- It is recommended for those handling the body to be wearing rubber gloves or disposable gloves.
- The washer can wear a surgical mask, if required, to protect his nose and mouth from foul odours.
- He can wear some form of plastic covering over his clothes, if required, to prevent impurities from staining them.
- He can wear boots or a protective covering over his shoes, if required, to prevent them from getting dirty.
- For washing the private parts, wrap a paper towel around the piece of cloth or the gloved hands. Use the left hand for cleaning private parts, and cover the soiled towel with right hand while throwing away. This allows for discreet disposal.
- **Lightly** press on the stomach (recommended by some scholars; and disagreed by others) with both of your hands, moving them gradually down with each press. This is to clean out any waste remaining in the intestines.

**CHAPTER 8**  
**THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

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- *Sidr* is used as a disinfectant cleanser. The leaves should be dried and ground. After the *sidr* has dried, it should remain green in colour; if it has turned yellow, it should not be used. After the ground *sidr* is placed in water, the mixture will become soapy in about 15-30 min. If *sidr* is not available, it is permissible to use any soap.
- Warning: Pregnant women should not work with or inhale camphor as this may cause a miscarriage.
- Normally camphor dissolves in boiling water. If there are any un-dissolved particles of camphor, they may be brushed off with the hands or a towel from the hair and face of the deceased.
- If camphor is not available, any other *ḥalāl* (Islamically permissible) fragrance is allowed. Allāh is Merciful and accepts that we use what is available at our hands.
- It is said that the reason why camphor is used, although it is a perfume, is because it has a pleasant smell, and burial is a time when angels are present. It has a drying and cooling effect, it can penetrate the body of the deceased and stiffen the body, keep vermin away, prevent wastes from being expelled, and prevent the body from decomposing rapidly. It is the most effective of perfumes in that sense. This is the reason why it is put in the last wash, because if it was put in the first wash the water would remove it.
- It says in al-Muntaqa: *Ḥânūt* is that which is put on the body and shroud of the deceased of perfume, musk, amber, camphor and anything else that is used for its scent rather than its colour,



because the purpose here is the scent rather than beautification with the colour.

### **58. INNOVATIONS DURING THE WASHING PROCEDURE**

The following practices are amongst common innovations related to washing:

- Clipping of the nails and shaving of armpit or pubic hair. Washing the body is meant to cleanse and preserve it, not for beautification.
- Pressing hard on the stomach to expel impurities. It is *bid'ah* to place a heavy object on the stomach for this purpose.
- Stuffing cotton into the throat, nose and anus of the deceased (this is only permissible if the body has a continuous leak).
- Reciting a specific phrase for every part of the body that is washed.
- The people present making a loud *dhikr* or reciting the Qur'ân while the body is washed.
- Arranging a woman's hair between her breasts.

We take refuge in Allâh ﷻ from ignorance.

**CHAPTER 9**  
**THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

59.	Requirements of the shroud	105
60.	Preparing the shroud	107
61.	The steps of shrouding	107
	a) Alternate way of shrouding	109
	b) Shrouding sheets for a woman	111
62.	A few practical tips	115
63.	Innovations related to shrouding	117

The next procedure after washing is the obligatory act of shrouding the entire body based on the commands of the Prophet ﷺ to do so. Shrouding should start immediately after washing the body of the deceased.

Prophet ﷺ said: “When one of you is responsible for his (deceased) brother, let him shroud him well.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Muslim, Ahmad]

### **59. REQUIREMENTS OF THE SHROUD**

- The cost of the shroud (*kafān*) or its cost should be taken from the wealth left behind of the deceased unless someone contributes it.
- It is not permissible to be extravagant in the shroud material. The sheets should be ordinary cloth, preferably cotton and not synthetic, so that it decomposes quickly along with the body, and the number of sheets should not exceed three. It should be inexpensive, clean, thick (i.e., not transparent), unstitched and preferably white and long enough to cover the entire body (except for a person in *iḥrām*, whose head should be exposed).

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “Wear white clothes, for verily it is among the best of your garments, and shroud your dead in it also.”<sup>2</sup>

- Avoid silk for men as it is prohibited during their life.
- If the number of dead is great or the cloth used for shrouding is insufficient for all the bodies, more than one body may be wrapped in the same shroud at a time.
- The *sunnah* is to use three sheets, based on the fact that the Prophet ﷺ was shrouded in three. The best way to enshroud the deceased is to wrap him in three white sheets, using neither the waist wrapper nor the shirt. However, there is no harm in using the shirt and waist wrapper for shrouding.

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<sup>2</sup> [Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmidhī]

## CHAPTER 9 THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE

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- There is no difference in the authentic *sunnah* between the shrouds of men and women. Prophet ﷺ did not specify a particular number for women and another for men, as is commonly held among Muslims today. However, some scholars have recommended two additional pieces for women, if felt necessary for adequate covering. This is to prevent the contour of their bodies from being identifiable.
- It is allowed for the deceased to be wrapped with one or two sheets too. One sheet may suffice if nothing else is available. Two sheets will also suffice, but three sheets are preferable for those who can afford it.
- In the case of the male who dies while in a state of *iḥrām*, the two sheets will be the two sheets of his *iḥrām*, and his head is not covered.
- In the case of the martyr or one killed on the battlefield, his or her garments are not removed. The shroud is wrapped over the garments in which the person was killed as the Prophet ﷺ did for Ḥamzah and others.
- It is recommended that the shroud be perfumed with incense thrice, except in the case of the *muḥrim*, who died in a state of *iḥrām*. The Prophet ﷺ said: “When you perfume the deceased with incense (*bakhûr*), then perfume him three times.”<sup>3</sup>

The word deceased here refers to both male and female.

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<sup>3</sup> [Aḥmad, classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi'*]

**CHAPTER 9**  
**THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

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**60. PREPARING THE SHROUD**

1. Measure and cut the three wrapping sheets. Each sheet should be long enough to tie at each end; about 2.50 meters in length (i.e., at least one foot longer above the head and below the feet) and wide enough to wrap completely around the body – (approx. 60 inches in width, depending upon the size of the body).
  
2. Cut and keep three long strips of fabric from the wrapping sheets to use as ties around the body. They should be about 1 or 2 inches in width and the length should be long enough to go around the whole body of the deceased (about 60 inches). Then cut two small strips used for tying the shroud ends after the final wrapping is complete, about 1 or 2 inches in width and about 12 inches in length.

**61. THE STEPS OF SHROUDING**

- The three sheets should be spread out one on top of the other and fragrance should be put between the sheets.
  
- The deceased, covered with a sheet, is lifted and laid on his back on the three sheets.
  
- The arms of the deceased should normally remain at his sides.
  
- Begin to wrap the body in a right to left direction.

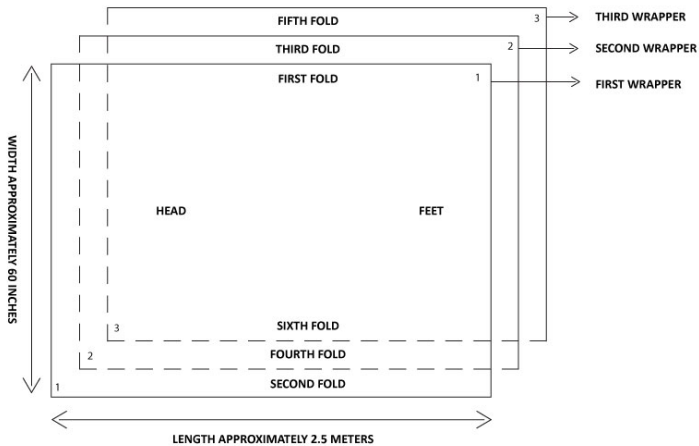
**CHAPTER 9**  
**THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

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- Pull the left side of the upper sheet over to the right side of the body including the head; then pull the right side of the sheet over to the left side of the body.
- Now remove the cloth that was covering the private parts.
- Then the second sheet should be folded the same way. The third sheet should also be folded the same way. Wrap one piece at a time, tuck it tight and ensure that the whole body is covered from head to toe.
- Gather the excess cloth above the head and under the feet, twist it and tie it gently together with the smaller strips of the fabric. Then, using one or more of the longer strips, insert them under the body and tie them around the waist, with the knots on the left side; in a way that they can be easily loosened in the grave when the body is placed on to its right side. Tie in such a way that one can differentiate the head from the legs.
- For a child, one long strip at the waist may be sufficient, while an adult may require three ties, according to the size and weight of the body. These will keep the shroud in place and the body stabilized until it is placed in the grave.

**CHAPTER 9**  
**THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

**Pic: 1: Shroud layout**



**A) ALTERNATE WAY OF SHROUDING:**

- Even though the above method is better, it is also allowed to use the following to shroud the deceased:

- 1) An un-sewn shirt (*jubbâ or qamîs*), with a cut at the centre to facilitate the passing through of the head, for which 2.50 meters of cloth is required.

- 2) secondly, a waist wrapper (*lungî*), 2 meters in length,

- 3) thirdly, a large outer wrapping sheet, 2.50 meters in length.

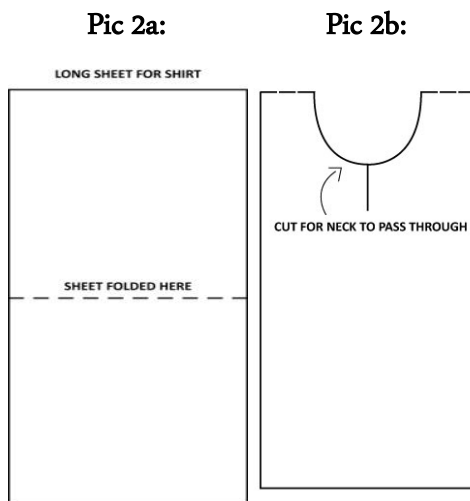
- For this way of shrouding, first the waist wrapper (from the deceased's waist to feet) is measured and cut. It should be nearly three times the width of the body.

## CHAPTER 9 THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE

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- The shirt (*jubbâ*) is a long sheet with an opening in the centre for the head to pass through and it covers the body, front and back, up to the waist (up to the feet for women). It is made as follows:
  - 1) Take a sheet slightly wider than the width of the body and twice its length from the shoulders to the waist (up to the feet for women).
  - 2) Fold it in the middle so that each half is the length from the shoulder to the waist (up to the feet for women).
  - 3) Cut a small half circle in the centre of the folded edge and make a slit in the front part so that it will slip easily over the head of the deceased.

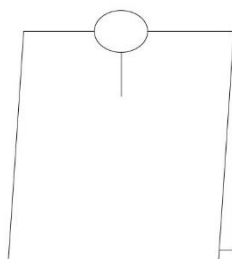
### Pic 2: How to fold and cut the shirt





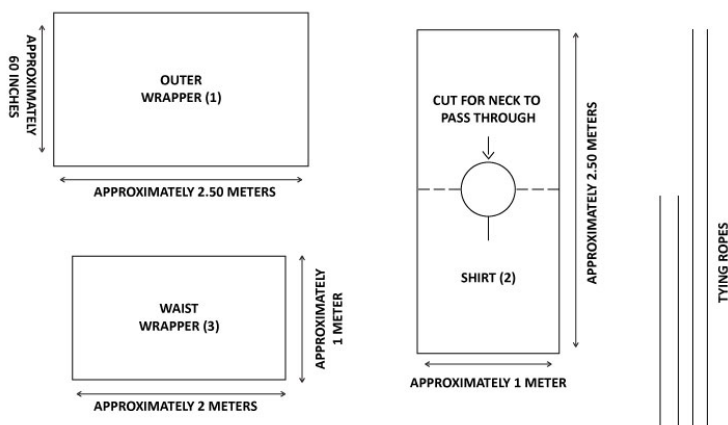
## CHAPTER 9 THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE

Pic 2c: The shirt



- Next, measure and cut the waist wrapper with which the lower part of the body will be wrapped. Again it should be wide enough to wrap around the waist. Its length is from the deceased's waist to the feet.

Pic: 3: Shrouding sheets for a man



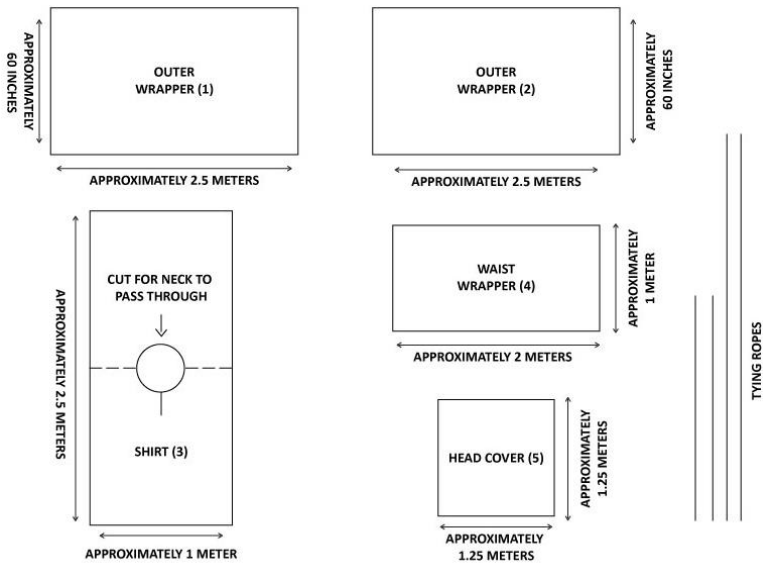
### **B) SHROUDING SHEETS FOR A WOMAN:**

- If desired, two additional pieces may be cut for a woman only. One in the shape of a head-cover with which the head is wrapped, for which about 1.25 to 1.50 meters of cloth is required. Take a

## CHAPTER 9 THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE

square piece of cloth and fold it to make it triangular in shape, large enough to be wrapped around the head and tied in front of the neck. The other is a large outer wrapping sheet of 2.5 meters. Also note the length of the shirt (*qamîs, jubbâ*) should be from the shoulder to the feet.

**Pic 4: Shrouding sheets for a woman**



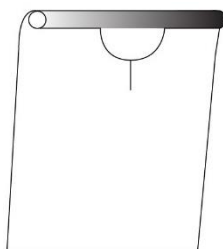
### STEPS OF SHROUDING:

- Spread out the large outer wrapping sheet.
- On top of it, place the back half of the shirt, and roll the front part of the shirt above the head area. After the body is placed, the front part can then be pulled over the head to cover the body up to the waist (up to the feet for women).

**CHAPTER 9**  
**THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE**

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**Pic: 5 - The half rolled up shirt**



- Then the waist wrapper is placed over the other two pieces.
- While still covered, transfer the body on to the shroud sheets which have been laid out. The neck is placed at the cut/opening in the fold of the shirt. The cloth may be scented, as well as the body of the deceased, before wrapping, but do not remove the cover over the body.
- Begin shrouding by wrapping the lower half of the body (from the waist down) with the waist wrapper, working underneath the towel or sheet without exposing or touching the private area. Pull the wrapper firmly around the deceased and tuck it under the body to keep it in place.
- Now remove the towel or sheet covering the body (only for men).
- Then put the deceased's head through the cut in the shirt and pull the top front section which extends above the head area, down to the waist. The arms of the deceased should normally remain at his sides. Tuck the side edges of the shirt in around or under the body.

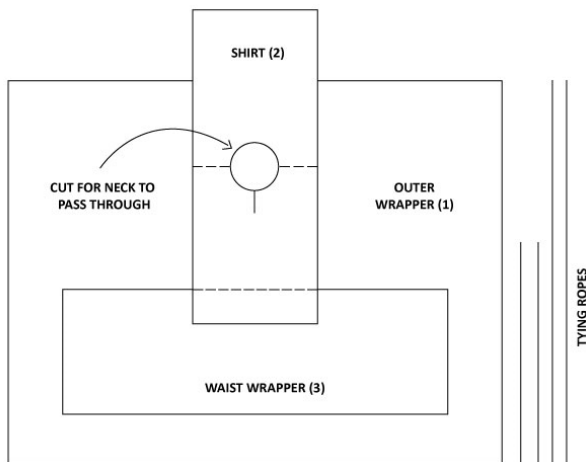
## CHAPTER 9

### THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE

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- Finally, the entire body is wrapped well in the large outer wrapping sheet. The edge of the outer sheet is folded over the deceased's right side, then the other edge over his left side. Gather the excess cloth above the head and below the feet and tie it together with small strips of the fabric (from the same shroud) in such a way that one can differentiate the head from the legs. Then, using one or more of the longer strips, insert them under the body and tie them at the side in a way that they can be easily loosened in the grave.
- The three shroud pieces which have been laid out are sufficient for a woman as well as for a man. However, if it is preferred to use the two additional pieces, the woman's head is now wrapped with the head-cover and tied in the front. Another large outer wrapping sheet may also be used.
- The shroud layout is as shown below:

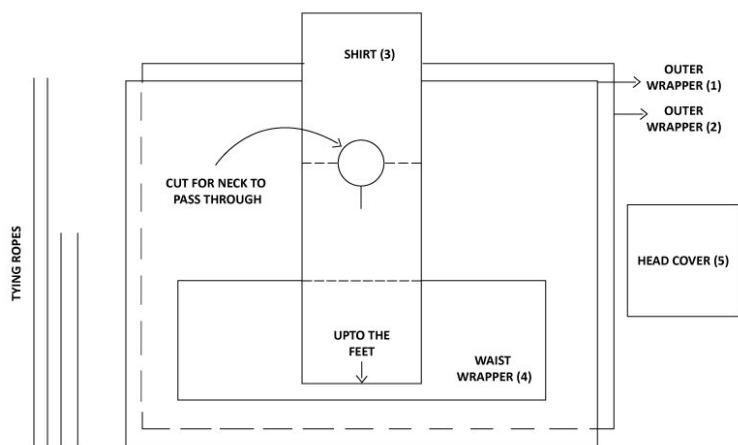
**Pic: 6 - Shroud layout for a man**



## CHAPTER 9

### THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE

Pic: 7 – Shroud layout for a woman



#### **62. A FEW PRACTICAL TIPS**

- The shroud material is simple: three sheets, one on top of the other. They can all be the same size, or each one a little smaller than the first. Use what is available, and use what covers the body appropriately.
- The sheets should be of ordinary cloth, preferably cotton and not synthetic, so that they decompose quickly along with the body, and the number of sheets should not exceed three.
- Normally cotton Long Cloth of width 44 or 60 inches is available for shrouding.
- For a man, the cloth required for the three sheets would be about 7.50 meters. If using the same cloth to cover the body after

## CHAPTER 9

### THE SHROUDING PROCEDURE

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washing and before shrouding, then 2.50 meters more would be required.

- For a woman, 7.5 meters of cloth for the two wrapping sheets and the *jubbâ* (to cover the body from the shoulder to the feet) is required, 2 meters for the waist wrapper, 1.25 meters for the head scarf, and if using the same cloth to cover the body after washing and before shrouding, then 2.50 meters more would be required.
- If shroud material is not available, king-size bed-sheets will do. Cut and remove the stitched seams with a pair of scissors.
- Also cut from the width of each sheet, four strips for tying, long enough to tie around the body and holding it in place.
- The shroud should already be cut before *ghusl*. Place the last piece of *kafan* at the bottom and the first piece at the top.
- Transferring the body onto the shroud pieces which have been laid out is more easily done by inserting a folded sheet under it as is done in hospitals.
- For transferring the body of a woman on to the wrapping sheets after *ghusl*, help can be taken from her *maḥârim*. Care should be taken that the bare hands do not touch the body.
- A tightly wrapped shroud not only provides adequate body coverage, but it also aids in the transport of the deceased, as the body is now tightly packed rather than loosely wrapped.

### **63. INNOVATIONS RELATING TO SHROUDING**

The common innovations relating to shrouding are:

- Using expensive shrouds.
- Soaking the shroud in Zam Zam water to seek blessings or for purification, or thinking that it will benefit the deceased in the Hereafter.
- Writing the deceased's name or supplications etc., on a piece of paper and putting it inside the shroud.
- Using more than three sheets.
- Perfuming the body specifically on the places of prostration.

We take refuge in Allâh ﷻ from ignorance. We ask Allâh ﷻ to make our intentions pure for His sake, and to bless all our efforts to do everything the right way.

CHAPTER 10  
TRANSPORTING THE *JANÁZAH*

64.	Transporting the <i>janâzah</i> is a communal obligation	118
65.	Virtues of transporting the <i>janâzah</i>	119
66.	Etiquettes of transporting the <i>janâzah</i>	119

**64. TRANSPORTING THE *JANÁZAH* IS A COMMUNAL OBLIGATION**

- Transporting the *janâzah* is a communal obligation (*Fard al-Kifâyah*) that must be performed by some Muslims as a part of the burial procedures. And following the funeral procession contains (fulfilment of) a right for Allâh, a right for the deceased, and a right for the living relatives of the deceased. It is one of the rights of a dead Muslim upon his fellow Muslims. It is thus an obligation upon the close friends and family of the deceased.

Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “The rights of the Muslim upon the Muslim are six.” It was said, “And what are they O’ Messenger of Allâh?” He replied, “When you meet him, give him the greeting of peace, when he invites you, respond to his invitation, when he seeks your advice, advise him, when he sneezes and praises Allâh, supplicate for mercy upon him, when he becomes ill, visit him, and when he dies follow him (i.e. his funeral).” <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Muslim]



**CHAPTER 10**  
**TRANSPORTING THE JANÁZAH**

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**65. VIRTUES OF TRANSPORTING THE JANÁZAH**

- Transporting and carrying the *janâzah* are acts which will remind us of the *Âkhirah*. We all need to be reminded about death from time to time because the material needs, pleasures and distractions of this life easily cause humans to forget about the life to come.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Visit the sick and walk with funerals; they will remind you of the Hereafter.” <sup>2</sup>

- As for the virtues of walking with a funeral, Prophet ﷺ said:

“When one follows the funeral of a Muslim having faith and seeking his reward with Allâh, and when one stays with the *janâzah* until the prayer is performed for it and its burial is completed; he then returns with two chunks (*qîrât*) of reward, each *qîrât* being the size of (the mountain) Uḥud. When one performs the prayer but returns before the burial; then he returns with one *qîrât*.<sup>3</sup>

**66. ETIQUETTES OF TRANSPORTING THE JANÁZAH**

- Transportation of the bier in a funeral coach or vehicle (hearse) according to the traditions of non-Muslims is not recommended. It is *sunnah* to transport the *janâzah* in an open bier (frame used for carrying the deceased) and not a closed coffin, unless there is a legal requirement to the contrary. Muslims should be able to see the shrouded body and realize that one day they will be in a similar state.

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<sup>2</sup> [Muslim]

<sup>3</sup> [al-Bukhari]

**CHAPTER 10**  
**TRANSPORTING THE *JANÂZAH***

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- Prophet ﷺ instructed his followers to walk and carry the bier with their own hands. He explicitly instructed his followers on numerous occasions to differ in their religious and social customs from the disbelievers.
- If the *janâzah* is carried in a car for practical reasons, like because of the distance to the graveyard, it is permissible to transport it and follow it in motor vehicles.
- The pallbearers should walk with the *janâzah* at a quick pace and not slowly. Walking step by step at a slow pace is a hated *bid'ah* (innovation).
- Those walking with the bier are allowed to walk in front, behind, or on either side of it; while those riding or following in vehicles should be behind the *janâzah*.
- It is prohibited for women to follow the funeral procession. Umm 'Aṭiyyah ﷺ said:

“Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ prohibited us (women) from following the *janâzah*, but did not enforce that on us.”<sup>4</sup>

- As the righteous *Ṣalaf* (predecessors) used to do, one should walk silently in the funeral procession. Reflecting upon, or remembrance should not be done aloud. The funeral procession should be characterized by thoughtfulness, humbleness, reflection and awareness of Allâh. Silence at this time allows those present to

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<sup>4</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

**CHAPTER 10**  
**TRANSPORTING THE JANÂZAH**

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contemplate the realities of life and death and learn lessons from it.

- It is *mustahabb* (recommended) for those who carry the *janâzah* to do *wuđû'* because the Prophet ﷺ said:

“Whoever washes the dead, let him do *ghusl*, and whoever carries him, let him do *wuđû'*.”<sup>5</sup>

- Standing up for a *janâzah* when it passes, or standing till they reach the grave is not required. In the early days of Islam, it was obligatory, but later on it was abrogated by Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ.
- Let’s ponder over this:

Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “When the funeral is ready and the men carry it on their shoulders, if the deceased was righteous, it will say: ‘Present me (hurriedly),’ and if he was not righteous, it will say: ‘Woe to it (me)! Where are they taking it (me)?’ Its voice is heard by everything except man and if he heard it, he would fall unconscious.”<sup>6</sup>

And Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur’ân:

*[“No doubt! Verily, the awliyâ’ of Allâh (i.e., those who believe in the oneness of Allâh and fear Allâh much and love Allâh much), no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve.”]*<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abū Dāwūd]

<sup>6</sup> [al-Bukhārī 2:400]

<sup>7</sup> [Sûrah Yûnus 10:62]

CHAPTER 11  
THE *JANÁZAH* PRAYER

67.	The <i>janâzah</i> prayer	123
68.	<i>Janâzah</i> prayer for those who commit major sins openly	123
69.	<i>Janâzah</i> prayer for a child	124
70.	<i>Janâzah</i> prayer for martyrs	124
71.	<i>Şalât al-ghâ'ib</i>	125
72.	<i>Janâzah</i> prayer for the disbelievers	125
73.	The times when the <i>janâzah</i> prayer should not be performed	125
74.	Performing the <i>janâzah</i> prayer over a grave	126
75.	Where should the <i>janâzah</i> prayer be performed	127
76.	The <i>janâzah</i> prayer by women	127
77.	Who should lead the <i>janâzah</i> prayer	128
78.	The reward of more people praying for the deceased in the <i>janâzah</i> prayer	128
79.	The number of rows in the <i>janâzah</i> prayer	129
80.	Where should the deceased be placed	129

### **67. THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

- When the soul leaves the body of the deceased, preparations are made for bidding him the last farewell. A prayer service i.e. *Ṣalât al-janâzah* is held over the dead body of every Muslim, young or old. The *Ṣalât al-janâzah* is a petition of mercy for the deceased. This is a duty everyone owes to the dead.
- It is highly recommended that, after washing and shrouding the body of the deceased, the body should not to be kept long, but rather taken quickly, prayed for, and then buried.
- The performance of *Ṣalât al-janâzah* is considered *fard al-kifâyah* – a communal obligation on the residents of a particular area. 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.

### **68. JANÁZAH PRAYER FOR THOSE WHO COMMIT MAJOR SINS OPENLY**

- The *Ṣalât al-janâzah* should be performed in congregation; it is a rewarding act and a Muslim should not hesitate to participate in it, whether or not the deceased or his relatives are known to him. It must be performed for every deceased Muslim, even if he was sinful, or had committed suicide, or was in debt, or had committed innovations; provided that his deviation did not take him out of Islam. However, it is preferable that the scholars and the pious and people of stature do not join in the funeral prayer for him as a punishment for him and deterrent for others like him.

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.

Abû Qatâdah reported that when Allâh's Messenger ﷺ was invited to pray *Ṣalât al-janâzah*, he would inquire about the deceased. If he was praised as having been good, he would stand and pray for him. But if he was described as having been otherwise, he would tell his family, "You take care of him." And he would not pray for him.<sup>1</sup>

### **69. JANÁZAH PRAYER FOR A CHILD**

- Even though it is not obligatory, it is permissible to pray *janâzah* for a child who died before attaining puberty. The Prophet ﷺ did not pray *Ṣalât al-janâzah* for his son Ibrâhîm. *Ṣalât al-janâzah* may be performed for a miscarried foetus, only if the soul has been blown into it, which occurs after completing four months. The prayer should not be performed prior to that because it does not count as a dead person.

### **70. JANÁZAH PRAYER FOR MARTYRS**

- Though it is permissible, it is not required to perform *Ṣalât al-janâzah* for martyrs. The Prophet ﷺ did not perform *Ṣalât al-janâzah* for most of the *shuhadâ'* of Uḥud.

Anas ؓ reported: "The *shuhadâ'* of Uḥud were not washed, were buried in their blood, and *Ṣalât al-janâzah* was not performed for them – except for Hamzah."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Ahmad, al-Hâkim and authenticated in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]

<sup>2</sup> [Abû Dâwûd, at-Tirmidhî and authenticated in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]

### **71. SALÂT AL-GHÂ'IB**

- If someone dies in a country or situation where there is no one to perform the *Ṣalât al-janâzah* for him, then it is permitted for a group of Muslims to make a funeral prayer for him in his absence. This prayer is known as *Ṣalât al-ghâ'ib* (prayer for an absent person). Prophet ﷺ prayed for an-Najâshî, the ruler of Abyssinia, who was a Muslim.<sup>3</sup> *Ṣalât al-janâzah* was not performed for him since he died among disbelievers. But it is not recommended to pray *Ṣalât al-ghâ'ib* for every Muslim who dies afar because Prophet ﷺ did not pray for other Muslims who died elsewhere.

### **72. JANÁZAH PRAYER FOR THE DISBELIEVERS**

- *Ṣalât al-janâzah* or even seeking forgiveness or mercy for the disbelievers or the hypocrites is strictly forbidden, based on the following instructions of Allâh ﷻ in the Qur'ân:

*[“And do not pray (the funeral prayer, O’ Muḥammad), over any of them (hypocrites) who has died - ever - or stand at his grave. Indeed, they disbelieved in Allâh and His Messenger and died while they were defiantly disobedient.”]*<sup>4</sup>

### **73. THE TIMES WHEN THE JANÁZAH PRAYER SHOULD NOT BE PERFORMED**

- It is permissible to pray the *janâzah* prayer during the prohibited time that is lengthy, like after *‘Aṣr* and after *Fajr*.

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<sup>3</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim, Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz]

<sup>4</sup> [Sûrah at-Tawbah 9:84]

**CHAPTER 11**  
**THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

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- Similar to the regular prayers, it is not permissible to pray *janâzah* at the three prohibited short times. 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.
- Forbidden times are:
  - 1) When the sun is rising (i.e. the disc of the sun is clearly above the horizon, until it has become high (completely risen to a spear's height).
  - 2) When the sun is at its peak i.e. noontime, until the sun declines (off the zenith).
  - 3) When the sun approaches setting, until it completely sets.
- It is also not permissible to bury the deceased at these times.

**74. PERFORMING THE JANÁZAH PRAYER OVER A GRAVE**

- It is generally not permissible to perform *Ṣalât al-janâzah* for the dead between the graves, according to the following *ḥadīth* narrated by Anas ibn Mâlik, in which he said:

“The Prophet ﷺ forbade the performance of the *Ṣalâh* for the dead in between the graves.”<sup>5</sup>

But it may be performed over a grave if the deceased was buried before performing the prayer, or if he was buried before

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<sup>5</sup> [aṭ-Ṭabarâni and authenticated in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]



giving a chance to the Muslims, especially their *Imâm*, to perform the *Ṣalât al-janâzah*.

The person who is offering the prayer over a grave should stand with the grave in front of him, just like the bier is in front of him during the funeral prayer.

Ibn ‘Abbâs reported: “Prophet ﷺ used to visit a sick man. The man died and was buried during the night. In the morning, his people informed the Prophet ﷺ about his death. He asked: ‘Why didn’t you inform me (earlier)?’ They replied: ‘Because he died during the night and it was dark. Thus we hated to disturb you.’ Ibn ‘Abbâs continued: “The Prophet ﷺ went to the grave. He arranged us in rows behind him, led us, and prayed over him, pronouncing four *takbîrât*.”<sup>6</sup>

### **75. WHERE SHOULD THE JANÁZAH PRAYER BE PERFORMED**

- The *janâzah* prayer should be preferably performed in the *muṣalla* (an open space outside a *Masjid* that is mainly used for praying), but it is permissible to perform it in the *Masjid*.

### **76. THE JANÁZAH PRAYER BY WOMEN**

- *Ṣalât al-janâzah* is prescribed for both men and women. Women are permitted to attend the funeral prayer just as they are permitted to perform other non-obligatory prayers. Women are not

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<sup>6</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

forbidden to offer the *janâzah* prayer, whether it is offered in the Masjid, in a house or in a prayer-place.

### **77. WHO SHOULD LEAD THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

- The *Amîr* or the most responsible person in city or his assistant has more right to lead the funeral prayer than the deceased's *waliyy*. If neither is present, the one who has the most knowledge of the Qur'ân should lead the funeral prayer, even if he is a child. Knowledge is not just memorization, but that which benefits. <sup>7</sup>

### **78. THE REWARD OF MORE PEOPLE PRAYING FOR THE DECEASED IN THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

- It is required to be performed in congregation to appeal for forgiveness for the deceased and all dead Muslims, and to wrap them all in Allâh's mercy. The extent of the number of attendees at the funeral prayer also brings a proportionate reward to the deceased. So, it is recommended to gather a lot of people for the prayer; the larger the *jamâ'ah*, the better it is for the deceased.

Prophet ﷺ said: "There is no Muslim man who dies and forty men who do not associate anything with Allâh pray the funeral prayer for him, but Allâh will grant their intercession for him." <sup>8</sup>

Hence the scholars regarded it as *mustahabb* (recommended) to look for a mosque in which there is a large congregation to pray for the deceased. The greater the number, the closer that is to

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<sup>7</sup> [al-Bukhârî, al-Bayhaqî and in Ahkâm al-Janâ'iz]

<sup>8</sup> [Muslim]

goodness and the more *du‘á* will be made. They should be Muslims of correct belief and they should sincerely strive to intercede for him through supplication and seeking forgiveness for him.

### **79. THE NUMBER OF ROWS IN THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

- It is recommended to form three or more rows behind the *Imâm*, each row containing a minimum of two people. If only one person is present other than the *Imâm*, he should not stand foot to foot with him, as is done in other prayers; but should stand behind him.

### **80. WHERE THE DECEASED SHOULD BE PLACED**

- The deceased should be placed in front of the *Imâm*, and the *Imâm* should stand at the head of a man and the middle of a woman, as described in the *ṣaḥīḥ aḥadīth*. If there are a number of dead; men, women and children, the men should be placed closest to the *Imâm*, then boys, then women, then girls. The woman's middle should be in line with the man's head, so that the *Imâm* will be standing in the correct position in relation to all of them, as prescribed in the *sharī‘ah*.
- A very common error is: The body is brought into the *Masjid* and laid in front of the people at the time of the regular prayer. So people perform the prayer, while the body is in front of them, before performing the *janâzah* prayer. This causes them to commit this prohibited act of making *rukû‘* and *sujûd* towards it.

**CHAPTER 11**  
**THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

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- It is permissible for the *Imâm* to mention the deceased's name before starting the prayer so that people would make a specific supplication for him, either in the masculine or feminine gender respectively.
- The *janâzah* prayer is performed standing up. A probable reason is that since the deceased's body is laid in the front of the praying people, *rukû'* and *sujûd* actions would appear to be performed for it, and this would resemble praying among the graves, which is prohibited.
- Supplicating after the completion of the *janâzah* prayer has not been confirmed by the Prophet ﷺ and this was not from his *sunnah* or the *sunnah* of his companions.

## CHAPTER 12

### HOW TO PERFORM THE *JANÁZAH* PRAYER

81. How to perform the *janâzah* prayer 131

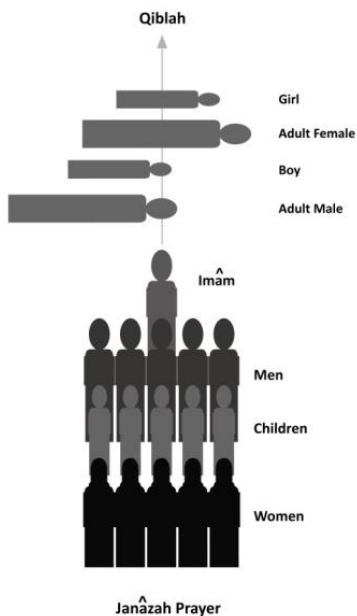
#### 81. HOW TO PERFORM THE *JANÁZAH* PRAYER

- The washed and shrouded body is brought to the *Muṣalla* (preferable) i.e. a place outside designated for prayer, or the *Masjid* (permissible).
- The deceased is laid down on the ground in the front, with the face directed towards the *Qiblah*.
- The *janâzah* prayer should be offered in *jamâ'ah* (congregation), not individually. It is permissible to offer it individually only if the situation calls for it; however, the *sunnah* is to perform the *janâzah* prayer in *jamâ'ah*.
- The *Imâm* faces the *Qiblah*, standing behind the head of the dead man or behind the middle of the dead woman.

**CHAPTER 12**  
**HOW TO PERFORM THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

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**Pic 1: The *janâzah* prayer**



- There is no *adhân* or *iqâmah* prior to the *janâzah* prayer.
- The *janâzah* prayer consists of four *takbîrât* (can go up to nine). It is permissible to make either four, five, six, seven or *takbîrât* as all of them are recorded in the authentic *aḥadîth*.
- There is no *ruku‘* or *sajdah* in the *janâzah* prayer.
- There is no opening *du‘â’* in this prayer. Scholars stated that the reciting of the opening *du‘â’* it is not recommended, as the funeral prayer is supposed to be kept short. Therefore, the opening *du‘â’* should not be recited. However, there is no sin upon reciting it and there is no sin upon omitting it. But omitting it is preferable.

**CHAPTER 12**  
**HOW TO PERFORM THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

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- Raise your hands for the first *takbîr*, and recite *Sûrah al-Fâtiḥah* silently. A short *Sûrah* from the Qur’ân may or may not be read, if time permits.
- The *sunnah* is to recite it silently. Ibn ‘Abbâs رضي الله عنه recited *Sûrah al-Fâtiḥah* aloud sometimes as mentioned in *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Bukhârî 1249*, to teach the people that it should be recited in a funeral prayer.

It was narrated that Abû Umâmah said, “The *sunnah* when offering the funeral prayer is to recite *Umm al-Qur’ân* (i.e., *Sûrah al-Fatiḥah*) quietly in the first *takbîr*, then to say three (more) *takbîrât*, and to say the *taslîm* after the last one.”<sup>1</sup>

- You may or may not raise your hands for the remaining *takbîrât*.
- Make the second *takbîr*, and recite the *ṣalawât* on the Prophet ﷺ silently.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ. اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ  
عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ.

*Allâhumma ṣalli ‘alâ Muḥammadin wa ‘alâ âli Muḥammadin kamâ ṣallayta ‘alâ Ibrâhîma wa ‘alâ âli Ibrâhîma, innaka Ḥamîdun-Majîd. Allâhumma bârik ‘alâ Muḥammadin wa ‘alâ âli Muḥammadin kamâ bârakta ‘alâ Ibrâhîma wa ‘alâ âli Ibrâhîma, innaka Ḥamîdun-Majîd.*

O’ Allâh! Send prayers (grace, honour and mercy) upon Muḥammad, and upon the family of Muḥammad, as You sent

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<sup>1</sup> [Ḥadîth No. 1991, *Book of Funerals, Sunan an-Nasâ’î, Vol. 3*]

**CHAPTER 12**  
**HOW TO PERFORM THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

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prayers upon Ibrâhîm and upon the family (or the followers) of Ibrâhîm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy and Most Glorious. O' Allâh! Send blessings upon Muḥammad, and upon the family of Muḥammad, as You sent blessings upon Ibrâhîm and upon the family of Ibrâhîm. Indeed, You are Praiseworthy and Most Glorious.

- Make the third *takbîr*, and recite the *janâzah du'â'*. (If the *Imâm* chooses to make more *takbîrât*, one should supplicate for the deceased after each of the *takbîrât* following the first two.) The supplications should be done sincerely and truthfully since Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said:

“When you pray for the deceased, supplicate sincerely for him.”<sup>2</sup>

- Some of the supplications are:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ وَعَافِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنْهُ وَأَكْرِمْ نُزُلَهُ وَوَسِّعْ مَدْخَلَهُ وَاعْسِلْهُ  
بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ وَنَقِّهِ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا نَقَّيْتَ الثَّوْبَ الْأَبْيَضَ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ  
وَأَبْدِلْهُ دَارًا حَيْرًا مِنْ دَارِهِ وَأَهْلًا حَيْرًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَزَوْجًا حَيْرًا مِنْ زَوْجِهِ وَأَذْخِلْهُ  
الْجَنَّةَ وَأَعِذْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ (أَوْ: مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ).

*Allâhumma-ghfir lahu warḥamhu, wa 'âfihi, wa'fu 'anhu, wa akrim nuzulahu, wa wassia' mudkhalahu, waghsilhu bil-mâi' wath-thalji wal-baradi, wa naqqihi minal-khaṭâyâ kamâ naqqaytath-thawbal-abyaḍa minad-danasi, wa abdilhu dâran khayran min dârihi, wa ahlan khayran min ahlihi, wa zawjan khayran min zawjihi, wa adkhillul-jannata, wa a-'idh-hu min 'adhâbil-qabri (or: min 'adhâbin-nâr).*

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<sup>2</sup> [Abû Dâwûd, Ibn Mâjah, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]



**CHAPTER 12**  
**HOW TO PERFORM THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

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O' Allâh! Forgive him and have mercy on him, give him well-being and overlook his faults, make his place of rest a noble place and expand (the door of) his entrance (into Paradise), wash him with water, snow and hail, and purify him of his sins as a white dress is cleansed from dirt, replace his home with a better home, his family with a better family and his spouse with a better spouse. Admit him into Paradise and shelter him from the punishment of the grave (or: from the punishment of the Fire).<sup>3</sup>

Note – The pronouns change according to who is the dead person. If the dead person is a woman, the ending of certain words in this supplication change from 'hu' (masculine pronoun) to 'hâ' (feminine pronoun), like '*Allâhum-aghfir lahâ, warhamhâ*'. For more than one person, it is *Allâhum-aghfir lahum warhamhum*; for two persons it will be *Allâhum-aghfir lahumâ warhamhumâ*.

Some scholars say that it is not compulsory since one is praying for the dead person regardless of the gender.

or

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِحَيِّنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا وَشَاهِدِنَا وَغَائِبِنَا وَصَغِيرِنَا وَكَبِيرِنَا وَذَكَرِنَا وَأُنثَانَا.  
اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ أَحْيَيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَأَحْيِهِ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ تَوَفَّيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَتَوَفَّهُ عَلَى  
الْإِيمَانِ. اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَحْرِمْنَا أَجْرَهُ وَلَا نُضِلَّنَا بَعْدَهُ.

