

Islamic Funeral Rites and Practices

By Sheikh Ahmad Kutty

All praises are due to Allah. May Allah's blessings and peace be on Muhammad, his family, companions, and on all those who earnestly follow their footsteps. Ameen.

Introduction

Allah Almighty says,

"Nor can a soul die except by Allah's leave the term being fixed as by writing. If any do desire a reward in this life, We shall give it to him; and if any do desire a reward in the Hereafter, We shall give it to him. And swiftly shall We reward those that (serve Us with) gratitude." (3:145)

Death is an inevitable fact, which all human beings, rich or poor, scholar or layman, must face one day. The time, place and manner of death are all pre-determined by Allah. A Muslim, therefore, recognizes that death is a fact, and prepares himself to welcome it in a state of true submission to the will of Allah.

It is said, "There is no preacher better than death." In other words, constant remembrance of death helps a person to sort out the priorities in this life from the point of view of the eternal life. By so doing, he avoids a situation where death suddenly overtakes him.

For a believer, the attitude to life is best summed up by the motto, "Live for this world as though you were destined to live forever, and live for the hereafter as though you were destined to depart tomorrow." Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) said, "When morning comes, do not convince yourself that you will surely live until evening, and when evening comes, do not convince yourself that you will live until the morning." (Reported by al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi, etc)

To be prepared to die means to make one's life productive and fruitful by serving Allah and our fellow human beings. It is to live with the full realization that Allah's sovereignty over life and death is both supreme and absolute. It is also to be conscious of one's accountability before Allah.

Allah says,

"O ye who believe! Fear Allah and let every soul look to what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow. Yea, fear Allah: for Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do." (59:18)

The Final Hour

"(Namely) those whose lives the angels take in a state of purity, saying (to them) "Peace be on you; enter ye the Garden, because of the good which ye did (in the world)." (16:32)

"If thou couldst but see how the wicked (do fare) in the flood of confusion at death!— the angels stretch forth their hands, (saying) "Yield up your souls. this day shall ye receive your reward a penalty of shame, for that ye used to tell lies against Allah, and scornfully to reject of His Signs!" (6:93)

Death is a tense moment both for the dying and for relatives and friends. The dying person is in a process of passing into the other world, and experiencing things which the living would never understand. He has a complete replay of his entire life's performance in flash, and has intimations of what awaits him in the other world. Thus the believer is given good tidings and the disbeliever is given bad tidings. A believer rejoices, and a disbeliever feels depressed, dejected and vainly asks for a second chance.

Allah says,

"And spend something (in charity) out of the substance which We have bestowed on you, before death should come to any of you and he should say "O my Lord! why didst thou not give me respite for a little while? I should then have given (largely) in charity, and I should have been one of the doers of good." But to no soul will Allah grant respite when the time appointed (for it) has come: and Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do." (63: 10-11)

The dying is visited by the angels of death who seize his soul. In a hadith reported by Abu Hurayrah, The Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) said: The angels will descend upon a person who is nearing death. If he is good the angels will say, "Come out! O good soul proceeding from a good body! Come out in an honorable way, and rejoice in God's bounty and favor, and a Lord who is ever happy with you."

"The angels will then escort his soul to the higher heavens, and in each heaven he will be greeted with the same sweet words. When the door opens, the inhabitants will ask, "who is there?" The angels will reply, "So and so (mentioning the person's name)." The inhabitants will say, "Welcome! O good soul proceeding from a good body, enter ye with full honor, and rejoice in the bounty and pleasure of Allah." His soul is then taken from one heaven to the next and eventually is escorted to the presence of Allah, the most exalted."

"As for the evil soul, the angels will say, "Come out, O evil soul dwelling in an evil body. Come out despised, and be warned of a fire, bitter drinks, and all sorts of torments." His souls will then be escorted to the heavens by angels, but he will be met with a stern, harsh greeting. The angels will ask for the door to open and the inhabitants will ask, "who is there?" The angels will then reply "So and so (Mentioning the person's name)." The inhabitants will further respond, "O evil soul proceeding from an evil body! Ye are unwelcome! Return ye despised! For the

doors of heavens are not open for ye. His soul will then be sent back from heaven and returned to the grave." (Reported by Ibn Majah)

A Muslim, therefore, constantly keeps the final hour in his consciousness and is never slack with respect to his duties in this life and prior to his death. He desires to appear before his Lord in a state that is pleasing to Allah. He should be praying all along

Say: "Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds" (6:162)

How Should A Muslim Face Death?

