

ISLAMIC FUNERAL

Advance Preparations:

- Choose one person as a family spokesperson to coordinate and resolve funeral and burial issues.
- Ensure that death certificate is issued by a doctor/hospital. Funeral home can also arrange for it. Death certificate is required before body is removed.
- Cost of issuing death certificate will be a separate line item.
- Get cost estimates from Masjid coordinators/funeral homes for washing and transporting the body.
- Select funeral home, cemetery (burial site) and the Masjid where the prayers will be performed.
- Ensure that cemetery Lot ownership paperwork is readily available if the family has already purchased a cemetery site.
- Funeral Directors coordinate transportation of the body. Ensure that timings are correctly adhered.
- Normally, cemeteries charge premium rates to arrange services after 3:00 PM. Additional charges are applied for services over weekends.
- Print directions the procession will follow. Hand out copies of directions at the funeral home/Masjid.

GUIDELINES*

Introduction:

When a Muslim passes away, it is a collective obligation of that particular Muslim community to arrange and participate in the funeral services for the deceased. Though only some members of the community may fulfill this obligation on behalf of the rest, the entire community would be held to account if none did it. This is a right of a Muslim and this is how a Muslim is respected even after death.

There are slight variations in the funeral procedures depending on the school of thought.

Basically the funeral procedure consists of four major steps:

1. Ghisl (washing the body)
2. Kafan (wrapping the body in white shrouds)
3. Salat-ul Janazah (Funeral Prayer)
4. Dafan (Burial)

This brief write-up explains the above steps in order.

Ghusl:

Note: The kafan (shroud) should already be cut before ghusl. Place the last piece of kafan at the bottom of the pile and the first piece at the top of the pile.

After the deceased's body has been transported to a funeral home, the following manpower and supplies should be available for washing the body:

Although there is no specified limit but experience shows that 3-5 individuals (minimum three) to perform the washing

A table or a board to wash the body

Pair of scissors

Hot/cold water

Soap and camphor (optional)

Disposable gloves

Cotton (roll/balls)

Three/four white sheets

Towels

Males wash the male body and females wash the female body.

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.

The Satr (private area) of the deceased must remain covered at all times.

The satr of a male is from navel to knees and of a female from neck to ankles.

Those handling the body should wear gloves.

Use warm water for washing.

First wash the table thoroughly with warm water/soap.

Transfer the body gently on to the washed table.

Cover the Satr with a white sheet and change it frequently as it gets wet.

Cut the garments (if any) under the sheet and remove them carefully.

Press the abdomen firmly but gently.

Wash off any emissions that might result from pressing the abdomen.

Put cotton in mouth/ears/nostrils to keep water from entering.

Now perform Wadu (ablution) to the body by washing in the following manner:

Face three times

Arms up to elbows three times (first right then left)

Perform Masah (passing wet hands over head, behind neck & around the ears)

Feet up to ankles three times (first right then left)

Using wet cotton, clean mouth/nose/ears, and close these areas again with cotton.

Now wash the head (also beard for a male) with soap (and camphor).

Wadu is done.

Now perform the Ghusl in the following manner:

Turn the body on its left side and wash it three times from head to toe.
 Turn it now on the right side and wash it three times from head to toe.
 Wash the private area if anything is expelled (no need to repeat the wadu/ghusl).
 Lift the head and bring the body to a sitting position and massage the stomach.
 Turn the body on left side and pour camphor water three times from head to toe
 Turn the body on left side and pour camphor water three times from head to toe
 Ghusl is now complete. Remove the cotton from mouth/ears/nostrils.

Change the top sheet and wipe the body with towels or sheets.
 Generous application of non-alcoholic perfume can be made to the head and beard.
 Camphor can be rubbed on forehead, nose, hands, knees, and forefeet.
 The body is now ready to be wrapped in the Kafan.

Kafan:

Unstitched kafan is made out of white (preferably cotton) fabric about 4 feet wide. A male’s kafan consists of three pieces while a female’s of five as detailed below:

<u>Name of Cloth Piece</u>	<u>Approximate Size</u>
Qamees (Shirt)	4 feet x 10 feet
Izar (Body Wrap)	4 feet x 6 feet
Lifafa (Envelope)	4 feet x 8 feet
Chest Wrap (only for female)	4 feet x 4 feet
Hijab (only for female)	4 feet x 4 feet

Note: Child’s kafan should be adjusted according to the size of the child.

