

FUNERAL INFORMATION

We never know when one of us will die, including ourselves. So usually we are not prepared for this important time. When our relatives or friends die, it is very hard to deal with the funeral details while we are saddened by our loss.

ISLAMIC FUNERAL STEP BY STEP and COMMON MYTHS

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ISLAMIC FUNERAL STEP BY STEP and COMMON MYTHS

The following are simple step by step procedures for a Muslim funeral that explain what should be done in an Islamic manner when death occurs. It also explains in detail what to do and not to do, including common myths.

A-) Death

A1-) When a Muslim is at the point of Death

Family members of the dying person and his/her most pious friends should be informed and should be present at his/her side to help him/her turn his/her thoughts to Allah, encourage him/her very gently to repent, remind him/her about all the good deeds that he/she did, about Allah's mercy, and Allah's forgiveness so that he/she may anticipate Allah's mercy and Allah's favors.

Those who are present near a dying Muslim should do the following :

They should be kind and patient.

They should never leave him/her alone.

They should give him/her hope, not allowing him/her to collapse out of pain or panic.

They should prompt him/her 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/her last words.

They should make Dua' (Supplicate) to Allah to help him/her go through situation easy, and forgive him/her.

NOTE:

There is no authentic proof of reading chapter (Yasin) beside a dying Muslim.

There is no authentic proof of directing the dying Muslim to the Qiblah.

There is no Islamic teaching of putting the Quran under the head of a dying Muslim.

There is no Islamic teaching of asking junubs(Those who did not take a shower after a sexual act), or menstruating women, to leave the room .

B1-) Just after Death has been determined

When the person is confirmed dead, family members or those who are present should :

Close the eyes of the deceased.

They should bind his/her lower jaw to his/her head so that it does not sag.

They should cover all his/her body completely with a clean sheet.

They should make Dua' (Supplicate) to Allah to forgive him/her.

They should hasten to prepare the body for washing, shrouding and burial.

They should pay his/her debts from his/her money, or if there is not enough, then from any family member or any relative, this matter is important since the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) encouraged Muslims to pay the debts of the deceased.

NOTE:

There is no Islamic teaching of putting the Quran under the pillow of the deceased.

There is no Islamic teaching of asking junubs (Those who did not take a shower after sexual act), or

menstruating women to leave the room of the deceased.

There is no Islamic teaching of putting flowers, candles etc., in the deceased's room.

B-) Mourning the dead

Mourning over the dead is allowed in Islam, but there is a great difference between what is allowed Islamically and the practice of some Muslims at the present time.

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 (Bewailing refers to mourning in a loud voice), 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).

Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) said : *" Two things in people are Kufr (Ignorance), one is to ridicule someone on his/her family genealogy, and the other is bewailing loudly the dead "* (Muslim).

Some people let their beard grow to show their sadness, then after several days they shave it. Others wear black clothes, or black ties. All of this has no basis in Islam..

It is a Muslim's duty to advise gently those who do these things to stop doing so, since it is totally prohibited. No loss, however great, should lead a Muslim to sour his faith. They should however bear patiently and accept Allah's destiny.

There is no objection to quiet weeping as Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did when his son died.

Relatives of a deceased Muslim may mourn him for three days only, but a widow may mourn her husband four months and ten days.

C-) Washing the body

When a Muslim dies, it is the responsibility of his/her family or other Muslims to wash him/her 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.

PLACE OF WASHING :

The deceased's body should be washed in a clean, secluded, and private place where clean water and soap are available. Gloves or pieces of cloth are needed.

The body of the deceased should be washed with water and, if available, lotus leaves, or camphor (To be used in the final wash).

The washing should be done three or five, or any more odd number of times if necessary.

STEPS OF WASHING :

The body of the deceased should be placed on a table or alike, the deceased's clothes should be removed , and the body should be covered with a sheet of cloth.

The head and the upper body should be raised slightly to insure the washing water with exudations from the body flows down and does not run back to the body.

The Aura (Private parts) of the deceased should be covered with a piece of cloth (The Aura of a male is from the belly button to the knee in the presence of males, for the female is the same in the presence of females).

The washer should start washing by saying: " Bismil - lah ", " In the name of Allah ".

The washer winds a piece of cloth around his/her hand, and with this he cleans away any impurities from the body using water. Then he should dispose of this piece.

The washer should take another piece of cloth around his/her hand, press lightly the stomach of the deceased so as to expel, if possible, any remnants from it, and then wash the body of all impurities using water. Then he should dispose this piece of cloth.

The washer should take another piece of cloth around his/her hand (May use gloves), and wash the covered private parts, then dispose of this piece of cloth.

The washer should perform Wudu (Ablution) on the deceased without inserting the water in the nose and in the mouth.

The washer should clean the body with water and soap (If available), starting from the head (hair, face and beard {Men}), then the upper right side of the body then the left side, after that the lower right side then the lower left.

