



# UNIS

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## Death, Funeral and Burial in Islam

In the name of Allah Most Merciful  
Most Gracious

All praise is due to Allah; we praise Allah and seek Allah's help and forgiveness. And we seek refuge in Allah, Most High, from the evils of our own selves. Whomsoever has been guided by Allah, none can misguide him, and whomsoever is misguided, no one can guide him except Allah. I bear witness that there is no god worthy of being worshipped except Allah Al Mighty, alone, without partner or associate. I further bear witness that Muhammad (pbuh) is his true worshipper and messenger, may Allah the exalted bestow His peace and blessings upon him.

Allah says in the Quran ***"O you who believe! Fear Allah as Allah should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islam"*** (Quran 3:102).

Just as the Muslim is welcomed into this world at birth by purification of his body and by joyful exclamation of "There is no god but Allah" and "Allah is most great", and the face of the earth is spread before him as dwelling, so also is he bidden farewell at death by the washing and shrouding of his body and by prayer over him, and the depths of the earth are made a grave for him, and a cover to preserve his dignity.

It is imperative that the reflection of death should be ever present in the minds of men. However prolonged this worldly life may be, it is mortal and must end. The eternal life is immortal; its blessings are everlasting. One who reminds himself of death frequently, his

heart becomes alive and death becomes easy for him.

***"Every soul shall have the taste of death"*** (Quran 29:57)

You are not dead yet, and the Day of Judgment has not yet started, so I remind myself first and I remind you as my brothers and sisters to prepare for this day; prepare for it by truly and sincerely submitting to Allah, doing good deeds according to Allah's commands in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet. To avoid all types of wrong and evil which Allah and the Prophet asked us to avoid, but do not delay or postpone asking for repentance and doing good deeds since we do not know when death will come.

The following are simple step by step procedures for a Muslim funeral that explain what should be done Islamically when death occurs:

When a Muslim is at the point of death, 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 Allah, encourage him very gently to repent, remind him about all the good deeds that he did, about Allah's mercy, and Allah's forgiveness so that he may anticipate Allah's mercy and Allah's favors. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said: ***"Let no Muslim die except expecting and hoping the best from Allah"*** (Muslim).

Those who are present near a dying Muslim should be kind and patient, should never leave the dying person alone. They should prompt him very

gently (Encouragement without insistence) every now and then to say the Shahada: "La ilaha ella Allah", which means 'There is no God but Allah,' in a very kind and sincere manner as these may be his last words. Abu-Saeed Al-Khuduri reported that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said, ***"Help Muslims who are dying to say La ilaha ella Allah"*** (Muslim). They should make Dua to Allah to help him go through situation easy, and forgive him.

When the person is confirmed dead, those who are present should close the eyes and mouth of the deceased and cover the body completely with a clean sheet. Um Salma reported that, ***"When her husband died, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) closed his eyes"*** (Muslim) and Aisha reported that ***"Muslims covered the body of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) when he died"*** (Bukhari & Muslim).

Dua should be made to Allah to forgive deceased and one should hasten to prepare the body for washing, shrouding and burial. The deceased debts should be paid from his money, or if there is not enough, then from any family member or any relative

Grief at the death of a beloved person is normal, and weeping for the dead is allowed in Islam. What is prohibited is to express grief by wailing, shrieking, beating the chest and cheeks, tearing hair or clothes, breaking things or scratching faces or saying phrases that makes a Muslim lose faith. All of this is totally prohibited, and the deceased may feel pain by these actions. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said: ***"The***

*deceased suffers when someone bewails loudly” (Bukhari & Muslim).*

Relatives of a deceased Muslim may mourn him for three days only, but a widow may mourn her husband four months and ten days. This period is called the Edda (Waiting period) which is prescribed by Allah in the Quran.

There are certain restrictions that apply when washing the body of the deceased. A male's body is to be washed by a male and a female's body should be washed by a female. A minor's body can be washed by either a man or a woman. A husband can wash his wife's body and vice versa.

Prepare the body for washing by placing the body on the washing table. Keeping the private parts of the body covered, remove all other garments from the body. Then, gently but firmly press the stomach and clean out using a towel or cloth any excretions that may have resulted by stomach pressing. The body is now ready for washing.

