

What You Should Do Just Before Death

Authors(s):

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi [3]

Foreword

Death is a reality in which all human beings believe. However, it is also a reality which most of us like to keep out of our minds.

In Islam, death is not an end to our existence; it is a passage, which takes us from this world to the hereafter – the actual purpose for our creation and the result of our work in this life. Whether we fear death or not depends on how much we have prepared for the reckoning of the Day of Judgement.

Preparing for death is a lifetime's job. It begins on the day you reach the age of bulugh and are held accountable for your deeds in the eyes of Almighty Allah. Imam 'Ali bin Abu Talib (a.s.) has beautifully described the preparation for death as follows: "Fulfilling the obligations, refraining from forbidden [things, and acquiring noble character."

In this article, I have attempted to present some of the things which all believers are either required or strongly urged to do just before death by the shari'ah.

In Preparation for Death

Before death, try your best to fulfil the obligations, which are upon you in regard to the creatures as well as the Creator

Return to the owners whatever has been given to you as a trust **or** write it down in your will so that the executor of your will shall return the trust to its rightful owner.

In Islam, you are allowed to dispose up to one-third of your estate for whomsoever or whatever cause you like. As for the two thirds, it must be distributed among your heirs according to the shares allocated for them in the shari'ah.

Make a will in writing or verbally about those religious obligations which you could not fulfil by yourself and which cannot be done on your behalf by others except after your death: the qadha prayers, fasting and pilgrimage (hajj), etc. You should specify the amount from the one-third of your estate to be used to hire people to do such deeds. If you cannot afford this, then you may request your heirs to do unfulfilled rituals on your behalf voluntarily or pay someone else to do so.

It is also recommended, if your financial circumstances allow you, to include your deserving relations in the one-third of your estate.

It is recommended to forgive your brethren in iman for whatever wrong they may have done to you. On the other hand, you should ask your brethren in iman to forgive you for the intentional and unintentional wrong you may have done to them.

At The Time of Death

When death approaches you, it is wajib on you to lie down on your back in such a way that the soles of your feet face the qiblah (direction of Mecca). Or you may turn your bed in such a way that your soles will face the qiblah. If you cannot do so yourself, then it is wajib on those who are with you to help you.

It is recommended to say by yourself or repeat after someone else the declaration of faith and statement of faraj.

The declaration of faith: It is a declaration in which you reconfirm your belief in Allah, Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), the twelve Imams (a.s.), the Qu'ran, and the Day of Judgement.

This may be done as follows:

Radhitbu bil-lahi Rabban;

Wa bi Muhammadin (sal-lal-lahu 'alayhi wa alihi) nabiyyan;

Wa bil Islami dinan;

Wa bil Qur'ani kitaban;

Wa bil Ka'bati qiblatan;

Wa bi' Aliyyan waliyyan wa imaman;

Wa bil Hasan, wal Husayn, wa 'Aliy-yib nil Husayn;

Wa Muhammad bin 'Aliyyan,

Wa Jafar ibn Muhammadin;

Wa Musa ibn Ja'farin, wa 'Ali yibn Musa;

Wa Muhammad ibn Aliyyin; wa Ali yibn Muhammadin;

Wal Hasan ibn ‘Aliyyin; wal Hujjat ibnil Hasan
(salawatul-lahi ‘alayhim) aimmatan wa sadatan wa qadatan;
Bi him atawalla, wa min a’da’ihim ata-barra
Wa an-nas sa’ata atiyatun la rayba fiha;
Wa annal-laha yab’athu man fil qubur;
Wa annal hisaba haqqun; wa annal jannata haqqun;
Wa annan nar haqqun

I have accepted Allah as the Lord, Muhammad (s.a.w.) as the Prophet, Islam as the religion, the Qur’an as the Book [of God, the Ka’bah as the qiblah.

And [I accept ‘Ali as the waliy [of Allah and [my Imam; and Hassan, Hussein, ‘Ali ibn Hussein, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, Ja’far ibn Muhammad, Musa ibn Ja’far, ‘Ali ibn Musa, Muhammad ibn ‘Ali, ‘Ali ibn Muhammad, Hassan ibn ‘Ali, and al-Hujat ibn al-Hassan (a.s.) as Imams, leaders and guides – I declare my love for them and declare my disassociation with their enemies.

And [I believe that surely the Hour [of Doom will come in which there is no doubt; and that Allah will resurrect all those who are in their graves. And [I believe that the reckoning [of our deeds is the truth; the Paradise is the truth and that the Hell is the truth.

B. The statement of faraj is to be recited as follows:

La ilahah il-lal lahu Halimul Karim;
La ilaha il-lal lahu ‘Aliyyul ‘Azim;
Subhana ‘l-laha Rabbus samawatis sab’i
Wa Rabbul ardhinas sab’i;
Wa ma fee hinna wa ma bayna hunna
Wa ma fawqa hunna wa ma tahta hunna;
Wa Rabbul ‘arshil ‘azim;
Wal hamdu lil-lahi Rabbis ‘alameen.