In the case of a female, her hair should be loosened, washed, combed, and be braided in three braids, and placed behind her back.

The washing should be done three times, or five times, or seven times, as needed, providing that after washing the head, wash the right side before the left, and the upper parts before the lower ones.

In the last wash, the washer may use camphor, or some perfume with the water.

After that the body should be dried with clean towel.

Then the body should be totally covered with a white sheet.

Get ready to start the shrouding.

SPECIAL NOTE : In case the deceased is a female in her menstrual period or have child birth bleeding, padding should be used to prevent blood from leaving the body.

NOTE:

It is recommended that those who performed the washing should take a bath .

It is recommended that those who performed the washing should make Wudu.

NOTE:

There is no Islamic teaching of reading the Quran during the Ghusul.

There is no Islamic teaching of making special dthiker (Certain words to remember Allah) during the Ghusul.

D-) Kafan/Shrouding the body

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).

D1-) Kafan of a male

The Kafan of a male should consist of three white winding sheets about {7 x 7 feet}, clean and large enough to conceal the whole body, after having been perfumed with incense. Use 4 tie ropes, each 7 feet long (Figure (1)).

The material of the sheet should not be silk, nor should any gold be used.

STEPS OF SHROUDING :

The winding sheets should be spread out one on the top of the other .

The deceased, covered with a sheet, is lifted and laid on his back on the winding sheets.

Some scent or perfume may be put on those parts of the body upon which one rests during prostration that is the forehead, nose, hands, knees, and feet.

If it is possible the deceased's left hand should be placed on his chest, then put his right hand on the left hand like the way in the Salat (Prayer).

The edge of the top sheet is folded over the deceased right side, then the other edge over his left side. Then the second sheet should be folded the same way. The third and the largest sheet should be treated the same way.

These sheets should be fastened with a piece of cloth {Tie ropes}, one above the head, another under the feet, and two around the body.