*Allâhum-aghfir li-hayyinâ, wa mayyitinâ, wa shâhidinâ, wa ghâ'ibinâ, wa saġhîrinâ wa kabîrinâ, wa dhakarînâ wa unthânâ. Allâhumma man ahyaytahu minnâ fa-ahyihî 'alal-Islâmi, wa man tawaffaytahu minnâ fa-*

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<sup>3</sup> [Muslim]

**CHAPTER 12**  
**HOW TO PERFORM THE JANĀZAH PRAYER**

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*tawaffahu ‘alal-îmâni. Allâhumma lâ tahrimnâ ajrahu wa lâ tuḍillanâ ba‘dahu.*

O’ Allâh! Forgive our living and our dead, those of us who are present and those of us who are absent, our young and old, our males and females. O’ Allâh! Whoever among us You keep alive, keep him alive upon Islam, and whoever among us You take away, take him in a state of *îmân* (faith). O’ Allâh! Do not deprive us of our reward (for supplicating for him), and do not misguide us after him. <sup>4</sup>

or

اللَّهُمَّ عَبْدُكَ وَابْنُ أُمَّتِكَ اِحْتِاجَ إِلَى رَحْمَتِكَ، وَأَنْتَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ عَذَابِهِ، إِنْ كَانَ  
مُحْسِنًا فَزِدْ فِي حَسَنَاتِهِ، وَ إِنْ كَانَ مُسِيئًا فَتَجَاوَزْ عَنْهُ.

*Allâhumma ‘abduka wabnu amatika ihtâja ilâ rahmatika, wa Anta ghanîyyun ‘an ‘adhâbihi, in kâna muhsinan fazid fi ḥasanâtihi, wa in kâna musî’an fatajâwaz ‘anhu.*

O’ Allâh! (This is) Your slave, son of Your female slave. He is in need of Your mercy and You are not in need of his torment. If he was good, multiply his good deeds, and if he was a transgressor, then pardon him. <sup>5</sup>

or

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ (فُلَانَ بْنَ فُلَانٍ) فِي ذِمَّتِكَ وَحَبْلِ جِوَارِكَ فَفَهِيَ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْقَبْرِ وَعَذَابِ  
النَّارِ وَأَنْتَ أَهْلُ الْوَفَاءِ وَالْحَقِّ، فَاعْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ.

*Allâhumma inna (fulâna-ibna fulânin) fi dhimmatika, wa ḥabli jiwârika, faqihi min fitnatil-qabri wa ‘adhâbin-nâri, wa Anta ahlul-wafâ’i wal-ḥaqqi. Faḡfir lahu warḥamhu innaka Antal-Ghafûrur-Raḥîm.*

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<sup>4</sup> [Aḥmad, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Ṣaḥîḥ Ibn Mâjah*]

<sup>5</sup> [al-Ḥâkim, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ’iz*]

**CHAPTER 12**  
**HOW TO PERFORM THE JANÁZAH PRAYER**

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O' Allâh! Verily (so and so, son of so and so) is in Your care and protection, holding to the rope that will take him close to You. Shelter him from the trial of the grave and the punishment of the fire. You are the One worthy of fulfilling the promises and establishing the truth, so forgive him and have mercy on him. Surely You are the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful. <sup>6</sup>

- If the deceased is a child below the age of puberty, the following supplications must be made, in addition to the above mentioned *du'â's*.

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ لَنَا فَرْطًا وَسَلَفًا وَأَجْرًا

*Allâhummaj'alhu lanâ farāṭan, wa salafan, wa ajran.*

O' Allâh! Make him for us one who prepares the way for us and precedes us (for which we are deserving of a reward), an advance provision (for the Hereafter) and a source of reward (i.e., an advanced and secured reward).<sup>7</sup>

If the deceased is a female child, say:

*Allâhummaj'alhâ lanâ farāṭan, wa salafan, wa ajran.*

- Make the fourth *takbîr*, and make a *du'â'* from the *sunnah* for the deceased, his family and the Muslim *ummah*.
- Make *taslîm* to the right (required), and to the left (optional).
- It is important to note that one should adhere to whatever he knows of the supplications for the *janâzah* reported in the *sunnah*, and not to replace them with other *du'â's* invented by the people.

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<sup>6</sup> [Abû Dâwûd, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Ṣaḥîḥ Ibn Mâjah*]

<sup>7</sup> [al-Bayhaqî, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]

**CHAPTER 13**  
**THE BURIAL**

82. The burial	138
83. The times when burying the deceased is not permissible	139
84. The two types of graves	139
85. Who can lower the deceased into the grave	142
86. The etiquettes of burial	143
87. Innovations related to burial	150

**82. THE BURIAL**

- After the funeral prayer the deceased should be taken to the Muslim cemetery. Muslims should not be buried besides non-Muslims, nor should non-Muslims be buried beside Muslims. Each should have their own separate graveyard. Even in death it is desirable to be in the company of pious people. Who would like to be sitting next to a person who is being tortured in a jail? Even if one is not being tortured himself, the sight of the other would not make one feel good. That is why Muslims must be buried in graveyards for Muslims and not amongst non-Muslims.

**CHAPTER 13**  
**THE BURIAL**

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- Burying the deceased in the coffin is not permitted unless it is a requirement that must be followed in a particular area or country; unless there is dire necessity, say, the body of the deceased is damaged, or for health reasons, or when the grave is wet and cannot be dried, burying in a coffin is not allowed.

**§3. THE TIMES WHEN BURYING THE DECEASED IS NOT PERMISSIBLE**

- It is not permissible to bury the dead at the three prohibited short times. They are:

1. When the sun is rising (i.e. the disc of the sun is clearly above the horizon, until it has become high (completely risen to a spear's height).

2. When the sun is at its peak i.e., noontime, until the sun declines (off the zenith).

3. When the sun approaches setting, until it completely sets.

- It is not recommended to bury the deceased during the night, unless there is a necessity for it. The reason for this is that the night burial may result in smaller number of people praying over the deceased, following his *janâzah*, and burying him; depriving a larger group of people from gaining the rewards for having performed these duties.

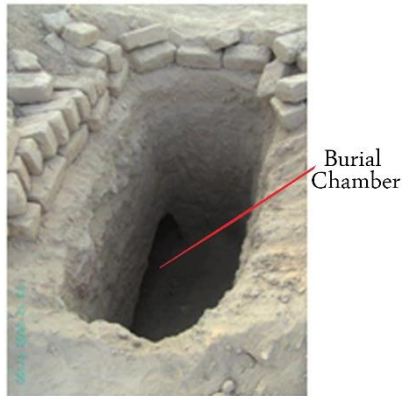
**§4. THE TWO TYPES OF GRAVES**

- In Muslim cemeteries, there are two types of graves:

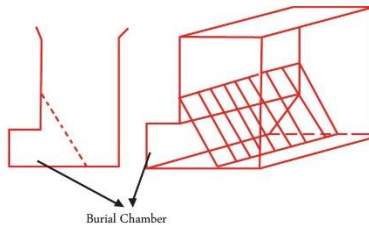
**CHAPTER 13**  
**THE BURLAL**

1. *Al-Laḥd* which is a crevice in the grave. This burial chamber is a horizontal hole (*laḥd*) dug in the direction of the *Qiblah* at the bottom of a deep vertical hole, big enough to accommodate the whole body. After the body is placed in the *laḥd*, bricks are placed behind it. The purpose of the *laḥd* is that, when the soil is filled into the grave, it does not fall directly over the body, but behind it. Both methods were in practice in the time of the Prophet ﷺ and with either method, the soil would not be filled in directly over the face or the body of the deceased.

**Pic 1 a: Al-Laḥd**



**Pic 1 b: Section and view of al-Laḥd**



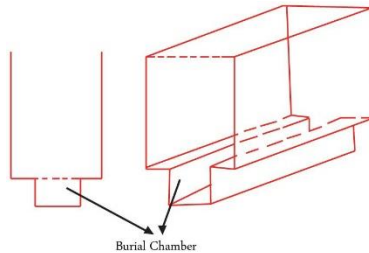
**CHAPTER 13**  
**THE BURIAL**

2. *Al-Shaqq* is a plain rectangular vertical hole in the ground. A shallow trench (burial chamber) is dug in the centre of it to fit the size of the deceased, and its sides are built with bricks so that it will not collapse on the deceased. The deceased is placed in the burial chamber on his right side facing the *Qiblah*, then this trench is covered with stones or bricks of unbaked clay i.e. dried mud bricks (*libn*) and the ceiling is raised a little so that it does not touch the deceased; then the soil is filled in. *Al-Shaqq* is made when the soft soil of the ground does not allow a *lahd* to be made.

**Pic 2 a: *Al-Shaqq***



**Pic 2 b: Section and view of *al-Shaqq***



- Both types are used, but it is preferable to use *al-laḥd* if the ground is firm and hard, because this is what was done with the grave of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In areas where the soil is very sandy and digging *al-laḥd* is not possible because the niche would collapse in on itself, *al-shaqq* is used.
- The grave should be always perpendicular (horizontal) to the direction of *Qiblah*.

### **§5. THOSE WHO CAN LOWER THE DECEASED IN THE GRAVE**

- It is preferable that only men should be responsible for the burial, even if the deceased is a woman. This was the custom from the time of the Prophet ﷺ and still is today.
- The deceased's relatives have the first right to lowering him into the grave.
- It is a condition for a man who enters the grave to bury the body not to have had recent conjugal relations with his wife. If the closest relatives do not fulfil this condition, others will have more right to burying the body, even if it were a woman's; and even if they were not her *maḥārim*.

Anas ibn Mālik related: "We were (in the funeral procession) of one of the daughters of the Prophet ﷺ and he was sitting by the side of the grave. I saw his eyes shedding tears. He said, 'Is there anyone among you who did not have sexual relations with his wife last night?' Abû Ṭalhâ replied in the affirmative. And so the



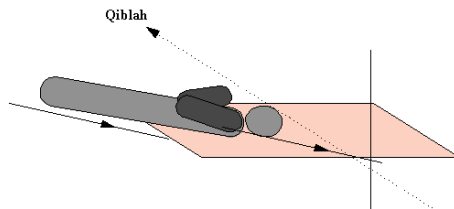
Prophet ﷺ told him to get down in the grave. And so he got down into her grave.”<sup>1</sup>

Based on this *ḥadīth*, it is better that a man who is in this condition does not enter the grave of a woman.

### **86. THE ETIQUETTES OF BURIAL**

- All those who are present should keep quiet and remember death, the Hereafter, and that one day they too will be buried.
- It is forbidden to sit on or walk between graves with slippers or shoes.
- Some scholars stated that the grave of a woman should be covered when she is placed in it, just in case the features of her body become apparent; but this is not obligatory. This covering should be left until the bricks are placed over her.
- The body should be entered into the grave lengthwise, head first, from the foot (rear) of the grave, which is the side where the deceased's feet will be.

**Pic 3: How to enter the deceased into the grave**



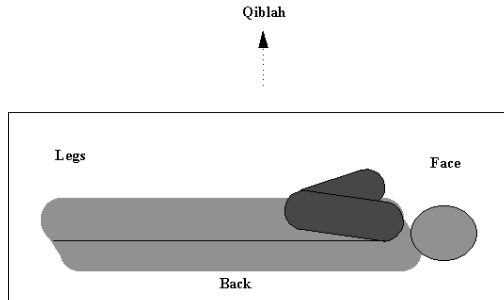
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<sup>1</sup> [al-Bukhārī]

## CHAPTER 13 THE BURIAL

- The body should be placed in the grave resting on its right side, facing the *Qiblah* and should be close to the wall and supported so that the body will not fall back.

**Pic 4: The deceased inside the grave**



The deceased lying on his/her right side in the grave, facing the *Qiblah*

- The tying ropes that were put around the shroud to hold it together at the head and feet should be untied. They were tied in case the shroud should fall open, but that is no longer a concern once the deceased has been buried.
- It is not from the *sunnah* to reveal the face of the deceased after putting the body in the grave.
- When placing the body in the grave, those handling the procedure are recommended to make a short *du'â'* mentioning Allâh's Name and also declaring that this is being done according to the teachings of Allâh's Messenger ﷺ by saying,

CHAPTER 13  
THE BURLĀL

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى سُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ.

*Bismillāhi wa ‘alā sunnati Rasūlillāhi.*

With Allāh’s Name, and upon the *sunnah* of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ.<sup>2</sup>

or

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ.

*Bismillāhi wa ‘alā millati Rasūlillāhi.*

With Allāh’s Name, and upon the religion of Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ.<sup>3</sup>

- Bricks are then placed behind the body, making sure to keep it facing the *Qiblah* with their help.
- A layer of wood or bricks (*libn*) should be placed above the body so that soil does not fall directly on the body when the grave is filled up with it. A straw mat is put over the bricks or wood and then the soil is put over it. The soil should not be filled in directly on the face or body of the deceased, whether the grave is a *lahd* or a *shaqq*, because in the *lahd* the deceased is placed in the niche which is dug in the wall of the grave, and the soil is not filled in above him. In the *shaqq*, the soil is filled above the roof of the *shaqq*, and not directly on top of the deceased.

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<sup>2</sup> [Abū Dāwūd, authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi’ aṣ-Ṣaḡhīr*]

<sup>3</sup> [Ibn Mājah, al-Ḥākim, authenticated by al-Albānī in *Aḥkām al-Janā’iz*]

Pic 5: Placing the bricks above the body



The *libn* – bricks secured at the bottom of the grave to prevent soil being filled directly on the body of the deceased

- After the *lahd* is closed with bricks and the grave is totally filled up, it is recommended for those by the grave to throw three double handfuls of soil into the grave.
- Some people recite the verse, “*From it We created you*” upon throwing the first handful of soil, and on the second handful “*and into it We shall send you back*” and on the third handful, “*and from it will We raise you a second time*”<sup>4</sup> as they throw the soil into the grave. Shaykh al-Albânî says in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ’iz* (1/153) that this *ḥadīth* is extremely weak.
- It is recommended to raise the grave by a hand’s span for that would make it distinctive and preserve it from disrespect and abuse. The top of the grave should be shaped into a mound and not flattened. This is done by using the extra soil remaining from digging after burying the body. This is to ensure that people show due respect by not stepping over the grave and so that people can

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<sup>4</sup> [Sûrah Ṭa Ha 20:55]

## CHAPTER 13 THE BURIAL

also visit the grave and know its location. In time the raised portion is naturally levelled as the earth settles.

- After completing the burial, it is recommended for those who are present at the grave-site, to stand near the grave for a while, supplicating and asking forgiveness for the deceased, as this is the time when he is being questioned by the angels. The following *du‘ā’* may be said,

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ، اللَّهُمَّ ثَبِّتْهُ.

*Allāhumma-aghfir lahu, Allāhumma thabbit-hu.*

O’ Allāh! Forgive him. O’ Allāh! Strengthen him.<sup>5</sup>

- It is not recommended to prompt the dead person to say things to the angels who would be questioning him.
- It is recommended to mark the grave with a rock or something similar without inscriptions, in order to bury other family members in the same vicinity. Putting an inscription on the grave containing the deceased person’s name and lineage or words of praise for him, or writing the Names of Allāh ﷻ or His Messenger ﷺ, or *āyāt* from the Qur’ān; all this is prohibited in Islam. Nevertheless, putting up some sort of a marker, like what the Prophet ﷺ did when he put a rock on the grave of ‘Uthmān bin Maz‘ūn ؓ, is permissible. The rock should be placed at the location of the head.

<sup>5</sup> [al-Ḥākim, authenticated by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Abū Dāwūd*, *Aḥkām al-Janā‘iz*]

Pic 6: Graves with markings



- Building structures over graves; raising, plastering, white-washing and adorning them is prohibited.

Jâbir رضي الله عنه said: “I heard the Prophet ﷺ forbid sitting on graves and plastering or building structures over them.” <sup>6</sup>

- Shoes must be taken off when walking between graves.
- Recitation of the Qur’ân should not be done over the body during funeral procedures.
- It is recommended though not obligatory, for those who carry and bury the body to take a bath after the burial.
- Angels attend the funerals of the righteous. The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said concerning Sa’d ibn Mu’âd رضي الله عنه: “Seventy thousand angels attended his funeral, and he was squeezed (in his grave) once, then he was released.” <sup>7</sup> Sa’d ibn Mu’âd رضي الله عنه was one of the

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<sup>6</sup> [Sunan Abû Dâwûd]

<sup>7</sup> [Sunan an-Nasâ’î]

illustrious *Ṣaḥābah* whose *imān* and contribution in fortifying Islam was particularly noteworthy. Allāh ﷻ held him in such high esteem that Allāh's Messenger ﷺ told us regarding him: "This is the one at whose death the Throne has shaken and for whom the gates of Heaven are opened." <sup>8</sup>

- It is not permissible to talk ill of the deceased Muslims or to mention their evil deeds. Allāh's Messenger ﷺ said: Do not abuse (revile) the dead because they have reached the result of what they forwarded." <sup>9</sup>
- In Islam every person dies at their appointed time, not a second less or more. As Muslims we don't believe in statements like "she died before her time" or "he died too young". Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ān:

*[“Allāh takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought.”]*<sup>10</sup>

- The grave is not the final abode. After it, will come the Last Day and there will be no day after it. The period of remaining in the graves is only a visiting/transitory period. The statement some people make without thinking or contemplating about its meaning that the deceased has reached his final abode is not right because

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<sup>8</sup> [Muslim]

<sup>9</sup> [al-Bukhārī]

<sup>10</sup> [Sûrah az-Zumar 39:42]

it implies the denial of Resurrection. Belief in Allāh ﷻ and the Last Day is one of the conditions of faith and Islam. It is obligatory to be aware of this and to know that it is forbidden to say such a thing.

- The deceased who were with us yesterday on the face of the earth, are now being held pawn in their graves for their deeds, which will be presented on their behalf on the Day of Judgement. They do not have any friends or comrades. Their only company is their deeds. Only one's deeds accompany him when in the grave; the good deeds of those who did good, and the bad of those who did bad. Hence, it is logical that one sorts out his life, before it is too late.

### **§7. INNOVATIONS RELATED TO BURIAL**

- Excessive talking in loud voices during the time of burial.
- Sprinkling rose water when placing the body and everybody covering the grave with sand reciting something.
- Recitation of the *shahādah* three times after covering the grave and sprinkling of water.
- Group *du'ā* after the *janāzah* prayer and *talqīn* after the burial after taking 40 steps.
- Decorating the *janāzah* and the grave with flowers.
- Transporting the *janāzah* along with the burning of *'ūd* (incense).
- Placing leaves upon the grave.



**CHAPTER 13**  
**THE BURLAL**

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- Distribution of salt, dates in the graveyard.
- Building structures over graves or placing gravestones to indicate the name and family of the dead.
- Visiting the grave after three days.
- *Fâtiḥah dâwat* on the 7<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup> days.
- Celebrating the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Sha‘bân* as the *‘Îd* of the dead.

Innovations in Islam and practices of the disbelievers should be prevented at the funeral. We must strive to have appearance and actions that reflect Islam in the best possible way and strive to spread and establish the religion of Islam. May we all become such righteous Muslims that our funerals are crowded with angels. May Allâh ﷻ make us among those who answer the questions in the grave correctly and may we be clothed with the garments of Paradise. O’ Allâh! Make us of those who love to meet You and whom You love to meet. *Âmîn yâ Rabb al-‘Âlamîn.*

**CHAPTER 14**  
**MOURNING**

88. Mourning – The do’s and don’ts	152
89. Wailing is a torment for the dead	154
90. Period of mourning	155
91. Period of mourning for a widow	155

**88. MOURNING – THE DO’S AND DONTS**

- Mourning over the dead is allowed in Islam, but there is a great difference between what is allowed in Islam and the practice of some Muslims in these present times. Weeping is natural and to be expected. Feeling sad, shedding tears and weeping quietly is permitted on the death of a loved one. It is natural to feel a sense of loss from which one automatically sheds tears. However, shouting wailing loudly, eulogizing (excessively praising the deceased), tearing one’s clothes, pulling one’s hair, and all such extreme displays of emotions of grief and anger from one’s hands and tongue are strictly forbidden. Such practices are acts of *kufr* (disbelief), because they indicate one’s displeasure with the decree of Allāh ﷻ.
- *Îmân* (faith) includes the belief that Allāh ﷻ is the source of all good and that all of His actions are wise. True *îmân* would never allow those who possess it to commit such acts of ignorance. No

## CHAPTER 14

### MOURNING

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amount of wailing or grieving can change the situation or bring the dead back to life. Therefore, Islam exhorts Muslims to deal with the death of a person with dignity, accepting Allâh's decree. Muslims are people of peace and peace can only be demonstrated through peaceful actions. Of the practices prevalent before Islam at the time of *jahiliyyah* (days of ignorance), was excessive wailing and lamenting for the dead. This was denounced by Islam and is strictly forbidden. These customs, however, are unfortunately still very prevalent amongst some Muslims today. Such conduct is not permitted in Islam as the believer is required to face bereavement, like all other trials of life, with patience. Also, inappropriate behaviour of other Muslims only prolongs the distress of the bereaved.