There is no god but Allah, the Gentle, the Kind;
There is no god but Allah, the High, the Great;

All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the seven heavens and the lord of the seven earth’s, and whatever is in them and whatever is between them, and whatever is above them and whatever is below them; and [He is the Lord of the Great Throne.

And all praise be to Allah, the lord of the Universe.

It is recommended to move the dying person to his/her usual place of prayer in the home. This is recommended only if it does not cause pain or inconvenience to the dying person.

It is recommended to recite two surahs, Yasin (no. 36) and as-Saffat (no. 37), near the dying person.

According to the traditions, this will relieve the pangs of death.

After The Death

- Soon after a person dies, it is recommended to do the following things:
- Close the eye-lids of the dead person
- Close the mouth of the dead person
- Tie the two jaws so that the mouth does not open
- Straighten his/her arms and place them on the two sides of his body
- Straighten his/her legs
- Cover the dead body
- Switch on the light in the room where the dead body is kept
- Arrange the funeral as soon as possible
- Inform the mu'mineen to attend the funeral.

After Death Rituals

They cover *Ghusl/Kafan/Dafan* i.e., washing, shrouding, and burying. Basically, these are *Wajib* (obligatory) acts for all of us but *Kifai – Wajibe Kifai*, which means if one or more persons undertake to do, others are absolved. Else it is *wajib* on everyone.

Therefore, it is essential for all of us to know the basics of burial rituals in case we are called upon to perform them when it becomes obligatory for us to do so according to the *Shar'ia*.

First Obligatory Wajib Act Ghusl-e-Mayyit (Ritual Wash of the Dead Body)

It is *wajib* to give three *Ghusls* to a Muslim dead body.

- First *Ghusl* with water mixed with *Sidr* (berry or lotus) leaves.
- Second *Ghusl* with water mixed with camphor.
- Third *Ghusl* with pure water.

Note: The quantity of “*Sidr*” leaves or camphor should neither be so much that the water becomes mixed (*Mudhaf*), nor so little that it may be said that “*Sidr*” leaves or camphor has not been added in it.

Q) When *Ghusl Mayyit* is performed with water mixed with SIDR and with water mixed with CAMPHOR, care should be taken in each case that the water does not become *muzaf*.

When SIDR and especially CAMPHOR is mixed in water for *Ghusl Mayyit*, even in small quantity, certainly a change in SMELL AND TASTE will occur. Would not that constitute to water that has been mixed with SIDR or CAMPHOR having become *Muzaf*?

In the case of *Ghusl Mayyit* using water mixed with Sidr and with water mixed with Camphor, what is one required to do to ensure that while there is presence of Sidr or Camphor in the water, it has not become *MUZAF*?

A) *Mutlaq* water remains *Mutlaq* even with change in color, smell or taste.

The *Katheer* (big quantity) water becomes *Najis* if it's color or smell or taste changes becoming like the *Najis* item's color, smell or taste.

Water mixed with Sidr or Camphor remains *Mutlaq* in spite of the change of smell or taste of it, as far as the quantity of the Sidr or Camphor is not too much. (M.M.)

Q) If I am giving *Ghusle Mayyit* and wearing hand gloves. Do I have to perform *Ghusle Maseh Mayyit*?

A) As long as you have not touched the *Meyyit* with your bare hand and no part of your body touched the *Meyyit*, then you do not need to perform *Ghusl of Maseh Meyyit*.

Q) If a foetus of 4 months or more is still-born it is obligatory to give it *Ghusl*, and even if it has not completed four months, but it has formed features of a human child, it must be given *Ghusl*, as a precaution. In the event of both of these circumstances being absent, the foetus will be wrapped up in a cloth and buried without *Ghusl*.

Am I correct to understand that besides *Ghusl*, it will also be *wajib* to give *Tahnit* and *Kafan*?

A) Whenever *Ghusl* is *Wajib* then *Hunut* and *Kafan* are also required. (H.K.)

Q) When giving *Tayammum* to a *Meyyit*, is it necessary that the palms of the person doing *Tayammum* to a *Meyyit* must be placed on the forehead of the *Meyyit* in such a way that his right palm is on the right side of the forehead of a *Mayyit* and his left palm is placed on the left side of the forehead of a *Mayyit*.

Similarly, is it also necessary that he should be stroking the right hand of the *Meyyit* (from the wrist-joint to the end of the fingers) with his left palm followed by passing his right palm over the back of the *Meyyit's* left hand.

A) That is not obligatory.

A person giving *tayammum* to the dead body should strike his own palms on earth and then wipe them on the face and back of the hands of the dead body. And the recommended precaution is that he should, if possible, use the hands of the dead for its *tayammum*. (L.O.)