Male Kafan

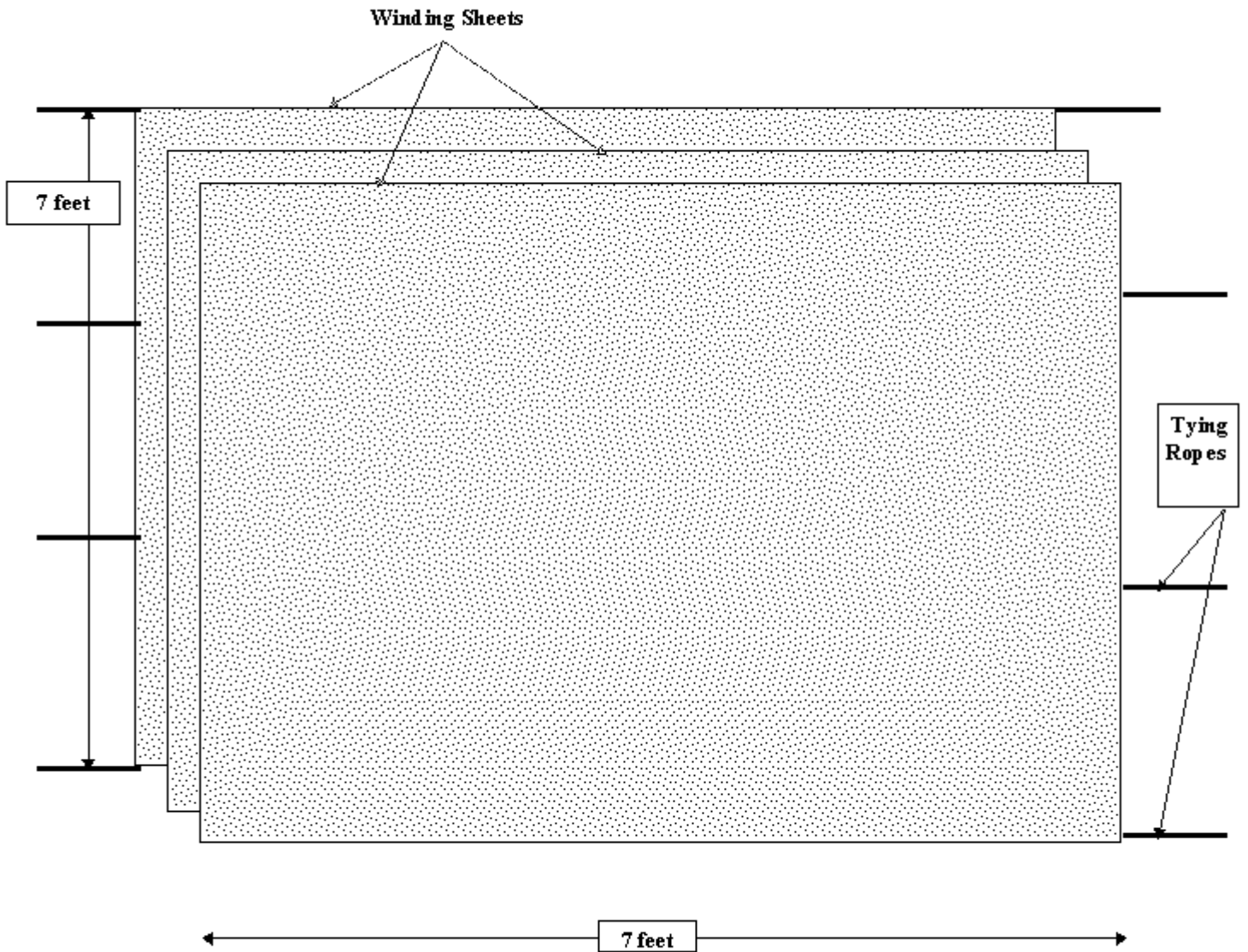


Figure (1)

D2-) Kafan of a female

The Kafan of a female should consist of five white garments, (Two winding sheet, a long loose sleeveless shirt {From shoulder to feet}, a waist wrapper, and a head veil), 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, each one is 7 feet long (Figure (2)).

STEPS OF SHROUDING :

The garments are spread out (First: winding sheets { 7 x 7 feet }, Second: the long loose sleeveless shirt { 3 1/2 x 14 feet, with a hole in the middle line for the head }, Third: waist wrapper { 6 feet x 3 1/2 feet }, Fourth head veil { a 4x4 square feet white sheet }, and Fifth: the loin cloth { 12 inches wide x 4 feet long }).

The deceased, covered with a sheet, is lifted and laid on her back on the shroud.

Some scent or perfume may be put on those parts of the body upon which one rests during prostration that is the forehead, nose, hands, knees, and feet.

The loin cloth is bound round her upper legs (Acts like underwear).

The waist wrapper is tied in place.

Put on the sleeveless shirt (Long to cover the body from the shoulder to the feet) .

Put the head veil.

The deceased's left hand should be placed on her chest, then put her right hand on the left hand like the way in the Salat (Prayer).

The edge of the top sheet is folded over the deceased right side, then the other edge over his left side. Then the second sheet should be folded the same way.

These sheets should be fastened with a piece of cloth {Tie ropes}, one above the head, another under the feet, and two around the body.

NOTE:

There is no Islamic teaching of writing anything on the shrouds.