- When Ruqayya ﷺ, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ died and women started to cry, 'Umar ﷺ tried to stop them. On this the Prophet ﷺ said: "O' 'Umar, leave them alone and let them cry." To the women he ﷺ said: "Go ahead and cry, but avoid the crying of the *shaytân*. Whatever comes from your eye and heart is from Allâh and is a sign of mercy, and whatever comes from your hand and your tongue is from the *shaytân*." <sup>1</sup>
- Some people let their beards grow to show their sadness, then after several days shave it off. Others wear black clothes, or black ties. All of this has no basis in Islam. Growing the beard is *wâjib*, but not only when in sadness due to the death of someone. It is a

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<sup>1</sup> [Shaykh al-Arnâ'ût: This *ḥadīth* is *ṣaḥīḥ*. Ref: *Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. Vol. 3, Pg. # 345 - 346]

Muslim's duty to advise gently those who persist in such actions to avoid doing so since it is prohibited. No loss however great, should shake a Muslim's faith. They should however bear the loss with patience and accept Allâh's destiny.

### **89. WAILING IS A TORMENT FOR THE DEAD**

- The dead are tormented in their graves by the wailing of their family over them since Prophet ﷺ said:

“Verily the dead are tormented in their graves by the wailing of their family over them.”<sup>2</sup>

Torment is not the same as punishment. This is because the deceased person has not committed a sin that he should be punished for; but it is a torment in that he feels pain and discomfort from this crying and wailing that his family does. Feeling pain and discomfort does not necessarily mean that it is a punishment for a sin.<sup>3</sup>

Prophet ﷺ had said: “Travel is a piece of torment.”<sup>4</sup> What was meant was: travel is not a kind of punishment, but a person suffers because of exhaustion, the anxiety, the preparation and personal agitation. Similarly, wailing hurts the deceased so he feels some pain, agitation and discomfort, even though that is not a punishment for a sin; and this is a warning to the relatives and friends against doing so.

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<sup>2</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>3</sup> [Fatâwâ Islâmiyyah pg. 132]

<sup>4</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

### **90. PERIOD OF MOURNING**

- Those present and the relatives of a deceased Muslim may mourn him for three days only, though the memories of the deceased may last forever. It is permissible for a woman to mourn for a period of three days on the death of a near relative, provided that her husband does not object to her doing so. Crying is not a sin, but only for a maximum period of three days. This period is considered long enough for a person to immerse himself in grief and sadness. Islam emphasizes that death is not the termination of a person; rather it is the beginning of a journey, from a transient stop to an everlasting life.

‘Abdullâh ibn Ja‘far narrated that 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 my brother after today.”<sup>5</sup>

### **91. PERIOD OF MOURNING FOR A WIDOW**

- A widow may mourn her husband for four months and ten days. This period called the *‘iddah* (waiting period) which is prescribed by Allâh ﷻ in the Qur’ân:

*[“And those who are taken in death among you and leave wives behind - they, (the wives, shall) wait four months and ten (days).”]*<sup>6</sup>

- The *‘iddah* begins as soon as she learns of her husband’s death. It is an obligation towards the husband and is observed in

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<sup>5</sup> [Abû Dâwûd]

<sup>6</sup> [Sûrah al-Baqarah 2: from verse 234]

**CHAPTER 14**  
**MOURNING**

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obedience to Allâh ﷻ. Therefore, it is rewarded by Him as a righteous deed. *Iddah* is prescribed for the widow in order to grieve for and mourn the death of her husband and to fulfil any obligations toward him. This period is not to deprive herself of lawful things or to suffer more than what a human could bear. It is a time to recall all the memories of her husband, make *du‘â’* for him, think about herself and plan for the future.

- To protect her reputation from slander, it is not permitted to make a secret commitment of marriage with a widow during her mourning period or decide the time and place of a marriage contract during the prescribed period. Proposals of re-marriage should be entertained only after the mourning period is over. The defined time frame of a mourning period is also to safeguard the woman from criticism for re-marrying too quickly.
- The duration of the mourning period is to determine if the widow is pregnant or not, so as to prevent confusion of paternity of children in case the widow had conceived from her late husband and was to re-marry after his demise. The mourning period (*‘iddah*) of a pregnant widow ends with the delivery of her child,<sup>7</sup> whether it is more than four months and ten days or less. The period of four months and ten days is sufficient to detect pregnancy, since it is half the length of a normal pregnancy.
- Women are required to avoid all forms of beautification as a sign of mourning for their husbands and this does not contradict

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<sup>7</sup>[*Sûrah at-Talâq 65:4*]

**CHAPTER 14**  
**MOURNING**

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the recommendations for patience. During their *'iddah* they should not make any efforts to enhance their attractiveness by wearing colourful clothes or makeup. A widow should be extra modest in her appearance during this waiting period and even refrain from using fragrance; she must visibly be in a state of mourning and not give the society an opportunity to criticize or say anything negative about her. These are the commands of Allāh ﷻ which He has prescribed out of His love and wisdom for us.

- So, a woman during her *'iddah* should observe the following:
  - 1) She must remain in her house in which she was living when her husband died. She must not leave the house except due to necessity, such as visiting the hospital due to illness, buying what she is in need of from the market, such as food or other items, if she cannot find others to do these things for her.
  - 2) She must not wear any kind of attractive or beautiful clothing.
  - 3) She must not adorn herself with jewellery, gold, silver, diamonds, pearls or anything of that nature until her period of mourning is over. This is regardless of whether the jewellery is a bracelet, chain or ring.
  - 4) She must refrain from using perfume. The only exception to this is when she cleanses herself after her period. In that case, there is no harm if she applies some kind of incense. She should not use henna or saffron either on her clothing or in her coffee. This is because saffron is a kind of perfume and it is not permitted for her to perfume herself.

**CHAPTER 14**  
**MOURNING**

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- 5) She must not apply kohl which is a beautification of the eyes or make-up which is a beautification for the face. She can use water and soap to wash the face.
- 6) She cannot be proposed to.

She has to observe the above until her *'iddah* comes to an end.



**CHAPTER 15**  
**CONDOLENCE**

92.	Condolence	159
93.	How to offer condolence	160
94.	Up to when can condolence be offered	162
95.	Etiquettes of offering condolence	162
96.	Providing food for the family of the deceased	163
97.	Arranging gatherings for mourning and receiving condolences	164
98.	How to praise the deceased person	165

**92. CONDOLENCE**

• Condolence (*ta'ziyah*) is an important act of kindness; a sincere expression of sympathy that has been prescribed to console the family of dead to relieve them of their sorrows and alleviate their distress. The purpose behind the condolence is to make *du'â'* for the deceased and to remind the bereaved to be patient and forbid them from discontentment. Visiting the family and relatives of someone who has just passed away and to offer condolences, comfort, and sympathy to them is among the duties of a Muslim. It is a form of consolation, to share the grief of the family during these stressful moments and help to lighten the feelings of sadness and misfortune. It is also to gently remind the bereaved to be

patient and accept the Will of Allah ﷻ, encouraging them to be calm while trusting in Allâh’s promise of great reward. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur’ân,

*[... but give good tidings to the patient. Who, when disaster strikes them, say, “Indeed we belong to Allâh, and indeed to Him we will return.” Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the (rightly) guided.]*<sup>1</sup>

### **93. HOW TO OFFER CONDOLENCES**

- It is prescribed to give condolences to the family of the deceased (by reminding them of the reward if they remain patient and invoke for the deceased and the afflicted relatives of the deceased). Condolence also includes supplication for the deceased person. When we pray for the deceased to be forgiven and pardoned, they will receive the benefit of such prayers. This strengthens the relationships within the Muslim community.
- When we console people who are afflicted, we should say those words that will bring them comfort; words that strengthen them, help them bear their loss, making them patient, submitting to Allâh’s decree and make them hopeful of Allâh’s mercy towards the beloved one whom they lost. This is the point of offering condolences. It is not something we should do as a mere act of courtesy.

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<sup>1</sup> [Sûrah al-Baqarah 2: from verse 155, 156/7]

• Condolences should be offered in the manner reported from the Prophet ﷺ if we can remember them, otherwise with whatever good words that come easily to us. Carefully chosen words, said gently to convey sympathy must encourage the family and the relatives of the deceased to accept Allah's Will and help them return to their normal routine as soon as possible. The words should be chosen carefully and offered with sympathy. They should be aimed at lessening their agony by mentioning the reward of patience, the transitory nature of life on earth and that the Hereafter is the everlasting life. Care should be observed that even under the stress of extreme pain and grief, our tongues do not utter inappropriate comments, lest the virtues of patience and contentment be forsaken. As with everything we do in this world, we should always strive to seek the reward of Allah ﷻ, and remember to always show kindness, especially towards those affected by the death, as it is a pain too deep for one to bear alone. Prophet ﷺ said these words to console his daughter when a child of hers was dying, and he told her to have patience and to pray for reward from Allāh ﷻ.<sup>2</sup>

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا أَخَذَ وَلَهُ مَا أُعْطِيَ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى.

*Innā lillāhi mā akhadha, wa lahu mā a'ṭá, wa kullu shay'in 'indahū bi-ajalin musammá.*

Indeed, to Allāh belongs what He took, and to Him belongs what He gave. Everything is (recorded) with Him for an appointed term.

<sup>2</sup> [al-Bukhārī, Muslim]

– He then said,

فَلْتَصْبِرْ وَلْتَحْتَسِبْ. – *Faltasbir waltahtasib.*

So have patience and be rewarded.

- It is also permissible to offer any *du‘â* to them, such as:

أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ، وَأَحْسَنَ عَزَاءَكَ، وَعَفَّرَ لِمَيْتِكَ

*A‘zamallâhu ajraka, wa ahsana ‘azâ‘aka, wa ghafara li-mayyitika.*

May Allâh magnify your reward, make better your solace (relieve your distress with something better) and forgive your deceased.

Note: This is the saying of some of the scholars, not a *hadîth*.

#### **94. UP TO WHEN CAN CONDOLENCE BE OFFERED**

- Condolences may be offered to the family and to the relatives of the deceased before, during or after burial for up to three days, but it may be offered even at later time if someone did not hear about it or he was far away. Whenever there is benefit in giving condolences, then it is done. It is recommended to leave after offering condolences to give the family time to take care of their other affairs. Assistance may be offered for anything the family may need, and one may stay to help, if asked. It is not right to visit them frequently and sit for long periods of time there when there is no need to do so.

#### **95. ETIQUETTES OF OFFERING CONDOLENCE**

- Condolences can be offered at the *Masjid* when offering the *janâzah* prayer, at the graveyard, the street, the market place, the

house of the bereaved family, or even by simply calling them up and comforting them with words of solace and advice.

- When people have come to offer condolence, it is not from the *sunnah* to give each person a part of the Qur’ân and ask them to read it.
- Among the actions recommended at the time of offering condolences are to leave relatively quickly, unless the family requires and asks for assistance, and to prepare food for the grieving family.

### **96. PROVIDING FOOD FOR THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED**

- The *sunnah* is that the relatives and neighbours send food for the family of the deceased that will suffice them, because of them becoming preoccupied with the calamity. ‘Abdullâh bin Ja‘far رضي الله عنه said:

“When the news of the death of Ja‘far came when he was killed, the Prophet ﷺ said, ‘Prepare food for the family of Ja‘far because an affair which has preoccupied them has come to them.’”<sup>3</sup>

Sometimes, the family members of the deceased are embarrassed to ask for help and often neglect themselves while grieving. Support should be given to the family of the deceased in their grief and pain and they should be taken care of by simple acts such as providing assistance or bringing food, for they are too grieved or busy to do it for themselves.

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<sup>3</sup> [Ahkâm al-Janâ'iz]

- A common practice that has unfortunately crept into Muslim communities is that when a family member dies, the family of the deceased are burdened with preparing food for the guests, and it adds to their grief and further burdens them unnecessarily. The cultural or family practices which make the family of the deceased person prepare food and gather the neighbours and visitors to eat what they have prepared is not correct. The guests enjoy a feast in the name of the deceased! The scholars have agreed that it is disliked for the family of the dead to prepare food and gather people to eat it since this will keep them busy at the time of calamity, and this is what people before Islam (*jahiliyyah*) used to do. The believers who sincerely fear Allâh ﷻ and the Last Day must strive to absolutely abstain from all such innovations. Cultural and family practices should be abandoned and the customs of those whom Allâh ﷻ is pleased with should be adopted. The *sunnah* is in reality, the exact opposite to this practice; the culture of Muslims is to take food to the family of the deceased, and not expect to be fed. Prophet ﷺ recommended this practice for it is an act of virtue and kindness and brings friends and neighbours closer to each other.

### **97. ARRANGING GATHERINGS FOR MOURNING AND RECEIVING CONDOLENCES**

- It is not from the *sunnah* for the family of the deceased to go out of their way to make preparations to receive condolences by organizing and arranging for it like an event. The custom of organizing gatherings in the home, at the grave or in the *Masjid*

to give condolences to the family of the deceased is against the *sunnah* of the companions of the Prophet ﷺ.

Imâm ash-Shâfi‘î رحمه الله 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.”<sup>4</sup>

- Arranging a gathering for mourning on the day of death, or on the third day or on the fortieth day after death, or on the anniversary of the death, are abominable and heretical practices which people have introduced. The fortieth day gathering after death was originally a Pharaonic custom which was practised by the Pharaohs before Islam; then it spread from them to other nations. It is a reprehensible innovation (*bid’ah*) which has no basis in Islam. It is not permissible to take part in or attend such gatherings. We have to speak out against such practices. A Muslim should pray for his brother at all times, not only for three days after his death, or forty days or one year later, etc. It should be known that this is a custom of the *kuffâr* and it is not permissible for us to imitate them.

## 98. HOW TO PRAISE THE DECEASED PERSON

- Commemorating and eulogizing (praising highly in speech or writing) the dead in the manner that is done nowadays, when people gather for that specific purpose and exaggerate in praising the deceased is not permitted. This is because mentioning the attributes of the deceased usually involves boasting and provokes

<sup>4</sup> [al-Umm, vol.1, pg. 248, Ahkâm al-Janâ‘iz, al-Majmû’]

sorrow and grief. But simply speaking well of him when he is mentioned or when his funeral passes by, or mentioning his good deeds and so on, in a manner similar to the way in which the *Ṣahâbah* extolled those who were killed at Uḥud and others, is permissible.

May Allāh ﷻ make us among those Muslims who are caring and kind to others and are able to alleviate the grief, especially of those affected by death, as it is a pain too intense for one to bear by just himself. *Âmîn*.



**CHAPTER 16**  
**ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES**

99.	Benefit of visiting graves	167
100.	Etiquette when visiting graves	168
101.	Women visiting graves	170
102.	Visiting the grave of a disbeliever	171
103.	Innovations related to visiting graves	172

**99. BENEFIT OF VISITING GRAVES**

- Visiting graves in the legislated manner is a *sunnah* and has two benefits. Firstly, it reminds one of death and the Hereafter which makes one turn away from the world; a reminder for the visitor that every person will experience death and that we must start preparing for the eternal life after death. It directs us to *taqwa* (piety, God-consciousness). The sight of the graveyard should prompt us to contemplate on the shortness and temporary nature of this life and the closeness and eternity of the next.
- Prophet ﷺ said: “Visit graves, for verily doing so will remind you of the Hereafter.”<sup>1</sup>
- The second benefit is the visitor seeking the forgiveness of Allāh ﷻ for the deceased. Visiting the graves benefits the dead, since the visitors will make supplications for mercy, forgiveness and

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<sup>1</sup> [Muslim]

**CHAPTER 16**  
**ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES**

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safety from the Fire for the deceased. It is legislated for men to visit graves every now and then, to supplicate for the deceased, and to remember death and what comes after it.

**100. ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES**

- When someone dies, one should not let his heart remain too attached to the deceased and he should not make frequent trips back and forth to the grave. This will renew his grief and cause him to forget the remembrance of Allāh ﷻ. Of greatest concern is that when he is at the grave, he may be tested by evil whispers of Satan, wicked thoughts and superstitious beliefs.
  
- Visiting graves is subject to the condition that one does not say anything that will anger our Lord, such as calling upon the one who is buried or seeking his help instead of Allāh ﷻ. This is major *shirk* and takes a person out of Islam. For example, “Fulfil such and such demand, etc.”
  
- Visiting graves in order to invoke Allāh ﷻ by the gravesite is an innovation, and can turn into a *fitnah* (affliction) for the visitor. For instance, if Allāh ﷻ answers his *du‘ā*, he may think it was due to the blessing of the grave’s occupant; however we know that the occupant possesses nothing of this ability.
  
- Visiting graves to invoke Allāh ﷻ by the occupant; this involves putting the grave’s occupant as an intermediary between him and Allāh ﷻ. This is unlawful and could become major *shirk*, like invoking in this manner - “O’ Allāh, I ask You by the right of

**CHAPTER 16**  
**ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES**

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this occupant ...” or “Ask Allâh to fulfil my need and relieve my difficulty.”

- Visiting graves in order to agitate grief is not permissible. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taimiyyah رحمته الله said anything that agitates the affliction is from lamentation. For example, whenever a person remembers his beloved ones who have died, he visits their graves, and this may fall under lamentation.
- It is recommended to give the greetings of peace (*salâm*) every time we pass by the graves (of Muslims) and supplicate for forgiveness and well-being for all of them. Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ taught the *Ṣaḥâbah* (companions) to say this when they went to the graveyards:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ  
لَاحِقُونَ أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ.

*As-salâmu ‘alaikum ahlad-diyâri, minal-mu’minîna wal-muslimîna, wa innâ in shâ’ Allâhu bikum lâḥiqûn. As’alul-lâha lanâ wa lakumul-‘âfiyah.*

Peace be upon you, dwellers of these places, of the believers and Muslims. Certainly, we will – if Allâh wills – be joining you. I ask Allâh to grant well-being to us and you. <sup>2</sup>

or

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<sup>2</sup> [Muslim]

**CHAPTER 16**  
**ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES**

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السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ دَارَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ.

*As-salâmu ‘alaikum dâra qawmin mu`minîna wa innâ in shâ’ Allâhu bikum lâhîqûn.*

Peace be upon you, abode of believing people and certainly, we will – if Allâh wills – be joining you. <sup>3</sup>

- It is permissible to raise the hands when reciting this *du‘â’*, but we should not face the grave when making *du‘â’* for them; rather we should face the direction of the *Ka‘bah*.
- It is prohibited to offer *Ṣalâh* facing towards the graves.
- Among the etiquette required of those who visit graveyards is taking off their shoes when they want to walk between graves.
- It is prohibited to step over, lean, or sit on a grave.

### **101. WOMEN VISITING GRAVES**

• Visiting graves is legislated only for men. Women are forbidden from visiting the graves. At the beginning of Islam, visiting graves was not allowed for men and women alike, because the Muslims were new to Islam and came from a background of grave-worship, where visits to seek help from the dead and attachment to the dead were widespread. This is the reason why visiting the grave was prohibited in the early years of Islam. They were forbidden to visit graves as a preventative measure, to avoid evil and prevent *shirk*. But once Islam was well-established and the creed of *Tawhîd* was settled in people’s hearts and they understood

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<sup>3</sup> [Abû Dâwûd]

**CHAPTER 16**  
**ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES**

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Islam, Prophet ﷺ prescribed visiting the graves because of the lessons and reminders of death and the Hereafter involved in it and so that they could make *du‘ā* for the deceased and pray to Allah to bestow His mercy on them.

- Prophet ﷺ forbade women from visiting graves – according to the most correct of the two scholarly opinions, because their presence there might be a distraction to men and even to themselves, and because they have little patience and they get too upset.
- Hasân ibn Thâbit ؓ narrated: “The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ cursed women who frequently visit graves.”<sup>4</sup>

The Prophet ﷺ cursed women who visit graves, those who build mosques over them and erect lamps (over the graves).<sup>5</sup>

This *hadîth* proves that the act is a grave error as a curse is mentioned in connection with it.

### **102. VISITING THE GRAVE OF A DISBELIEVER**

- Visiting the grave of a disbeliever is permissible only with the intention of remembering death. As for visiting the graves of the Muslims, it is permissible with the intention of remembering death and making *du‘ā* for them.

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<sup>4</sup> [Ibn Mâjah]

<sup>5</sup> [Abû Dâwûd]

**CHAPTER 16**  
**ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES**

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- Although participation in the funeral rites of the disbelievers is not permitted, Muslims are allowed to visit their graves for reflection.
- Praying for those who die in a state of disbelief is totally prohibited. Prophet ﷺ was prevented by Allāh ﷻ from praying for his own mother at her funeral, because she and his father had died as polytheists.

Prophet ﷺ once visited the grave of his mother; he cried and made others around him cry as well. He ﷺ said: “I sought permission from my Lord to ask forgiveness for her, and He didn’t permit me, and I asked Him permission to visit her grave, and He permitted me; so visit graves for verily doing so reminds one of death.”<sup>6</sup>

### **103. INNOVATIONS RELATED TO VISITING GRAVES**

- Visiting the grave after three days, or forty days; or visiting the graves of parents every Friday; or on the anniversary of a person’s death, or visiting the grave on days such as *‘Īd* days, *‘Ashûrâ*’ day, *Ramaḍân* or in the middle of the month of *Shâ‘bân* is not from the *sunnah* of our Prophet ﷺ.
- Setting out on journeys to visit graves was specifically forbidden by the Prophet ﷺ. This practice forms the basis of idolatrous pilgrimages in other religions. He ﷺ forbade that graves be revered in any form, such as touching or rubbing the tombs of the righteous in the belief that blessings will be gained from the

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<sup>6</sup> [Muslim, *Abū Dâwūd*, *an-Nasâ’i*]

**CHAPTER 16**  
**ETIQUETTE WHEN VISITING GRAVES**

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act, taking them as places of worship, praying next to or before them, taking their sites as places of feasts and worshipping them.

