

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ

"EVERY SOUL SHALL TASTE DEATH."

DEATH AND THE BURIAL PROCESS OF A MUSLIM

INCLUDING FATIHA AND ISAL-E-SAWAB



by **Mohammad Masood Ahmed**

MA, Islamic Studies

SUHARWARDY,
ASHRAFI



GLOBAL ISLAMIC MISSION
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Global Islamic Mission

73 Hi View Drive / P. O. Box 100

Wingdale, NY 12594

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www.globalislamicmission.org | gimusa@gmail.com

This book is dedicated

To my father, Zameer Ahmed, (d. 1977), my father-in-law, Syed Mumtaz Ali (d. 2010), and my two uncles, Saleem Ahmed Hashmi (d. 1990) and Syed Ghazanfar Ali (d. 2013), who departed from this *Alam-e-Dunya* (worldly life) to the *Alam-e-Barzakh* (life in between this world and the Hereafter). Also, since this book is written at the wish of my brother-in-law, I wish to dedicate it to his father, Hussain Ali Zain-ul-A'bidin (d. 2006). May Allah ﷻ bless their souls and the souls of all the faithful who have departed, and grant them success in the Hereafter. *A'meen!*



It is my utmost religious duty to express gratitude for the contemporary righteous scholars of Islam, saints, and shuyukh, whose lifelong dedication and tireless efforts to serve Islam continue to inspire all my work. They have been for me, as well as for countless others, guiding lights and beacons of wisdom and knowledge. For those who have passed away, may Allah ﷻ elevate their ranks and influence and for those still present among us, may Allah ﷻ grant them a long and healthy life and allow us to benefit from them greatly. I am thankful to

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My Guiding Light, **Shaykh-ul-Islam, Hadhrat Allama Syed Muhammad Madni Ashrafi Jilani** and
Many others including **Shaykh-ul-Hadith Allama Nasrullah Khan Afghani, Hadhrat Mufti Athar Na'imi, and Hadhrat Muhammad Ibrahim Ashrafi** (Bholay Baba).

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IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST-MERCIFUL, EVER-FORGIVING

INTRODUCTION

Death is an uncontested reality. Everyone has to “die” one day and, according to their funeral rites, have their body disposed of. Just as there are basic human rights of the living, there are rights of the deceased, and since no one is permitted, in today’s free world, to usurp the rights of a living person, no one should be permitted to usurp the rights of a deceased person. In my opinion, a deceased’s rights should be much more protected than of those alive, because the deceased cannot protect his/her rights, in any way. Every human being, including Muslims, is entitled to basic rights, and so is the deceased Muslim person. Whether, according to his/her will and/or the belief system he/she lived under, the deceased Muslim must be honored with the appropriate rites of passage.

In this day and age everyone wishes to be “somebody”. I am not sure and neither is anyone else that whether or not any of us will become “somebody”, but one thing is 100 per cent certain that we will all, one day, be a “dead-body”. Thus, we should all, at least, consider this fact and prepare accordingly so that our dead body will be disposed of properly. It can be said that if we perpetually fulfill the rights of the deceased, chances are that someone will do the same for our dead body, when, at which point, we will not be able to even move our lips to

complain about whatever will be happening to us above the ground, let alone after being buried in it.

In light of today's extremely materialistic world, where everything has been reduced to a mere commodity, a matter of business, a money-making idea; where even non-profit entities are infamous for being "the most-profitable business"; and where social welfare organizations and administrators are living the good-life and prioritizing themselves over others—what ought we to expect? Where no one, and I emphasize not a single soul, fulfills the rights of the living, out of sincerity, how can we expect anyone to fulfill the rights of the deceased unless the deceased-to-be—each and every one of us—will not make sure that our rights after death are protected.

Islamic *shari'a* (law) obligates the Muslim deceased's next of kin, relatives, friends, and other members of the Muslim community to properly dispose of their loved one's body and fulfill the rites of passage as underlined. This duty towards the deceased requires us to have complete knowledge of the subject matter.

Firstly, we must know what our rights are regarding our death and secondly, what is our Islamic duty towards our loved ones when they part ways and lie waiting to be buried and after they are buried? The fulfilling of such rights gives proof of our strong love for our parents, spouses, children, siblings, other loved ones, and our commitment to Islam. Do remember this fact that the death of a family member does not terminate our familial relationship to them. They remain to be our family members and brother/sister in Islam, and we must remember them in our prayers as it is legally part of the '*huququl-i'bad*' (Rights of People), as outlined in *shari'a*.

This timely and essential book is written to educate Muslims about their duties concerning the death and burial process of their loved ones and of themselves. Others who wish to know how Islam protects and deals with the deceased will also benefit from reading this booklet. If one does not follow the proper Islamic teachings regarding a Muslim's

passing away, then when this distant yet abrupt truth will manifest itself, no one will be able to do anything.

As is every book of the Educational Series, this one is based on the traditional *aqidah* (set of beliefs) of Islam—the Ahle-Sunnah wa Jama’h. I have, in light of this, included the rights of the deceased Muslim, from the time of death, while being prepared for burial, at the time of being buried, and thereafter. Also included are the duties of the living towards the deceased after departing to and remaining in *Alam-e-Barzakh*.

After explaining the procedure of *Fatiha* (prayer/supplication for the deceased) and *Isal-e-Sawab* (transferring of rewards to the deceased), I have drawn up a pledge-form to obtain, in advance, an oath from immediate relatives and loved ones for taking on the responsibility of fulfilling the rights of the deceased. Although Muslims recognize their obligations towards those who pass away, many forget or purposely fail to fulfill the rights of their deceased loved ones. Having taken this voluntary oath of fulfilling the rights of the deceased may, at the very least, bring some relief to the one dying and prevent the living from the sin of usurping the rights of the deceased. Moreover, it may compel others to comply with relevant Islamic rules and wishes of the deceased. This oath form may seem odd and might be labeled as *bid’a* (innovation), but in the face of the immoral challenges and circumstances around us, there is no other solution for the barbarity of those who are misguided and immersed in a “modern” lifestyle, which may translate into being more painful to the deceased Muslim than death itself.

Thus, being mindful that “There is no compulsion in religion”¹, requiring such an oath (from loved ones) cannot be supported by a *fatwa* (religious edict). However, can anyone come up with a better idea to secure the rights of a deceased person from the misguided ones and the so-called modern, soulless and two-faced imams and leaders? This “Oath Form” is a mere suggestion and friendly reminder so that those who are close to dying may find some relief that they will be in “good hands” upon their death. As a concerned Muslim brother, I am carrying out my

¹ Al-Qur’an 2:256

duties, based on Islamic teachings and beliefs, for my fellow Muslims. I have purposely not kept hidden anything relevant to this topic, nor have I exaggerated any practice for any personal gain, name, or fame.

May Allah ﷻ accept this effort as a token of service to Islam and Muslims and shower His blessings on my mentors and teachers of the past and present, both dead and alive, and my family, especially my son Mansoor and my brother Waseem in editing and designing this book. A heartfelt thanks to my brother-in-law, Aijaz and sister, Ghazala, who provided financial assistance in the publication of this booklet.

May Allah ﷻ be pleased with us all and include us in the long list of devotees of His beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. *A'meen!*

THE CONCEPT OF DEATH IN ISLAM

Death marks the end of this worldly life.

Death discontinues a person's earthly life. It halts any additions to our *A'mal Nama* (Roster of Deeds), except for *Sadaqa-e-Jariah* (charity/perpetual alms). It completes our times of trials and tribulations. It temporarily separates our soul from our body. It shuts our eyes from this world and opens them in the next world. It is the mode of transportation, carrying our soul to the next phase of our journey, *A'lam-e-Barzakh*, and then to the Hereafter. Life is unpredictable but death is certain and an uncontestable reality. Death is a painful process for sinners and *kuffar* (deniers/disbelievers), primarily because of their faithlessness and strong attachment to this material world. "Death is a gift to the believer," as the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ so eloquently said.²

The term "*al-maut*" (the death) is mentioned 35 times and in its different forms appears in the holy Qur'an altogether 72 times. Just like life and other things, death is a reality that comes to every living thing, and human beings are given death by *Malak-ul-Maut*, the Angel Izra'il عليه السلام. Death comes only once. In the Hereafter, death will be no more; people will either abide in Heaven or Hell forever. "DEATH" itself will finally be put to death. Remember, death is not an end of the human

² Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 1609, narrated by Abdullah ibn Amr

journey because death does not perish the human being, only the human body, composed of earthly elements, begins to decompose. If death were to completely annihilate the human being then there would be no purpose of human life and there could be no Judgment Day or the world hereafter. Death simply is a method of transportation from this *alam* (world) to the *Alam-e-Barzakh*. On the Day of Judgment and upon the Command of Allah ﷻ every soul/spirit will re-join its respective body and will be hastened to “Mehshar” (the ground of reckoning). The matter of death and what happens thereafter is all part of the obligatory belief in the “Iman-e-Mufassal” (The Detailed Declaration of Faith).