A Muslim faces death in a state of complete and total submission to the inevitable will of Allah, his Lord; and avoids being restless and frustrated. He cherishes hope and expectation in the boundless mercy and grace of Allah. The Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) said, "None of you should die except while cherishing good faith and trust in Allah's mercy. " (Reported by Muslim)

A Muslim also derives inspiration from the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) who, on the verge of death, was heard retreating, "Lord! Ease the pains of death for me, and lighten its throes for me.!" (Reported by Tirmidhi and Ibn Majah), and

"Lord! Forgive me and have mercy on me....!" (Reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

While facing death, a Muslim should prepare himself both physically and spiritually for meeting his Lord. Therefore, he should try to be physically clean and exchange his clothes for clean ones. He should also seek absolution from sins, and ask pardon and forgiveness from all those whom he may have hurt or injured in one way or another.

He should take care of his worldly obligations such as unpaid loans etc, either by leaving clear instructions or writing a will. He should advise his family and relatives to persevere patiently and shun all un-Islamic customs and practices.

Spiritually, he should ensure that his heart and tongue are busy with Dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and constantly repeat the Kalimat as Shahadah.

The Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) said, "Whoever utters La ilaaha illa Allah immediately prior to breathing his last, will enter paradise." (Reported by Ahmad, Abu Dawud, etc).

What to Do While Attending to a Dying Person

Attending to the needs of, and comforting a dying person is a great Islamic duty. While doing so, one should be compassionate and gentle. Speak to the dying in a manner that inspires hope,

and avoid all unpleasant discussions. Since the angels are present during this time, one must abstain from all kinds of unseemly conduct. The Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace), while visiting Abu Salmah who was on the verge of death, told his family, "[Speak only good words for the angels are saying Ameen.](#)" (Reported by Muslim)

Ideally, the dying person's closest relatives and friends, especially those who are most conscious of Allah, should be comforting him. They should make every effort to direct his thoughts to Allah and remind him of Allah's infinite mercy.

The following steps should be taken as death draws near:

1. Help the person to rest on his (*) right side, facing the direction of the Qiblah (the Ka'bah in Makkah). If this is impossible due to his condition, then he should be allowed to lie on his back. His feet must be stretched in the direction of the Qiblah and his head slightly raised so that he would be facing the Qiblah.
2. Objects such as musical instruments, statues and any other Islamically objectionable things should be removed from the room.
3. He should be persuaded to seek sincere repentance for all his sins.
4. Exhort him to take care of his worldly obligations by leaving a testament or will.
5. The Qur'an should be recited in an audible voice without disturbing him. It is preferable to read Surah Yaseen (Chapter 36)
6. When the signs of death become visible, he should be persuaded to say the Kalimat as - Shahadah (the testimony of Oneness):

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ

Laa ilaaha illa Allah Muhammadur Rasoolullah

"There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

(*) Please note that the pronoun used in all the articles refers to both genders, male and female, unless specified otherwise.

After The Last Breath

Obviously, the death of a dear one causes boundless grief and pain for the family. However, the pain is eased when they are mentally and spiritually prepared to accept the inevitable will of Allah. A true Muslim also finds inspiration from the example of the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) who had to cope with the death of many of his beloved ones, including his only son Ibrahim, whom he loved so ardently. When Ibrahim died, the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) expressed his grief with these words, "[Our eyes shed tears, and our hearts grieve, but we speak only in a manner that pleases the Lord. O Ibrahim! We are indeed deeply pained by your departure.!](#)" (Reported by Muslim and Abu Dawud)

On another occasion, when the Prophet's grandson passed away, he sent word to his daughter saying, "[Allah has taken what is rightfully His to take, and He gives what is rightfully His to give, and so be patient before the decree of Allah, and seek rewards from Him.](#)" (Reported by Bukhari). A Muslim, therefore, exercises patience, and ensures that the dying is off to meet his Lord in the best manner.

Once the person has breathed the last, those attending to the *mayyit* should complete the following steps:

1. Close his eyes immediately. You may also pray in the manner that the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) prayed when he closed the eyes of Abu Salmah when he died:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي - فلان باسمه - وارفع
درجته في المهديين واخلفه في عقبه
في الغابرين واغفر لنا وله يا رب
العالمين وافسح له في قبره ونور له
فيه.

Allaahummaghfir li (name of the person) warfa' darajatahu fil-mahdiyyeena, wakhluflu fee 'aqibihi fil-ghaabireena , waghfir-lanaa wa lahu yaa Rabbal-'aalameena, wafsaahu fee qabrihi wa nawwir lahu feehi.

"O Allah, forgive [name of the person] and elevate his station among those who are guided. Send him along the path of those who came before, and forgive us and him, O Lord of the worlds. Enlarge for him his grave and shed light upon him in it." (Reported by Muslim)

2. Remove all the personal ornaments, jewelry or belongings such as rings, necklaces and dentures from the body.
3. Tie his chin to the head with a broad piece of cloth or band so that the mouth is not left wide open.
4. Tie both legs together with a band.
5. Cover the body with a sheet, preferably white, so that it is not exposed. The only exception is if the *mayyit* (deceased) is a male pilgrim, in which case the head should be left uncovered in deference to his start of Ihram (consecration for Hajj).