- People put flowers, candles, wreaths, food, or perfume on the grave; this is a non-Muslim ritual and none of this will benefit the deceased.
- Reading the Qur'ân or *Sûrah Ya Sîn* during the visit to the cemetery, or praising the deceased and saying that he is for certain in Paradise, wiping hands over the grave, or kissing the grave is also not from the *sunnah* of our Prophet ﷺ.

May Allâh ﷻ have mercy upon all the deceased Muslims.  
*Âmîn.*

## **CHAPTER 17**

### **TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE**

104. Trials and punishments of the grave	174
105. Some reasons for the punishments in the grave	176
106. Who are protected from the torture of the grave	178

#### **104. TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE**

- When a person dies and his soul departs and he is placed in his grave, then he is in the first of the many stages of the Hereafter. The two angels who are assigned with questioning come to him and ask him what he used to believe in this world, who his Lord was, what his religion was and who his Prophet was. The two angels question the deceased in his grave only about matters of *Tawhîd* (monotheism) and *‘aqîdah* (belief). If he is able to answer correctly, that is good, but if he does not answer correctly, they inflict him with a severe and painful beating. If he was one of the righteous, angels with white faces come to him, but if he was one of the evildoers, angels with dark faces come to him. This is the *fitnah* or tribulation that he suffers. The grave is the first stage of trial and test and if one is saved from its punishment, what comes afterwards is easy.



**CHAPTER 17**  
**TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE**

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- The punishment of the grave or its pleasure is a reality established from the Qur'ân and authentic *sunnah*. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân:

*[Then why do you not (intervene) when (the soul of a dying person) reaches the throat?*

*And you at the moment are looking on,*

*But We (i.e. Our angels who take the soul) are nearer to him than you, but you see not,*

*Then why do you not, if you are exempt from the reckoning and recompense (punishment, etc.),*

*Bring back the soul (to its body), if you are truthful?*

*Then, if he (the dying person) be of the Muqarrabûn (those brought near to Allâh),*

*(There is for him) rest and provision, and a Garden of delights (Paradise).]<sup>1</sup>*

- Our Prophet ﷺ used to seek refuge in Allâh ﷻ from the punishment of the grave and he ordered his *ummah* to do so. The affairs of the Hereafter cannot be compared to the affairs of this world. Thus the punishment or pleasure found in the grave is not like that which can be perceived in this world. The torment of the grave is one of the matters of the unseen. How many people in these graves are being tormented but we do not realize it, and how many of their neighbours are being blessed with a door opened for them to Paradise, but we do not realize it? What is beneath the

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<sup>1</sup> [Sûrah al-Wâqi'ah 56:83-89]

**CHAPTER 17**  
**TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE**

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graves is known only to the Knower of the Unseen. The torment of the grave is one of the matters of the unseen, and were it not for the revelation that came to the Prophet ﷺ, we would not know anything about it.

Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said: "Verily, the dead are punished in their graves, and even the animals hear their screaming." <sup>2</sup>

Whenever 'Uthmân bin 'Affân ؓ stood over a grave, he would cry until his beard soaked. He was told: "You remember *Jannah* and the Fire without weeping, but you weep when you remember the grave." He replied: "Indeed, I heard Allâh's Messenger ﷺ say: "The grave is the first of the Hereafter's domiciles; if one passes through it safely, what follows will be easier; and if one does not pass through it safely what follows will be more horrible." And I heard Allâh's Messenger ﷺ say: "I have never seen a dreadful view but the grave is even more dreadful." <sup>3</sup>

**105. SOME REASONS FOR THE PUNISHMENTS IN THE GRAVE**

- Imâm ibn al-Qayyim in his book "*ar-Rûh*" stated: "Some of the reasons behind some people being punished in the grave is because of their ignorance concerning Allâh, their disobedience to Him and their committing what He prohibited. Allâh will not punish a soul which knew Him, loved Him, adhered to what He commanded and refrained from what He prohibited; nor will He punish the body in which such a soul was. The punishment in the grave and in the Hereafter is an indication of the wrath of Allâh

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<sup>2</sup> [at-Ṭabarâni, *Abû Nu'aym*, classified as authentic by al-Albâni in *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Jâmi'* 1965]

<sup>3</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, classified as authentic by al-Albâni in *Ṣaḥîḥ at-Targhib wat-Tarhîb*]

**CHAPTER 17**  
**TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE**

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upon His slave. The one who makes Allâh angry in this life and did not repent and dies while in that state, will be punished in the grave according to the extent he angered Allâh; some will be punished for a short while, and others for a long time.”

- The punishment of the grave is the result of the sins committed by the heart, the eyes, the ears, the mouth, the tongue, the stomach, the private parts the hands, the feet and the body as a whole. Some of the people and for what actions of theirs will the torture in the grave takes place, and which are reported in the *ṣaḥîḥ aḥadîth* are listed as follows:

- 1) A person to whom Allâh ﷻ taught the Qur’ân, but he slept and neglected it during the night and did not implement it during the day, and slept through the prescribed prayers. <sup>4</sup>
- 2) A liar who spreads lies which are carried from him in all directions.
- 3) Men and women who indulge in *zinâ’* (adultery).
- 4) One who takes *ribâ* (usury).
- 5) One who does not clean himself from traces of urine. <sup>5</sup>
- 6) One whose relatives wail over him (expressing dissatisfaction over Allâh’s decree). <sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [1-4 are listed in *aḥadîth* reported by Samurah in *al-Bukhârî*]

<sup>5</sup> [*al-Ḥâkim*, authenticated by *al-Albânî* in *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Jâmi’*]

<sup>6</sup> [*al-Bukhârî*, *Muslim*]

**CHAPTER 17**  
**TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE**

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7) One who spreads slander among people. <sup>7</sup>

8) A *kâfir* (disbeliever). <sup>8</sup>

- Let us be of those residents of the grave who rejoice for what they have earned of the good they had done while living. We should ponder over what we are doing in this life to prepare for death, to save us from the punishment of the grave, and that which will lead us to an eternal life. We should hasten to spend our remaining life in performing good deeds, becoming active worshippers, making repentance and gaining forgiveness from Allâh ﷻ. Performing good deeds will be a richly rewarding investment for us on the Day of Judgement. We are in this life to perform good deeds, yet we fall victim to laziness. Let us not be of those residents of the grave who grieve for not having done good deeds, who did not spend money in Allâh's cause and who did not use their time in the obedience and worship of Allâh ﷻ.

**106. WHO ARE PROTECTED FROM THE TORTURE OF THE GRAVE**

Our Prophet ﷺ has informed us through various *ahadîth* about the people who will be protected from the punishment of the grave. They are:

1) A *shahîd* (martyr). <sup>9</sup>

2) A person who stands guard in the battle for Allâh's cause. <sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>8</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>9</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, Ibn Mâjah, Ahmad, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Shahîh al-Jâmi'* 5182]

<sup>10</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, Ahmad, Abû Dâwûd, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Shahîh al-Jâmi'* 4562]

**CHAPTER 17**  
**TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE**

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3) A person who dies because of abdominal disease. <sup>11</sup> This reward will be for those who do not despair upon their sickness, but rather persevere through it and hope for the reward from Allāh

ﷻ.

4) A person reciting *Sûrah Tabâarak (Sûrah al-Mulk)* regularly. <sup>12</sup> This *ḥadîth* and others which carry the same meaning prove that those who regularly recite *Sûrah al-Mulk* and apply what is in it, will be rescued from the punishment in the grave.

Ibn Mas'ûd رضي الله عنه said: “(Angels) will come to a man in his grave; they will come to his feet and his feet will say: ‘You have no power over us; he used to recite *Sûrah al-Mulk*’. Then they will come to his chest or his stomach and it will say: ‘You have no power over me; he used to recite *Sûrah al-Mulk*’. Then they will come to his head and it will say: ‘You have no power over me; he used to recite *Sûrah al-Mulk*’. So it is the *mâni'ah* (protector) that protects against the punishment of the grave and it is referred to in the Torah as *Sûrah al-Mulk*; whoever recites it by night has done a great deal and has done well”. <sup>13</sup>

5) A Muslim who dies on the day or night of Friday. <sup>14</sup>

6) A person who avoids major sins.

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<sup>11</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz*]

<sup>12</sup> [al-Ḥâkim, authenticated by al-Albânî in *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Jâmi'* 3643]

<sup>13</sup> [Mustadrak al-Ḥâkim 3839, ṣaḥîḥ by adh-Dhahabî in *Talkhîṣ* and classed as *ḥasan* by al-Albânî in *Ṣaḥîḥ Targhîb* 1475]

<sup>14</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, *Aḥmad*, verified as *ḥasan* by al-Albânî in *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Jâmi'* 5773]

**CHAPTER 17**  
**TRIALS AND PUNISHMENTS OF THE GRAVE**

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- And Allâh ﷻ says:

*[Verily, those who say: “Our Lord is (only) Allâh,” and thereafter istaqâmû (i.e. stood firm and straight on the Islamic faith of monotheism by abstaining from all kinds of sins and evil deeds which Allâh has forbidden and by performing all kinds of good deeds which He has ordained), on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.]<sup>15</sup>*

May Allâh ﷻ save us from the trials of the grave. *Âmîn.*

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<sup>15</sup> [Sûrah al-Aḥqâf 46:13]

**CHAPTER 19**  
**DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD**

110.	The deeds of a person	201
111.	Deeds for which rewards will continue after death	203
112.	Deeds that benefit the dead	205

**110. THE DEEDS OF A PERSON**

- The life span of a Muslim is short, and a person's deeds are sealed at his death. Nothing that takes place after that can affect his records. The exception to the above rule is that anything good or bad that takes place after a person's death, to which he contributed in any manner during his lifetime, will appear in his records equal in proportion to his contribution. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân:

*[And that there is not for man except that [good] for which he strives.]<sup>1</sup>*

- The deeds a person does during his lifetime can benefit him or can cause him punishment in the Hereafter. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân:

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<sup>1</sup> [Sûrah an-Najm 53:39]

**CHAPTER 19**  
**DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD**

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*[And that is Paradise which you are made to inherit for what you used to do.]<sup>2</sup>*

And,

*[This (punishment) is because of that (evil) which your hands have sent before you. And certainly, Allâh is never unjust to (His) slaves.]<sup>3</sup>*

And,

*[And truly you have come unto Us alone (without wealth, companions or anything else) as We created you the first time. You have left behind you all that which We had bestowed on you.]<sup>4</sup>*

This means: “All means and resources which the people had on earth will become non-existent except for their good and bad deeds. These deeds will indeed be the resource/provision of the Hereafter. All blessings and punishments of the Hereafter will be based on this currency, i.e. the deeds. On that Day, only deeds will offer benefit and only deeds will offer loss. Everything besides one’s deeds, such as family and children, wealth and property, friends and followers will be of no value on that fateful Day.”<sup>5</sup>

- So, it is the duty of a Muslim to utilize what Allâh ﷻ has granted him in this life to gain the benefit of the Hereafter, for Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur’ân:

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<sup>2</sup> [Sûrah az-Zukhruf 43:72]

<sup>3</sup> [Sûrah Âli ‘Imrân 3:182]

<sup>4</sup> [Sûrah al-An’âm 6: from verse 94]

<sup>5</sup> [Tafsîr as-Sa’dî]



**CHAPTER 19**  
**DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD**

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*[But seek, with that (wealth) which Allâh has bestowed on you, the home of the Hereafter, and forget not your portion of legal enjoyment in this world, and do good as Allâh has been good to you, and seek not mischief in the land.]*<sup>6</sup>

This means, “seek the rewards in the Hereafter (Paradise) by utilizing what Allâh ﷻ has granted you in this life”. It is like saying, “Do not leave all your wealth behind to be used for your funeral.”

**111. DEEDS FOR WHICH REWARDS WILL CONTINUE AFTER DEATH**

- A Muslim may continue to earn rewards for certain things that he initiated in his lifetime, even after his death. Whatever he has left behind him and which reaches him, are righteous deeds, continuous charities etc. as stated by Allâh ﷻ,

*[Indeed, it is We who bring the dead to life and record what they have put forth and what they left behind, and all things We have enumerated in a clear register.]*<sup>7</sup>

Prophet ﷺ said: “After the death of a person his actions stop, except three things that he leaves behind: first, continuous charity; second, a knowledge (of Islam) from which some benefit may be obtained; third, a righteous child who makes *du‘â’* for him.”<sup>8</sup>

Prophet ﷺ said “... a righteous child who will pray for him,” because the righteous child is more likely to have his *du‘â’* answered than a child who is not righteous, even though everyone

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<sup>6</sup> [Sûrah al-Qaşaş 28: from verse 77]

<sup>7</sup> [Sûrah Ya Sîn 36:12]

<sup>8</sup> [Muslim]

**CHAPTER 19**  
**DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD**

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is required to make *du‘â* for his parents. But if the child is righteous then his *du‘â* for his parents is more likely to be answered. A righteous child is considered to be part of the parent’s earnings. Parents will benefit from whatever righteous deeds their children do, without decreasing the reward of their children’s good deeds. The duty of a child towards his parents after their death is to supplicate Allâh for them, ask Allâh to forgive them and bestow His mercy upon them.

Regardless of all the property and family a person has, he leaves it all behind and none of it will avail him except the prayers from his family and whatever of his wealth he has kept for continuous charity etc. One’s family may or may not pray for him, and the wealth which he once possessed cannot avail him in any way once he is in his grave – except for the portion he kept for himself, for his Hereafter; and it will be part of the deeds which shall accompany him in his grave. The rest of his property, no matter how much or little it may be, will only go to his inheritors. So, the good deeds that are rewardable for a Muslim after his death are deeds such as beneficial knowledge, a righteous child who prays for him, continuous charity like a *Masjid* that he built, as long as its benefit exists; teaching the Qur’ân to another person, a house he built for public use, a water fountain that he provided free for people, or a charity that he gave during his life while he was in good health etc.

### **112. DEEDS THAT BENEFIT 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. Though the following *ḥadīth* specifies four Muslim witnesses, other *ḥadīth* have mentioned three and even two witnesses.

Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “For any Muslim who dies and four of his close neighbours testify that they have known him to be good, Allāh, the Blessed, the Highest says, ‘I have accepted your testimony and forgive him for what you do not know (about him).’”<sup>9</sup>

- Supplication of a Muslim for the deceased, if the conditions of acceptance are fulfilled, is answered. Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur’ān, *[And those who came after them say: ‘Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful.]*<sup>10</sup>

Prophet ﷺ said, “The supplication of a Muslim for his brother in his absence is answered; by his head is an appointed angel; everything that he supplicated for his brother with good, the appointed angel with him says, ‘*Āmīn* and for you with same.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [Aḥmad and authenticated by al-Albānī in *Aḥkām al-Janā’iz*]

<sup>10</sup> [Sūrah al-Hashr 59:10]

<sup>11</sup> [Muslim, Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd]

**CHAPTER 19**  
**DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD**

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When the Prophet ﷺ finished burying someone who had died, he would stand over him and say:

“Pray for forgiveness for your brother, and ask that he may be made steadfast, for even now he is being questioned.”<sup>12</sup>

- When Muslims perform the *janâzah* prayer for their deceased brother, they are granted intercession for him. The more the number of Muslims who join in the prayer, the more beneficial it is for the deceased.

Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “Whenever a (Muslim) person dies, and a group of (Muslim) people pray *janâzah* for him, they are granted intercession for him.”<sup>13</sup>

- Also, most of the supplication in the funeral prayer is for the dead (person) and seeking forgiveness for him.

Ibn al-Qayyim رَحِمَهُ اللهُ said: “The fact that the dead benefit from *du‘â’s* is indicated by the consensus of the *ummah* on offering *du‘â’* for him during the *janâzah* (funeral) prayer, hence we know that *du‘â’* benefits the deceased. This is supported by many *ahadîth* and is in fact is the whole point of praying for the deceased. The same applies to making *du‘â’* for him after the burial, and making *du‘â’* for him when visiting his grave.”<sup>14</sup>

- When we make *istighfâr* (asking forgiveness) on behalf of our deceased parents, grandparents and great-grandparents asking

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<sup>12</sup> [Abû Dâwûd 3221]

<sup>13</sup> [an-Nasâ’î, verified as *hasan* by al-Albânî in *Şahîh al-Jâmi’*]

<sup>14</sup> [ar-Rûh 118, 119]

**CHAPTER 19**  
**DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD**

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Allāh ﷻ to forgive their sins and keep them in comfort and happiness, we would be of those who appreciate and return favours. They may have made a lot of *du‘ā’s* for us and our well-being during their lifetime. Prayers for forgiveness offered by both sons and daughters of the deceased bring great benefits, as the Prophet ﷺ said:

“A man’s status will be raised in Paradise and he will ask, ‘How did I get here?’ He will be told, ‘By your son’s *du‘ā’s* asking forgiveness for you.’”<sup>15</sup>

The most important thing that will benefit the parent after his death are his childrens’ *du‘ā’s* that ask for forgiveness and mercy for him, for Paradise and salvation from the Fire, and other meaningful *du‘ā’s*.

- 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 part of the parent’s earnings.

Shaykh al-Albānî رحمه الله said: “Whatever righteous deeds the righteous son does, his parents will have a reward like his, without it detracting from his reward in the slightest, because their child is part of their striving and earning. Allāh ﷻ says:

*[And that man can have nothing but what he does (good or bad)].*<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> [Ibn Mājah, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi‘ aṣ-Ṣaḥīr*]

<sup>16</sup> [an-Najm 53:39]

## CHAPTER 19

### DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD

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The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “The best that a man can benefit from is that which he earns, and his son is also part of his earnings.”<sup>17</sup>

- A deed that may reach the deceased is *sadaqah* (charity) given on his behalf by his children, because ‘Â’ishah رضي الله عنها reported that a man said to the Prophet ﷺ:

“My mother has passed away, and if she could have spoken, she would have given something in charity. Will she receive a reward if I give something on her behalf?” He said, “Yes.”<sup>18</sup>

- Prophet ﷺ had mentioned five ways to benefit our parents after their death. They are as follows:

- 1) Invoke Allâh for them.
- 2) Supplicate for their forgiveness.
- 3) Fulfil their promises (to others) after their death.
- 4) Maintain the ties of kinship that one has through them.
- 5) And honour their friends.<sup>19</sup>

- Other deeds that may also benefit the deceased are *Hajj* and *‘Umrah* on their behalf, after the living person has first performed *Hajj* and *‘Umrah* on his or her own behalf.

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<sup>17</sup> [Abû Dâwûd, 2/108; an-Nasâ’î, 2/211, narrated and classified as *hasan* by at-Tirmidhî, 2/287 - *Aḥkâm al-Janâ’iz*, p. 216, 217]

<sup>18</sup> [al-Bukhârî, *Fath* 1388]

<sup>19</sup> [Abû Dâwûd]

**CHAPTER 19**  
**DEEDS THAT BENEFIT THE DEAD**

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The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ heard a man saying “*Labbayka ‘an Shubrumah*” (At your service, O’ Allāh, on behalf of Shubrumah). The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said, “Who is Shubrumah?” He said, “A relative of mine.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “Have you ever done *Hajj* before?” He said, “No.” he said, “Do this *Hajj* for yourself, then do *Hajj* on behalf of Shubrumah.”<sup>20</sup>

- Fasts missed by the deceased, either from *Ramaḍān* or from a vow (*naḍr*) may be done on his behalf by his *waliyy* (close relative/guardian).

‘Ā’ishah رضي الله عنها reported that Allāh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “Whoever dies while he has a fasting to fulfil (as a vow), his *waliyy* should fast for him.”<sup>21</sup>

- Paying the debts of the deceased is also one of the best ways his family can help him. 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 relieving them some of the punishment which was due to their negligence in repaying them. It must be done before the distribution of any inheritance, even if it exhausts the entire amount.

May Allah makes of us those who avoid all types of wrong and evil which Allāh ﷻ and our Prophet ﷺ told us to avoid, and may we not delay or postpone doing good deeds since we do not know when death will come. *Āmīn*.

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<sup>20</sup> [Abū Dāwūd, 1811; Ibn Mājah, 2903 – this version was narrated by him. The ḥadīth was classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Albānī in *Irwā’ al-Ghalīl*, 4/171]

<sup>21</sup> [al-Bukhārī, Muslim]

**CHAPTER 18**  
**SIGNS OF A GOOD AND BAD END**

107. Types of ending	181
108. Signs of a good end	182
109. Signs of a bad end	194

**107. TYPES OF ENDING**

- This worldly life consists of numerous dwellings for man. Yet in the Hereafter, there are only two places of destination: Paradise and Hell. Likewise, one's ending can only be categorized as two: a good ending and a bad end ending. *Husn al-khâtimah* means "a good ending" and *sû' al-khâtimah* means "a bad ending". These terms do not refer to what a person has been doing all his life or how they appeared in the sight of others, but rather it refers to their state when they finally leave this world. The final state of a person at the time of death is what truly matters in the Hereafter.