DEATH IS UNAVOIDABLE

Death is unavoidable and no matter what precaution we take or what protection we have at our disposal, we cannot escape or cheat death. It is revealed very clearly and at numerous times in the holy Quran that:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ط

EVERY SOUL WILL TASTE DEATH.³

أَيْنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَدْرِكَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّشِيدَةٍ

WHEREVER YOU MAY BE, DEATH WILL OVERTAKE YOU, EVEN IF YOU SHOULD BE WITHIN TOWERS OF LOFTY CONSTRUCTION.⁴

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ٥٥

EVERY SOUL WILL TASTE DEATH, THEN, TO US WILL YOU BE RETURNED.⁵

Not even the Prophets of Allah, the chosen ones, are exempt from this fact of life, let alone the common man. No matter how great health one has or how intelligently and successfully one has prepared to avoid death or being killed, once the time is up, the clock of life will stop ticking and the person will die and move on. The underlying message in the

³ Al-Qur'an 3:185

⁴ Al-Qur'an 4:78

⁵ Al-Qur'an 29:57

above verse is that every living soul will die. As far as the death of human creature is concerned, this does not mean that [it] will perish forever, it simply means that its soul will separate from the body, leaving the body lifeless. To simply “taste” death or to experience death permanently are two very different conditions. The human soul tastes death in the body it was in, then, the lifeless body is disposed of, and the soul—based on the answers to the questions asked in the grave—is either taken to *Illiyeen* (Heaven-like atmosphere) or *Sijjiyeen* (Hell-like atmosphere) in the *Alam-e-Barzakh*. As noted earlier, on the Day of Judgment and upon Allah’s command, every soul will reunite with its respective body. This is what is meant by “*ba’athi ba’adal maut*”, to resurrect on Judgment Day after dying. This belief is the final part of *Iman-e-Mufasssil*. Muslims must have belief in final resurrection and permanent life of the Hereafter.

The taste of death is either good and pleasant or bad and painful, depending upon one’s success or failure, respectively. For those who loved this life and the world and failed to bring faith upon Allah ﷻ and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the taste of death is severely painful and those who love Allah ﷻ and His beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the taste of death is quite pleasant. In this context, there are two categories of people: those who leave their loved ones behind are in pain and those who come to meet their Lord, Allah ﷻ and get to see the beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ are happy. Certainly, Allah ﷻ and the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and all other heavenly beings are better companions than those left behind. Thus, a believer is happier to depart from the mortal beings and join the immortal. On the other hand, pain is for the lovers of this world who left it behind. Anyway, regardless of the taste, death is for everyone.

THE CAUSES OF DEATH

In truth, it is not bad health, disease, accidents or bullets that kill, rather it is the appointed time of death that takes away the life of every living thing. Therefore, only Allah ﷻ causes death.

There is no doubt, for one reason or another, people name a variety of “causes” of death and say that nearly everyone dies because something caused it. However, many times, a supposed cause is present but death does not happen and other times death happens but a cause is difficult to understand, so we simply declare death to be from natural causes. Islam teaches that only Allah ﷻ causes death. With these supposed and physical causes of death, it may be that Allah ﷻ tests believers to see if they pay attention to or bring faith on such causes or truly believe that Allah ﷻ causes them to die. Those who believe that such causes are the reason why people die, really think that if such causes can be avoided they may not die—how foolish is this thought.

As Muslims we should be prepared to leave this world any moment the call arrives. In Surah Zumar, Verse 42, Allah ﷻ states that Allah concludes a life at the time of its death, meaning that no one can survive even for a moment longer than his/her time of death.

THE TIME AND PLACE OF DEATH

Allah ﷻ states in the holy Quran,

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِتَابًا مُّوَجَّلًا

AND NO MORTAL HAS THE RIGHT TO DIE, WITHOUT ALLAH'S COMMAND; WRITTEN IS THE APPOINTED TIME.⁶

The time of death for everything is fixed; no one can exceed their stay in this world or depart any earlier. The time of when something dies is known only to Allah ﷻ and to those who Allah ﷻ may disclose, from among His beloved and closer ones. Just think, how great of a blessing is it that Allah ﷻ kept our time of death hidden from us. How difficult it would be for us to do anything had that not been the case because we would always be thinking about our death and our lives would cease. We could neither be happy nor work towards achieving anything. Not knowing when we will die allows us to be ever-watchful of ourselves and of our valuable time on Earth. Because our time and stay

⁶ Al-Qur'an 3:145

on Earth is limited, it serves as an impetus for us to accumulate good deeds as much as possible and as fast as possible, so that we may be ultimately shown Allah’s Mercy. The faithful people are advised:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَتَّى تَقْتَبَهُ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ
إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ⁷

O FAITHFUL ONES! FEAR ALLAH AS HE IS TO BE FEARED, AND DO NOT DIE EXCEPT IN THE STATE THAT YOU ARE MUSLIM.⁷

This verse commands Muslims to always be in the state of faith and never do anything that renders you faithless since you do not know when you are going to die and you believe that death can come any moment. If a believer departs from this world in a state of faithlessness then he/she will be the ultimate loser. Therefore, Muslims should, at every moment, be equipped with ‘unshakable faith’ so that they may depart from this world with faith. It is ill-advised to use expressions such as “untimely death” to mean that someone has died before their actual time, as if someone knows the *actual* time of death. If they really mean it and believe it with their heart, then this claim being un-Islamic will amount to *kufr* (heresy). Allah ﷻ states clearly that no one has the right or power to die before their time then how can anyone meet an untimely death.

Sudden deaths, according to our limited understanding, lead us to believe that someone died by accident, but according to the vast and all-encompassing knowledge of Allah ﷻ no death is sudden or accidental. If we obtain proper knowledge of the basics and other accompanying teachings of Islam, our faith will strengthen and we will refrain from such heretical beliefs that are merely assumptions of our own making.

Since we do not know the exact time of our death, we also do not know the exact place of our death. Allah ﷻ states:

وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ

NO ONE CAN GUESS (ESTIMATE) THAT IN WHICH LAND HE WILL DIE...⁸

⁷ Al-Qur’an 3:102

Generally, we witness people living at a place all their life but then do not necessarily die there. Somehow they arrive at the exact place of their death. This, in itself, is clear proof that only Allah is in control of everything. We just have to believe it and act accordingly. Our strong belief in Allah ﷻ and in the Prophet ﷺ will rescue us from false beliefs and from the Hellfire. Knowing that Allah is in control removes all kinds of worries from the believers, and those who do not believe are worried sick about life and death and everything in between.

THE QUESTIONS OF THE GRAVE

The subject of death in Islam can never be complete without mentioning the three questions that will be asked of every deceased person by the angels Munkir and Nakir. These two angels will appear to every deceased wherever they may be buried or disposed of in any way, shape, or form. The answers to the following three questions decide where the angels will place the deceased: *illiyeen* or *sijjiyeen*, as discussed earlier.

- 1) Who is your *Rabb*?.....(*Man-Rabbuka*)
- 2) What is your *Din*?.....(*Ma-dinuka*)
- 3) What did you use to say about this man (Muhammad ﷺ)?
(*Ma kunta taqulu fi haqqi ha'-zar-rajul*)

The correct answers to these questions bring success in the initial stages of the life hereafter. The matter in these questions is the basic truths and beliefs of our Prophet ﷺ as so greatly emphasized and as is required of us to have absolute faith in them. The beloved Prophet ﷺ stated,

Whoever is pleased with Allah ﷻ being his *Rab*, with Islam being his *Din* and with Muhammad ﷺ being his Prophet, so for him the Heaven becomes *wajib* (compulsory).⁸

In another hadith the Prophet ﷺ said,

Whoever is pleased with Allah as *Rab*, Islam as *Din* and Muhammad as Messenger has felt the taste of *iman* (faith) and

⁸ Al-Qur'an 31:34

⁹ Muslim Sharif, Nisa'i, and Abu-Dawud—all have reported this hadith.

that whoever says this three times every morning or evening will be pleased on the Day of Resurrection.¹⁰

With that said, it could be easily understood that the questions asked after death are quite appropriately the test for the “course” the blessed Prophet ﷺ taught us and prepared us for, so that we answer these questions properly and be successful at the outset of our permanent life thereafter.