Method of Performing Ghusl-e-Mayyit

Ghusl for a dead body is similar to *Ghusl* of *Janabat*. It should be given by way of *Tartibi*. The obligatory precaution is that a corpse should not be given *Ghusl Irtimase*.

Step One

Before giving *Ghusl*, it is necessary to remove all dirt and oily substances from the dead body, which may prevent water from reaching the skin. If there is any *'ayn najasat* on any part of the dead body, it is obligatory to first remove it before giving *Ghusl*. And it is required that before the dead body is given *Ghusl*, it should be clean and free from all other *Najasat*.

It is recommended that the dead body should be laid, with feet facing the *Qiblah*, during the *Ghusl*. After the three *Ghusls* have been completed, it is better that the dead body is laid in the same way as it is laid when *Salatul Mayyit* is prayed.

Step Two – Ghusl With Water Mixed With Sidr

Make a *niyyat*, "I am washing this dead body with *SIDR WATER Wajib Qurbatan Ilal-lah*" and wash the body with *SIDR* water in which small quantity of berry or lotus leaves have been added or its essence squeezed from a parchment paper.

Note: Care should be taken that the water does not become *mudhaf*.

Step Three – Ghusl with Water Mixed With Camphor

Make a *niyyat*, "I am washing this dead body with *CAMPHOR WATER Wajib Qurbatan Ilallah*". And wash the body with camphor water in which a little camphor has been added.

Note: Care should be taken that the water does not become *mudhaf*.

Step Four – Ghusl With Clean Water

Make a *niyyat*, "I am washing this dead body with *CLEAN WATER Wajib Qurbatan Ilallah*" and wash the body with clean (tap) water.

After all these *Ghusls*, the body should be gently dried with a clean towel.

Some Basic Rules

While giving *Ghusl* cover the body, or at least the private parts of it, with a sheet of cloth or any type of cover. It is *Haraam* to look at the private parts of a *mayyit*.

- The method of giving *Ghusl* is *Tartibi* – in sequence, first head and neck, then the right side and finally the left, the way we ordinarily do our *Ghusl*.

- While performing *Ghusl* it is better to recite Surah/Ayat of the Qur'an and Du'a for the *marhum* than keeping quiet or chatting.
- The person giving *Ghusl* should be a Muslim, preferably a Shia Ithna-Asheri, adult, sane and should know the basic, essential rules of *Ghusl*. He should belong to the same gender.
- It is *haram*, as a precaution, to take any remuneration for giving *Ghusl*. If any remuneration is paid and the person receives it as an earning, *Ghusl* will be void (*batil*). The person who gives *Ghusl* to the dead body should keep the *niyyat* of *Qurbatan Ilallah* (obedience to and for the pleasure of Allah).
- If both *sidr* leaves and camphor or either of them is not available, then the body should be given *Ghusl*, on the basis of precaution, with pure water instead of the *Ghusl* which is not possible. In such a case, after the three *Ghusls*, one *tayammum* should be performed on the *mayyit*.
- If water is not available or the body has open and bleeding wounds or partially crushed, or any other valid reason for abstaining from using water, and, as no rule of *Jabirah* is applicable to *Ghusle Mayyit*, one *Tayammum* should be given instead of *Ghusl*. Apparently one *Tayammum* is sufficient. However, the recommended precaution is to give three *tayammums*, and in one of the *tayammums*, there should be a *Niyyat* of '*Ma fi-zimmah*' which means that the person giving *tayammum* resolves that this *tayammum* is given to absolve him of his responsibility.
- Method of giving *Tayammum* to the *Mayyit* is that the person giving *Tayammum* strikes his own palms on earth and then wipes them on the face and back of the hands of *Mayyit*. However, the obligatory precaution is that he should, if possible, use the hands of the *Mayyit* to do its own *Tayammum*.

Quoted from Minhaaj of Ayatullah Al-Sistani Dama-Dhilluhu.

v 271) If the body of the dead person becomes impure after or during *Ghusl* with an external impurity or from it, and it can be purified without difficulty or dishonor, then it is obligatory even if it is after the person has been placed in the grave, according to what is more prudent. Yes, that is not obligatory after burial.

v 272) If urine or semen is discharged from the deceased, it is not necessary to repeat his *Ghusl*, even if it is prior to his being placed in the grave.

Q) If there was some sort of insertion into the body of a *mayyit*, for example a tube or a Cather, and we know blood will come out, can we close it shut with a thread/needle.

A) Yes, you can. (L.O.)

Q) When camphor or lote-berry leaves [*sidr*] are not available to perform *ghusl* for a dead person, what should be done?

A) First, it is necessary to wait if there is possibility of obtaining camphor and sidr. However, if these are not available, then, pure water should be used in their stead and the intention should be using pure water in place of camphoric and lote–berried water. After the three ghusls are given, it is *ihhtiyat wajib*, i.e. obligatory precaution, to give the corpse one *tayammum*. (F.S.)