Female Kafan

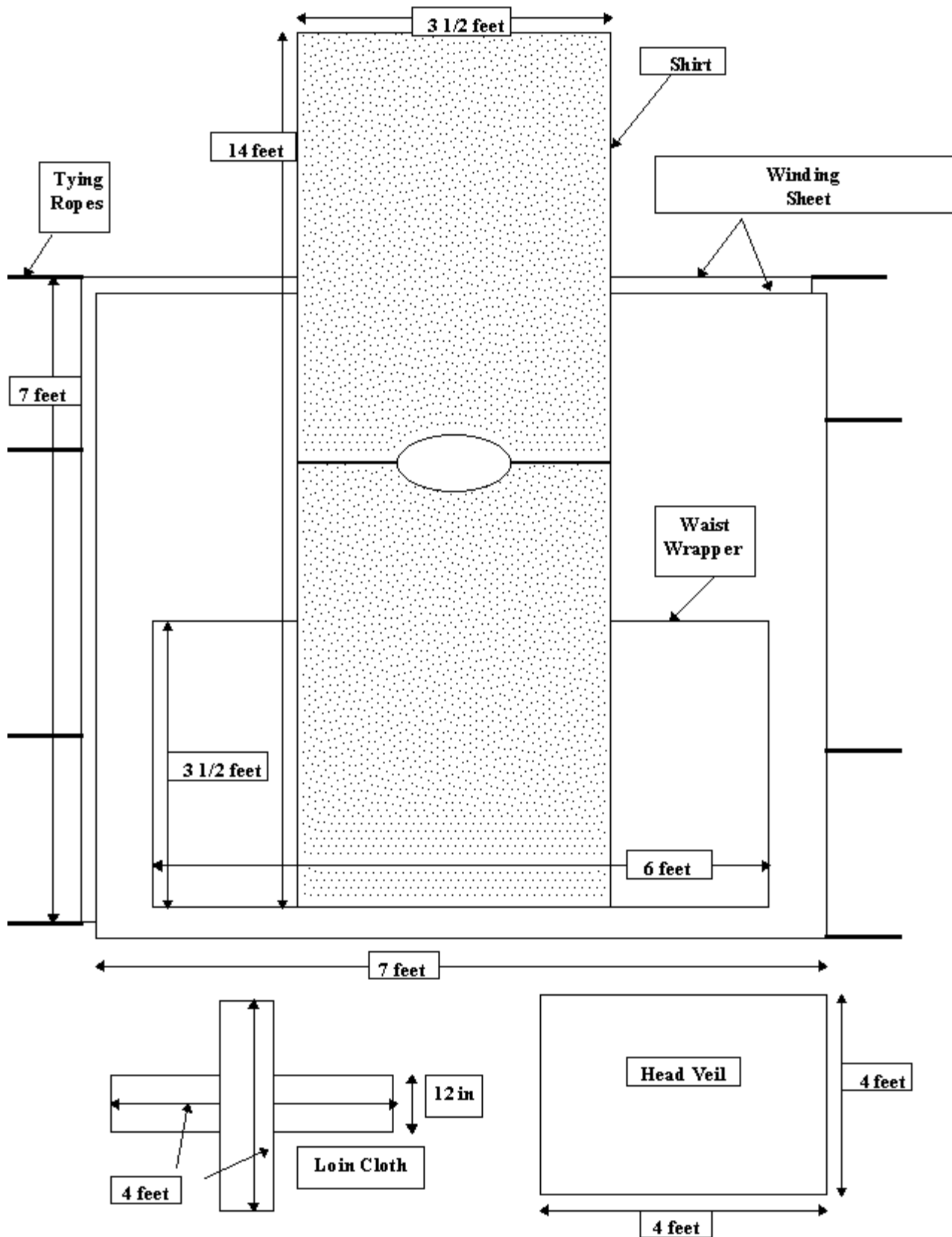


Figure (2)

E-) Funeral Prayer

A divine service is held over the dead body of every Muslim, young or old, even of infants who have lived only a few minutes. When the soul leaves the body, preparations are made for bidding him/her the last farewell.

It is highly recommended that, after washing and shrouding the body of the deceased, the body not to be kept long, but rather taken quickly, prayed for, and then buried.

Salatul Janazah is required to be performed in congregation to request pardon for the deceased and all dead Muslims, and to wrap them all in Allah's Mercy.

It is preferable that Salatul Janazah be performed outside the Mosque or the Musalla (Prayer room), like in activity rooms or courtyards.

Salatul Janazah is a collective obligation. A Muslim should not hesitate to participate in it, whether or not the deceased or his relatives are known to him.

Salatul Janazah is said silently, except the Takbeer and Tassleem. All conditions for regular Salat are required in Salatul Janazah such as Tahara, Wudu, clean body and clothes, neeyah (Intention), and facing the Qiblah.

There is a reward for attending Salatul Janazah for both the deceased and those who make the Salat according to the following Hadith.

There are specific times when it is prohibited to perform Salatul Janazah, unless it becomes necessary, due to the condition of the body, to perform it quickly and then bury the body.

This is due to the Hadith of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) who forbade us to pray, or bury our dead during these specified times (Muslim).

These prohibited times are :

From sunrise until the sun is fully risen,

At the zenith of the sun (the sun at meridian), until it passes the meridian,

From when the sun pales before sunset until it has set.

STEPS OF SALATUL JANAZAH

It is preferable that Salatul Janazah be performed outside the Mosque / the Musalla.

All conditions for regular Salat are required in Salatul Janazah such as Tahara, Wudu, clean body and clothes, neeyah (Intention), and facing the Qiblah.

Muslims should form a minimum of three lines facing the Qiblah. The one who leads the Salat is the leader or his deputy, or the deceased's father.

If there is only one Muslim with the Imam, he should stand behind the Imam.

The body (ies) should be placed in front of the person who leads the prayer.

In case there are more than one dead Muslim (Males and females), then the female(s) should be placed in the first row(s) in the direction of the Qiblah, then the male(s) in the following row(s), then the Imam.

For example : If there are : a dead Muslim male, a female, a young girl, and a young boy, then behind the Qiblah, first place the body of the young girl, then the adult female, then the young boy, then the adult male, so the bodies are arranged in a way that females' bodies are first, then the males (Figure (3)).