Now, to properly answer these questions in our graves, we must make preparations in this life accordingly. If we do not have unshakable faith in these three Truths and in other foundational principles of Islam or have any doubt about them, then we will be the losers right from the beginning of the succeeding world. There will not be any other question at this point in time about any other matter because the final reckoning will be on Judgment Day. The answers to these questions will determine the condition in which we will live in the *Alam-e-Barzakh*. According to many *ahadith*, sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, right answers bring peace, happiness, pleasures, Heaven-like atmosphere, freedom to the soul to visit places and loved ones and many other privileges. And wrong answers cause much pain and suffering, the grave contracts crushing the body, the atmosphere becomes Hellish and the initial state of the life hereafter becomes miserable and unbearable. Having, unshakeable *iman* (true faith) until the final moments of this mortal life, practicing the beliefs and teachings of Islam and the love for Allah ﷻ and His beloved Prophet ﷺ is the key to success in the otherworld.

Allow me to emphasize and have your attention so that you ponder upon the reality and seriousness of the matter and ask you why was there a need for the third question relating to the Prophet ﷺ? Certainly, when one correctly answers the first question that Allah is my Lord, then there is a need to ask the second question about his religion, because people may still have religions other than Islam, even though they may believe in Allah. However, if and when, one correctly answers the second question that my religion is Islam, then that should have been

¹⁰ Ahmad 4/337, Nisa’l, Tirmidhi 5/465

sufficient, because salvation lies only upon Islam; that in the sight of Allah only Islam is the acceptable religion¹¹ and by saying that one's religion is Islam then that encompasses every true belief, including the belief that Muhammad ﷺ is the true and final Prophet and Messenger. Then, why is there a need for the third question? There must be some hidden and necessary truth to it because our ultimate success is based on the right answer to this third question and that the correct answers for the preceding questions do not suffice for our success.

This third question is the most important one, because it shows that there will be people, within Islam, who will fail to recognize the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Why? This question is of immense importance. How could this be possible? Some Muslims and, of course, others will fail to recognize Muhammad ﷺ because they must have either lived a hypocritical life, or because they had no love for him ﷺ, or cared less for his *sunnah* or had no respect for his person and/or his status, or because they had disrespected him or were contemptuous to him, or found faults in his noble character, or defaced his teachings or rejected his miracles and magnificent personality, or published audacious literature about him and his status, etc. Only Allah ﷻ knows best why someone will fail to recognize the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. I have understood from the teachings of Islam and from righteous scholars that in this life anyone whose heart is devoid of love for the beloved Prophet ﷺ, will not be able to recognize him in the grave.

On a final note, it is a fact that every soul recognized and declared Allah ﷻ as their *Rab*, Lord, on the Day of *Alast*, when Allah ﷻ had asked "Am I not your Lord?" Each and every one of us said, "Why not!"¹² This recognition was necessary for us to begin our life here on Earth, and to be successful and peacefully begin our life in the Hereafter, we must be able to recognize Muhammad ﷺ in our graves and we will most certainly fail to do that if we refuse to follow and love him in this life. May Allah save all of us from ultimate failure, *A'meen!*

¹¹ Al-Qur'an 3:19

¹² Al-Qur'an 7:172

THE RIGHTS OF A MUSLIM

Before moving on to the next section, I believe it is important to refresh our knowledge concerning the rights of a Muslim.

A Muslim is not a *momin* (true believer) if he does not prefer for other Muslims what he prefers for himself. Do not give to your brother what you would not take for yourself. Do not turn back your brother if you are able to help him. To one who is kind to people on earth, Allah ﷻ will be kind to him on Judgment Day. The one who is not grateful for favors from his brother cannot be grateful to Allah ﷻ. Such teachings and commandments of the Qur'an and *sunnah* form the foundations for universal brotherhood in Islam. The following are the six duties a Muslim must fulfill towards another Muslim.

- 1) To greet each other with "assalamu alaykum" meaning, "peace be upon you," to which the reply is "wa alaykum assalam" (may peace be upon you too).
- 2) To accept the invitation when invited for food/ceremony.
- 3) To show solicitude to him, when he expects it from you.
- 4) To respond with "yarhamukullah" (may Allah be kind to you) when hearing a Muslim say "Alhamdülillah" (all praise be to Allah) upon sneezing.
- 5) To visit him when he is sick.
- 6) To attend his funeral, pay respect, and accompany the deceased to the cemetery.¹³

In this booklet, we are only concerned with the rights of a deceased Muslim which have to be fulfilled by other Muslims. Preparing for the burial process is an obligation that is *Fardh-e-Kifayah*¹⁴. Usually the next of kin and close relatives arrange for the funeral and everything else that is required in this process. In Muslim countries usually many relatives and friends are physically present by the side of a dying loved one, whether at home or in a hospital. Generally, all Muslims are literate about what is to be recited or prayed at this point in time to bring comfort and

¹³ Sahih Al-Bukhari, hadith #1162

¹⁴ Fardh-e-Kifayah is an obligation if fulfilled only a few from the Muslim community, the rest are relieved of it, and if no one fulfills this obligation then the entire community is held responsible for it and becomes sinful.

peace and to take the proper actions as the person is passing away. Generally, this is not true or sometimes possible in non-Muslim countries such as in the West where the deceased is immediately taken to the hospital or if is in the hospital many people are unable to be by their side. Rarely can the relatives be physically close to the dying loved one so that he/she may hear the recitation of the holy Qur'an or supplications on his/her behalf. This means that many necessary rituals are either missed or ignored, usurping the rights of the deceased.

Some 'modern' Muslims may not care if they miss or ignore such religious practices but for those who care and would like to fulfill the last rites of their loved ones, I have outlined the Islamic process of *janâza* from the time of death to burial and thereafter.

THE COMING OF DEATH

Our natural time of death is fixed, therefore, we must not rush to die or wish to live longer. This requires strong faith and patience.

Here, let me digress a bit and add that almost every Muslim knows that suicide is *haram* (prohibited) in Islam and one who commits suicide is damned in the Hereafter. Supplicating to Allah for such a one is also prohibited. Usually, one who intentionally commits suicide or wishes to die suffers from extreme pain or desperation for whatever reason and has lost all patience and hope. From a religious standpoint, Muslims should always be patient and hopeful because Allah ﷻ is the All-Powerful and is able to change any negative condition and ease all kinds of pain and suffering, at any given moment. The first thing a hopeless person loses is faith in Allah ﷻ, so anyone losing faith in Allah ﷻ and kills himself, dies a disbeliever's death. Whatever pain a Muslim bears with patience and is grateful to Allah, will be rewarded abundantly by Him, because this life is nothing but a test of faith—whether we bring faith or remain faithless.

According to a *hadith* of the Prophet ﷺ, "If a *momin* is even pinched by a thorn, Allah will reward him for bearing the pain".¹⁵ Any

¹⁵ Sahih Bukhari, Book 70, hadith #545, narrated by Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri and Abu Huraira

kind of pain that is suffered patiently will be greatly rewarded by Allah ﷺ in this world and/or in the Hereafter. Death is the mother of all pains, so upon laying on our death bed, we must remain calm and peaceful, have patience and hope for the best from Allah ﷺ. We should always comfort our dying loved ones and support them and convey to them gestures of peace, patience, hope, and wish them well in their succeeding life and supplicate for them thereafter. We should always expect good from Allah that *insha'Allah*, He will forgive us and be Kind and Merciful on us and admit us into the Gardens of Heaven.

Another *hadith* states, "Allah ﷺ always accepts the supplications of people who are ill and those who are traveling"¹⁶ simply because they are more liable to become victims of pain and suffering therefore Allah's mercy is with them making them closer to Allah ﷺ. That is why people request the sick and those who are travelling to pray for them because of their closeness to Allah ﷺ. For those near death, when the Angel of Death, *Malak-ul-Maut* becomes visible to them and the signs of death become clear, the door to repentance is shut. Bringing faith, at this point in time becomes unacceptable. That is because the *ghaib* becomes visible and the essential part of having faith in *ghayb* (*iman bil-ghaib*), also part of the "Iman-e-Mufassal", is rendered worthless. Thus, after witnessing *ghaib*, having faith in *ghaib* has no meaning.