Second Obligatory Wajib Act – Tahnit Application of Camphor Powder to Specific Parts of the Body

Tahnit

After first *wajib* act has been completed, the second *wajib* act is *tahnit* (to give *Hunut*). This involves applying fresh fragrant camphor powder on seven parts of the body which rest on the ground when prostrating (doing *Sajdah*).

These are:

- v the forehead,
- v both the palms of hands,
- v both the knees,
- v and both the big toes.

Note: It is *Mustahab* to apply camphor on the tip of the nose.

Camphor must be powdered and fresh. It will not be sufficient if it is so stale that it lost its fragrance.

It is, as an obligatory precaution, to start *tahnit* starting with the forehead. It is not necessary to observe sequence while applying to other parts mentioned above. The *niyyat* should be, before commencing *tahnit*, "I am doing *tahnit/hunut* on this dead body *Wajib Qurbatan Ilallah*."

It is *Mustahab* to mix a small quantity of *Turbah* (soil of the land around the shrine of Imam Husayn a.s.) with camphor, but it should not be applied to those parts of the body where its use of it may amount to disrespect, i.e. the knees and the big toes. It is also necessary that the quantity of *Turbah* should not be so much that the identity of camphor disappears or is obscured.

Third Obligatory Wajib Act – Kafan – Shrouding the Mayyit

Rules Relating To Kafan

After the second *wajib* act has been completed, the third *wajib* act is *Kafan* i.e., shrouding or systematically wrapping the body with three obligatory – *wajib* and several additional recommended – *mustahab* pieces of cloth, as outlined below.

As a precaution, each of the three pieces of cloth used for *Kafan* is not so thin as to show the body of

the deceased. However, if the body is fully concealed when all the three pieces are put together, it will be sufficient.

Wajib Pieces Of Kafan

a. Loin cloth

It is an apron like cloth worn around the waist. The *wajib* portion of the loin cloth should completely cover both the front and back part of the body from the navel to the knees. However, it is recommended that it should be long enough to cover the body from the chest up to the feet.

b. Tunic (shirt)

It is a piece of cloth similar to a long shirt that covers the body from the shoulders to below the knees, preferably to the ankles.

c. Inner Wrapper (Sheet Cover)

A large sheet of cloth that covers the entire body. As a precaution, it should be long and wide enough so that the front and the back part overlap each other, and the top and the bottom ends can be tied with a string.

Mustahab Pieces Of Kafan

a. Outer Wrapper – a second large sheet like the first sheet
(for both males and females)

b. Scarf to cover the head and the neck
(for females only)

c. *Turban* to cover the head
(for males only)

d. A piece of clothing to cover the complete area of the private parts and should be long enough to secure around the hips. (for both male and female)

e. A strip of cloth to cover the whole area of the breast
(for female only).

It is *Mustahab* (recommended) that:

- The cloth for “*Kafan*” should be white.
- The body should be kept in such a position so that the right shoulder faces *Qibla* as it is done for *Salatul Mayyit*.

- Two fresh green twigs of a tree inscribed with *Shahadah (Kalma)*, called *Jareedat*, should be kept in the *Kafan* with the dead body.
- Recite *surahs/layats* from the Qur'an and *Istaghfar* while shrouding the body.

Quoted from Minhaaj of Ayatullah Al-Sistani Dama-Dhilluhu.

289) If the *Kafan* becomes impure with an impurity from the deceased person – or anything else – the impurity must be removed, even if he has been placed in the grave, by washing or cutting it out in a way that does not affect his being covered. If that cannot be done, then it should be changed, if possible.

Q) I have a point that I am seeking clarification on -- in using cotton wool, other padding and plastic to cover the private parts of the dead body after *Ghusle Mayyit* (especially when the dead body is discharging waste matter from his private body part), the *kafan* may be well preserved from coming into contact with the *najasat*. But what about the body itself? It may be *najis* from the excretion but this will not be evident because of the precautionary measures taken.

Is it obligatory to check the body before burial for its *taharat*?

A) There is no need to check body before burial. However, if the *najaasat* is evident then it would be cleaned before burial. Allah knows the best. (H.K.)

Follow-up Questions

If the *najaasat* becomes evident on the *kafan* which would mean that the body has also become *najis*. In the grave yard (or after the dead body has been placed in the grave) where there is no water facility for making the body and the *kafan paak*, the part of the *najaasat* on the *kafan* can be cut, but what about the *najaasat* on the body?

Under the above circumstances, what is the dictate of the *Shari'ah*?

A: If there is *haraj* (difficulty) to clean the *najaasat* on the body then there is no need to worry about it and the deceased can be buried after taking care of the *kafan*. (H.K.)

Q) As I understand the *wajib* portion of the *kafan* should not have been stitched. If it becomes necessary for the pieces to be joined together because of insufficient length then the thread to be used should be drawn from the *kafan*. Is my understanding correct? Does the same rule apply to the *mustahab* portion of the *kafan* as well?