Once death has been verified, all necessary steps should be taken to arrange a funeral without delay. Since it is most desirable that as many people as possible attend the funeral, all relatives and friends should be notified of the death.

According to the Qur'an, the faithful who face calamity, tragedy or death, should instantly recognize the sovereignty of Allah over life and death, and pray:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Innaa Lillahi wa innaa ilayhi raaji'un

"To Allah we belong and to Him is our return." (Al -Qur'an 2:156)

When a dear one passes away, a person tends to lapse into a state of despair and a feeling of helplessness. This is one of those times when the devil tries his best to cast doubts into a person's heart about Allah's decree, and prompts him to question Allah's wisdom. A Muslim should resist this temptation by immediately turning to Allah for strength and support.

Allahumma 'indaka ahtasibu museebatee, fa aajirnee feehaa wa abdilnee bihaa khayran minhaa

"O Allah! I seek rewards from You in my tragedy (by my patience to accept Your will without protest), so reward me, and follow up this tragedy with a beneficial outcome for me."

Bathing the Deceased Person (mayyit)

A mayyit must be bathed before the janazah (funeral) prayer. The exception to this being a shaheed (martyr), who should not be bathed, but buried as he is.

Ghusl (bathing) should be performed by persons of the same gender. If persons of the same gender are not available, then ghusl cannot be done; only Tayammum (symbolic ablution) should be performed. A very young child can be bathed by either a male or a female.

However, there is no objection, according to hadith, to spouses performing ghusl on one another. The prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) told A'ishah, "If you were to die, I would bathe you and shroud you." (Ibn Majah, Ahmad and others.)

It should also be remembered that it was Ali who bathes his wife Fatimah when she died. (Reported by al-Bayhaqi, al- Daraqutni, etc).

More than one person is needed to perform ghusl. A person familiar with the procedures of ghusl and two helpers should be sufficient.

The absolute minimum requirement (of ghusl) is to bathe the whole body at least once. The complete form of ghusl is as follows:

1. The body should be placed on a high stand or table.
2. Those bathing the mayyit should wear gloves.
3. Cover the body from navel to knee; the 'awrah (private parts) should never be exposed.
4. Plug the wounds with cotton and band-aid, if the body is bleeding.
5. Press the stomach gently so that the excrements can pass out from the body.
6. Wash the private parts without lifting the cloth cover.
7. Give the mayyit a Wudhu (ablution). Do not rinse the mouth with water but clean the teeth and lips with a wet cotton ball if possible.
8. Before pouring water on the body, plug the ear and nose cavities, and mouth if open with cotton balls so that water does not get inside.
9. Wash the whole body from top to bottom, beginning with the right side. Repeat this procedure three or five times, once with soap. The final wash, should preferably be done with a mixture of water and camphor or rose water.
10. Wipe the body dry with clean towel.
11. Apply some scent to the body.
12. Comb the hair gently, sideway for males, and in the case of females, the hair should be combed backwards in three parts.

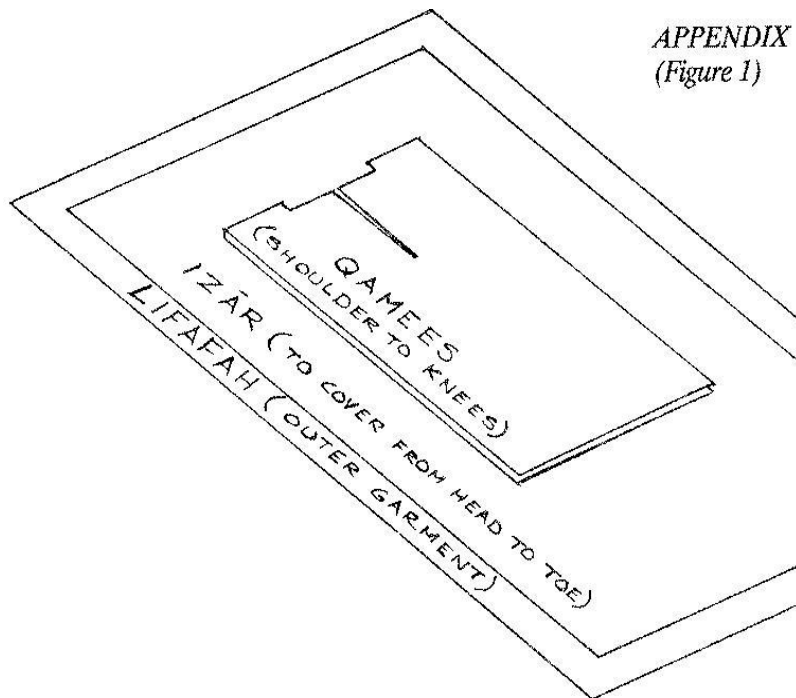
Ghusl should be performed by close relatives, who are God-fearing or pious. Nothing that would discredit the mayyit can be revealed, as anything undesirable seen during the course of *ghusl* must be treated as a trust between the person performing *ghusl* and Allah.