Here, I am reminded of that Jewish boy, who admired the Prophet ﷺ very much and had yet to embrace Islam. Some short time later, he lay on his death bed and made a request to his father. He said, "O father, I wish to see Muhammad before I die." The Prophet ﷺ was informed of this request and he rushed to see him. The Prophet ﷺ seeing that the Angel of Death is on his way to extract his soul, said to the boy, "Recite, 'La ilaha illallahu Muhammadur-Rasulullah'." He looked to his father and then to the Prophet. The Prophet insisted that he do so immediately and the boy said, "I will recite under one condition that you promise to be with me all the way." The Prophet ﷺ agreed. He recited the *kalimah*, became Muslim, and then

¹⁶ Ibn Majah and Ibn Abiddunya

passed away immediately. The boy's faith was accepted by Allah ﷻ because no *ghaib*, unseen truths, had been revealed to him as of yet. After laying him in his grave, the Prophet ﷺ sat inside his grave for a very long time. The Companions of the Prophet ﷺ asked him, "Ya Rasullallah ﷺ, you have not sat in the graves of any *sahabi* (companion) for this long." The Prophet ﷺ explained, "This child requested me to be with him all the way and so I have delivered him in the arms of the *hoories* in Paradise." My Allah ﷻ take us from this world when we are in the state of *iman*.

- No doubt the moments of the coming of death are painful. These crucial moments require one to hold on to faith, because, especially at this time, Shaytan appears to the dying believer to snatch away his *iman*. The honorable Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever departs this world believing in "*la ilaha illallah*" will be admitted into Heaven.¹⁷ Whoever's end is good, which is with *iman* intact, will be successful.
- It is recommended to turn the face of the dying towards the Qibla and all the people present should recite and direct/suggest (but not demand the dying) to recite the 2nd *Kalimah*.¹⁸

Kalimah-e-Shahadat

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَشْهَدُ
أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ

*Ashhadu allaa-ilaha illallahu wa ashhadu anna
Muhammadan abdohu wa Rasuluhu*

"I bear witness that there is no deity but Allah, and I
bear witness that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His
Servant and Messenger"

- Near the dying person and especially when noticing any hardship and pain in the dying person, it is *mustahab* (preferred) to recite Surah Yasin and Sural al-Ra'ad.
- Anyone in the state of *nijasa* (impurity) requiring *ghusl* should not come near the dying person. If there is a dog or a picture that is

¹⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari

¹⁸ Fatawa-e-Alamgiri, Fathul-Qadir, Juharah, Nyrah, etc.

prohibited near the dying person it should be removed because the Angels of Mercy do not go where there are dog(s) and/or picture(s).

- People present near the dying person should continue to supplicate to Allah ﷻ for him or her and do not say anything hurtful or of painful nature, etc.
- Whatever condition, situation, or appearance of the dying person is witnessed by those present, it should not be discussed and/or conveyed to other people. This amounts to *ghībah* (gossip/slander), of a helpless Muslim and this sin awaits grave punishment. Indeed, if you witness something good, there is no harm in sharing it. In fact, it is good to publicize that which brings respect to the deceased and so others may replicate his/her life to be blessed with the same.
- When those present notice that the soul of the dying person has departed and he/she has passed away, then, tie the jaw to the head with a string of cloth so the mouth does not remain open. The eyes, if open, should be gently shut by the nearest relative and/or friend present there. The deceased should be covered completely from head to toe. Everyone present should say at least once:



Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un.

“SURELY WE BELONG TO ALLAH AND TO HIM WE SHALL RETURN.”¹⁹

- The husband is not allowed to touch the body of his deceased wife. He may see it. Men should handle the corps of other men and women of other women. Certainly, there are *rukhsa* (flexibilities) for extreme and unusual situations, and Muslims should know of them.
- Preparation for *janâza* should begin immediately and it is *mustahab* (preferred) that all relevant people should be informed of the death so that the family, relatives, and friends could join the *janâza* to fulfill the rights of the deceased, according to the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

In some parts of the world, it is not permitted to hold or bring the corpse/*janâza* home. The body is taken to the hospital and held there to fulfill the legal requirements: verify the cause of death and obtain the

¹⁹ Al-Qur'an 2:156

death certificate, etc. until it is transported to funeral homes by funeral service providers. Then, at funeral homes, *ghusl*, *kafan* and *Salâtul-Janâza*, if not taken to a *masjid* takes place, and then the *janâza* is transported to the cemetery. Note that in Islam, autopsy is allowed only in a situation where crime is involved and the cause of death is absolutely necessary to be known.

In America, Canada, and many other countries, religiously required funeral service has yet to be provided by Muslims in their own funeral homes. For example, transporting the body from the hospital, carrying the body properly, storing the body in the funeral home, transporting it to a *masjid* for *janâza* prayers and then to the burial site; digging and placing the body in the grave, and finally, re-filling the grave are still mostly performed by non-Muslims. Muslims have been living in such countries for decades, is it not time for them to take full responsibility of their deceased loved ones? At least, all that is required after transporting the body to a funeral home should be handled by Muslims, so that the body of their loved one only shortly remains alone or in the hands of the non-Muslim staff. It is the duty of Muslims to fulfill the right of another deceased, brother or sister, to see to it that they are laid to rest according to the rules of Islam.

Let me express the grave concern, once again, and tell you how important it is, especially in regards to a deceased sister. The corpse of our women: mothers, wives, sisters and daughters should not be handled by non-Muslims, at any stage of the funeral process. Since *sharia'* has barred the husband from even touching his wife, how can we dare allow non-Muslim men, who are not even relatives, *mehram* or *na-mehram*, to touch, see, carry, and transport the corpse of our sisters in Islam. At least, feel pity for our deceased sister, that her body is being touched at various places when removing sheets and being transported from one place to another. Are we that financially stressed that we cannot even establish our own funeral homes, so, at least, our women can fulfill the *janâza* rites of our beloved sister. Are we not capable to demand hospitals and funeral homes to accommodate Islamic rules, especially

when it comes to female corpse? Let me assure you that we will not even have to compel them for it, they would happily enforce every Islamic rule relevant to Muslim *janâza*. We simply have to ask and inform them about this necessity. But a fog of carelessness overcasts the minds of Muslims and the blinding love for one's self, time and money renders them inept to resolve such simple issues. Why should money-driven *mullahs*, *imams*, and fame-seeking *chaudhrys*, elites, and so-called humble servants of Muslim communities, waste their time in this matter. It will certainly not raise any more money for them, but will certainly add headaches. But if they do not care now, one day it will be the bodies of their mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters laying uncovered, secluded, and in the hands of strangers, and then it will be too late.

Is it not so that mostly the Muslim medical doctors are in charge and so generously support Islamic and Muslim organizations and *masajid*? How easy is it for them to make such funeral services possible, at least for their sisters? A poor Muslim, like me, could only afford to raise awareness, clear the deep fog and turn their attention to such essential needs and truths concerning our communities in North America. It is not sufficient if only few people and organizations are fulfilling these needs in remote places, the rights of a deceased Muslim should be granted everywhere. It is the duty of the entire Muslim *Ummah* to make sure that everywhere all the rights of Muslims, at least of the deceased, are preserved and protected.

It may be that we may never engage in *janâza* services but it is always better to be knowledgeable about the entire process and know what is required of us, as Muslims. It may be that one day we come across a *janâza* and be responsible for burying it, or find ourselves in a situation where we have to teach a few of our own how they should carry out the duty of laying us in our graves. In this way, our right will be fulfilled and others will take heed and feel good about doing something that was required of them in Islam.

I have included here general information which will suffice in case the need arises. For in depth information, other books on this subject can

and should be consulted. An informed Muslim is a million times better than an ignorant one and practice based on knowledge carries greater reward in the Hereafter.

GIVING GHUSL TO THE DECEASED

Ghusl is the Islamic way of bathing. Giving *ghusl* to the deceased is among the rights of the dead. This duty on Muslims is *fardh-e-kifayah*—an obligation considered fulfilled if only a few are able to do it. It is an honor for both the deceased and their closest relative/loved one, who performs the *ghusl*. For example, a father giving *ghusl* to his son and vice versa; a mother to her daughter and vice versa; a brother to his brother and a sister to her sister, carries abundant blessings and rewards from Allah and this act is a clear sign of one's strength of *iman*. This act carried out by such close family members brings relief to both the living and the dead and it gives the living a chance to realize their own passing and reuniting with their loved ones. They see themselves laying like this in the future, making them stronger in faith and fearless of death.

When doing *ghusl*, the bather should keep in mind the following.

