

## Funeral Guide for Muslims

When a Muslim dies, it is the responsibility of his family or other Muslims to wash him according to the Islamic rites of washing the deceased. Two or three persons may perform the washing.

The person(s) who may wash the deceased should: Be a trustworthy, and honest adult Muslim(s). Know the Islamic way of washing the dead and be able to carry out the washing. Not make any comment on the body of the deceased

NOTE: If the deceased is a male, then ONLY males should wash him. If the deceased is a female, then ONLY females should wash her. For a married person, the spouse may perform the washing. For a child, either males or females may do the washing.

Shrouding should start Just after washing the body of the deceased. It is recommended to use white sheets from inexpensive material. Extravagance is not recommended in the Kafan (Shroud).Aisha relates that: "When the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) died, he was shrouded in three white sheets from Yemen" (Bukhari & Muslim).

The Kafan of a female should consist of five white garments, these should be large enough to cover the whole body and may be perfumed with incense, a loin cloth may be used to bind the upper part of her legs, use 4 tie ropes.

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).

The burial should be done as soon as possible after death, but the following times should be avoided: At night. From sunrise until the sun is fully risen. At the zenith of the sun (The sun at the meridian), until it passes the meridian. When the sun pales before sunset until it has set. During these times burying is prohibited unless there is an urgent necessity, according to the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) that was narrated by (Muslim).

A grave is dug deep enough to totally hide the body of the deceased. The grave should be always perpendicular (Horizontal) to the direction of Qiblah. Only men are allowed to attend the burial. All Muslims who are present should remember death, the hereafter, and that one day he too will be buried. They should keep quiet (No talking unless it is necessary). The deceased's male relatives are expected to put the body in 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.

It is prohibited to step over, lean, or sit on a grave. Abu Hurairah relates that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said: "It is better for a person to sit on burning coal by which his clothes may catch fire and the heat thereof may touch his skin, rather than that he sits on a grave "(Muslim).

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.

When offering condolences, words should be chosen carefully and said gently to convey sympathy and to encourage the family and the relatives of the deceased to accept Allah's will and to help them to get back to their normal life.

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.

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.

Some families hold gatherings for three days or more, and hire people to recite Quran loudly. While the Quran is recited, others eat, drink or talk, disregarding the rules of listening to the Quran, and inflicting the family with high expenses.

It is Sunnah that friends, neighbors and relatives prepare food for the family of the deceased, for the loss of the loved one occupies the family's whole attention.

It is prohibited to express grief by wailing, shrieking, beating the chest or cheeks, tearing hair or clothes, or saying phrases that makes a Muslim lose faith.

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said : " Allah says: I have no better reward than Paradise for a believer servant of Mine who is patient and resigned when I take away one of his/her beloved, one among those he/she most cherishes in the world " (Bukhari).

All scholars have no dispute about the point that it is prohibited for Muslim females to frequently visit the cemetery. This is due to the authentic Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) who said: " May Allah curse the women who are frequently visiting the cemetery "(Authentic, Termithi).

But if the visit is not frequent, most scholars say it is Makrouh (Hated action), while Other scholars say it is permissible for Muslim females to visit the cemetery provided That the visit is not frequent and it is for the sole purpose of remembering death and Hereafter.

When Muslim females visit the cemetery, they should wear proper clothes, no make-up Or perfume, they should not cry loudly or say words of discontent or behave UnIslamically.