Prophet ﷺ said; "Indeed, a man will perform the deeds of the people of Paradise, as it appears to people, yet he is from the people of the Hell-Fire. And indeed a man will perform the deeds of the people of Hell-Fire, as it appears to the people, yet he is from the people of Paradise." <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]



The Companions *رضي الله عنهم* always remained concerned, primarily about how they would be viewed by Allâh regarding their actions. ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb رضي الله عنه who was one of the closest companions of the Prophet ﷺ would often say: “Have I been regarded (by Allâh) as a hypocrite? He would ask if his name was included in the list of hypocrites that was given to Huzaifah رضي الله عنه by the Prophet ﷺ. He was constantly worried despite having to his credit so many acts of worship and so many conquests. ‘Umar رضي الله عنه knew that it is the inner dimensions of a person that matters and not the actions; and that one should perfect the former.

### **108. SIGNS OF A GOOD END**

- A person who dies with a good ending (*ḥusn al-khâtimah*) is re-assured by the angels that good awaits him. He died with faith in Islam and his good deeds will benefit him all the more. A good end means that a person was guided before his death to keep away from that which angers Allâh ﷻ, to repent from his sins, to focus on doing acts of worship and good deeds; and then he died in this good state. If Allâh wishes good for someone, He guides him to perform good deeds when He is about to take his life. One of the indications of this is the narration of Anas ibn Mâlik رضي الله عنه who said: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said:

“When Allâh wills good for His slave, He uses him. They said, “How does He use him?” He said, “He guides him to do good deeds before he dies.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [Ahmad 11625, at-Tirmidhî 2142, classified as *ṣaḥîḥ* by al-Albânî in *Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥîḥah* 1334]

**CHAPTER 18**  
**SIGNS OF A GOOD AND BAD END**

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A man asked, “O’ Messenger of Allâh! Are the people of Paradise known from the people of the Fire? He replied, “Yes”. The man then said, “Why then do people do good deeds? He replied, “Everyone will do the deeds which he was created to do or he will do the deeds made easy for him to do.”<sup>3</sup>

When Allâh ﷻ wills good for a person, He gives him the ability to perform acts of goodness for his *dîn* before he dies. These actions will then be a means of acceptance for the individual in the sight of Allâh ﷻ and thus he will leave this world with a good end.

- A good end comes only to those who are both inwardly and outwardly upon the straight path, and an evil end comes to those who are corrupt and sinful, remaining so until they die without repenting. One who is upon the straight path but regresses by straying away from it and committing sins will also have an evil end.

Ibn Kathîr رحمته said: “People who are righteous inwardly and outwardly and whose actions coincide with their words, Allâh willing, will not have an evil way to end their lives; and never was this reported about anyone before. It is only those who are evil inwardly and outwardly; those who are daring and indulge in major sins and who are frequent in committing minor sins; this type of people, who are used to this practice will continue to do so until they die without repenting.”

- In this world, a person’s actions are considered as good or bad based on how he is perceived by other people and another person’s

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<sup>3</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

**CHAPTER 18**  
**SIGNS OF A GOOD AND BAD END**

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actions are considered evil based on how he is viewed by others. However, there is something hidden inside the individual that eventually overcomes him at the time of death, which is why our Prophet ﷺ said that what is really taken into consideration is the final state of an individual at the time of death.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Do not be delighted by the action of anyone until you see how he ends up.”<sup>4</sup>

This is why our right predecessors رضى الله عنهم feared their ends because no one knows how his life will end and in what state he will depart. We can never tell if a person is of the people of Paradise or of the Fire based on his good or bad deeds, as we do not know what his final action before his death will be. Instead, we should hope for Allāh’s mercy for him and fear for him because of his actions. We do not know what has been destined for him at the time of death as regards to repentance. Hence, we should pray and hope that something good has been destined for him at the time of his death. We should also pray for a death in the state of Islam for ourselves too.

- Allāh ﷻ tests His servant even as he draws his last breath. Life and death are a test to see who would strive to be the best in deeds. It is only the fear of Allāh ﷻ, the love for Allāh ﷻ and a strong *îmân* which will protect a believer during this traumatic experience; and he successfully completes his test on earth – by

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<sup>4</sup> [Ahmad, ibn Abî 'Asim in *as-Sunnah* 347/353, *ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Albânî in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* 1334]

**CHAPTER 18**  
**SIGNS OF A GOOD AND BAD END**

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living **and** dying in a state pleasing to the Creator. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân:

*[(He) who created death and life to test you (as to) which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving.]<sup>5</sup>*

The signs of a good end that appear to the dying person, are those that give him the glad tidings as he is dying, that Allâh ﷻ is pleased with him, as Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân:

*[Indeed, those who have said, 'Our Lord is Allâh' and then remained on a right course - the angels will descend upon them, (saying), 'Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.']<sup>6</sup>*

These glad tidings come to the believers when they are dying, as indicated by the *ḥadīth* from the Mother of the Believers 'Ā'ishah رضي الله عنها, who said:

“The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: ‘Whoever loves to meet Allâh, Allâh loves to meet him, and whoever hates to meet Allâh, Allâh hates to meet him.’ I said, ‘O’ Prophet of Allâh, do you mean hating death, for all of us hate death?’ He said, ‘It is not like that; but when the believer is given the glad tidings of the mercy and pleasure of Allâh, and His Paradise, he loves to meet Allâh; and when the *kâfir* is given the tidings of the wrath and punishment of Allâh, he hates to meet Allâh, and Allâh hates to meet him.’”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [Sûrah al-Mulk 67:2]

<sup>6</sup> [Sûrah Fuṣṣilat 41:30]

<sup>7</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

Imâm an-Nawawî رحمه الله said: “What this *hadîth* means is that the love and hate that are referred to here are those that happen when one enters the stage in which repentance is not accepted, where the dying person is told of his situation and he is shown his destiny.”

A good end is when one (a Muslim) dies while fasting, performing *Hajj*, praying; while in *jihâd* i.e. when he dies while doing a righteous deed. There are certain signs, which indicate the good end of a dying person, which the scholars have derived from the texts which speak of it. If any person dies with one or more of these signs, then that is glad tidings for him/her. Some of them are the signs on the face or body of the deceased; contentment or satisfaction at the time of death, evidenced by a smile on the face of the person regardless of the way in which he has died in; his raised index finger; or the shine on his face from hearing glad tidings from the Angel of Death. But even if we see the good signs it is not permissible for humans to designate certain people as being of the people of Paradise because these are matters of *ghayb* (unseen) which only Allâh ﷻ knows best.

The signs of a good ending include the following:

1. Pronouncing the *shahâdah* at the time of death.

Prophet ﷺ said: “A person whose last words are ‘*Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh*’ (There is none worthy of worship in truth except Allâh) will enter Paradise.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> [Abû Dâwûd, al-Hâkim, classified as *hasan* by al-Albânî – *Ahkâm al-Janâ'iz*]

2. Sweating of the forehead at the time of death.

Al-Buraydah ibn al-Husayb رضي الله عنه said: “I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say, “The believer dies with sweat on his forehead.”<sup>9</sup>

3. Death on the night or day of *Jumu‘ah*.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “There is no Muslim who dies on the day of Friday or the night of Friday, but Allāh will protect him from the trial (*fitnah*) of the grave.”<sup>10</sup>

4. Dying as a fighter while striving for the sake of Allāh (*fi sabīlillāh*). Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur’ān:

*[And never think of those who have been killed in the cause of Allāh as dead. Rather, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision. Rejoicing in what Allāh has bestowed upon them of His bounty, and they receive good tidings about those [to be martyred] after them who have not yet joined them – that there will be no fear concerning them, nor will they grieve. They receive good tidings of favour from Allāh and bounty and (of the fact) that Allāh does not allow the reward of believers to be lost.]*<sup>11</sup>

5. One of the best examples indicating a good end is to die while on a military expedition for the cause of Allāh ﷻ.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever is killed for the sake of Allāh is a martyr, and whoever dies for the sake of Allāh is a martyr.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> [Ahmad, at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā’ī, classified as authentic by al-Albānī – *Aḥkām al-Janā’iz*]

<sup>10</sup> [Ahmad, at-Tirmidhī, classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Albānī – *Aḥkām al-Janā’iz*]

<sup>11</sup> [Sūrah Āli ‘Imrān 3:169-171]

<sup>12</sup> [Muslim]

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “A martyr (*shahîd*) is awarded seven favours by Allâh; he is forgiven by the first gush of blood, shown his position in *Jannah*, protected from the torment of the grave, saved from the great fear (on the Judgement Day), adorned with the adornments of faith (*îmân*), married to *al-Hûr al-‘Ayn* (fair women of *Jannah*), and allowed to intercede for seventy of his relatives.”<sup>13</sup>

6. Dying while defending one’s religion, one’s wealth, household or one’s life.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever is killed defending his wealth is a martyr; whoever is killed defending his household is a martyr; whoever is killed defending his religion is a martyr; whoever is killed in self-defence is a martyr.”<sup>14</sup>

7. Dying guarding the Muslims’ frontiers for the sake of Allâh.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “Guarding the borders of Islam for one day and one night is better than fasting and praying at night for a whole month, and if he dies (while performing this duty), he will go on receiving the reward for this great deed and he will be provided with provisions (continually), and he will be spared from the questioning in the grave.”<sup>15</sup>

8. One of the signs indicating that the person died whilst having a good end is dying when or immediately after performing a

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<sup>13</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, *Aḥmad*, classified as authentic by *al-Albânî – Aḥkâm al-Janâ’iz*]

<sup>14</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, *Aḥmad*, classified as authentic by *al-Albânî – Aḥkâm al-Janâ’iz*]

<sup>15</sup> [Muslim]

righteous deed in obedience to Allâh ﷻ (i.e. this should be the last thing one did).

Prophet ﷺ said: Every servant (*'abd*) will be resurrected upon the same thing upon which he died.”<sup>16</sup>

Prophet ﷺ said “Whoever says *'Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh'* seeking the Countenance of Allâh thereby, and that is the last of his deeds, will enter Paradise; whoever fasts one day seeking the Countenance of Allâh, and that is the last of his deeds will enter Paradise; whoever gives charity seeking the Countenance of Allâh, and that is the last of his deeds will enter Paradise.”<sup>17</sup>

9. To die in the state of *iḥrâm* which entitles the person to a great reward.

Prophet ﷺ said about the companion who died as a result of his she-camel kicking him whilst in the state of *iḥrâm* (for either *Ḥajj* or *'Umrah*): “Wash him with water and (the leaves of) the lote tree, and shroud him with two sheets and do not cover his head for he will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection saying the *ṭalbiyah*”.

10. A good indication of a good ending is when righteous Muslims who knew the deceased well and were among his neighbours, testify to others about the good qualities of the deceased. This is also a means of encouraging others to do good deeds. Prophet ﷺ

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<sup>16</sup> [Muslim]

<sup>17</sup> [Aḥmad, classified as authentic by *al-Albânî – Ahkâm al-Janâ'iz*]



encouraged this practice and pointed out that such praise is of benefit to the dead person.

Once when some Muslims passed by a funeral, they praised the deceased in a good way. Upon hearing them, Prophet ﷺ said, “It has become binding”. Then they passed by another funeral and they described the dead person as having bad qualities. So Prophet ﷺ said, “It has become binding”. Then, ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ asked, “What has become binding?” He ﷺ answered, “This one you praised in a good way, so Paradise has become binding for him. And this one you evaluated as being bad, and so the Fire became binding for him; You are Allāh’s witnesses on His earth.”<sup>18</sup>

11. To die because of any one of these diseases. They are:

1) Plague.

Prophet ﷺ said: “The plague is martyrdom for every Muslim.”<sup>19</sup>

Also ‘Ā’ishah ؓ, wife of the Prophet ﷺ said: “I asked the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ about the plague, and he told me that it is a punishment that Allāh sends upon whomsoever He wills, and that Allāh has made it a mercy for the believers, for there is no one who stays in his land at the time of a plague, bearing that with patience and seeking Allāh’s reward, knowing that nothing will befall him but that which Allāh has decreed for him; but he will be given a reward like that of a martyr.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> [al-Bukhārī, Muslim]

<sup>19</sup> [al-Bukhārī, Muslim]

<sup>20</sup> [al-Bukhārī]

2) Diseases of the stomach.

Prophet ﷺ said: “He who is killed by (disease in) his abdomen will not be tortured in his grave.”<sup>21</sup>

Prophet ﷺ said: “He who dies of a stomach disease is a martyr.” (i.e. he will be given a reward equal to that of a fight martyr)<sup>22</sup>

3) Pleurisy (inflammation of the membrane around the lungs).

Prophet ﷺ said: “The martyrs other than those being killed in Allah’s cause are of seven (kinds): the one who dies because of plague is a martyr, the one who dies by drowning is a martyr, the one who dies because of pleurisy is a martyr, the one who dies because of abdominal diseases is a martyr, the one who dies because of burns is a martyr, the one who dies under a collapsed building is a martyr, and the (Muslim) woman who dies with a child in her womb is a martyr.”<sup>23</sup>

“*Al-Maṭ‘ûn* is the one who dies of the plague. The one who drowns is a martyr if his journey was for a permissible purpose. The one who dies of pleurisy – this refers to pain in a person’s side, the pain of which ceases at the time of death. One of its signs is pain under the ribs and difficulty in breathing, along with constant fever and coughing. It is more common in women,

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<sup>21</sup> [Aḥmad, *an-Nasâ’i*, classified as authentic by *al-Albâni – Ahkâm al-Janâ’iz*]

<sup>22</sup> [Part of the next *ḥadīth*]

<sup>23</sup> [Aḥmad, *Abû Dâwûd*, *an-Nasâ’i*, classified as authentic by *al-Hâkim*, *adh-Dhahabî*, and *al-Albâni – Ahkâm al-Janâ’iz*]

according to al-Qârî. *Al-Mabtûn* (the one who dies of a stomach disease) refers to diarrhoea or dropsy or pain in the stomach. The one who is burned to death refers to one who dies in a fire. The one who dies beneath a collapsed building – this refers to being crushed to death by a falling wall and the like. The woman who dies in pregnancy – al-Khaṭṭâbi said: ‘What this means is if she dies with a child in her womb.’”<sup>24</sup>

4) Tuberculosis.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Being killed for Allah’s cause is a martyr, dying because of delivery is martyrdom (for any Muslim woman), death by burning is martyrdom, death from drowning is martyrdom, death by tuberculosis is martyrdom and death by abdominal disease is martyrdom.”<sup>25</sup>

With regard to dying as a martyr, the status of martyrdom is a special status before Allâh ﷻ, and not everyone who dies of sickness attains it, even if he is one of the righteous close friends of Allâh ﷻ.

12. A woman dying as a result of childbirth or when she is pregnant.

Prophet ﷺ said, “A woman who dies with a child in her womb is a martyr.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> [*Awn al-Ma’bûd, Sharh Sunan Abû Dâwûd*]

<sup>25</sup> [*aṭ-Ṭabarâni in al-Awsaṭ, classified as ḥasan by al-Albânî – Ahkâm al-Janâ’iz*]

<sup>26</sup> [*Abû Dâwûd*]

‘Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit ؓ said: The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ told us about the martyrs and mentioned among them, “A Muslim being killed (in battle) is a martyr, dying from plague is martyrdom, and a woman’s death because of the child in her womb is martyrdom, and her child will drag her by its umbilical cord to Paradise.”<sup>27</sup>

13. Death by drowning, or from being crushed by a collapsing building.

Prophet ﷺ said: “The martyrs are five types: the one who dies of plague, the one who dies of a stomach disease, the one who drowns, the one who dies under a collapsed building, and the one who is martyred for the sake of Allâh.”<sup>28</sup>

14. Death by burning.

Shaykh ibn ‘Uthaymîn رحمه الله explained: “Everyone who dies by fire and is a Muslim is one of the martyrs, because the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘the one who is burned to death is a martyr.’ But we cannot specifically say that so and so is a martyr because he died by burning, because our knowledge of such matters is limited. Rather we say in general terms that everyone who dies by burning is a martyr.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> [Aḥmad, an-Nasâ’î, classified as authentic by al-Albânî – Aḥkâm al-Janâ’iz]

<sup>28</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>29</sup> [Majmû‘ Fatâwâ ibn ‘Uthaymîn (25/448)]

15. He who is killed by a tyrannical, oppressive ruler as a result of him discharging obligation of enjoining good and forbidding wrong (*al-'amr bil-ma'ruf wan-nahî 'anil-munkar*) is a martyr.

The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said: “The chief of all martyrs is Ḥamzah, and a man who stands before an unjust ruler, commanding and forbidding him, and so he (the ruler) kills him.”<sup>30</sup>

- These were some signs of a good end, some of which are seen by the dying person as he is dying, and some which may be visible to other people. But we cannot be certain that a specific person is one of the people of Paradise unless the Prophet ﷺ testified that he will go to Paradise, such as the four rightly guided Caliphs (*al-Khulafâ' ar-Râshidûn*). We ask Allâh ﷻ to bless us and grant us a good end to our lives.

### **109. SIGNS OF A BAD END**

A bad ending (*sû' al-khâtimah*) comes to those who are corrupt and sinful, remaining so until they die without repenting. A bad ending is when one dies while abandoning prayer, visiting a sorcerer, while drunk or committing forbidden acts. The fear of a bad ending of one's life should be present in front of one's eye for every moment of his life, for fear induces the person to work towards righteousness (i.e. do good deeds).

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<sup>30</sup> [*al-Hâkim, classified as authentic by al-Albânî in aṣ-Ṣaḥîḥah*]

Some of the causes for a bad ending are:

1) Corrupt beliefs.

Even though a person performs good deeds, even renounces the world in piety, some of his beliefs may be false. He is convinced that his beliefs are true and correct. It doesn't cross his mind that he may be in error. This discovery is only made when *sakarât al-mawt* (stupor, pangs of death) reaches him. And though he may be upon the truth in some of his beliefs due to his opinions, his falsehood will overcome him. His good deeds are of no benefit to him. Without correct belief which is based upon the teachings of the Qur'ân and *sunnah*, nothing will benefit him. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân,

*[Say, (O' Muḥammad ﷺ), "Shall we (believers) inform you of the greatest losers as to [their] deeds? (They are) those whose effort is lost in worldly life, while they think that they are doing well in work." ]*<sup>31</sup>

2) Persistence in acts of disobedience.

The person who persists in sin will accustom his heart to sinful acts and they will become natural to him. All such deeds that are done habitually and consistently throughout our lives will come to us at the time of death. If we are accustomed to righteousness and obedience and the doing of good deeds, it will be in this state of mind that we die. And if we have accustomed ourselves to a life of sin or persisted in certain sinful acts, these acts will fill our minds

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<sup>31</sup> [Sûrah al-Kahf 18: 103/4]

at death. If this occurs, if these acts of disobedience overcome our thoughts due to the active role they played in our lives, we will have a bad ending to our lives. We know from the *sunnah* that a person should be encouraged to say “*lâ ilâha ill-Allâh*” when we are dying, but some will be unable to say this.

3) Deviation from the straight path.

The person who possesses the correct belief and is upon the straight path but then leaves it, will cause himself to have a bad ending to his life. A person may know the truth and live in accordance with it for some time. But then he follows the *shaytân* when he commands him to reject faith. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur’ân,

*[(The hypocrites are) like the example of Satan when he says to man, “disbelieve.” But when he disbelieves, he says, “Indeed, I am disassociated from you. Indeed, I fear Allâh, Lord of the worlds.” So the outcome for both of them is that they will be in the Fire, abiding eternally therein. And that is the recompense of the wrong-doers.]*<sup>32</sup>

4) Deterioration of faith.

Deterioration of faith begins in this way. A Muslim feels himself sufficient in his knowledge and fails to see his weaknesses. Slowly he loses even the knowledge that he has because he fails to put it into practice. He neglects the *sunnah* and perhaps feels the spiritual path of faith is sufficient for him. Practical affairs for which we take guidance from the *sunnah* such as, how to eat and

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<sup>32</sup> [Sûrah al-Hashr 59:16/7]

sleep, how to pay *zakâh* etc. become unimportant to him. Though spiritual worship is rewarded, often the practical deeds are of more benefit to a Muslim in life and may be of greater reward. For example, scholars are of the opinion that the recitation of the Qur'ân is rewarded, although seeking knowledge is of greater reward. Recitation without knowledge and practical application is fruitless. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân,

*[The example of those who were entrusted with the Torah and then did not take it on is like that of a donkey who carries volumes [of books]. Wretched is the example of the people who deny the signs of Allâh. And Allâh does not guide the wrongdoing people.]<sup>33</sup>*

5) Weakness in faith.

The definition of faith in Islam is: A belief in the heart supported by words from the tongue and actions of the body. However, faith, to many people is just a matter of the heart: an inner belief. The Islamic faith, on the other hand, consists of much more. Faith in Islam cannot simply be an inner belief nor just mere words by the tongue. It must be backed by deeds. This is where many Muslims fail in faith.

We cannot simply hope for Paradise; we must work for it. We must pass many trials and tests in order to obtain it. If our actions do not convey all that we carry in our hearts and voice with our tongue, our faith is weak and therefore deficient. Many a time

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<sup>33</sup> [Sûrah al-Jumu'ah 62:5]



weakness in faith is caused by one's love for the *dunyâ*, the worldly life. Sometimes the love for *dunyâ* can become so excessive eventually causing one's faith to become so weak, that one lives for this world only, dreading death as it marks the end of the enjoyment of the worldly life that he loves so much. If *sakarât al-mawt* reaches him whilst in this state, he will find himself having doubts about faith and can have a bad end.

Sometimes believing practicing Muslims fall into innovation in religion or attach themselves to one of the sects whose followers claim to be Muslim in spite of some of their beliefs being of *kuf'r* (disbelief). This is all the more reason to seek authentic Islamic knowledge so that we avoid falling into such falsehood, while believing that we are on the right path.