Shrouding (Takfeen) of the Mayyit (deceased)

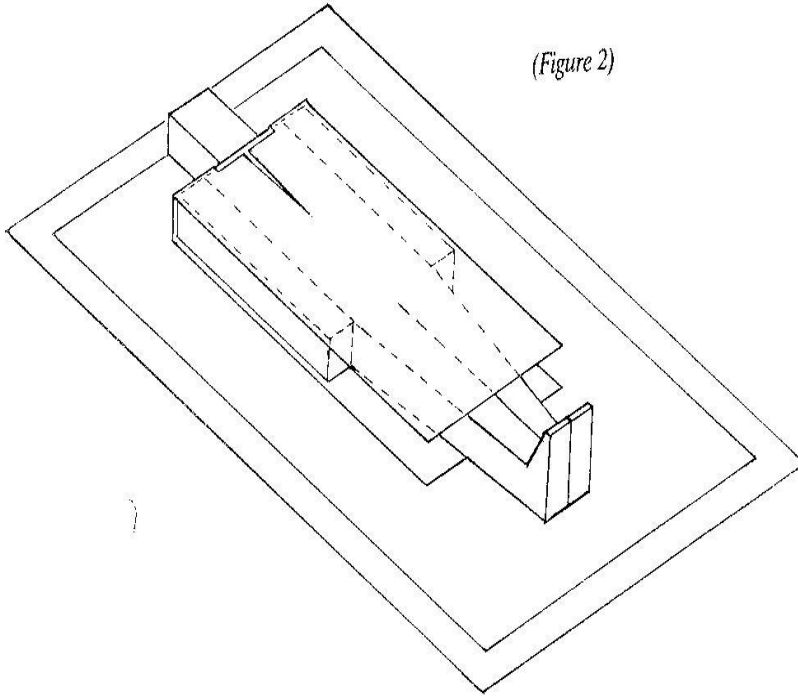
It is necessary that a mayyit be shrouded and wrapped fully in a clean sheet; (while cloth is recommended). The shroud should be simple. A pilgrim who has died in a state of *ihram* should be wrapped in his *ihram*. The complete form of shrouding is as follows:

1. Cut the sheets into three pieces for male and five for females. *
2. Place the three bands (included in the kafan package) on the table parallel to one another as follows: One slightly above the head position, the second at the waist, and the last one below the feet.
3. Spread the scented shrouds one on top of the other: spread the *lifafah* (outer garment) first on the table; place the *izar* (covering from head to toe) on the *lifafah*, and then the *qamees* (shoulder to knees).

For a females use the two extra pieces (in the package) to cover the head and the chest.

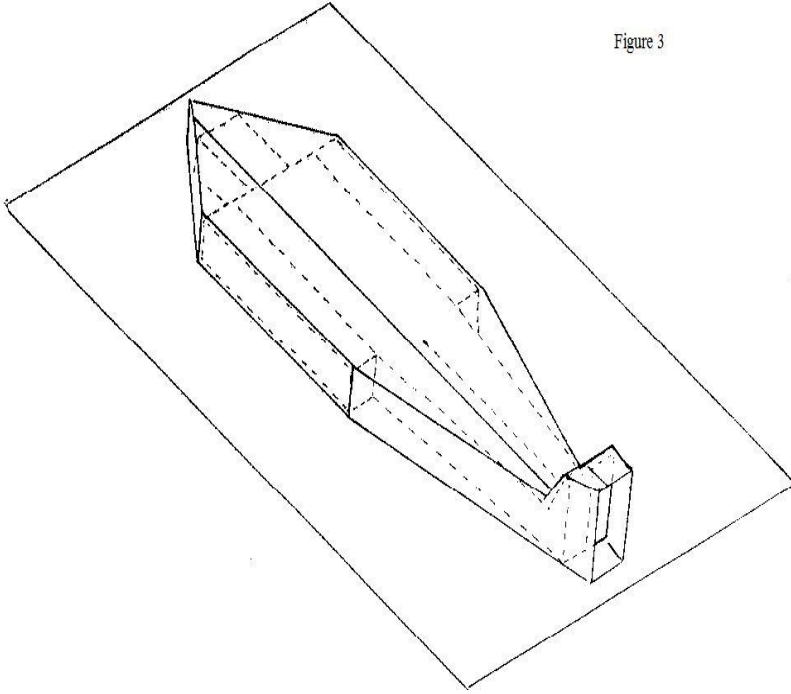


4. Place the body in the shrouds in such a way that the top of the qamees can be lifted or rolled over the head. The head should now pass through the neck hole so that it fits like a shirt on the body.