The body should be washed with hands or a piece of clean cloth. Clean and warm water should be used. The body is to be washed three times, five times or seven times-always an odd number of times.

For each washing, first place the body on its left and wash the right side. Then place it on its right side and wash the left side. Male's hair should be unbraided, washed and combed. Female's hair should be gathered into two braids, with loose hair at end of each braid. For the final washing, scented water (non-alcoholic scent) can be used. Then perform ablution (wudu) for the body. The teeth and nose should also be cleaned. Generous application of non-alcoholic perfume can be made on various parts of the body. Perfumed cotton can be placed on the front and the rear private parts and the nostrils.

For the Kafan (shroud) for men, three pieces of clean, cotton preferably white cloth should be used. Each piece of cloth should be large enough to cover the entire body. For women, five pieces of cloth are used. Non-alcoholic perfume can be applied to the kafan. Use a piece

of cloth and tie the top (head side) and bottom (foot side). The two tie knots should be different so as to recognize the head side. The material required for the kafan is, a)Kafan (4 feet x 12 feet), b)Head Wrap (4 feet x 4 feet), c)Body Wrap (4 feet x 6 feet), d)Chest Wrap (4 feet x 4 feet) and e)Body Sheet (4 feet x 8 feet). Tear a one inch strip from the length of the Kafan sheet and use it as strings to tie the body.

For wrapping an adult male body, three pieces, i.e., Kafan, Body wrap and Body sheet are required. For wrapping an adult female body, all five pieces are required.

To wrap the male body:

1. Spread the Body Sheet on a flat table, a firm bed or floor. Then the Body wrap on the Body Sheet about one foot each from the top and the bottom edge of the Body Sheet.
2. Fold the Kafan sheet over in half, so that its size after folding is 4 feet x 6 feet. At the crease in the middle, cut a hole big enough for the head of the body to pass through.
3. Unfold the Kafan sheet and lay it on the two sheets prepared earlier. The cut hole will now be in the center of the Kafan sheet.
4. Lay the body on its back on one half (which is on the other two sheets) and pull the other half of the Kafan sheet over the whole body, making sure that the head comes out through the hole; except for the head, the rest of the body should be covered inside the Kafan sheet.
5. Comb the hair on top and back of head.
6. Roll the upper half of Kafan sheet from both the right and the left sides to gather in the center of the body.
7. Wrap the lower long sides of the Kafan sheet over the body from both the right and the left sides (from shoulders to feet). Then unroll the upper half of the Kafan sheet to spread it over the lower half wrapped previously on the body and wrap it along both sides of the whole body
8. Wrap the left side of the Body Wrap over the body and cover it by wrapping the right side of the Body Wrap over the left side on the body. Wrap the Body Sheet in a like

manner, with the right side over the left side on the whole body.

9. Gather at the head and tie a string, then gather at the feet and tie a string. Use another string to tie in the middle of the body.

The procedure for wrapping the female is:

1. Lay the Chest wrap on the Body sheet about two feet each from the top and the bottom edge. Then lay the Body wrap on the Chest wrap about one foot each from the top and the bottom edge of the Body sheet.
2. Follow steps 2 through 4 as in the procedure for the male.
3. Comb and brush the hair in two groups loose or braids; spread one group on the right breast and the other group of hair on the left breast.
4. Follow steps 6 through 8 as in the procedure for the male.
5. Fold the Head wrap in half; raise the head and upper part of the body to slip about one half of the Head wrap under the body. Then fold the other half over and around the head so that the face is not covered and the lower edge of the Head wrap covers the hair on the breast.
6. Follow step 8 as in the procedure of the man.
7. Use the Kafan strings to tie around the body; one just below the shoulders, another in the middle on the navel, and third string a little above the knees on the thighs.
8. Cover the face with the Head wrap.
9. Lastly wrap the Body sheet all over the body with the right side over the left side on the body; gather at the head and tie a string and then gather at the feet and tie a string. If necessary tie a string in the middle of the body also.