- The body's private parts remain covered at all times. Only the bather(s) and helpers should be present, no one else should watch the body during *ghusl*. Use warm water and soap can be applied on hairs such as head and beard. Natural fragrances should be sprayed on the table or whatever used to lay the body on.
- One of the bathers should wrap a piece of cloth around the hand to wash out the private parts and wash as in *istinja*. It is *haram* to touch the private parts with bare hands. Any filth that comes out of the body by pressing the stomach should be thoroughly removed and the private parts are to be cleaned at this point.
- After this give *wudu* to the body. Do not insert water in the mouth or in the nostrils. Mouth and nostrils can be cleaned with a piece of wet cloth. Turn the body on its left side and run the water from head to toe and then turn the body on its right side and run the water from head to toe. If any filth comes out of the body at this point, clean it out but there is no need to repeat the *wudu* or the *ghusl*. Finally, dry the body with a cloth.

- Running water on the body once is a *fardh*, three times is a *sunnah*. A husband cannot give *ghusl* to his wife or touch her but can be present and see her face, place her in the grave, carry her coffin, but cannot touch her with bare hands. If there is a need to touch her, he must use cloth that must be placed between his hands and the body.
- The female body should be washed the same way as the male's body except that the hair of her head should be placed on her chest. Remember that looking at the private parts of the deceased is strictly forbidden, as is touching them.
- To give *kafan* (white sheets/cloth used to cover and wrap the body) to the deceased is *fardh-e-kifaya*. For men the *sunnah kafan* is three (3) sheets; one is the Envelope (the outer most sheet), the second is the Cover in between, and the third is the Shirt, the inner-most sheet. And for women is five (5) sheets; Envelope, Cover, Shirt, Shawl, and the Sheet that covers the chest area. The minimum *kafan* for men is two sheets, the Envelope and Cover and three sheets for women, Envelope, Cover and Shawl or Envelope, Shirt and Shawl.
- The outer most Envelope sheet, used to wrap the entire body should be long enough to cover the whole body and left over to tie at both ends, at the head and toes. The inner Cover should be long enough to cover the body but shorter than the Envelope because it does not need to be tied at both ends. The Shirt, most inner sheet, must cover from the neck to the thighs, both front and back sides. The Shawl layer should be about 5-6 feet long, and the Chest sheet should cover the breast to the belly button and better if it can go up to the thighs. The Shirt sheet should be cut at the neck so the face is shown and should cover the shoulder extending all the way to the thighs both front and back.
- Reducing the *kafan* without any legitimate reason is prohibited and it is *makruh* (disliked). If the minimum requirement is fulfilled, then there is to be no demand for the *sunnah kafan*. But, yes, if even the minimum *kafan* is not in one's possession (due to financial hardship) then asking for contributions from the Muslim community is allowed, and fulfilling this request is *fardh-e-kifayah*, so someone must have to provide it, otherwise, the whole community will be held responsible and become sinful. It is very rewarding to bear the cost of *janâzah* on behalf of a poor Muslim and when it is done so quietly, it brings abundant rewards from Allah ﷻ.

- If worse comes to worst then even used clothing can be used for *kafan*. The clothes of *kafan* should be as best as possible, at least, as one used to wear for *jumah* or *Eid salah*. As per a *hadith*, “Give white colored *kafan* to your deceased.” *Kafan* made of silk is forbidden for men but it is permitted for women.²⁰
- If the deceased has left some funds, the *kafan* will be paid for from that. Buying the *kafan* has priority over payment of the deceased’s debt, will, and inheritance distribution. All will be distributed after paying for *kafan*. Here it refers to the whole burial process.
- If the deceased was poor and did not leave any inheritance then their dependent pays for their *janâza* expense, and if there are no dependents or if they too are poor and cannot afford the expenses then *bait-ul-ma’l*, government treasury, or the Muslim community pays for it. If anyone from the community purposely neglects to take up the expense of such a *janâza* then the whole Muslim community will be held responsible and incur sin because it is a *fardh-e-kifayah*.
- If a Muslim woman dies and leaves some wealth, even then her husband is legally responsible for her *janâza* expenses, but a wife is not responsible for her husband, even if she is rich. His *janâza* expense is not *wajib* (compulsory) on her. If she chooses to bear the expenses then it’s all good, she will certainly be rewarded for it.
- All the rules mentioned above are for the required and the minimum expense. If anyone wishes to go the extra mile and does more than required, without violating any rules, then the expense is on their shoulder alone.

THE WRAPPING OF THE KAFAN

First, the Envelope sheet that is to be wrapped around the entire body is to be spread on the table. Secondly, the Cover sheet should be spread over that and thirdly, on top of that should lay the Shirt sheet. Then the deceased should be laid on the sheets. Now, after rubbing camphor gently on those parts of the body that touch the ground during *sujud*: forehead, nose, palms, knees and toes, the Shirt sheet is to go through the head covering from the neck to the thighs. Now, the left side of the

²⁰ Fatawa-e-Alamgiri and Bahar-e-Shariat

Cover sheet is to be placed over the body and then its right side goes over that. Finally, the Envelope sheet with the left side first and then the right side should be wrapped around and gently tied. As said, this most outer Envelope sheet should be big enough to be tied at both ends so that the wind may not blow it away.

For the female corpse, spread the Envelope sheet then the Cover sheet then the Shirt sheet then the Shawl sheet and finally the Chest area sheet. Now, after laying the body on top of all these sheets, first wrap and tie the chest covering from the breast to the thighs, then the Shirt and the Shawl sheets should be wrapped to cover the head and face as in *niqab/hijab*, and then the Cover and Envelope sheet is to be wrapped as in the male corpse.

Bear in mind that during this process of wrapping the *kafan*, no part of the private parts area should be uncovered or visible. After this, the *janâza* is ready to be transported to a *masjid* or wherever the *Salâtul-Janâza*, is taking place, if it is not already present in such facility.

SALÂTUL-JANÂZA

The *Salâtul-Janâza*, a special prayer made for the deceased, is also a *Fardh-e-Kifaya* (an obligatory act if performed by just one person, the whole community is relieved of it). If not, then whoever is informed of it, i.e. learns of the *janâza* and does not come to perform the *Salâtul-Janâza*, becomes sinful. Anyone denying the religious obligation of *Salâtul-Janâza* or denies its compulsoriness is a *kafir* (disbeliever). *Salâtul-Janâza* is another right of the deceased Muslim.

- *Nafil* (voluntary) worship is always very rewarding, but if a neighbor, relative or a pious Muslim passes away then joining their *janâza* is more rewarding than performing *nafil-salah*.²¹
- Whoever joins the *janâza* is not permitted by law to leave without performing the *Salâtul-Janâza*. After performing the *Salâtul-Janâza* one can leave only after seeking permission from the *wali* (guardian/

²¹ Fatawa-e-Alamgiri and Bahar-e-Shariat

caretaker) of the deceased. After the burial, seeking permission to leave is not required.²²

- People accompanying the *janâza* should not talk uselessly or laugh, out of respect and basic human decency.
- Having a congregation for *Salâtul-Janâza* is not necessary, even if one Muslim is available, he may perform it and the *fardh* would be deemed fulfilled. If many people are present then congregate in a way that the rows end up in an odd number, meaning, one, three, five or seven, etc. For example, if seven people are performing the *Salâtul-Janâzah*, then behind the imam, should be three rows. The first row would have three people, two in the second row and one person in the last row.²³ As stated in a hadith, "If there are three rows in *Salâtul-Janâza*, the deceased will be forgiven by Allah ﷻ."²⁴
- Out of the four *madhhab* (school of thought) of the *Ahle-Sunnah wa Jam'ah*, except the *Shafaii*, all others do not permit the *Salâtul-Janâza* to be held inside of a *masjid* unless absolutely necessary, as in the case of rain, snow or other incredible circumstances. Just for simple convenience, it is not permitted. Performing *Salâtul-Janâza* in a *masjid* is *makruh-e-tahrimi* (close to being *haram*, forbidden).
- Among the people who may lead the *Salâtul-Janâza* is a king/leader of an Islamic state, if not, then the *qadi* (judge). If not, then the imam of *Salâtul-Juma'h*, if not, then the imam of one's local *masjid*, if not, then the *wali* (in charge) of the *janâza*, has the right to be the imam of the *Salâtul-Janâza*.
- *Salâtul-Janâza* of a *Sunni* Muslim should always be performed by a *Sunni* imam. How would it feel that when your loved one never performed his *salah* behind a non-Sunni imam, because he cared so much for his *aqidah*, belief, and now when he/she has died and is helpless that you are leaving him for his final *salah* to a non-Sunni imam. I do not mean to create any mischief here but this is an important matter. Ask yourself this question, would the deceased have allowed his *Salâtul-Janâza* to be performed by a non-Sunni Imam? You are paying for the services; you have all the right to choose the person to lead the *Salâtul-Janâza* of your loved one. With that said, I invite Sunni-Muslims to take a moment and think about

²² Fatawa-e-Alamgiri

²³ Ghuniat-e-Talibin and Bahar-e-Shariat

²⁴ Ibid.

establishing their own funeral services and arrange for their own imams. This is your right and the right of your loved ones so do not neglect it, it will be your turn tomorrow.