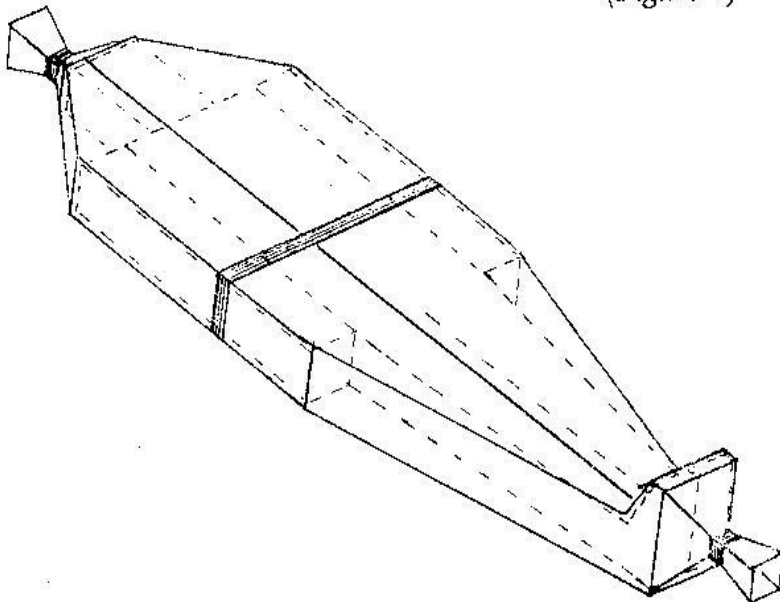
5. Wrap the izar around the body.

Figure 3



6. Use the lifafah to wrap the whole body by overlapping it from side to side.

(Figure 4)



7. Tie the three bands over the shrouds: one above the head, the second around the waist, and the third below the feet. (See Figure 4)

* Shrouds are available as a tailored package (Kafan package) from Mosques.

Janazah Prayer

According to a famous and authentic hadith, the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) considers attending funerals as one of the most fundamental duties of brotherhood. (See Bukhari and Muslim). Since it brings countless blessings, every Muslim should hasten to participate in funerals as often as possible. The purpose of the Janazah prayer is to seek pardon and forgiveness on behalf of the deceased.

In *Fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence) Janazah prayer is classified as a *fard kifayah*. This means it is the collective duty of the Muslim community. If some people perform it, then all are free from blame, but if no one performs it, then all are held responsible.

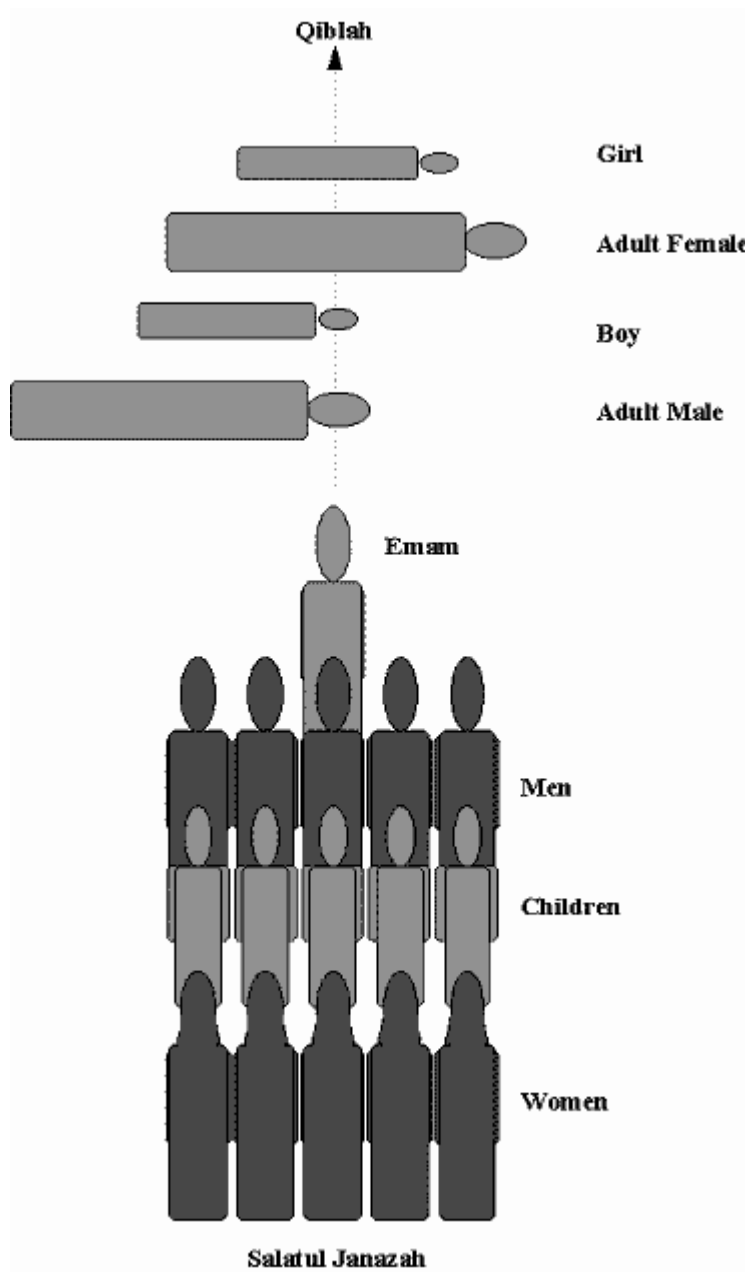
However, the greater the number of people praying, the better it is for the *mayyit* (deceased).