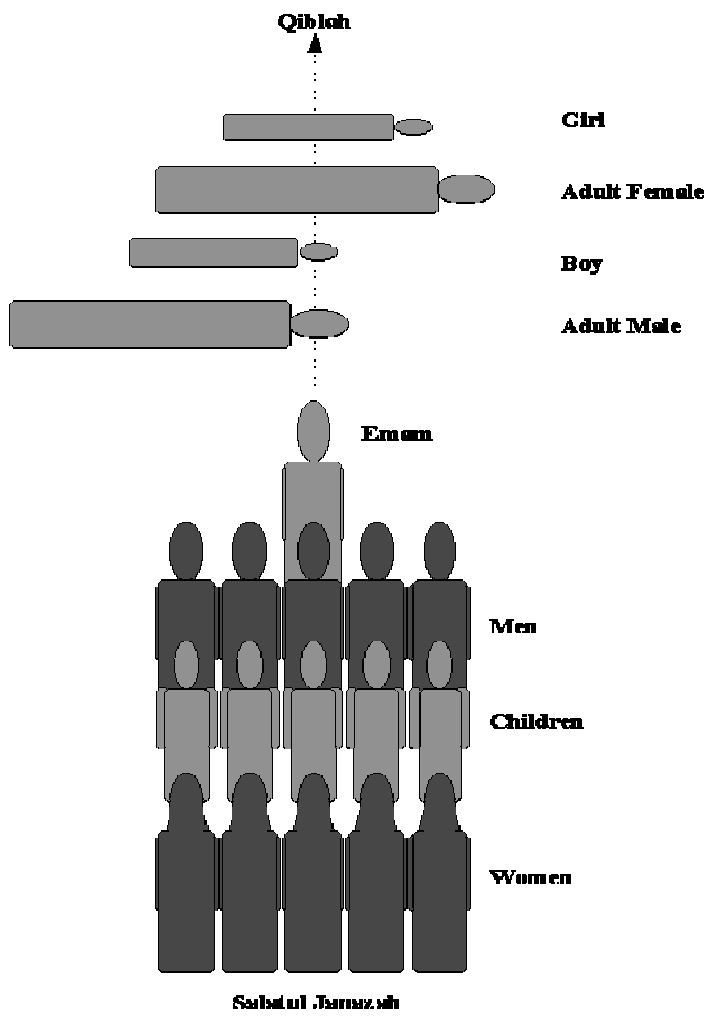
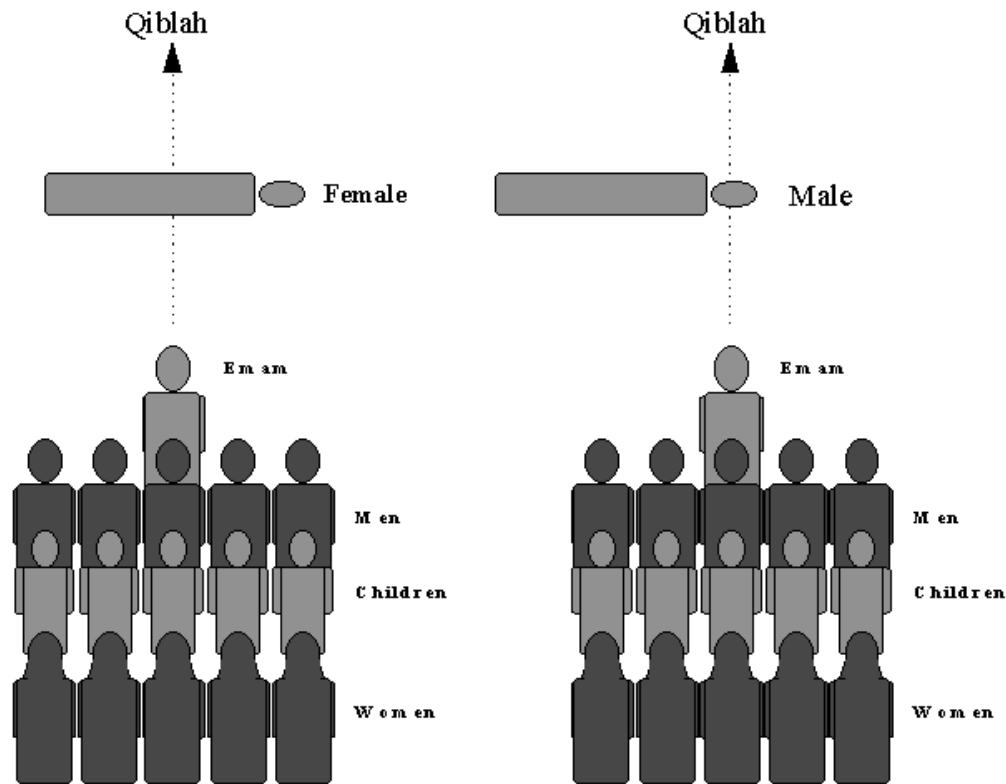


Figure (3)



Salatul Janazah for a Muslim female

Figure (4)

Salatul Janazah for a Muslim male

Figure (5)

The Imam should stand by the middle of a female body, and by the head for a male body, this is due to the Hadith in which Anas related that Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) leading Salat al-Janazah for a dead male, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) stood in front of the deceased head, and for a dead female, the Prophet (P.B.U.H) stood in front of the middle of her body. (Authentic-Abu Dawood). In another Hadith Samura ben Jundub said when Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) made Salat al-Janazah for a dead Muslim female, he stood in front of her waist (Muslim) (Figure (4), (5)).