There are some signs indicating a bad end and we seek refuge in Allâh ﷻ from them. Some of them are signs on the face or body of the deceased, like a frown, darkness or blackness that results from having the Angel of Death giving him the bad news of Allâh's anger. But we cannot be sure, for sometimes, the body of the deceased person may undergo changes that result in a repulsive look, such as the blackness of the face or the like of it. These marks, however, should not be taken as certain evidence of his evil deeds or bad end, since they may have been caused by disease or by other factors.

Some of the signs of a bad end are:

1. Dying in the state of disbelief (*shirk*).

**CHAPTER 18**  
**SIGNS OF A GOOD AND BAD END**

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Allâh’s Messenger ﷺ said: “He who dies joining none with Allâh (in worship) enters *Jannah*. And he who dies joining anything with Allâh will enter the Fire.”<sup>34</sup>

2. Dying while doing a prohibited or an act of disobedience like being neglectful of one’s prayers or of any other of Allâh and his Messenger’s commands. Some examples of this is for one to die while one is singing, listening to music, watching lewd films, drinking alcohol or taking drugs.

Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever dies while doing something, Allâh resurrects him while he is still doing it.”<sup>35</sup>

3. Refusing to say the *shahâdah* at the time of death.

4. Death by committing suicide.

Prophet ﷺ said: “He who commits suicide by throttling shall keep on throttling in the Hell-Fire (forever) and he who commits suicide by stabbing himself shall keep on stabbing himself in the Hell-Fire (forever).”<sup>36</sup>

5. Dying before repenting from sins.

Turning in repentance unto Allâh ﷻ from all sins is a duty enjoined on every mature Muslim at all times, as is stated in the words of Allâh ﷻ:

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<sup>34</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>35</sup> [Aḥmad, al-Hâkim, classified as authentic by al-Albânî in aṣ-Ṣaḥîḥah]

<sup>36</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

*[And turn to Allâh in repentance, all of you, O' believers, that you might succeed.]*<sup>37</sup>

Delaying repentance is one of Satan's tricks by which he misguides people.

6. Sudden death.

Sudden death needs to be feared because it comes to a person all of a sudden and gives him no time (to repent); he might be doing something evil and so his life will end on such a state.

Allâh's Messenger ﷺ said: "A sudden death is a wrathful take."<sup>38</sup>

May we be of those who are blessed with a provision of good deeds and always keep the company of the scholars and the righteous Muslims, for we do not know when death will come upon us. May Allâh ﷻ make our last actions like the actions of the people of Paradise. May Allâh give us *tawfîq* to recognize virtue and to follow it. May Allâh give us *tawfîq* to recognize evil and to abstain from it. May Allâh accept us and use us in the service of His *dîn*. May Allâh ﷻ give us a good ending. *Âmîn*.

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<sup>37</sup> [Sûrah an-Nûr 24: from verse 31]

<sup>38</sup> [Aḥmad, Abû Dâwûd, classified as authentic by al-Albâni in *Ṣaḥîḥ al-Jâmi'*]

**CHAPTER 20**  
**THE WILL (BEQUEST)**

112.	The importance of writing the Will	210
113.	The Islamic inheritance	212
114.	The Will ( <i>Waṣiyyah</i> )	213
115.	It is not permissible to include the heir in the <i>Waṣiyyah</i>	215
116.	<i>Waṣiyyah</i> as a means of <i>ṣadaqah al-jâriyah</i>	216
117.	The Will can also be for upholding <i>Tawḥîd</i> , <i>sunnah</i> , good deeds	217
118.	<i>Waṣiyyah</i> to and from a non-Muslim	219
119.	Witnessing the Will	220

**112. THE IMPORTANCE OF WRITING THE WILL**

- Death will come to each and every one of us; however there are things we can do to make our passing easier for those we leave behind. One of those things is to make sure we leave an Islamically sound Will. Islam has placed great emphasis on both the laws of inheritance and making a Will; thus there is compelling evidence that every sane adult Muslim should have an Islamically acceptable Will. It gives a person peace of mind to know that his wishes will be carried out after his death. It helps resolve or avoid completely

**CHAPTER 20**  
**THE WILL (BEQUEST)**

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the unnecessary disputes that sometimes occur after a person's death.

- Preparing a Will and being fair and just in it is a means of accumulating good deeds and entering Paradise.

Al-Nu'mân bin Bashîr once addressed the people from the pulpit and told them about what took place between the Prophet ﷺ and his father, saying: "My father gave him a gift. Then my mother, 'Amrah bint Rawâhah, said: "I will not be satisfied until Allah's Messenger ﷺ is a witness to it." So my father went to Allah's Messenger ﷺ and said: "I gave a gift to my son from 'Amrah bint Rawâhah, and she told me to have you be a witness to it, O' Messenger of Allâh." The Prophet ﷺ asked: "Did you give your other children something similar?" "He replied that he had not. So the Prophet ﷺ said: "Fear Allâh, and be just between your children." <sup>1</sup>

In relation to this there is a *ḥadīth* even though it is *ḍa'īf* as said by al-Albânî.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "A man may do the deeds of the people of goodness for seventy years, then when he makes his Will, he is unjust in his Will, so he ends (his life) with evil deeds and enters Hell. And a man may do the people of evil for seventy years, then he is just in his Will, so he ends (his life) with good deeds and enters Paradise." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhârî (2587) and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (1623)*]

<sup>2</sup> [*Sunan Ibn Mâjah, ḍa'īf al-Albânî 1458*]

**CHAPTER 20**  
**THE WILL (BEQUEST)**

---

- Majority of Muslims are completely oblivious to the importance of making a written Will. Those who are knowledgeable of its importance and try to bring up this topic with the grief stricken family members are ostracized. It's even worse if a family member dares touch upon this sensitive subject; they are considered greedy and insensitive for talking about such a thing at a time like that. This is unfortunate because the ignorant people don't know and don't care about one of the few things that are mandatory and extremely important after the death of a Muslim.

**113. THE ISLAMIC INHERITANCE**

- The Islamic inheritance refers to the rightful shares of wealth that Allâh has appointed to the heirs. It is the heirs' right and must be distributed as legislated (i.e. there is no choice in this regard). The inheritance is distributed to the heirs after the distribution of debts and the *was'iyyah* of the deceased.
- Islam considers inheritance to be the portions of the deceased's wealth which the laws of inheritance (*farâ'id*) allotted to the heirs in accordance with Allâh's decree in the Holy Qur'ân. It is a means that Allâh ﷻ made for supporting the nearest kin of the deceased. He should not deprive them of this right nor cause them to fall into poverty after him. In the absence of close relatives, a share is allotted to distant ones. The precise details of who inherits and how much, without leaving the matter to human judgement and emotion, are laid out in the Qur'ân <sup>3</sup> and *ahadith*.

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<sup>3</sup> [Sûrah an-Nisâ' 4:7-12, 33, 176]

**CHAPTER 20**  
**THE WILL (BEQUEST)**

---

- The heirs to a person's estate can take two forms. There are the fixed share inheritors; these are those whose percentage of the share is explicitly mentioned in Chapter 4 (*Sûrah an-Nisâ'*) of the Qur'ân (for example, for the husband, half or one-fourth, depending upon if there are children or not), and there are the residual inheritors, who will receive the balance of the estate once the fixed shares have been calculated. So, when an estate is divided according to this divine system of law that is outlined in the Qur'ân and in the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ, it would be highly rewarding in the sight of Allâh ﷻ.

**114. THE WILL (*WASIYYAH*)**

- The Will (*waṣiyyah*) is a set of instructions to be executed after one dies. Before dying, everyone leaving behind wealth and property may write or dictate a Will in which they may give away up to one-third (and less than one-third is preferable) of their wealth to those who would not inherit from them based on Islamic inheritance laws (*farâ'id*). This Will, known as *waṣiyyah*, is a set of instructions as to what should be done after one's death. The Islamic Will includes both bequests and legacies, Islamic advises, instructions and admonishments, distribution of one's wealth, property and monetary distributions, charity and the assignments of rights. If one wishes to donate some of his wealth, he should write a Will as soon as possible. The Will is acted upon after the payment of funeral expenses and any outstanding debts and before the remainder of the wealth is distributed among the lawful heirs. In the Will, he can explain what he owes and what is owed to him

**CHAPTER 20**  
**THE WILL (BEQUEST)**

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of rights, such as a debt, loan and items entrusted to his care; or rights that he is owed by other people. In this case, the Will is obligatory to protect his wealth and to absolve himself of responsibility.

- According to Islamic law, wealth obtained by *wasīyyah* is not considered to be inheritance but a gift which is given to someone according to the wishes of the deceased. If the person making the bequest maintains a sincere intention of pleasing Allâh ﷻ through this bequest, then it will count as *ṣadaqah* that will benefit him after his death.
- A common misconception about the preparation of a Will prevails among some Muslims for they say that since the Qur'ân gives clear instructions about the distribution of the wealth of a deceased Muslim; then why prepare a written Will. The reason is that if a person dies without a legal written Will, it is called having died intestate. This means that the wealth will be distributed according to the laws of the country in which the person lived and may not be in accordance to Islamic laws. And if one is living in a non-Muslim country, the government acts according to its own laws in the absence of a legal written Will and there is a strong possibility of non-compliance on this extremely important matter. So writing the Will and giving it the power, is the only way to ensure that one's wealth will be distributed among his inheritors according to the Islamic laws of inheritance.



- Therefore, we should prepare a written *waṣiyyah* to ensure that we follow the command of Allāh ﷻ. Also, this is particularly important for people who have accepted Islam later in life.

### **115. IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO INCLUDE THE HEIR IN THE *WASIYYAH***

- The *waṣiyyah* was instituted by Allāh ﷻ to protect the rights of non-inheriting relatives and friends. It is not allowed to bequeath any amount of our *waṣiyyah* to the legal heirs who would inherit by Islamic law, such as parents and children (unless their mention is necessary to uphold their right). At the same time, it should not deprive a rightful heir of his share. However, one could include special clauses in his Will to make sure that the heirs receive their rightful share of the inheritance, especially in countries where the Islamic laws of inheritance are not applicable.
- The *waṣiyyah* is that which is given to someone according to the wishes of the deceased. Islamic law allows a person to bequeath by *waṣiyyah* up to 1/3 (one-third) of his or her estate to whomever he or she wishes, providing the beneficiaries are not from amongst those who will benefit from the remaining 2/3 (two-thirds) by *farâ'id*. Those who are entitled to the final two thirds of the estate are specified in *Sûrah an-Nisâ'* 4:7-12, 33, 176. This is why Prophet ﷺ encouraged Muslims to record their Will and keep it with them, as soon as the need arises.

When Sa'd bin Abî Waqqâs asked Prophet ﷺ while he was ill, that should he bequeath two thirds of his wealth; to which Prophet

**CHAPTER 20**  
**THE WILL (BEQUEST)**

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ﷺ said: “No.” So Sa’d said: “Then half?” Prophet ﷺ, replied: “No.” So Sa’d said: “Then one third?” He ﷺ answered: “One-third – and a third is a lot”. It is better for you to leave your heirs wealthy than to leave them impoverished and begging from the people.”<sup>4</sup>

So, it is permissible for a person to bequeath whatever he wishes from his wealth and to whoever he wishes; before his assets are divided between his heirs, on the condition that it does not exceed one-third of his wealth.

**116. WASIYYAH AS A MEANS OF SADAQAH AL-JÂRIYAH**

- A Will helps not only the beneficiaries, but can help the deceased person too, who may wish to set up provision for *ṣadaqah al-jâriyah* or ongoing charity; an action that continues to be rewarded even after death. Many people choose to leave this one-third, or part of it, to charity so that their money can continue to work for them after their death as a continuous charity. By making the *wasīyyah*, they can be assured that the charities they supported in their life are not neglected after their death.

Prophet ﷺ was asked: “What is the best charity?” He ﷺ answered: “It is when you give charity while you are healthy and desirous for more, fearing poverty and contemplating riches. Do not put it off until your soul reaches your throat and you say, ‘Such and such should be given to so and so.’ At that time, it already belongs to so and so.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

<sup>5</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

What he ﷺ meant was: Do not delay giving charity until you feel unwell and fear that death may be approaching. Because, at death it becomes too late, for your wealth is no longer yours, it belongs to your inheritors.

**117. THE WILL CAN ALSO BE FOR UPHOLDING *TAWHĪD*, *SUNNAH*, GOOD DEEDS**

- The *waṣiyyah* is not only about money and wealth; it can be to explain to his family what they should do after his death in detail so that a lot of mistakes can be avoided. He may give instructions to his family with regard to matters having to do with his funeral, such as who will wash him, who will offer the prayer for him and so on. He can also instruct them to refrain from *bid'ah* and innovated matters, and to avoid wailing and other forbidden actions, especially if he knows that they might do some of these things. Through the bequest, he may also direct his heirs to perform specific deeds on his behalf. It is better to make the bequest general enough to encompass all types of righteous and good deeds, especially those in which the benefit is most widespread.

The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: “When death was approaching the Prophet of Allāh Nūḥ عليه السلام, he said to his son: ‘I will narrate to you my bequest; I command you with two things and prohibit you from two things. I command you with *‘Lā ilāha ill-Allāh’* (There is none worthy of worship in truth except Allāh) if the seven heavens and the seven earths were placed upon a scale and *‘Lā ilāha ill-Allāh’* was placed on the other, then *‘Lā ilāha ill-*

**CHAPTER 20**  
**THE WILL (BEQUEST)**

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*Allâh*' would be heavier. If the seven heavens and the seven earths were a closed off circle, then '*Lâ ilâha ill-Allâh*' would be able to break it. The second thing I command you with is '*Subhân Allâhi wa bi-ḥamdihî*' (Far is Allâh from imperfection and praise is for Him), since it is a supplication for everything, and by it the creation is given its provision. I prohibit you from *shirk* and pride. (The narrator said: I asked or someone asked): O' Messenger of Allâh as for *shirk* then we know about it, but what is pride? Is it that one of us has sandals with two good straps? The Messenger answered: 'No'. He asked again: 'Is it that one of us has companions and they sit with him?' The Messenger again answered: 'No'. Someone asked: 'O' Messenger of Allâh, what is pride?' He said: 'Ridiculing the truth and belittling the people and reviling them.'<sup>6</sup>

- The *waṣiyyah* gives a person the opportunity to help those less fortunate. A person should take his obligations seriously and think about who could benefit from his or her bequests. It is an opportunity to perhaps help a poor relative who would not otherwise qualify for a share or even to leave something to a person of another faith, because they cannot inherit from the other two thirds of the estate. It is also better that the bequest be for the purpose of good deeds, such as helping the poor and needy, those who participate in *jihâd* in Allâh's cause, the building of *Masâjid*, Islamic schools, charity to one's relatives and other charitable works. Other such deeds would be helping those who wish to

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<sup>6</sup> [*Silsilah aṣ-Ṣaḥîḥah* 134]

marry and do not have the means, and those with debts and have no means to pay them.

### **118. WASIYYAH TO AND FROM A NON-MUSLIM**

- According to the system of Islamic inheritance laws (*farâ'id*), non-Muslims are not classified as heirs to Muslims.

Prophet ﷺ said: “A Muslim must not inherit from a disbeliever, nor should a disbeliever inherit from a Muslim.”<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, Muslims have no right to take portions of their dead non-Muslim relatives “wealth allotted by non-Islamic systems of inheritance.” (That is, if the deceased non-Muslim relative does not write a Will (*wasīyyah*) and the non-Muslim state divides up his/her wealth according to its man-made laws, the Muslim relative is prohibited by Islamic law to accept any share allotted to him/her by this process.)

- With regards to a Muslim giving a *wasīyyah* to a non-Muslim, the scholars have unanimously agreed that it is permissible. The scholars have also agreed that a Muslim may accept the *wasīyyah* of a non-Muslim. So by writing the *wasīyyah*, Muslims may leave a portion of their wealth to non-Muslim relatives and a Muslim may also receive a portion in a Will from a non-Muslim relative, because it is considered a gift. It can be expressed verbally or in writing, and then it is witnessed. In the

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<sup>7</sup> [al-Bukhârî, Muslim]

**CHAPTER 20**  
**THE WILL (BEQUEST)**

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West, it is similar to when a man writes someone in his Will to receive his house, car, or a sum of money.

**119. WITNESSING THE WILL**

- After writing the *wasīyyah*, it is better to show it to a person of knowledge so that he may explain it. Then he can also be a witness for it. When the rules have been so explicitly set out by Allāh Himself, it would be unwise to leave the handling of an estate to someone not familiar with the wishes of the deceased or the rules set by Allāh ﷻ
- As with any legal document, an Islamic Will must be witnessed. The person making a Will should choose his witnesses carefully, remembering that a person who inherits cannot to be a witness. If he or she does so they will not be able to inherit. The ideal situation would be to choose two trustworthy Muslim men to witness the signing of the Will. However, if this is not possible then two non-Muslim men may be taken as witnesses.

*Farā'id* is ordained in great detail by Allāh ﷻ in the Qurān. Allāh ﷻ has decided upon the rights of inheritance on the basis of the responsibilities of men and women. Allāh ﷻ has fairly and systematically made the choice of beneficiaries. Muslims must abide by this rule in all circumstances.

## **CHAPTER 21**

### **WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

120.	At the time of death	221
121.	During the journey to the heavens and back	227
122.	During the final test	230
123.	Events after the test	232

#### **120. AT THE TIME OF DEATH**

• Every one of us has a fixed period of life given to us when we are born. This is a part of our *qadr* (destiny). We do not live longer or shorter than this fixed period of life. When we have finished this period of life, the angel of death takes the soul from our body. This is called death. Allâh ﷻ says in the Qur’ân:

*[Every soul will taste death. And We test you with evil and with good as trial; and to Us you will be returned.]*<sup>1</sup>

And,

*[Say, “The angel of death will take you, who has been entrusted with you. Then to your Lord you will be returned.”]*<sup>2</sup>

• When the son of Âdam dies and his soul departs and he is placed in his grave, then he is in the first stage of the Hereafter

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<sup>1</sup> [Sûrah al-Anbiyâ’ 21:35]

<sup>2</sup> [Sûrah as-Sajdah 32:11]

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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because the grave is the first of the stages of the Hereafter. It was narrated that Hâni' the freed slave of 'Uthmân ibn 'Affân ﷺ stood by a grave he would weep until his beard became wet. It was said to him, 'You remember Paradise and Hell and you do not weep, but you weep because of this?' He said, 'The Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, 'The grave is the first of the stages of the Hereafter; whoever is saved from it, whatever comes afterwards will be easier for him, but if he is not saved from it, what comes afterwards will be worse for him.' And the Messenger of Allâh ﷺ said, 'I have never seen any scene but the grave is more frightening than it.'"<sup>3</sup>

- When a person is about to die he is shown glimpses of his approaching destiny, whether it be the Garden or the Fire. He who is shown his place in *Jannah* sees a world and a continuation of life better than the one he is leaving behind and he is eager to meet Allâh ﷻ after death. On the other hand, he who sees the punishment of *Jahannum* awaiting him in return for the careless and heedless life he had lived, hates the thought of dying and wishes to run away from his Lord and the reckoning that he was promised. Allâh ﷻ also has no desire to meet such souls.

Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever loves to meet Allâh, Allâh will love to meet him and whoever hates to meet Allâh, Allâh will hate to meet him." 'Â'ishah or one of his wives said: "But we all dislike the idea of death." He said: "It is not what you are thinking. When death approaches the believer and he is given the news of Allâh's

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<sup>3</sup> [at-Tirmidhî, *Ibn Mâjah*, classified as *hasan* by *al-Albânî* in *Shâhîh al-Jâmi'*]



**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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pleasure and honour, nothing will be more dear to him than what lies ahead of him, so he will love to meet Allâh and Allâh will love to meet him. But when death approaches the disbeliever and he is given the news of Allâh's wrath and punishment, nothing will be more disliked by him for what lies ahead of him, so he will hate to meet Allâh and Allâh will hate to meet him." <sup>4</sup>

The return of every soul to the afterlife shall depend on its state of righteousness in this world. To the pious believers it will be said (as stated in the Qur'ân):

*[(To the righteous it will be said), "O' reassured soul,  
Return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing (to Him),  
And enter among My (righteous) servants  
And enter My Paradise." ]<sup>5</sup>*

Between the moment of death and the burial, the soul of a deceased is taken on a quick journey to Heaven and Hell, where it beholds visions of the bliss and torture awaiting humanity in the Hereafter. After it is returned to the deceased's body in the grave, the final test starts. There are *ahadith* that inform us about what happens to the soul before death and after; and the events that take place when the deceased is buried in the grave and after.

When a person is about to depart from this world and proceed to the next, the angel of death comes to take the soul out of the body. For the person who led a life of evil, the removal of his soul

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<sup>4</sup> [al-Bukhârî]

<sup>5</sup> [Sûrah al-Fajr 89:27-30]

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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is tough and difficult. But for the person who lived a good life, his soul yearns to meet its Lord and leaves the body with ease, like a drop of water pouring out. A light like the sun's ray and a sweet fragrance comes out of the soul. Then it ascends amid rows of angels; but those who are present around the dead body cannot see or smell this. The angels pray for the soul of the believer in the heavens just as people pray over the body on earth. All this happens while he lies dead and his family is around him; but they can neither hear nor see any of this. The angels then bear the soul from one heaven to the next until it comes into the presence of Allâh ﷻ, and He commands the writing of its record. Then Allâh commands the witnessing angels to return the soul to the body so that the questioning can take place. The soul hears the receding footfall of the last of the people who followed the funeral. The living, of course, hear none of this.