There is a general misconception that women are not permitted to pray Janazah. This is totally baseless from an Islamic point of view. Islam does not insist that women come out for Janazah, as it might inconvenience them with respect to their duties toward their homes and children. Nevertheless, this in no way implies that women can be prevented from performing the funeral prayer. They may take part if they are in a state of purity. This can be inferred from the fact that the mothers of the faithful, such as Aishah, Umm Salmah etc used to pray Janazah.

In *Janazah* there is no ruku (bowing) nor sujud (prostration). The entire prayer is done in standing position, and it consists of four *takbirs* and *salam*. It is recommended that the prayer lines be odd in number, for example three or five.

It is also recommended that the closest male relative of the deceased lead the prayer. But if such a person is not available or does not wish to do so, then the Imam or any other knowledgeable person may lead the prayer with the family's permission.

The *mayyit* should be placed in front of the Imam. If it is a male, the Imam should stand near the head, if it is a female then he should stand towards the middle. If prayer is being conducted simultaneously on a male (s) and female (s), then the male should be placed closer to the Imam.



Before starting the prayer, as usual with every *salah*, the *niyyah* (intention) should be made. It is not necessary to pronounce the *niyyah* in words, since the *niyyah* comes from the heart. *Niyyah* means to have the sincere intention of praying for the *mayyit*. The Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) said, "[When you pray for a *mayyit*, pray sincerely on his behalf.](#)" (Reported by Abu Dawud).

The following are the steps to be taken in a Janazah Prayer:

1. The Imam should pronounce takbeer saying: Allahu Akbar

2. Read Surah Fatihah
3. Pronounce a second takbeer
4. Read the benedictions on the Prophet (al -Salatul Ibraheemiyyah or durood Shareef)

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَدَمِّحُم لآئِلَعِ،
 بُرَاهِيمَ، إِصَلَّيْتِ عَلَى مَاكِ آلِ وَعَلَى بُرَاهِيمَ، إِ
 إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ، اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
 . وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 آلِ وَعَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ، هِي ذِكُّ مَجِيدٌ

Allaahumma salli 'alaa Muhammadin wa 'alaa 'aali Muhammadin, kamaa sallayta 'alaa 'Ibraaheema wa 'alaa 'aali 'Ibraaheema, 'innaka Hameedun Majeed. Allaahumma baarik 'alaa Muhammadin wa 'alaa 'aali Muhammadin, kamaa baarakta 'alaa 'Ibraaheema wa 'alaa 'aali 'Ibraaheema, 'innaka Hameedun Majeed.

O Allah, bestow Your favor on Muhammad and on the family of Muhammad as You have bestowed Your favor on Ibrahim and on the family of Ibrahim, You are Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. O Allah, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad as You have blessed Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim, You are Praiseworthy, Most Glorious

5. Pronounce a third *takbeer*: one should pray for mercy and forgiveness on behalf of the *mayyit*. He may recite one or more of several du'as transmitted from the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace). Four of them are given below:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ ، وَعَافِهِ ،
وَأَعْفُ عَنْهُ وَأَكْرِمْ نُزُلَهُ وَوَسِّعْ
مُدْخَلَهُ ، وَاغْسِلْهُ بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ
وَالْبَرَدِ ، وَنَقِّهِ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا نَقَّيْتَ
الثَّوْبَ الْأَبْيَضَ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ ، وَأَبْدِلْهُ
دَارًا خَيْرًا مِنْ دَارِهِ وَأَهْلًا خَيْرًا مِنْ
أَهْلِهِ وَزَوْجًا خَيْرًا مِنْ زَوْجِهِ ،
وَأَدْخِلْهُ الْجَنَّةَ ، وَأَعِذْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ
الْقَبْرِ وَعَذَابِ النَّارِ .

Allaahum-maghfir lahu warhamhu, wa 'aafihi, wa'fu 'anhu, wa 'akrim nuzulahu, wa wassi' mudkhalahu, waghsilhu bilmaa'i waththalji walbaradi, wa naqqihi minal-khataayaa kamaa naqqaytath-thawbal-'abyadha minad-danasi, wa 'abdilhu daaran khayran min darihi, wa 'ahlan khayran min 'ahlihi, wa zawjan khayran min zawjihi, wa 'adkihilul-jannata, wa. 'a'ithhu min 'athaabil-qabri[wa 'athaabin-naar].