A) Stitching the *Kafan* is not forbidden, although it is *Makrooh* to stitch it using the saliva. (M.M.)

Q) To protect the *kafan* from becoming *najis*, in the event there is discharge of waste matter from his private body part, sometimes diaper is used as underwear to absorb bodily waste. Normally readymade diapers are used which have stitches on. Is this allowed in our *Shariah*?

A) Using diapers is allowed for dead body, and it does not matter if it is stitched as stitching the Kafan is allowed. (M.M.)

Q) During the time of putting *kafan* on the deceased, it is recommended to place branches under both arm pits. I do not recall the name but as this may not be easily available, someone again suggested to place leaves. If this is so, any particular leaves?

A) It is *Mustahab* to place two fresh green twigs (called *Jareedatain*) with the dead person. The most appropriate method is to place one of them on the right side near his collarbone in contact with his body, and the other on the left side from the collarbone between the shirt and the wrapping cloth (*izar*). It is better that the two twigs are from the date palm. If that is not available, then from the Sidr or pomegranate tree, and if these two are not available then from others, otherwise any fresh stems. It is also recommended that the *Jareedatain* be inscribed with *Shahadah* and the names of the infallible Imams (a.s.)

Note: There is no mention of leaves as a replacement for *Jareedatain*.

Fourth Obligatory Wajib Act – Salat Mayyit

Rules Relating To Salat Mayyit

The next *wajib* act is *Salatul Mayyit* – (*Namaz-e-Janaza*) for every Muslim. The *Salat* is also obligatory for a Muslim child who has completed six years. As an obligatory precaution, it should also be prayed for an under six year old child, if the child is *Mumayyiz*, a religious terminology which means that the child knows what *Salat* is and can also distinguish good from bad or right from wrong. If the child is not *Mumayyiz*, then the *Salat* could still be prayed with the *Niyyat of Raja'*.

Positioning the Coffin

The body, in a coffin, is laid on its back before the person(s) praying in congregation, head on the right side of the congregation, and the right shoulder facing towards *Qibla*. Those praying, stand close to the coffin in a row(s) stretching along both sides from the middle of the coffin. Imam stands in front reciting loudly and *M'amumeen* should not remain quiet and just listen but actually follow the recitation. It is recommended that they all be in (*wudhu*). For a male *mayyit* the Imam stands near the abdomen of the *mayyit* while for a female *mayyit*, Imam stands near the chest of the *mayyit*.

NB. If the *Salaat* is not prayed in congregation then one should not be distant from the body. i.e. the coffin should be close to him and he should be directly facing the coffin.

The *Salat* has no *Ruku* or *Sujuud*. It is prayed in a standing position. There are five *Takbirs* with recitations after each *Takbir*.

The details of the normal and shorter methods of praying *Salatul Mayyit* can be obtained from the Islamic Laws book of Ayatullah Al-Sistani Dama- Dhilluhu.

Q) Where should the imam of the salaatul mayyit stand in reference to where the people should be. Since there are no ruku/sajda, everyone is shoulder to shoulder. So if the imam stands at the coffin, can the people be next to him or should he be at the coffin and the rest should be behind him?

A) If Namaz-e-Mayyit being offered in Jama'at, the ma'momeen would stand behind the Imam. (L.O.)

Q) 1] Can a person pray Salatul Mayyit wearing shoes?

2] Can a man and a woman stand in the same row in Salatul Mayyit prayed in congregation?

3] Can a woman stand in front of a man in Salatul Mayyit prayed in congregation?

A) 1] Yes, he can

2&3) It is mustahab to stand behind them (L.O.)

Q) What is the minimum height at which a Mayyit should be kept for Salaatul Janazah?

A) Urf (convention, custom, common understanding) determines if the height at which the Janazah is kept is considered to be in front of the person praying or above him. It has to be in front of the person praying Salatul Janazah. (F.S.)

Fifth Obligatory Wajib Act – Dafan (Burial)

Place of Burial

After *Salatul Mayyit*, the body should be buried in a Muslim graveyard. It cannot be buried in non-Muslim cemetery unless a portion of that cemetery has been specifically allocated and reserved for Muslims.

Method

The *Mayyit* should be laid in the grave on its right side so that the face remains towards the *Qibla*.

Note: It is recommended that the persons who lower the dead body in the grave should be *pak*, bare-headed and bare-footed.

It is *Mustahab*, that the coffin, after arrival in the graveyard, is placed a short distance away from the dug up grave and moved slowly to the grave by pausing and putting back on the ground and lifting up again, three times. At the fourth time, it is finally lowered into the grave. If the dead body is of a male, it should be put on the ground at the third time in such a manner that its head should be towards the lower side of the grave and at the fourth time it should be lowered into the grave from the side of its head. In the case of a female, it should be placed on the ground at the third time towards the *Qibla* and the body should be lowered into the grave sideways.