- If there is no *wali* (guardian) of the *janâza* of a female then her father, husband, or adult son should become the imam and perform the *Salâtul-Janâza*, otherwise her neighbor, too, can become the imam. If no *wali* is present for the *janâza* of a male person then his neighbor has the right to be the imam.²⁵
- It is *mustahab* (preferable) for an *imam* to stand facing the chest of the deceased, and not too far from it.
- For *Salâtul-Janâza* there is to be no *adhan* (call to prayer) or *iqamah* (call of prayer read at a faster pace).
- Remember, the *adhan* and *iqamah* are recited at the birth of a Muslim, and upon their death only *salah* is to be performed.
- In *Salâtul-Janâza* there are four *takbirs*.
- The *niyyah* (intent) of *Salâtul-Janâza* is that, "O Allah, I make the intention to perform *Salâtul Janâza* for the sake of Allah and to supplicate for this deceased" and, thereafter, say, 'Allah-o-Akbar' by raising both hands and bringing them up to your earlobes and then fold them as done in any other *salah*. Recite the *sana*:

سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ وَتَبَارَكَ
اسْمُكَ وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ

*Subhaanaka allahumma wabehamdika wa tabara-kasmoka
wa ta'ala jaddoka wala'ilaaha ghairuk*

Glorify be to You, O Allah! And all praises are due unto
You, and blessed is Your Name and exalted is Your Majesty,
and none is worthy of worship but You.

- Then say *Allah-o-Akbar* or the imam will say the second, *Allah-o-Akbar* but do not raise your hands again and recite *Durood Sharif*, salutation and praise of the Prophet ﷺ. You may recite the *Durood-e-Ibrahimi*, as is recited in other *salah* or any other *durood* you know, then say *Allah-o-Akbar* the third time or the imam will say it; again without raising the hands recite the supplication for the

²⁵ Darr-e-Mukhtar

janâza. In it make *dua* (supplication) for yourself and for other *momineen* (righteous Muslims). Any specific *dua* that you may know or you can recite the following:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِحَيِّنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا وَشَاهِدِنَا
وَعَائِبِنَا وَصَغِيرِنَا وَكَبِيرِنَا وَذَكَرِنَا
وَأُنثَانَا اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ أَحْيَيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَأَحْيِهِ عَلَى
الْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ تَوَفَّيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَتَوَفَّهُ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ

Allahumagh firli hayyina wa mayyitina wa shahidina wa gha'ibina wa saghirina wa kabirina wa zakarina wa unthana. Allahumma man ahyaitahu minna fa'ahyiee 'alal Islam, wa man tawaffaitahu minna fatawaffahu alal-Iman.

O ALLAH, FORGIVE OUR LIVING AND OUR DEAD, THOSE WHO ARE WITH US AND THOSE WHO ARE ABSENT, OUR YOUNG AND OUR OLD, OUR MENFOLK AND OUR WOMENFOLK. O ALLAH, WHOMEVER YOU GIVE LIFE FROM AMONG US GIVE HIM LIFE UPON ISLAM, AND WHOMEVER YOU TAKE AWAY FROM US, TAKE HIM AWAY UPON FAITH.

- Then say the *takbir*, *Allah-o-Akbar*, for the fourth time or the imam will say it and then say the *salam* both towards the right and left as done in other *salah*, then unfold your hands. After moving away from your row, make *dua* for the deceased. This completes the *Salâtul Janâza*. Now, the *janâza* is ready to be transported to the burial ground.

TAKING THE JANÂZA TO THE BURIAL GROUNDS

In Islam, a deceased believer's body becomes an object of respect and fulfilling its rites of passage is considered an act of worship. Thus, carrying the *janâza* to the burial ground on one's shoulders is an act of worship that brings many rewards and blessings. No one should hesitate about performing this act of worship. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ carried the *janâza* of S'ad bin Ma'adh ²⁶

²⁶ Johar and Bahar-e-Shariat

Since the burial ground and cemeteries are usually not close by and transport vehicles are used to carry the *janâza*, thus, in this case people should not miss any opportunity to carry the *janâza* on their shoulder, whether it is to carry it from the *masjid* and into the vehicle or from the vehicle to the burial ground to fulfill this act of worship, especially, when being carried on the shoulder of Muslims is among the rights of the deceased. If the *janâza* is of a pious Muslim then people who are carrying it will be blessed and if the one carrying the *janâza* is pious then the deceased will be blessed. No matter how modern a *maulvi* (religious official) or the accompanied people are and no matter how much of a rush people may be in, no one should be allowed to bar, by any means, people from giving shoulder to the *janâza*.

To fulfill this act of worship, before loading the *janâza* onto a vehicle, people should be given the opportunity to carry the *janâza* on their shoulder and do several rounds within the facility of a *masjid* or wherever the *Salâtul-Janâza* has taken place; in this way, all the attendees will have taken part and earned rewards from their Lord ﷻ. Thus, Muslims will be able to perform this Sunnah *ibadah* (act of worship) and receive blessings, and such Islamic rituals and practices will never be overlooked and avoided by Muslims. The people in charge of the deceased should take this matter very seriously and make certain its execution, if they care for their loved ones and for themselves that one day they, too, will be departing this mortal world. Current imams of *masajid* (sing. *masjid*) and funeral service directors are always in a rush, because this is their business, and in business, time is money. When, in fact, the pleasure of Allah ﷻ, obeying the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ and fulfilling the rights of those loved ones who passed away, should be the business of every Muslim.

- At least, four Muslims should carry the *janâza*, lifting the coffin from each of the four sides on their shoulder, keeping the side of the head in front. If and when there are more people, they should all take turns in this act and walk the *janâza* slowly and continuously recite the *Kalimah-e-Shahadat*, the declaration of belief in Allah's Oneness

and in Prophet Muhammad ﷺ's status of being the final Messenger of Allah to guide mankind.

- It is the Prophet ﷺ's *sunnah* to carry the *janâza* on the shoulder. It is to be done in this way: those who initially lift it and have walked with it, should move backwards, swiftly putting it on other peoples' shoulder as they come in front of them to carry it. They should move from left to right shoulder and move in reverse as others take over from the front. All those who participate in this should, at least, walk forty steps while carrying the *janâza*. If the trip to the transport vehicle or burial ground is long and not enough people are present then people should take turns until the destination is reached. Allah ﷻ is Ever-Watching our deeds and the more we strive the more He shall elevate our status, and in this act of fulfilling the right of our deceased brothers and sisters there is abundant reward.
- According to a *hadîth*, "Whoever carries the *janâza* for 40 steps, his 40 major sins will be forgiven and whoever has the opportunity to carry on the shoulder the *janâza* from all of its four sides, Allah ﷻ will ultimately forgive him."²⁷
- Carry the *janâza* quickly but with utmost care.²⁸
- People accompanying the *janâza* should walk behind it and not be on its sides or in front of it.²⁹
- It is preferable to walk with the *janâza* on foot and if the *janâza* is driven in a vehicle then you must remain behind the *janâza*.
- The head side of the *janâza* should be in front when carrying it.³⁰
- It is prohibited to take any lit fire with the *janâza*.
- Even though it is not suggested but it is permitted to carry and bury the *janâza* at night.

BURYING THE DECEASED

- The act of burying a deceased Muslim is *fardh-e-kifayah* (obligatory on all Muslims). The length of the grave must be at least the size of

²⁷ Johar, Alamgiri, Durr-e-Muhtar

²⁸ Alamgiri and Durr-e-Muhtar

²⁹ Alamgiri, Raddul-Muhtar, and Bahar-e-Shariat

³⁰ Fatawa-e-Alamgiri and Bahar-e-Shariat

the deceased and the width should be about half of that. The depth can be half or at most equal to the height of the deceased.