O Allah, forgive him and have mercy on him and give him strength and pardon him. Be generous to him and cause his entrance to be wide and wash him with water and snow and hail. Cleanse him of his transgressions as white cloth is cleansed of stains. Give him an abode better than his home, and a family better than his family and a wife better than his wife. Take him into Paradise and protect him from the punishment of the grave [and from the punishment of Hell-fire]. (Reference: Muslim)

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 تُضِلَّنَا بَعْدَهُ .

Allaahum-maghfir lihayyinaa, wa mayyitinaa, wa shaahidinaa, wa
 ghaa'ibinaa, wa sagheerinaa wa kabeerinaa, wa thakarinaa wa 'unthaanaa.
 Allaahumma man 'ahyaytahu minnaa fa'ahyihi 'alal-'Islaami, wa man
 tawaffaytahu minnaa fatawaffahu 'alal-'eemaani, Allaahumma laa
 tahrinnaa 'ajrahu wa laa tudhillanaa ba'dahu.

O Allah forgive our living and our dead , those who are with us and those
 who are absent, our young and our old , our menfolk and our womenfolk.
 O Allah, whomever you give life from among us give him life in Islam, and
 whomever you take way from us take him away in Faith . O Allah , do not
 forbid us their reward and do not send us astray after them. (Reported by
 Abu Dawud)

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّ فُلَانَ بَنَ فُلَانٍ فِي ذِمَّتِكَ ،
 وَحَبْلِ جَوَارِكَ ، فَقِهِ مِنْ فِتْنَةِ الْقَبْرِ
 وَعَذَابِ النَّارِ ، وَأَنْتَ أَهْلُ الْوَفَاءِ
 وَالْحَقِّ فَاغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
 الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ .

Allaahumma 'inna [name the person] fee thimmatika, wa habli jiwaarika,
 faqihii min fitnatil-qabri wa 'athaabin-naari, wa 'Anta 'ahlul-wafaa'i
 walhaqqi. Faghfir lahu warhaw.hu 'innaka 'Antal-Ghafoorur-Raheem.

O Allah, surely [name the person] is under Your protection, and in the rope of Your security, so save him from the trial of the grave and from the punishment of the Fire. You fulfill promises and grant rights, so forgive him and have mercy on him. Surely You are Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Reported by Abu Dawud)

اللَّهُمَّ عَبْدُكَ وَابْنُ أُمَّتِكَ أَحْتَاَجُ إِلَيْكَ
رَحْمَتِكَ ، وَأَنْتَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْ عَذَابِهِ ، إِنْ
كَانَ مُحْسِنًا فَزِدْ فِي حَسَنَاتِهِ وَإِنْ
كَانَ مُسِيئًا فَتَجَاوَزْ عَنْهُ .

Allaahumma 'abduka wabnu 'amatika ihtaaja 'ilaa rahmatika, wa 'Anta ghaniyyun 'an 'athaaabihi, 'in kaana muhsinan fazid fee hasanaatihi, wa 'in kaana musee'an fatajaawaz 'anhu.

O Allah, Your male slave and the child of Your female slave is in need of Your mercy , and You are not in need of his torment . If he was pious then increase his rewards and if he was a transgressor then pardon him. (Reported by al-Bayhaqi)

Note: If the mayyit is a child, then the following du'a should be recited:

Allaahumma 'a'ith-hu min 'athaaabil-qabri. [or say:] Allaahum-maj'alhufaratan wa thukhran liwaalidayhi, wa shafee'an mujaaban. Allaahumma thaqqil bihi mawaazeenahumaa wa 'a'dhim bihi 'ujoorahumaa, wa 'alhiqhu bisaalihil-mu'mineena, waj'alhu fee kafaalati 'Ibraaheema, wa qihi birahmatika 'athaaabal-jaheemi, wa 'abdilhu daaran khayran min daarihi, wa 'ahlan khayran min 'ahlihi, Allaahum-maghfir li'aslaafinaa, wa 'afraatinaa wa man sabaqanaa bil'eemaan.

O Allah, protect him from the torment of the grave. [It is also good to say:] O Allah, make him a precursor, a forerunner and a treasure for his parents and an answered intercessor. O Allah, make him weigh heavily in their scales (of good) and magnify their reward. Make him join the righteous of the believers. Place him in the care of Ibrahim. Save him by Your mercy from the torment of Hell. Give him a home better than his home and a family better than his family. O Allah, forgive those who have gone (i.e. passed away) before us, our children lost (by death), and those who have preceded us in Faith.

6. Say a Fourth Takbeer
7. Make Salam either on one (right) side or on both sides. both ways have been authentically reported from the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace)

Burial of the Mayyit

The mayyit should be escorted to the cemetery for burial after the prayer. It does not matter whether one goes ahead of or behind the procession. In a funeral procession, the proper Islamic etiquette is to observe silence. It should be a time to reflect solemnly on the reality of death.