Also, a piece of cloth should be spread over the grave while lowering the body of a female so that the bystanders should not be able to see. In the absence of *mahram*, close relatives should lower the body in the grave.

Q) Does the above *mustahab* act make any difference whether it is done before or after the *Salaatul Meyyit* because sometime *Salatul Mayyit* is prayed in the grave yard after the *Meyyit* has been placed near the grave?

A) It is after prayer. (L.O.)

After the body has been laid in the *grave*, the ties at both ends, and in the middle, of the *kafan* should be unfastened and some earth should be put under the right cheek of the *mayyit*. A pillow of earth should be made under the head.

Before closing the grave *Talqin* is then recited.

Talqin

Before closing the grave, the person reciting the *Talqin* should hold the right shoulder of the dead body with his right hand and should place his left hand tightly on its left shoulder and draw his face close to the ear of the dead body. Then, shaking shoulders of the dead body, he should say thrice: "*Isma' ifham ya... (Listen and understand, O') mention the name of the deceased as the son of his father. For example, if the name of the deceased is Muhammad and his father's name 'Ali, say Muhammad ibn 'Ali thrice:*

The full text of *Talqin*, for both a male *mayyit* and a female *mayyit* can be obtained from the Islamic Laws of Ayatullah Al-Sistani Dama-Dhilluhu.

After the *Talqin*, and closing the grave it is *Mustahab* that those who participated in the burial, except the near relatives, throw small quantity of soil into the grave, using the back side of their right hand. The grave then is filled with earth, using shovels or by mechanical means. After the grave has been shaped, close members of the family then sprinkle water over the grave, followed by *Tanzil*, the recitation, seven times, of *Surah al-Qadr* and any short *Du'a* for *Maghfirat* of the deceased.

Note: It is *Mustahab* that the grave be rectangular in shape and its height equal to four fingers' span.

Q) A child of 3 years expired. Besides, *Ghusl*, *Hunoot* and *Kafan*, is it also recommended to recite *Talqeen* and request for the prayers of *Wahshat*?

A) As for *Talqeen* for *Mayyit* whose recitation is *Mustahab*, I checked a number of books and there is no mention about it being recommended for children. *Salaat* of *Mayyit* is not *wajib* for children under six years so it is safe to say that there is no *talqeen* for children under six. Rather, Maulana Rizivi believes that there is no *talqeen* for a *mayyit* who is not a *baligh*. Allah knows the best. (H.K.)

Q) A question came up during the *sehri* program on *Ghusl* and *Kafan*. At the time of *talqeen*, someone mentioned that the name of deceased should not be mentioned. The *talqeen* does say: *Isma'e Iffham, Ya fulan ibn fulan* where this is substituted for the name of the deceased.

A) Mentioning of the name in the *talqin* is not necessary; it can be replaced by *hadhal mayyit* or *hadhihil mayyit*. However, mentioning the name is not a problem at all. (M.R.)

Q) I understand, it is recommended to recite two *TALQINS* after death. 1] Immediately after the corpse has been laid in the grave. 2] After all the people have departed after burial. There is a tendency in certain Islamic Centers of reciting *TALQIN* after the corpse has been clothed with *KAFAN* and *TAHNIT*. Is this act provided in the *Shariah* and is it *mustahab* to do so?

A) It is *Mustahab* (recommended) to say *Talqeen* before death (Ehtidhaar), so that the person repeats the Truth before death. After death, there are no *Talqeens* but two ; one after putting the dead person in the grave before burial, and second *Talqeen* when dead is buried and people have left the grave.

After the Burial

It is *Mustahab* that, after burial and after the persons who attended the funeral have gone, the guardian of the *Marhum/la* or the person whom the guardian grants permission should recite the *Talqin* and the *Du'a* once again for the *Mayyit*.

Note: 1] It is *Mustahab* that after the burial, the bereaved family is consoled.

2] It is *Mustahab* that food be sent to the members of the family of the deceased for 3 days. It is, however, *Makrooh* to eat with them in their homes.

Ghusl Mase Mayyit (Ghusl For Touching A Dead Body)

If a person touches a *Mayyit* which has become completely cold and has not yet been given all three *Ghusl-e-Mayyit*, with any part of his body including nail, he should do *Ghusl Mase Mayyit*. The method is the same as that of other prescribed *Ghusls*, i.e. *Janabat*. After performing *Ghusl* for touching a dead body, the recommended precaution is that he should also perform *Wudhu* when he has to pray.

Note: *Ghusl* of *Mase-Mayyit* will not be *Wajib* if a person touches a dead body which has not become entirely cold even if he touches a part which has become cold.

Q) Is taking a bath mandatory for a medical student who has to touch skeletons and corpses?