- The deceased can be placed in a wooden coffin and be buried with it. Since, in this case, the body will not be touching the earth, a handful of soil can be placed inside, on the sides of the deceased. The body of the deceased should be tilted so that it faces the *qibla* (the direction of the holy Ka'ba). Cover the wooden box properly and preferably use wooden nails to attach the cover to the box. Then, the grave is to be refilled with the same earthly soil that was dug up.
- Erecting walls within the grave, near the sides of the deceased, with baked bricks, cement blocks and other similar objects is forbidden, but non-baked bricks and natural stones are permitted, if needed. Placing wooden planks are permitted, if needed.
- Those people who are assigned to carry/lower the body into the grave must be pious and trustworthy because, in case, they see something terrifying (which may occur when the deceased is sinful) thus can keep it a secret and not inform others about it. This is part of the privacy rights of the deceased that Islam has established.
- Only *mehram(s)* (those who can never be married to) of the female deceased may lower her body into the grave and the grave must in some way, be veiled. A *na-mehram* (one who can be married to) should stay away at that moment. If no *mehram* is present then other relatives can carry out this process, and if they too are not available, then pious and respectable members of the community can lower her body into the grave.
- Once placed in the grave, the strings used to tie the *kafan* must be loosened at the head and the feet.
- Recite "Bismillahi wa-billahi wa-ala' millati-Rasulillahi" while placing the body in the grave.
- Each attendee should pour at least three handful of soil onto the grave while reciting Surah Ikhlas (Chapter 112 of the holy Qur'an).

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 قَدْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ يَلِدْ
 وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَكَ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ

Bismilla hir-Rahma nir-Rahim

*Qul huwal laahu ahad • Allah hus-samad • Lam yalid wa lam
 yulad • wa lam yakul-lahu kufuwan ahad •*

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST-COMPASSIONATE, EVER-MERCIFUL
 SAY IT FOREVER THAT HE INDEED IS ALLAH, THE ONE • ALLAH INDEED IS
 SELF-SUFFICIENT • HE NEITHER GAVE BIRTH TO A CHILD, NOR WAS HE
 BEGOTTEN • NOR DOES HE HAVE AN EQUAL •

- When placing the first handful of soil, say, “minha-khalaqnakum”. At the second one, say, “wa fiha noi’dukum” and at the third one, say, “wa fiha nukhrijuhum taratan ukhrah”. Then clean your hands right then and there.³¹
- It is *mustahab* (preferable) to recite the beginning and end part of the Surah Al-Baqarah after covering the grave. Thus, it is preferable to recite from “Alif-Lam-Meem” to “muflihun” at the side of the head and at the side of the feet, then recite the last two verses (285-286) of Surah Al-Baqarah (included in the following pages).³²
- It is not prohibited to scatter/shower water on a covered grave. Also, to place flowers and to plant stems at the grave is permitted.³³
- Building monuments around and over the grave is allowed, as long as the grave, from the inside, is not solidified.³⁴
- Inscribing words/names on the grave/headstone for identification is allowed while maintaining utmost respect to the holy Qur’an, holy words, and respected names.³⁵
- It is preferable to bury the dead in those graveyards where pious and righteous Muslims are resting (buried). For example, many Muslims

³¹ Alamgiri, Juherah, Nyrah, A’ini Sharah-Kanz

³² Joharah and Bahar-e-Shariat

³³ Alamgiri and Raddul-Muhtar

³⁴ Durr-e-Mukhtar, Raddul-Muhtar, and Bahar-e-Shariat

³⁵ Joharah and Durr-e-Mukhtar

wish to be buried in Jannatul-Baqi (the cemetery established by the holy Prophet ﷺ in Medina Munawwarah.

- Sitting, stepping, walking, sleeping, or disgusting acts such as urinating or defecating on a grave is strictly forbidden. Walking on pathways built over graves is also prohibited. Sometimes new pathways are built in older cemeteries and chances are that many graves may have come under the pathway. Thus, walking on such pathways is also prohibited.
- Picture(s) of the deceased or anyone else are not to be posted on headstones or anywhere near the grave.
- It is strongly prohibited to walk on or over the graves. Getting to the grave of your relative in this manner is strictly prohibited. If unable to reach the intended grave, reciting *Fatiha* (to read portions of the holy Qur'an) from far away is permissible and sufficient. Once, the honorable Prophet ﷺ saw a man walking in a graveyard with his shoes on. He said to him, "Take your shoes off, don't hurt the buried and don't let them hurt you."³⁶
- Joining the burial procession of a Muslim brings abundant blessings and rewards from Allah ﷻ. The more we participate in the *janâza* of Muslim brothers and sisters, from their time of death to the time of burying them, with the intent to seek Allah's pleasure, Allah ﷻ will in return make many more people to attend and participate at our moment of death and until the time of burial, by which we will be blessed abundantly. We should always avail such opportunities to earn rewards.
- When our beloved Prophet ﷺ was conveying the message to his companions about how beneficial and rewarding it is for the men of the Muslim Ummah to participate in another Muslim's *janâza*, the women asked, "Can we attend the *janâza*, too, to receive such blessings?" The beloved Prophet ﷺ replied, "You will receive the same reward if you stay home for that period of time." There are many, many wisdoms behind every rule of Islam and abundant benefits and rewards for anyone who abides by them. Thus, for men are that they must join the *janâza* and for women it is to stay home, such is the sacred rule, for who can and cannot

³⁶ Bahar-e-Shariat

accompany a *janâza*. May Allah ﷻ give us the *taufiq* (opportunity), guidance, understanding, divine help, to obey our *Din-e-Islam*.

VISITING GRAVES

Visiting graves is a *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. One may choose to visit on Monday, Thursday, Friday, or Saturday; preferably Friday before *Salâtul-Jumah* is the best and holiest time. Visiting the *mazaar* (shrine of Allah's blessed *awliya*) is permitted. Their tombs, among other holy places, are where Allah's mercy and blessings are showered, and those who visit share Allah's mercy and blessings and have their *dua* fulfilled. At the shrines of such pious personalities, if one sees another Muslim brother or sister doing anything against Islamic *shari'a*, then it is a duty of a Muslim to stop it, but just because of anyone acting ignorantly, does not mean that such visitation is to be prohibited, especially, when they are permissible according to *sunnah* and *shari'a*. Anything that is allowed in Islam cannot be made prohibited by anyone.

PROPER PROCEDURE FOR VISITING GRAVES

- For safety and other practical concerns, the womenfolk should be discouraged from visiting graves.³⁷
- When at the grave site proceed from the side of the feet and humbly stand at the front side; offer your *salaam* by saying "Assalamu-alaykum ya ahlal-Quboor" (greetings of peace be upon you o resident(s) of the graves) and then recite *Fatiha*, meaning the first Chapter of the holy Qur'an and other portions from it and sending its rewards and blessings to the loved one buried there.³⁸
- It is prohibited to kiss the grave and/or circumambulate it.³⁹
- Placing flowers at the grave is permitted, and, as long as they remain wet, they will praise Allah ﷻ and the praise of the flowers brings

³⁷ Raddul-Muhtar, Fatawa-e-Rizvia, and Bahar-e-Shariat

³⁸ Raddul-Muhtar

³⁹ Bahar-e-Shariat, Ashi'atul-Lam'at

peace and mercy to the deceased. Similarly, placing flowers over the *janâza* is allowed, too.⁴⁰

- Covering the tombs of saints with spreadsheets embroidered with religious *kalimah* (words of prayer) are permitted and has been a long time practice of traditional Muslims. This practice is to show their high rank in the sight of Allah, and by which many, many people acquire blessings. Remember that Allah's mercy is constantly showered where the friends of Allah rest. These righteous people are those who have sacrificed their lives in the service of Islam and for the sake of Allah. Thus, Allah ﷻ has rewarded them with His perpetual Mercy. The *ruh* (spirit) of the deceased returns to its grave whenever anyone visits it, they receive their *salam* and hear their supplications, and, if and when Allah wills, their supplications are answered. Bear in mind that having love for Allah's saints is proof of having love for the Messenger of Allah. It is this love that is the greatest bond that brings conviction to a Muslim's *iman* (faith).

MOURNING THE DECEASED

Muslims must know and believe that every loss and tragedy comes from Allah ﷻ and they must remain patient at it and keep remembering Allah ﷻ with His *dhikr* (praising and extolling Him) and be grateful to Him because that loss could have been much worst. This life is but a test.