The following passages are a combined and summarized version of these events. These events have been taken from these *ahādīth*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> 1) *al-Barā's ḥadīth in Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd, verified by al-Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' 1676*

<sup>2</sup> *Abū Hurayrah's ḥadīth in Ibn Mājah, verified by al-Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' 1968*

<sup>3</sup> *'Ā'ishah's ﷺ ḥadīth in Aḥmad, verified by al-Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ at-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb*

<sup>4</sup> *Abū Hurayrah's ḥadīth in Ibn Hibbān and Ibn Mājah, verified by al-Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ at-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb*

<sup>5</sup> *Abū Hurayrah's ḥadīth in at-Tirmidhī, verified by al-Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' 724*

<sup>6</sup> *Abū Hurayrah's ḥadīth in al-Bazzār, verified by al-Albānī in aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah 2628*

<sup>7</sup> *Anas's ḥadīth in Abū Dāwūd, verified by al-Albānī in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' 1930*

<sup>8</sup> *Anas's ḥadīth in al-Bukhārī and Muslim*

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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Certain events take place when a person is nearing the time of his death until his soul starts its journey to the heavens. The following is a brief of those events.

- Angels of mercy or the angels of punishment descend from heaven to witness the death.
- They sit away from him at the limit of his eyesight.
- They bring with them a shroud (of white silk) from the clothes of *Jannah* and embalmment from the fragrance of *Jannah* for the believers. They bring coarse fabrics from the Fire for the disbelievers.
- Then the angel of death arrives and sits by the head.
- The angels of mercy say to the soul of a believer: “Depart from the body to Allâh’s granted happiness.”

The angels of punishment say to the disbeliever: “Depart from the body to Allâh’s wrath.”

- The angel of death then commands the soul of a believer to leave the body: “Depart O’ good and peaceful soul that inhabited a good body.”

For a disbeliever he says: “Depart O’ malicious soul that inhabited a malicious body.”

- The angel of death gives glad tidings to the soul of a believer: “Depart to Allâh’s forgiveness and pleasure; depart in a praised

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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state; and receive glad tidings of happiness, sweet aromas, and a Lord Who is not angry.”

To a disbeliever, he says: “Depart to Allâh’s wrath and anger; depart in a condemned state; and receive evil tidings of boiling fluids, dirty wound discharges, and other type of suffering.”

- The angel of death continues to say this until the soul leaves the body.
- The believer’s soul then leaves the body as water flows from the spout of a water skin; the angel of death takes it easily.

The disbeliever’s soul becomes terrified, and clings to the body; the angel of death extracts it by force, causing the veins and nerves to burst.

- A believing dying person longs to meet Allâh and loves that.  
A disbelieving dying person hates to meet Allâh and fears that.
- The believing person praises Allâh as his soul leaves his body.

The disbelieving person requests to be allowed to return to life, as his soul leaves his body.

- The eyesight follows the departing soul.
- The angels in the heavens and on the earth supplicate for a believer as the soul leaves the body.

They curse the disbeliever as his soul leaves his body.

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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- Then the gates to the heavens open for a believer and their guardians plead to Allâh to send this soul in their direction.

For a disbeliever, the gates to the heavens are shut and their guardians plead to Allâh to avert this soul from them.

- After the angel of death takes the soul, the witnessing angels do not leave it in his hand even for as little as the blinking of an eye.
- After they receive the soul of a believer, the witnessing angels place it in the shroud and embalmment from *Jannah*.

For a disbeliever, they put the soul in the fabric from the Fire.

- The best smelling scent of musk that ever existed on the surface of the earth emanates from a believer's departing soul.

The most repugnant odour of a decaying cadaver that ever existed on the surface of the earth emanates from the disbeliever's departing soul.

- The witnessing angels then ascend to the heavens with the soul.

**121. DURING THE JOURNEY TO THE HEAVENS AND BACK**

After departing from the bodies, the souls are taken on a journey to the heavens. The following is a summary of the events that take place during this journey till they are returned to their bodies in the grave.

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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- For a believer, the angels in the heavens supplicate: “A good soul is coming from the earth; may the blessings of Allâh be upon you and the body that you had inhabited.”

For a disbeliever, the angels say: “An evil soul is coming from the earth.”

- The angels pass the believer’s soul to each other to smell it.
- Groups of angels along the way to the heavens, ask about the believer’s soul: “What is this good soul?”

For a disbeliever they ask: “What is this malicious soul?”

- For a believer, the witnessing angels respond: “He is so and so, son of so and so”, uttering the best names with which he had been known.

For a disbeliever, they respond: “He is so and so, son of so and so, uttering the worst names with which he had been known.

- When the angels reach the lowest heaven, they ask for permission to enter.
- The angels guarding the lowest heaven’s gates say to a believer’s soul: “Welcome, good soul that inhabited a good body; enter in a praised state; and receive glad tidings of happiness, sweet aromas and a Lord who is not angry.”

To a disbeliever’s soul, they say: “Unwelcome, malicious soul that inhabited a malicious body; return in a condemned state, because the gates to the heavens will not open for you.”

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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- Then the gates open for a believer's soul and it is admitted into all of the heavens.

For a disbeliever's soul, the gates are shut and it is not admitted, even into the lowest heaven.

- The believer's soul is welcomed by the angels in every heaven, until it reaches the seventh, above which is Allâh's Throne.
- At the gate to every heaven, the angels ask: "What is this beautiful scent coming from the earth?"
- The most elite angels of each heaven escort it to the next one.
- The angels take the soul to meet the souls of the other believers.
- They (the other souls) are happier in meeting it, than are those to whom a beloved one returns after a long absence.
- Allâh then says for a believer: "Write My servant's records in *'Illiyûn*."

For a disbeliever, Allâh says: "Write his record in the *Sijjîn* in the lowest heaven."

- Then Allâh commands the witnessing angels to return the soul: "Take him back to the earth to complete its appointed time before Resurrection. I promised them that from it I create them, into it I return them, and from it I resurrect them once again."
- The believer's soul is then returned to his body.

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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The disbeliever's soul is cast down from the heavens without regard; it falls into his body in the grave.

- He hears the thumping of his companions' shoes as they walk away from his grave.
- No human will be spared the squeeze of the grave; only the degree of severity is different.

**122. DURING THE FINAL TEST**

After the soul returns to the body, two angels conduct the final test. They question the soul to test the person's level of belief and adherence to the Prophet ﷺ. The summarized details are as follows:

- The test starts immediately after burial.
- It is conducted by two angels who are black and blue, with a very stern appearance and their names are Munkar and Nakîr.
- They shake him up and make him sit up in his grave.
- The believer sits without fear or terror whereas the disbeliever sits in a state of fear and terror.
- He answers with what he used to say before his death. His faculty of reason is returned to him.
- When the angels ask him "Who is your Lord?", the believer replies, "My Lord is Allâh."

The disbeliever replies, "Alas! I do not know."



**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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- Then they ask him, “What is your *dîn*? What did you say about Islam? What did you do? The believer replies, “My *dîn* is Islam. I adhered to it, read Allâh’s Book, believed and obeyed it.”

The disbeliever says, “Alas! I do not know. I heard the people say things; so I said the same.”

- When they ask him, “What did you worship?”, the believer replies, “I worshipped Allâh.”

The disbeliever replies, “I do not know”.

- Then they ask him, “Who is that man who was sent to you?” The believer replies, “He is Allâh’s *‘abd* (servant) and Messenger Muḥammad. He brought clear signs from Allâh, and we believed him. I testify that there is no (true) god but Allâh, and that Muḥammad is His *‘abd* and Messenger.

The disbeliever cannot recall his name. When he is told, (His name is) Muḥammad, he says, “Alas, I do not know. I just heard the people say that.”

- To this the angels say, “We expected you to say this.”
- Allâh guides the believer and makes him firm in words, so that he knows how to answer the questions.

The disbeliever is confused and is told, “You did not know, or recite (Qur’ân).”

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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- The angels again shake him and ask, “Who is your Lord? What is your *dîn*? Who is your Prophet? The believer replies, “My Lord is Allâh, my *dîn* is Islam, and my Prophet is Muḥammad.”
- And this is the last test to which he is subjected.
- The test’s result for the believer is announced with a call from the heavens, “My *‘abd* has spoken the truth; give him furnishings from *Jannah*; clothe him from it; and open for him a door to it.”

The result for the disbeliever is announced, “He lies! Give him furnishings from the Fire; and open for him a door to it.”

### **123. EVENTS AFTER THE TEST**

After the result of the test, the believer is immediately rewarded in his grave, and the disbeliever is immediately punished in his grave. The test confirms what the person had already realized from the moment of his death. The summarized events are as follows:

- The believer is given furnishings and clothes from *Jannah* and the disbeliever is given furnishings from the Fire.
- Two openings appear in the grave; one to *Jannah*, and he views its grandeur and bounties. The other to the Fire, and he views its various sections crushing each other.
- From his grave, the believer can see the angels pointing to the Fire and telling him, “This could have been your place, had you disobeyed Allâh; but Allâh saved you from it.”

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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Pointing to *Jannah*, the angels tell the disbeliever, “Look at that from which Allâh has deprived you.”

- From the grave, the believer sees his final destination in *Jannah*, tastes its provision and perfume, and is told, “Allâh has granted you this place in it.”

The disbeliever sees his final destination in the Fire, tastes its heat and fierce hot wind, and is told, “This will be your abode in it.”

- Then the believer is told, “You lived with certitude; upon it you died; and upon it you will be raised – when Allâh wills.”

The disbeliever is told, “In doubt you lived; upon it you died; and upon it you will be raised – when Allâh wills.”

- The grave of the believer is spread to the extent of his eyesight, it is illuminated for him because of the Prophet’s supplication, and it is filled with greenery until the Day of Resurrection.

The disbeliever’s grave is told, “Contract on him,” and it contracts until his ribs break. Darkness engulfs him.

- The believer’s good deeds take the form of a good looking, well dressed and pleasantly smelling person. This companion gives him the glad tidings, “I am to give you the glad tidings of Allâh’s acceptance, and gardens with everlasting bliss. This is the day that you have been promised.” The dead believer replies, “Glad tidings from Allâh be to you too. Who are you? Your face is one that brings goodness.” The companion explains, “I am your good deeds. By

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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Allâh, I only knew you to be quick in obeying Allâh, and slow in disobeying Him. May He reward you with good.”

The disbeliever’s bad deeds take the form of an ugly looking, badly dressed and foul smelling person, who says, “I am to give you evil tidings. This is the day that you have been promised.” The dead disbeliever replies, “Evil tidings from Allâh be to you too. Who are you? Your face is one that brings evil.” The companion explains, “I am your malicious deeds. By Allâh, I only knew you to be slow in obeying Allâh, and quick in disobeying Him. May He repay you with evil.”

- The executor of the punishment in the grave is a blind, deaf and dumb person. He has an iron hammer that can turn mountains to dust. The disbeliever is hit between his ears, again and again, each time turning to dust, and getting restored as he was. His shrieks are heard by everything (even animals) except the human beings and *jinn*.
- When the believer sees what awaits him, he says, “My Lord, speed up the Resurrection, so that I may re-join my family and property.”

The disbeliever says, “My Lord, do not establish the Hour.

- Then the believer says, “Allow me to give this good news to my family.” The two angels respond, “Calm down; sleep as a newlywed person, whom no one awakens except the member of his family who is dearest to him.”

**CHAPTER 21**  
**WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL UPON DEATH**

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- The believer sleeps until Allâh raises him from his resting place.

The disbeliever sleeps like a bitten person, and his punishment goes on.

- The believer's soul is turned into a bird that eats from the trees of *Jannah*.
- Then morning and evening, the deceased is shown his future place and is told, "This will be your place when Allâh raises you on the Day of Resurrection."

This is the life in the grave.

Is it not a punishment to be shown the pleasures of *Jannah* and to be told that *Jannah* is forbidden for a disbeliever because of his disbelief and rebelliousness? The horrors of Hell, and all of its pain, torture, and humiliation, will be viewable from the grave, and the evil person is told that this is his future residence and he will enter it when Allâh ﷻ so decrees at a time known only to Him. All of this, and the Day of Judgement has not yet started!

This alone, without any additional punishment, would be more painful and agonizing than anything we can ever imagine. This however is only the beginning. To be shown your punishment, and to be forced to agonize as to the hour when you actually receive it, is an unbearable punishment in itself. In addition to this, the evil one is tortured until the hour is brought forth. May Allâh, the Mighty and Most Exalted, protect us from that. *Âmîn*.

## CHAPTER 22

### FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATION .....

124. Finally, in contemplation ..... 236

#### 124. FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATION .....

- Allāh ﷻ says in the Qur'ân,

*[Everyone shall taste death. And you will only be given your (full) compensation on the Day of Resurrection. So he who is drawn away from the Fire and admitted to Paradise has attained (his desire). And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion.]*<sup>1</sup>

And,

*[Every soul will taste death. Then to Us will you be returned.]*<sup>2</sup>

- Death is an inevitable event over which none can have any control, and can occur at any time during a person's journey through the various stages of life. Death will take place at the appointed time after the decreed span, and resurrection on the Day of Gathering when we all will face Allāh ﷻ. Then forgiveness and mercy, or His displeasure and punishment will be dealt out justly according to His Will. No one knows when and where he will die or how. Death is the same for all, the rich and the poor; believers and the disbelievers.

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<sup>1</sup> [Sûrah Âli 'Imrân 3:185]

<sup>2</sup> [Sûrah al-'Ankabût 29:57]

**CHAPTER 22**  
**FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATION .....**

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- In Islam, death is not perceived as an end of life. Death is a transition state from one world to another, as birth is. It is the end of the worldly existence, and the beginning of a new existence in which the soul experiences a new world called “*al-barzakh*”. *Al-barzakh* is the period between a person’s death and his resurrection on the Day of Resurrection. Allāh ﷻ has informed us that once the soul is in the *barzakh*, there can be no return to the life of the *dunyā*. Whoever dies as a Muslim, obeying Allāh ﷻ, will be in a blessed state, and whoever dies as a disbeliever disobeying Allāh ﷻ, will be punished. The disbelievers will plead to Allāh ﷻ to be sent back to obey His commandments but in reality, they are but empty words. The only difference between people will be their deeds and intentions. The grave is the place where we all are destined to reside in. Whether this residence is one of ease and comfort or severe torment depends on our adherence to the proper belief in Allāh ﷻ and the fulfilment of the orders that He has given us.
  
- Almost every day we hear of the death of someone, yet most of us ignore the fact that one day we too will die, and go on with our life as if nothing has happened, feeling that the time has not yet come for us to die. We should all think about our death on a daily basis, and reflect upon the fact that this day could in fact, be our last. We should always have caution and fear for as long as we remain in this world, since we do not know how we will die; upon which state we will end and upon which condition we will meet Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic; even if we had performed every

possible good deed. There are *ahadīth* that inform us of the suddenness with which the Hour will strike and how quickly people will die. There will then be no time to reconsider one's life or repent.

It is reported that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله once said during the funeral of a man: “May Allāh have mercy on the man who works for the likes of this day; for today you are able to do what these brothers of yours, the residents of these graves, cannot do. So make full use of your health and free time before the day of distress and accounts comes upon you.”<sup>3</sup>

- If we love this world more than the Hereafter, we will strive hard to gain its delights, enjoyments and pleasures and forget all about the Hereafter and all about building our house in Paradise near our *Rabb*; along with those whom Allāh has favoured of the Prophets, truthful, martyrs, and the righteous ones; the best company for us. When we remember death, we will turn towards the Hereafter and not make the life of this world our greatest concern and ultimate objective.

It is reported from al-Azwā'î that he said: “Whoever remembers death often will find a small amount (of worldly things) sufficient for him; and whoever includes his speech in his deeds will speak little”.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [Ibn Abī ad-Dunyā, *Dhamm ad-Dunyā*, article 53]

<sup>4</sup> [adh-Dhahabī, *Siyār A'lām al-Nubalā'* in his biography of al-Azwā'î]



**CHAPTER 22**  
**FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATION .....**

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- Being heedful of death discourages one from committing sins, softens the hard heart, curbs excessive enjoyment of the worldly life, and makes dealing with hardships easier. Remembering death strengthens the soul and makes it more capable of perseverance during trials and afflictions. Ka'b al-Ahbâr said: "When one remembers death, his trials become trivial to him."<sup>5</sup>
- The knowledge of the reality of death will help us understand it and prepare ourselves for its coming because as Muslims, we believe that life on earth is merely a preparation for the afterlife. The best way to prepare for death is life. Living our life in a good way is how we prepare for death. Remember the meaning of the *âyah*:

*"[(He) Who created death and life to test you (as to) which of you is best in deed.]<sup>6</sup>*

So sitting back and being scared to die is not the way to remember death, so advised the Prophet ﷺ. The way to prepare is to make remembering death soften our hard hearts, to make remembering death an inspiration for us to leave bad habits and let the thought of death motivate us to do the best we can.

- When we are conscious of our own death, we will constantly see the need to seek the forgiveness of our Lord, constantly increase our worship, and seek refuge with Him. This remembrance of death will improve the quality of our prayer, and make ourselves

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<sup>5</sup> [al-'Âqibatu fî dhikr al-Mawt by 'Abdul-Haqq Ishbîli]

<sup>6</sup> [Sûrah al-Mulk 67: from verse 2]

**CHAPTER 22**  
**FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATION .....**

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humble in our prayer, for we are conscious of the fact that this may be our last prayer. That is why Prophet ﷺ advised us that at the start of every prayer, we should consider that particular prayer as our last prayer in this life. Preparing for death is through repentance; turning sincerely to Allāh in penitence, reflecting upon our previous actions and deeds and being humble because we do not know in what state we will die. Repentance, prayer, humbleness, self-restraint, patience, charity, fear of Allāh's punishment, and hope of His mercy are all immediate outcomes of the remembrance of death.

- Three tips on how to remember death in a productive way:
  - 1) Think about death and hasten to repent.

If we are always thinking about death, we will think about the Hereafter and repent to Allah ﷻ. We should live our lives upon *tawbah*. We should be perpetually repenting, whether we're walking, eating, sitting. We don't know when we are going to die.

- 2) Think about death and be content with a little.

If we often remember death and we know that this world is just temporary, the problems we face in this world don't get to us.

- 3) Think about death and get energy to worship.

If death is constantly on our mind our heart feels the need to be pure so that we can meet Allah ﷻ with a pure heart. Allah ﷻ says in the Qur'ân:

**CHAPTER 22**  
**FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATION .....**

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*[The Day when there will not benefit [anyone] wealth or children,  
But only one who comes to Allâh with a sound heart.]*<sup>7</sup>

• And these are some things that remind us of death and the *Âkhirah*:

- 1) Pondering over earthquakes, floods, volcanoes and landslides which remind us of the nearness of death.
- 2) Reading about previous nations that died and vanished.
- 3) Reciting the Qur'ân especially the verses that mention the agonies of death, like the saying of Allâh ﷻ which means:

*[And the stupor of death will come in truth; that is what you  
were trying to avoid.]*<sup>8</sup>

- 4) The greying of hair and sickness are two messengers of death.
- 5) Being around the dying person who is suffering, and to try to make him utter the *shahâdah*.
- 6) Witnessing the washing and shrouding of the deceased.
- 7) Accompanying the *janâzah* and attending the funeral prayer and burial of the dead.
- 8) Visiting the graves.

Let us put aside our pride, shed our arrogance, and remember our grave. Our portion of this *dunyâ* is our *kafan* – remember, it is the only thing that we will take with us. This life, however it is,

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<sup>7</sup> [Sûrah ash-Shu'arâ' 26:88-89]

<sup>8</sup> [Sûrah Qâf 50:19]

**CHAPTER 22**  
**FINALLY, IN CONTEMPLATION .....**

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will pass. The real life is the life of the Hereafter, and this worldly life is a place of transit that we are only passing through as travellers. Allâh mentions in the Qur'ân what man would say on the Day of Judgement,

*[He will say, "Oh, I wish I had sent ahead (some good) for my life." ]<sup>9</sup>*

May Allâh ﷻ make the dead a reminder for us and make us reflect on our actions and our state of affairs. May Allâh ﷻ grant us steadfastness, make our ending good, upon *îmân*. May Allâh ﷻ take our souls while He is pleased with us. O' Allâh! Make our last deeds the best of our deeds, and our best day when we meet You. O' Allâh! Bestow on us sincerity in our speech and actions, forgive our mistakes, and place us with Your pious servants. O' Allah! We seek refuge with You from the lures and confusion that Satan throws on the dying person. O' Allah! Protect us from the trials of the grave and have mercy on us in this life, in the grave, and on the Day of Resurrection. O' Allâh! Do not bring disgrace upon us in this world nor in the *Âkhirah*. O' Allâh! Conceal our sins on the Day of *Qiyâmah*.

To Allâh we belong and to Him is our Return.

And, as always, we say – All praise and thanks be to Allâh, the Lord of the worlds.

*Wa shallallahu 'alâ Muḥammad, wa 'alâ 'alayhi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallam, wal-ḥamdu lillâhi Rabbil-'âlamîn.*

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<sup>9</sup> [Sûrah al-Fajr 89:24]

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