Behind the Imam, males stand in lines, then children, then females (Figure (3),(4),(5)).

There are NO Rukuh, Sujud, Athan, or Eqama.

Having the appropriate neeyah (Intention), raise your hands in the usual manner and say : " Alla-who Akbar ".

Fold your right hand over the left hand in the usual manner.

Recite the Fatiha silently .

Then say : "Alla-who Akbar".

Then recite the Tashahood .

The Tashahood is :- (Allahumma sallee ala-Muhammad wa'ala alee Muhammad kama sallayta ala Ibrahim wa ala alee Ibrahim, wa barik ala Muhammad wa'ala alee Muhammad kama barakta ala Ibrahim wa ala alee Ibrahim, innaka hamidun Majeed).

This means : " O Allah! Grant peace to Muhammad and his family as you did to Ibrahim and his family. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and his family as you blessed Ibrahim and his family. Truly you are Most Glorious and Most Praiseworthy".

Then say : " Alla-who Akbar ".

Then make dua' (Supplicate) for the deceased.

Then say: " Alla-who Akbar ".

Then make dua (Supplicate) for all dead Muslims.

In the case of a dead baby or young child, make dua (Supplicate) for his parents.

Then say : " Assalamu alykum ", like you say in other Salats. Tasleem could be said only once.

NOTE:

Salatul Janazah for the one who died far away is allowed.

There is no Islamic teaching of putting the picture of the deceased or some of his/her clothes or flowers in front of or around the Kafan (Shroud).

To use a coffin (Box) is not allowed (By US law and regulations coffin must be used) , unless there is necessity to use it, such as the body of the deceased is damaged, or for health reasons, or when the grave is wet and cannot be dried. By US law and regulations coffin must be used.

F-) Following the Funeral Prayer

After Salatul Janazah, the deceased should be transferred to the Muslim cemetery. 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.

G-) Burial

Islam has a unique style of building graves and cemeteries that is characterized by humility, simplicity and economy in costs and that avoids glorifying the dead with elaborate monuments.

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.

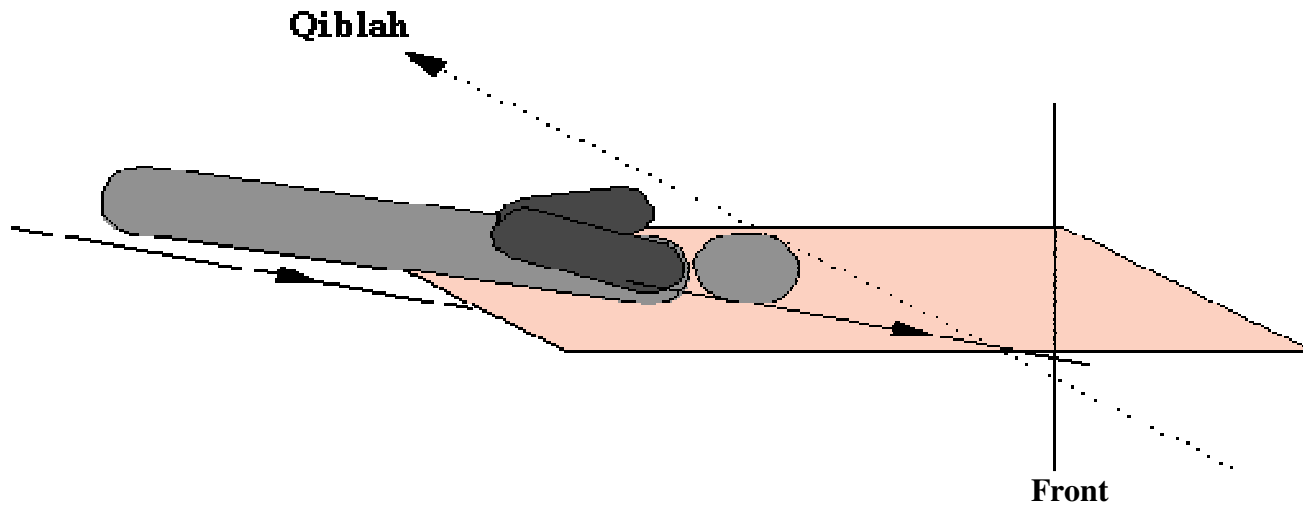
The deceased should be buried in the locality in which he lived. It is undesirable to take the body to the person's own country or to another city.

In Muslim cemeteries, there are two types of graves :

Al-Shaqq : is to make a deep vertical hole in the ground.

Al-Lahed : is to make a deep vertical hole in the ground, then in the bottom make a side horizontal hole big enough to cover the whole body.