One should try and attend the prayer of a deceased even if one does not know him/her. The entire Janazah Prayer is said standing only. Like any other prayer, this prayer is also offered facing Qibla. To perform the prayer, the body of the deceased should be kept in front of the Imam. The Imam stands approximately by the center of the body if the deceased is a male, and by the shoulder if the deceased is a female. If the prayer to be offered is for more than

one person, then the bodies should be placed one in front of the other, male body closest to the Imam and female body further away.

To begin the Janazah prayer the Imam says Allah u-Akbar loudly, recites Thana and Surah Fatiha silently. The followers say Allah u-Akbar, recites Thana and Surah Fatiha, all of them silently. The Thana is "Subhaanaka allaahumma wa bihamdika wa tabaaraka ismuka wa ta'aala jadduka wa jalla thannaa-uka wa laal ilaaha ghayruka" Translation: Glory be to you Oh Allah, and praise be to You, and blessed is your name, and exalted is Your Majesty, and there is none to be served besides.

Then the Imam says Allah u-Akbar loudly and silently invokes peace and blessings on the Holy Prophet. The followers do all of this silently. Peace and blessing on the prophet (pbuh) is done in the following words:

"Allaahumma salli alaa muhammadin wa alaa muhammadin kama sallayta alaa ibraaheema wa alaa aali ibraaheema innaka hameedun majeed. Allaahumma baarik alaa muhammadin wa alaa aali muhammadin kamaa baarakta alaa ibraheema wa alaa aali ibraheema innaka hameedun majeedun." Translation: Oh Allah! Shower Your mercy upon Muhammad (pbuh) and the followers of Muhammad (pbuh), as You showered Your mercy upon Ibrahim (Alayhis salaam) and the followers of Ibrahim (as). Behold You are Praise worthy, Glorious. Oh Allah! Shower Your blessing upon Muhammad (pbuh), as you showered Your blessings upon Ibrahim (as) and the followers of Ibrahim (as). Behold You are Praise worthy, Glorious.

Then the Imam says Allah u-Akbar loudly and silently makes dua for the deceased. The followers do all of this silently. The dua is: "Allaahumma ighfir lihayyinaa, wa mayyitinaa, wa shaahidinaa, wa ghaa-ibinaa, wa sagheerinaa, wa kabeerinaa, wa dhakarinaa wa unthaanaa. Allaahumma man ahyaytahoo minnaa fa ahyihee alal islaam wa man tawaffaytahoo minnaa fatawaffahoo alal iemaan." Translation:

Oh Allah! Forgive those of us that are alive and those of us that are dead; those of us that are present, and those of us who are absent: those of that are young, and those of us that are adults; our males and females. Oh Allah! Whomsoever of us You keep alive, let him live as a follower of Islam, and whomsoever You cause to die, let him die as a believer.

If the deceased is a male child, the invocation is: "Allaahumma ij'alhu lanaa faratan, wa j'alhu lanaa ajran wa dhukharn wa j'alhu lanaa shaafi'an wa mushaffa'an." If the deceased is a female child, the invocation is: "Allaahumma ij'alhu lanaa faratan, wa j'alhaa lanaa ajraan wa dhukhran wa j'alhaa lanaa shaafi'atan wa mushaffa'atan."

Translation: Oh Allah, make him/her (this child) a source for our salvation; and make him/her a source of reward and treasure for us; and make him/her an intercessor for us, and one whose intercession is accepted

Then the Imam says Allah u-Akbar loudly and immediately thereafter loudly calls Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah (twice), turning the head First to the right and then to the left. The followers do all of this silently. This concludes the Janazah prayer.

After Salatul Janazah, the deceased should be transferred to the Muslim cemetery. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said : " Visit the sick and walk with the Janazah, it will remind you of the hereafter"(Muslim). It is recommended for those following the Janazah on foot to keep behind or either on the right or on the left of those who are carrying the body. They should walk calmly, quietly, and not crowd or push others who are carrying the deceased.

Following the Janazah with incense or candles, mentioning Allah's name loudly, weeping loudly or reading Quran, playing music, or carrying the body of the deceased on a military car, all are not allowed when escorting the body of the deceased.