A) Bath becomes obligatory upon a person who touches a dead body containing flesh and bones. If only bones or a piece of flesh is touched, there is no necessity of taking a bath. The student may touch a corpse whilst wearing gloves and avoid the necessity of taking a bath. (M.M.)

Q) Does it make any difference if the dead body one touches, is that of a non-Muslim?

A) It does not make any difference. If a person physically comes in contact with the dead body of a non-Muslim, he will have to take bath. (M.M.)

Q) A na-baligh child touches a dead body which has become cold and before having been given the three ghusls.

The question is:

Is it wajib for him to perform *Ghusl Mase Meyyit* while he is still *na-baligh*?

A) Yes the *ghusl* is *wajib*. (H.K.)

Q) Will it become *wajib* for him on attaining *bulugh* if he did not perform it?

A) Yes, he/she should perform the *ghusl* upon becoming *baligh*. (H.K.)

Q) Since he is *na-baligh*, *shari'i* implication is not applicable to him and will he still be required to perform *Ghusl Mase Meyyit* now nor on attaining *bulugh*?

A) Here age or *bulugh* is not a criterion according to Ayt Sayyid Seestani (dz). (H.K.)

Q) I vaguely remember, I am not sure if my memory is not deceiving me, may be some 40 years back, a *mas'ala* had arisen when a mother died having a living child in her womb. When a living child was brought out, naturally he had a physical contact with the body of her dead mother. When a question was asked, probably at the time of Agha Burujardi, or Agha Muhsin Hakim or Agha Khoei, I cannot remember, the reply then obtained was that it will be *wajib* for the said child to perform *Ghusl Mase Meyyit* on attaining *bulugh*.

A) All answers to the above three questions apply if the child was removed from the mother's womb after she had become cold. Please check with a local Muslim doctor on this. I strongly presume that the child is delivered when the body is still warm. (H.K.)

Exhumation

It is *Haraam* to open the grave of a Muslim even if it belongs to a child or an insane person. However, there is no objection in doing so if the dead body has decayed and turned into dust.

Digging up or destroying the graves of the descendants of Imams, the martyrs, the *Ulama* and the pious persons is *Haraam*, even if they are very old, because it amounts to desecration.

Note: There are certain cases where digging up the grave is allowed. Details can be obtained from the Islamic Laws of Ayatullah Al-Sistani Dama- Dhilluhu.

Condolences

It is recommended (*Sunnah*), in fact, a religious, moral and social duty of *Mu'mineen* that condolences should be conveyed to the family of the deceased after the burial and expression of sorrow and sympathy should be shown to the members of the bereaved family.

Bereaved Family

With regard to the bereaved family, it is important that they should bear the loss with patience by often reciting "*Inna lil-Llah wa inna ilahi Raji'oon*", recite Qur'an, pray *Salat*, pay *Sadaqa* to the poor and remember *Marhum/Marhuma* with *Du'a* and *Istighfar*, organize recitation of the Qur'an and *Majalis* of Imam Husayn (a.s.) all for *Ithale Sawab* for the departed soul. These are a few ways of benefiting the departed soul.

Discipline of Visiting Cemetery

There are several disciplines you need to observe when visiting the cemetery:

- You should remember death and visualize yourself as lying in the grave and facing the consequences of your sins and acts of disobedience to Allah (swt).
- Worldly talks, jokes and laughs should be avoided and, instead, recitation of the *Surahs* of the Qur'an and *Du'as* for the dead buried in the cemetery should be constantly recited.
- Eating and drinking in the cemetery should be avoided. Apparently, *Tabarruk* in respect of recitation of the Qur'an or *Majlis* of our *Aemmah* (a.s.) is an exception.
- It is recommended to visit either on Thursday or Friday.

A person, on entering a cemetery, should say,

(I begin) in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

اللهم صل على محمد وآل

محمد وعجل فرجهم يا كريم

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

اَلْسَّلَامُ عَلٰی اَهْلِ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، مِنْ اَهْلِ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، يَا اَهْلَ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، بِحَقِّ
لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، كَيْفَ وَجَدْتُمْ قَوْلَ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، مِنْ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، يَا لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا
اللّٰهُ، بِحَقِّ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، اَغْفِرْ لِمَنْ قَالَ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، وَاَحْشُرْنَا فِيْ زُمْرَةِ مَنْ قَالَ
لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ، مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلٰی وِلٰی اللّٰهِ

“Peace, Salam be on the people who are worthy of being among those who declare that there is no God but Allah. O’ those who are (buried here) and worthy of being among the people who declare that there is no God but Allah, for the sake of there being no God but Allah, (tell us) how have you found the declaration that there is no God but Allah?

O’ Allah, there is no God but (You) Allah. By Your absolute and sole Attribute of You alone being God, Allah, forgive those who declare that there is no God but (You) Allah and raise us (on the Day of Judgment) among the group of people who declared (during their lives) that there is no God but Allah, Muhammad (s.a.w.a.) is the Prophet of Allah, ‘Ali (a.s.) is the Representative of Allah.”