Qamees covers the body from neck to the feet.
 Izar from neck to feet.
 Lifafa from above head to below feet
 Chest Wrap from shoulders to knees
 Hijab goes around the head with the edges spread over the chest.

In addition, tear off three or six strings of about 4 in.x 4 ft. each to tie the body at different places for holding the kafan together. Fold the Qamees over in half and cut a neck-size hole at the crease in the middle. One side will be the back of the shirt and the other the front. Cut a 4 in. slit in the front at the hole so that the head can go through the hole easily.

Procedure for Wrapping the Body:

Male:

Spread the Lifafa on a clean flat surface
 Spread the Izar evenly on Lifafa
 Spread the folded Qamees evenly on Izar

Roll up the front of Qamees toward the hole
Transfer the body onto the back of the Qamees
Unroll the upper of the Qamees on the front of the body with head through the hole
Wrap the body with Izar, the left side being under the right in the middle of the body
Wrap the body with the Lifafa similarly
Gather the ends of the Lifafa and tie each with a string
Tie one string in the middle
The body is now ready for Salat-ul Janazah

Female:

Spread the Lifafa on a clean flat surface
Spread the Chest wrap evenly on Lifafa
Spread the Izar evenly on Chest Wrap
Spread the folded Qamees evenly on Izar
Roll up the front of Qamees toward the hole
Lay the body on the back of the Qamees
Unroll the upper of the Qamees on the front of the body with head through the hole
Fold the Hijab in half and push half under the head
Wrap the other half around the head without covering the face
Spread the end of the Hijab over the chest
Wrap the body with Izar, the left side being under the right in the middle of the body
Wrap the body with the Chest Wrap similarly
Tie one string under the shoulders, one in the middle, and one above the knees
Cover the face with Hijab
Wrap the body with the Lifafa similarly
Gather the ends of the Lifafa and tie each with a string
Tie one string in the middle
The body is now ready for Salat-ul Janazah

Salat-ul Janazah:

This salat is a community obligation and is a right of the deceased to be recognized as a Muslim. It is a prayer to Allah (SWT) for the Maghfirah of the deceased. It is essential that this salat be performed; otherwise Muslim community is guilty of noncompliance. It is silent and is offered only standing with four takbeerat (Allah O Akbar). Only the imam says a takbeer aloud and others repeat it softly. There is no azan, iqama, ruk'u, or sujud. An odd number of safouf (rows), three or more, are formed. Deceased's body is placed in front of the imam in such a way that the right side of the body or the head faces the Qibla. In case of a male, the imam stands in line with the head of the body, and moves to the middle if the deceased is a female.

Note: It is Sunnah to say it loud that if the deceased owed any debts, contact the family.

Niyah (Intention) for Salat:

The niyah for this salat is: I intend to offer salat-ul janazah for Allah with four takbeerat, facing the Holy Ka'aba, behind the imam.

Method of performing Salat:

Form odd number of rows (3/5/7) behind the imam.

At the first takbeer, raise hands up to the ears and fold hands (as performed in daily salat) and quietly read the thana:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ أَسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى
جَدُّكَ وَجَلَّ ثَنَاؤُكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

(Some also read the sura Fatiha in addition to the thana)

2. At the second takbeer, repeat the takbeer quietly without raising hands (some raise hands) and read Tashahood - Durood Ibrahimī (invoking greetings on to the Prophet):

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا
صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّكَ
حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ
اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مُجِيدٌ

3. At the third takbeer, similarly, make du'a for the deceased. Du'a may be made in any language.

Du'a for an Adult:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِحَيِّنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا وَشَاهِدِنَا وَغَائِبِنَا
وَصَغِيرِنَا وَكَبِيرِنَا وَذَكَرْنَا وَأُنْشَأْ اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ
أَحْيَيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَاحْيِهِ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ ط وَمَنْ تَوَفَّيْتَهُ
مِنَّا فَتَوَقَّهُ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ ط

Du'a for a male child:

وَذُخْرًا وَاجْعَلْهُ لَنَا شَافِعًا وَ مُشَفَّعًا ط
اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ لَنَا فَرَطًا وَ اجْعَلْهُ لَنَا أَجْرًا

Du'a for a female child:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهَا لَنَا فَرَطًا وَ اجْعَلْهَا لَنَا أَجْرًا
وَ ذُخْرًا وَ اجْعَلْهَا لَنَا شَافِعَةً وَ مُشَفَّعَةً ط

4. After the fourth takbeer, repeat it quietly and invoke Tasleem by turning the face to the right following the imam.

Salat-ul janazah is over.