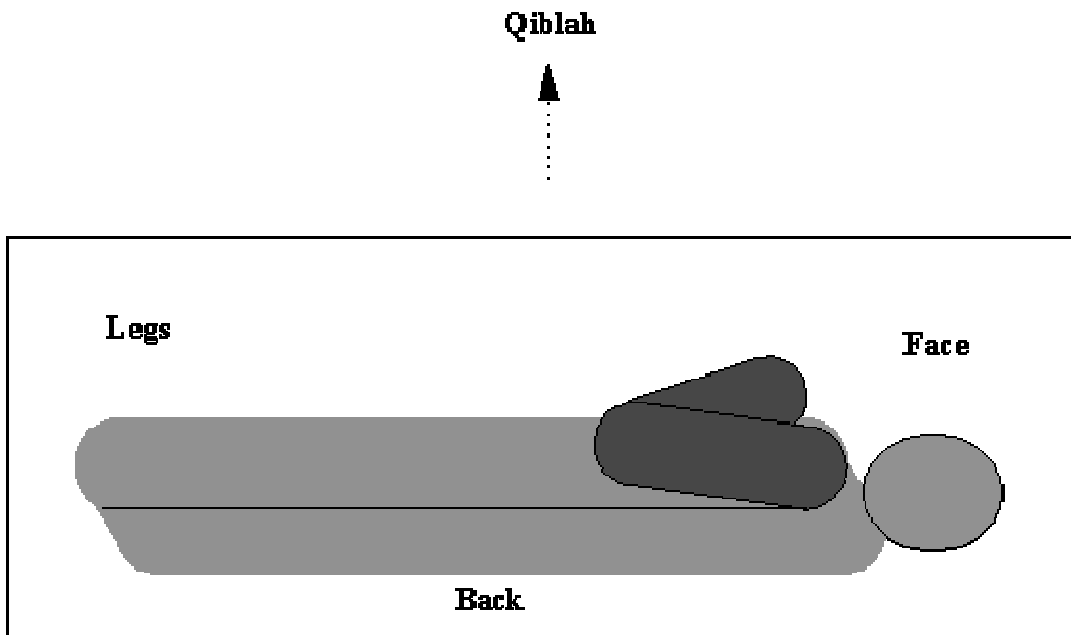
Both types are used, but it is preferable to use Al-Lahed if the land is solid (Figure (6)).



Rear

Figure (7)

Those who enter the body of the deceased in the grave should say : (Bismil llah wa ala millati rasulil llah), which means : " In the name of Allah and in the faith of the Messenger of Allah ". The deceased's body should rest on his/her right side, and should be close to the wall and supported so that the body will not fall back, the deceased's face should be towards the Qiblah.(Figure (6),(8)).



Looking into the grave

The deceased inside the grave laying on his right side and facing the Qiblah

Figure (8)

Those who put the deceased in the grave should not have had sexual intercourse with their wives the night before.

They should undo the tie on the head and the feet.

They should put above the body a layer of wood or big stones, so that earth will not be put directly on the body when they fill the grave with earth.

After the body is totally covered, it is desirable to throw three handfuls of soil into the grave.

Then the grave should be filled up with sand .

It is allowable to put a mark on the grave or a stone to know the grave.

It is also Sunnah to make the grave convex from sand, according to the Hadith that was reported by Sofyan.

Just after the burial all Muslims, including the deceased's relatives, may stay in the cemetery for a while and make dua' (Supplicate) for the deceased, since he/she is being questioned by the Angels.

NOTE:

There is no Islamic teaching of transferring the deceased to another country.

There is no Islamic teaching of revealing the face of the deceased after putting the body in the grave.

There is no Islamic teaching of shouting with special dthiker (Certain words to remember Allah) before, during, and after burial.

There is no Islamic teaching of reading the Quran in the cemetery.

There is no Islamic teaching of putting flowers, food, water, or money around the grave that will benefit the deceased.

There is no Islamic teaching of putting anything in, on or around the grave that will benefit the deceased.

There is no Islamic teaching of slaughtering an animal during or after burial.

There is no Islamic teaching of staying in a state of sadness for one year .

There is no Islamic teaching that the relatives of the deceased should wear black clothes.

There is no Islamic teaching that planting flowers on, or around the grave will benefit the deceased.

IMPORTANT RULES IN THE CEMETERY

It is prohibited to step over, lean, or sit on a grave.

It is prohibited to build any form of construction on the grave, or decorate the grave.

It is prohibited to plaster the grave, whitewash the grave, or use cooked stones.

Jabir relates that the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has forbidden that a grave should be made strong (of bricks and plaster), or durable or one should sit over it or the same should have a construction over it. (Muslim).

It is prohibited to pray facing towards the graves.

Women are forbidden from attending the burial.

It is prohibited to slaughter animals around the grave.

Arranging a mourning gathering on the day of death, or on the third day after death, or on the seventh, or on the twentieth day, or on the fortieth day, or on the anniversary of the death, all are abominable and heretical practices which people have introduced.