General Masaels

- If a foetus of 4 months or more is still-born it is obligatory to give it *Ghusl*, *Hunut* and *Kafan*.
- If it has not completed 4 months, but it has formed features of a human child, it must be given *Ghusl*, *Hunut* and *Kafan* as a precaution.
- In the event both the above circumstances being absent, the foetus will be wrapped up in a cloth and buried without *Ghusl*, *Hunut* or *Kafan*.
- It is obligatory to offer *Salatul Mayyit* for every Muslim as well as for a Muslim child if he/she has completed 6 years of age.
- If a child had not completed 6 years, but he/she was a *Mumayyiz* (a discerning child) who knew what *Salat* was, then as an obligatory precaution, *Salatul Mayyit* for him/her should be offered. If he/she did not know of *Salat*, then the prayers may be offered with the *Niyah* of ‘*Raja*’.
- As for *Talqeen* for *Mayyit* whose recitation is *Mustahab*, I checked a number of books and there is no mention about it being recommended for children. *Salaat* of *Mayyit* is not *wajib* for children under six years so it is safe to say that there is no *talqeen* for children under six. Rather, Maulana Rizivi believes

that there is no *talqeen* for a *mayyit* who is not a *baligh*. Allah knows the best. (H. K.)

Q) I seek your advice if there is any relevance in the *Shari'ah* pertaining to the following issue proposed for implementation:

"Miniature Graves' – There is a suggestion that based on the *hadith* that should somebody's parents/relatives be buried far [distant lands], one should make a mark at the *kabrastan* and recite *fateha* on the *marhum[een]* – miniature graves [12" x 18" with a plastic marker] can be made and placed within our boundaries. Such graves to be allocated at a minimum *hadiya* of between \$ 50 and 100."

A) To make a permanent marker as miniature graves of parents is really going over the board. The Prophet (s.a.w.w.) had asked a person to go and symbolically make a marking of a grave and pray at that grave. But it was never intended that a person should buy a plot and erect a permanent symbolic grave, and then periodically visit that 'grave!' This practice should be stopped before it gets out of hand. Ask those who are interested to pay that same amount has charity in the name of their parent(s) and there surely will be more reward for them. (M.R.)

Q) Based on what I have been informed is that it is makrooh to light fire on the grave. The question is: Is it Makrooh to place a lighted "agarbathi" (a perfumed sort of stick when lighted gives good smell) on the grave?

A) There is no problem in that.

Q) As I understand, the body should be buried in a Muslim graveyard. It cannot be buried in non-Muslim graveyard unless a portion of that graveyard has been specifically allocated and reserved for Muslims. I stand to be corrected.

In this particular case, while it was not a Muslim graveyard, the family of the deceased had purchased a small portion to accommodate about 6–8 Kabr for family members which when burried facing qiblah would accommodate hardly 3–4 kabr.

The question is, will this very small and insignificant portion of a large cemetery be considered an acceptable portion and that a Muslim body can be buried in this portion.

A) The example that you have written cannot be classified as "a Muslim cemetery" and therefore it would not be right to bury in that cemetery.

Q) Is a Mu'min who committed suicide entitled to receive the same burial rituals normally given to the dead body of a Muslim?

A2) Yes, even in case of a person condemned to death in an Islamic court, *ghusl*, *kafan* and *namaze-mayyit* have to be done. And there is no problem in saying the last *zikh* in *namaz-e janaza*--the eventual

Judge is Allah. As for *talqin*, it is also okay; however, you should know that reciting the talqin is not *wajib* anyway, it is recommended (*mustahab*). (M.R.)

Q) *Kafan* is donated to our Islamic Center for use for shrouding a dead body whenever any person dies. The *Kafan* donated is more than normally required. Therefore, there are small pieces of *Kafan* left over. The left over pieces are very small and cannot be used for *Kafan*. We have many of such very small pieces which cannot be used for *Kafan*. Will it be appropriate to sell these small pieces from the left-over of *Kafan* clothes and use the money obtained from the sale of these small pieces left over exclusively for *MEYYIT* as and when needed?

A) Based on the situation that you have mentioned, there is no problem in selling the extra pieces and using the money for the same purpose. (M.R.)

Q) When there is no heir for a deceased Muslim person in the foreign land, who should take charge of his burial?

A) If it is not possible to contact his heir and ask his consent in handling the burial procedures, the requirement of consent is lifted and it becomes obligatory, on basis of *wajib kifā'i*, on the Muslims to handle the burial. (S.Org)

Q) A Christian woman converted to Islam upon her marriage with a *Mu'min*. The marriage ended in divorce. She then converted back to Christianity. She dies. *Shari'i*, can the Islamic Center arrange *Majlis* for "*isale Sawaab* of the said *Marhuma*"?

A) There is no point for that *majlis*. (L.O.)

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