The reward of Janazah prayer and following the Janazah until the burial is

finished is explained in the hadith of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) who said, "Whoever attends the Janazah until it is finished, will earn a Qirat, and who ever stays until the burial, will earn two Qirats. Someone asked: What a Qirat means?" the Prophet answered , "It means rewards as big as a great mountain" (Bukhari & Muslim).

It is of great importance that a special cemetery be devoted exclusively for the use of Muslims. Muslims may not be buried in the cemeteries of non-Muslims, nor can non-Muslims be buried in a Muslim cemetery.

The deceased should be buried in the locality in which he lived. It is undesirable to take the body to the person's own country or to another city

A grave should consist of two parts. Lower part is smaller than the upper part. Both parts of the grave, should however, be spacious and uniformly excavated and dug to a depth of at least five feet. The body of the deceased should be slowly and gently put on the ground of the lower part of the grave. Putting the body in the grave should be carried out only by Muslim men. A female is placed in her grave either by her husband, her sons, her father, her brothers, or her uncle.

The face of the deceased should be toward the qibla. The deceased's head should be raised a little from the ground by using a hard object like stone or a brick or hard soil, but under no conditions any foreign object including a pillow should be put in the grave. The roof on the lower part of the grave should be made by using a large stone or laying bricks side by side or a very hard wood slab.

Everyone accompanying the Janazah should pour three handful of soil on the roof of the grave. The remaining part of the grave should then be filled up with soil. Again all present should contribute at least three handful of soil to finally complete the grave.

The grave can be raised above the ground so that it is not more than a foot above it.

Although burial is permitted at all-times, burial at sun-rise, high noon and sunset should be avoided.

When the body is lowered into the grave, one should recite, "Bismillah-i wa'ala millat-i rasulilah" meaning "In the Name of Allah, (we bury) according to the way of the Prophet of Allah." When throwing the first handful in the grave one should recite, "Minhaa khalaqnaahum," (from the (earth) did We create you.) During the second handful one should recite, "Wa minhaa nu'eedukum" (and into it shall We return you.) During the third handful one should recite, "Wa minhaa nukhrijukum taaratan ukhrraa" (and from it shall We bring you out once again.)

It is a Muslim's duty to offer condolences, comfort, and sympathy to the family and the relatives of the deceased. This strengthens the relationships within the Muslim community.

While the life span of a Muslim is short, and deeds and actions stop after death, a Muslim may continue to earn rewards for certain things even after his death. Good deeds, such as perpetual charity, are the ones that earn him rewards, even while the person is in the grave. It constitutes of deeds like a good child that prays for him, a Mosque that he built, teaching Quran to another person,

a house he built for public use, a water fountain or a river that he rented and made it free for people, or a charity that he gave during his life while he was in good health.

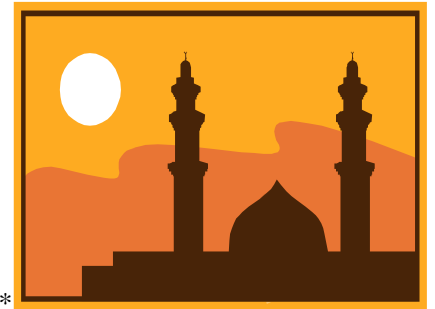
The purpose of visiting the cemetery is to remember the fact that everyone is going to die and that we must prepare for the day of judgment.

Finally as one famous poet said, "When you are born, you are crying while other people are very happy, so make sure that when you die, you be very happy while others cry."

**Wishing for Death**

Wishing for death, if the reason for it is difficulties in worldly matters, is forbidden because wishing for death in that case is indicative of impatience or panic as a result of the calamity that has befallen.

It was narrated from Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "No one of you should wish for death because of some harm that has befallen him, but if he must do that then let him say: 'O Allaah, keep me alive so long as life is good for me, and cause me to die when death is good for me.'" Agreed upon.



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**Editorial**

**Assalamu Alakium**

*Dear Readers!*

*As mentioned in the article Death is inevitable and we must all prepare for it.*

*One of the ways to prepare for it is to have a Will instructing our loved ones how to handle us after we die.*

*You will have to consult your legal team, the authorities of your institution and your family and friends for this.*

*Unfortunately because of limited resources, we at the Muslim Community Association of Ann Arbor may not be able to help you with this.*

*Please accept our apology for that.*

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