These practices have no basis whatsoever in the Quran, in the Sunnah of the Prophet, or in the practices of the early Muslims, may Allah the Exalted have mercy upon them. Some of these practices are done by some Muslims in different countries, but that does not make it the Islamic way.

It is prohibited to cremate the body of dead Muslim, even if the deceased requested it before his/her death.

It is prohibited to put candles on the grave. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said in an authentic Hadith: " *Curse those who light lamps on graves* " (Authentic-Ahmed).

It is also disliked (Makruh) to pray in the cemetery (Bukhari).

Performing autopsy on a dead Muslim is totally prohibited, unless it is requested by court order.

H-) Special cases (Miscarried fetus, children and Martyr)

1) Miscarried Fetus :

If the fetus is less than four months old (Mother was pregnant for less than four months), then the fetus may not be washed; the fetus should be wrapped in a piece of white cloth and buried. Then there is no Salatul Janazah for this fetus.

If the fetus is more than four months old (Mother was pregnant for more than four months), then the fetus may be washed, shrouded (Using one or two winding sheets to cover the whole body), and then Muslims have the choice whether to perform Salatul Janazah or not.

2) Children :

A) Before reaching the age of puberty, a child may be washed by males or females. Shrouding a child for females use a shirt and two winding sheets and for males two or three winding sheets may be used.

B) For those children who reached the age of puberty, they should be dealt with as an adult {Female child like female adult, and male child like male adult}, but then Salatul Janazah be performed.

3) Martyr :

The body of a Martyr should not be washed, nor be shrouded but buried with the same clothes that people found him with.

The strongest opinion of Muslim scholars is not to offer Salatul Janazah for martyrs since Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) did not offer it for the martyrs of the battle of Uhud.

I-) Condolences

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/she 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.

J-) Waiting period

Upon hearing the news of the death of her husband, a Muslim wife should be steadfast and patient. 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).

Um Atiyyah reported that the Messenger of Allah said: "A woman should not mourn for any deceased person for more than three days, except in the case of her husband's death, which she may mourn for a period of four months and ten days. Such a woman in mourning is not to wear any fancy, bright clothes, but only plain clothes, not use any adornment or make-up, nor use perfume, nor die her hands or feet with Henna" (Bukhari & Muslim).

If the widow is pregnant, then her waiting period ends when she delivers her baby, according to Allah's command in the Quran : "And for those who are pregnant, their Edda is until they deliver " (Quran 65:4).

DURATION OF EDDA

PREGNANT	NOT PREGNANT
Until delivery	Four Months and Ten Days

So a widow during the Edda should :

Stay in her home, and only leave when it is necessary.

Sleep in her home.

Not wear fancy, bright clothes.

Not wear jewelry.

Not use makeup including eyeliners (kohl).

Not use perfume.

K-) Rewards after death

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 follow him/her a Muslim (Get the rewards), even while the person is in the grave, such deeds like: useful knowledge, a good child that prays for him/her, 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/she was in good health; all are rewardable even after death.

In this respect the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said : "After the death of a person his actions stop, except three things that he leaves behind : First continuous charity, Second a knowledge from which some benefit may be obtained, Third a virtuous son who makes Dua' (Pray, supplicate) on his behalf " (Muslim).

Charity will benefit the deceased, as the following Hadiths show : " A man came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and asked him : " My father died leaving wealth but no will, would he be pardoned if a charity is given on his behalf ?", the Prophet (P.B.U.H) answered: "Yes" (Muslim).

Another Hadith : " A man came to the Prophet (P.B.U.H) and asked him : " My mother has died without making up for a missed days of fasting in the month of Ramadan, can I fast for her ? " , the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said to him : " Would you pay her debt if she owed someone ? ". The man said : " Yes", then the Prophet (P.B.U.H) said : " Then Allah is more deserving of payment in settlement of his debt" "(Bukhari & Muslim).

So from the previous authentic Hadiths there are generally three things that benefit the dead:

1) Charity; Continuous Charity ;

2) A knowledge left by the deceased from which some benefit may be obtained;

3) A virtuous son or daughter who makes Dua' (Pray, supplicate) on the deceased's behalf, or perform duties that the deceased did not do during his/her lifetime such as fasting missed days or Hajj, or pay his/her debts.

People put flowers, candles, food, perfume, on the grave all of this will not benefit the deceased.

L-) Visiting the Cemetery

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 in a non-Islamic manner .

NOTE:

There is no Islamic teaching of visiting the grave after three days, or seven days, or twenty days, or forty days.

There is no Islamic teaching of visiting the grave of the parents every Friday.

There is no Islamic teaching of visiting the grave any special days such as Eid days, Ashura day, or Ramadan.

There is no Islamic teaching of reading the Quran during the visit to the cemetery.

There is no Islamic teaching of wiping hands over the grave, or kissing the grave.