While burying the mayyit, the following must be done:

1. Loosen the knots of the shrouds.
2. Positioning the body in such a way that it faces the Qiblah, resting on its right side.
3. Gently place the coffin in the grave saying:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى سُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ.

Bismillaahi wa 'alaa sunnati Rasoolillaahi.

With the Name of Allah and according to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah.

(Reported by Abu Dawud)

4. Those present there should take three handfuls of earth and throw it in the grave saying:

أُخْرَى تَارَةً نُخْرِجُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ وَفِيهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْهَا

Minhaa khalaqnaakum wa feeha nu'eedukum was minhaa nukhrijukum taaratan ukhrraa

"From the (earth) did We create you, and into it shall We return you, and from it shall We bring you out once again." (20:55)

5. Cover the grave fully with earth.

Once the grave has been fully covered, those present should offer a final supplication asking forgiveness for the mayyit. While doing so one may read parts of the Qur'an especially the first and last verses of Surah al-Baqarah (Chapter 2)

Some mark of identification such as a simple headstone can be placed on the grave. However, all forms of extravagances must be strictly avoided as they are contrary to the Prophet's teachings. It should also be noted that all forms of wailing and lamentation are clearly forbidden by the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace).

Consoling the Bereaved (Ta'ziyah)

The Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) said, "[Muslims, in their mutual affection and mercy for one another, are like a single body; if one part is afflicted, the rest of the body also feels the pain....](#)" (Reported by al-Bukhari, Muslim, etc.)

One of the essential duties of brotherhood in Islam is to show care and concern for those who are suffering pain. Death is an occasion where relatives and friends should come together to console and comfort the bereaved family. The purpose of consolation is to help them overcome their grief and to ease their burden during this occasion. The Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) also recommended that friends and relatives should relieve the family of the burden of cooking for a brief period.

One must use appropriate words while consoling the bereaved family. The following is a brief du'a which is insightful.

(i)
إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا أَخَذَ ، وَلَهُ مَا أُعْطِيَ وَكُلُّ
شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى...فَلْتَصْبِرْ
وَلْتَحْتَسِبْ.

(ii)
أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ وَأَحْسَنَ عَزَاءَكَ
وَغَفَرَ لِمَيِّتِكَ.

(i) 'Inna lillaahi maa 'akhatha, wa lahu maa 'a'taa, wa kullu shay'in 'indahu bi'ajalin musamman . . . faltasbir waltahtasib .

Surely , Allah takes what is His , and what He gives is His , and to all things He has appointed a time ... so have patience and be rewarded. (Bukhari)

(ii) also good to say: 'A'dhamallaahu 'ajraka, wa 'ahsana 'azaa'aka wa ghafara limayyitika.

May Allah magnify your reward, and make perfect your bereavement, and forgive your departed. (An-Nawwawi)

Visiting Graves (Ziyarah)

A Muslim should not forget the dead after burial. He should constantly mention them in his prayers. According to the Qur'an, the believers should pray for those who have preceded them in faith:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا بِالْإِيمَانِ سَبَقُونَا الَّذِينَ إِخْوَانَنَا

Rabbanaa ighfir lanaa wa li ikhwaanina al-lladheena sabaqoonaa bi al-imaani

"Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith.." (Al- Qur'an: 59:10)

Visiting graves is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace). Its purpose is three fold:

1. To greet the deceased.
2. Ask forgiveness for him.
3. To remind oneself of his own final destiny.

The intention of visiting should never be to seek favours from the buried, even in the case of a Prophet or a saint. To do so is blatant shirk- an unforgivable sin according to the Qur'an. (See al-Qur'an 4:116)

Initially, the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) had forbidden people from visiting graves, because of their inclination to commit shirk. He lifted the prohibition only when he was assured that they would not commit this grave sin. However, the prohibition remains in effect when and where there is a tendency of veneration of graves. Among such objectionable practices are touching, kissing, bowing or prostrating at graves.

In order to prevent all forms of shirk, the Prophet (upon whom be Allah's blessings and peace) has taught us the proper manner of greeting the dead, which is as follows:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنْ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ
اللَّهُ بِكُمْ لَاحِقُونَ نَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا
وَلَكُمْ الْعَافِيَةَ.

Assalaamu 'alaykum 'ahlad-diyaari, minal-mu'mineena walmuslimeena, wa 'innaa 'in shaa'
Allaahu bikum laahiqoona [wa yarhamullaahul-mustaqdimeena minnaa walmusta'khireena]
'as'alullaaha lanaa wa lakumul- 'aafiyata.

Peace be upon you, people of this abode, from among the believers and those who are Muslims
, and we , by the Will of Allah , shall be joining you . [May Allah have mercy on the first of us and
the last of us] I ask Allah to grant us and you strength. (*Reported by Muslim*)

The End.