5. Salat-ul Janazah is a prayer and no other prayer is needed after the salat. Remind the sahih Hadith that only the good deeds performed by the deceased

or the good deeds performed by the children of the deceased can reach him/her in the hereafter.

Dafan:

Every effort should be made to bury the body in a Muslim cemetery or in a cemetery that has a designated Muslim section.

Grave:

The grave should be opened in such a way that when the body is placed in it its right side faces the Qibla. It should be large enough to accommodate the body without a casket. Typically, for an adult, the opening is **3½ ft W x 7 ft L x 6 ft D**. The grave should be excavated in two parts depth-wise. The lower (about 1 ½ ft deep) part is dug narrower, by allowing a ledge (about 6 inches) all around at the bottom, than the upper (about 4 ½ ft) portion. The ledge is used to support large stone or strong wood slabs.

Lowering the Body in the Grave:

Slowly and gently lower the body in the lower chamber of the grave while reciting:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

Untie the strings. Turn the face toward the Qibla. Raise the head slightly by placing a stone or hard soil under. Now put a roof over the body by placing large stone or strong wood slabs on the ledge around it. Everyone in the funeral now should pour three handfuls (using both hands) of soil on the roof, while recite:

On the first handful:

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ

On the second handful:

وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ

On the third handful:

وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى

Now fill the rest of the grave with soil shaping the top like a hump of a camel, but not raising more than a foot from the ground.

In concluding, one person should stand by the head of the grave and recite the first five verses of sura al’Baqr and then move toward the other end and recite the last three verses of it. The funeral is now complete. May Allah (SWT) accept our services and supplications and make the journey easy for the deceased in the grave. Ameen!

Special Cases:

Miscarried Fetus:

Fetus is more than four months old: it may be washed, covered with one or two sheets, and buried with or without salat-ul janazah.

Fetus is less than four months old: it should be wrapped in a white piece of cloth and buried. There is no ghusl, kafan or salat-ul janazah for this fetus.

Child:

Before reaching the age of puberty, a child may be washed by males or females. After reaching the age of puberty, however, a child will be treated like an adult.

Shaheed (Martyr):

The body of a shaheed should be buried in the clothes it was found without ghusl, kafan or salat-ul janazah.

Notes:

- If the deceased body is bleeding or leaking, cotton padding should be used to prevent it and for keeping the kafan from getting wet.
- Those who give the ghusl to the body should make wadu.
- Those who have given the ghusl should take a bath and change clothes (Sunnah).
- No reading of the Qur’an during the ghusl or any zikr (remembrance of Allah).
- Unless necessary, funeral services are prohibited during sunrise/sunset/noon.
- It’s prohibited to build any kind of structure on the grave.
- Women are not allowed to attend the funeral. Um-Atiyah reports: We were prohibited to accompany funeral processions (Bukhari & Muslim).
- It’s prohibited to cremate the body.
- Unless required by law, autopsy is prohibited.
- The body should be buried locally.
- There are no Islamic teaching to
 - o Transfer the body to another country.

- Reveal the face of the body in the grave.
- Shout with any special zikr during and after the burial.
- Read the Qur'an in the cemetery.
- Place any flowers or water around the grave.
- Wear black clothes.
- Deliver eulogies.

Iddah (Waiting Period) for a Widow:

The Iddah for a Muslim woman, who has lost her husband, is four (lunar) months and ten days. If she is pregnant, the iddah ends at the delivery. During this period she must stay in her home and may leave only when it's absolutely necessary (e.g., medical emergency).

* Dr. M. Riaz Khan, Islamic Council of Massachusetts provided the basic outline and Saleem Khan also contributed to this article.