Sometimes, Allah ﷻ tests us by giving something and other times by taking something away. We must not complain about any losses and with absolute faith in Allah ﷻ wash away our ill-feelings through His praises. Allah ﷻ is the sole Owner of this world and everything in it, including us. It is His will to grant us things and when He wills, they return to Him. We belong to Allah ﷻ thus, being patient and persevering are among the best practices for us.

- The mourning period is three days. It is prohibited to mourn the loss of a loved one for more than that except in the case of the widow that on her husband's death, the mourning period is, four months and ten days.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Bahar-e-Shariat

⁴¹ Sahih Bukhari and Muslim Sharif

- Those who remain patient upon a loved one's death are rewarded doubly: once for bearing the loss and once for being patient. However, weeping and bewailing exempts both rewards.⁴²
- According to a hadīth, you should recite "inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajiun" whenever you are reminded of someone's death or when you incur any kind of loss, by this you will receive abundant rewards from Allah ﷻ and each time you say it, even if the loss was incurred long ago, Allah ﷻ will reward you for it.⁴³
- Weeping and bemoaning over the death of a loved one, is, by *ijma* (consensus of scholars) *haram* (forbidden).⁴⁴
- Acts, such as, ripping one's clothes, crying profusely, pouring dust over oneself, beating the chest, smacking the thighs and other self-inflicting pains are practices of the 'age of ignorance' and in Islam are *haram*.⁴⁵ According to a hadīth, anyone inflicting pain on himself, like crying profusely, ripping of one's clothes and weeping like those of the 'age of ignorance', is not from among us.⁴⁶
- Weeping is prohibited but crying silently is permitted. The Prophet ﷺ cried silently upon the passing of his son and said that for shedding tears and feeling sad, Allah ﷻ does not punish, but mourning aloud is cause for Allah's displeasure.⁴⁷
- Weeping brings pain to the deceased and thus he/she cries too.⁴⁸

OFFERING CONDOLENCES/PAYING RESPECT

- Offering condolences is a *sunnah* of the beloved Prophet ﷺ. In a *hadīth*, it is stated that whoever offers condolences to another Muslim at the time of tragedy, Allah ﷻ will on Judgment Day adorn him with the garment of *kiramah* (magnanimity).⁴⁹
- Anyone who offers condolences receives equal amount of reward as he who is stricken with grief.

⁴² Raddul-Muhtar

⁴³ Ahmad and Baihiqi

⁴⁴ Joharah

⁴⁵ Fatawa-e-Alamgiri

⁴⁶ Sahih Bukhari and Muslim Sharif

⁴⁷ Sahih Bukhari and Muslim Sharif

⁴⁸ Joharah and Bahar with reference to Sahih Bukhari and Muslim Sharif

⁴⁹ Ibne-Majah

- When consoling those who the deceased left behind, say, “May Allah forgive the deceased and shower the loved ones with His mercy and grant them patience and blessings for bearing the pain of loss. The honorable Prophet ﷺ offered condolences in this way:

“Belongs to Allah ﷻ whatever He has taken back, everything remains in existence until its fixed period.”⁵⁰

- It is *mustahab* (preferable) to give condolences to all the relatives of the deceased, but to female relatives only her *mehram* may console them.⁵¹
- It is *makruh* (disliked) to give condolences over and over again and after the passing of the third day of death because it refreshes the loss. Certainly that should not be the purpose of offering condolences but if you are meeting the relatives of the deceased for the first time then it is okay beyond the third day.
- Offering condolences in the cemetery is a *bida* (innovation) and it is simply unacceptable and inappropriate.
- Offering condolences is permitted before the deceased is brought to the cemetery but it is preferable after the burial, and consoling the relatives is permitted at any time.
- *Fâtiha-khwâni* (commemoration of praise and eulogy) on the 3rd day and on the 40th day is permitted; however, sending invitation cards to people for such commemorations is prohibited. *Fâtiha-khwâni* of the 3rd and 40th day can be announced after the burial, so that the loved ones and friends may get together for *Isâl-e-Sawâb* (to convey blessed rewards to the deceased that their sins be forgiven and their status elevated). Usually, invitations are issued for occasions of happiness. At the occasion of a *Fâtiha-Khawâni* inviting and feeding the poor and needy people is better.⁵²
- Legally, the expense of *fâtiha* (food, etc.) should not come from the deceased’s inheritance but after its legal disbursement, whoever wishes to spend from their share, it is permissible.
- It is a *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ for relatives and neighbors to prepare food for the family of the deceased for the first day and


⁵⁰ Fatawa-e-Alamgiri

⁵¹ Fatawa-e-Alamgiri and Bahar-e-Shariat

⁵² Fathul-Qadeer

night. Only providing food for the first day and night is a Sunnah and after that it is *makruh* (disliked).⁵³

MISCELLANEOUS JANÂZA RULES AND PROCEDURES

- As per Imam Abu Hanifa  *Salâtul-Janâza* is to be performed for anyone who commits suicide.⁵⁴
- Only one *Salâtul-Janâza* is to be performed for the deceased.⁵⁵
- If the *janâza* is brought to a *masjid* at the time of *Salâtul-Maghrib* then *Salâtul-Janâza* has preference over the *sunnah rakah* of the *Salâtul-Maghrib*, therefore it is to be performed immediately after the *fardh* of *Salâtul-Maghrib*.⁵⁶
- If the deceased has so willed that such and such person should lead his/her *Salâtul-Janâza*, it is not obligated on anyone to fulfill this desire. However, historically, many saints and scholars have made such wills and people have fulfilled their desire as an obligation.
- Women are not allowed to enter the grave to lower the body of the deceased in it.
- It is *mustahab* (preferable) that wherever a person dies, they should be buried in the nearby cemetery, but it is permitted to return the deceased to their country of origin or some far away cemetery.
- Many times transporting the body, especially via air, requires special chemicals to be injected into the body, which must be painful for the deceased. As a matter of fact, it is said that even when a fly sits on the deceased, the deceased feels it as a ton of weight. Thus, the entire transporting process is very painful to the deceased and should only be done under extreme circumstances, Moreover, this entire process is time consuming and as per a *hadîth* the deceased is to be buried as soon as possible.
- The deceased's body should not be unearthed unless it is for some legal reason.⁵⁷ If something of value, equal to the value of a dirham was mistakenly left in the grave, then the grave can be dug up.⁵⁸

⁵³ Fatawa-e-Alamgiri and Bahar-e-Shariat.

⁵⁴ Tibyeen

⁵⁵ Izza

⁵⁶ Qunya

⁵⁷ Fatawa Qazi Khan

⁵⁸ Bahrur Raqa'iq

- Uprooting trees and grass from graveyards is prohibited but if they are decayed then it is permissible.⁵⁹
- It is permissible for individuals to make arrangements for their own grave site: purchasing land, digging the grave, etc.
- *Salâtul-Janâza* is to be performed for every Muslim, no matter how immoral or sinful he/she was. There is to be no *Salâtul-Janâza* for a *murtad* (traitor) or a thief who is killed during robbery. A *mujâhid* (one who fights in the way of Allah) and is martyred by opposing forces, such martyrs are not considered dead in the sight of Allah so *Salâtul-Janâza* and *ghusl* is not required for them. Also there is to be no *Salâtul-Janâza* for those who murder people indiscriminately and for those who have killed his/her mother and/or father.
- If water is not available to give *ghusl* to the deceased then it is permissible to perform *tayammum* (the act of dusting off the body with pure and clean earthly soil/sand).
- Anyone who comes in physical contact with a deceased's body before it was given *ghusl* must do *ghusl* to become legally clean. But once the deceased has been given *ghusl* one can touch the body and will not be required to do *ghusl* or *wudhu*.
- The rules applied for *Salâtul-Janâza* are similar to the regular *salâh*, like, being in *tahâra* (legally clean), *wudhu* (ablution), facing in the direction of the *qibla*, wearing clean clothes, the venue must be clean, making *niyyah* (intent), having the *satar* (navel area and private parts covered). There is no requirement of time and reciting the Takbir-e-Tahrima, the initial "Allahu-Akbar" in *Salâtul-Janâza*.⁶⁰
- During *Salâtul-Janâza*, the *janâza* must be placed in the front of the imam leading it. The *janâza* should physically touch the ground and if for example it is placed on an animal or remains in the transport vehicle, the *Salah* will become invalid.

LOANS OF THE DECEASED

Islam encourages Muslims to be debt free before they die, thus, paying off loans is a very serious matter.

⁵⁹ Fatawa Qazi Khan

⁶⁰ Raddul-Muhtar

Every sin may find forgiveness but any outstanding loan will be faced by the deceased upon resurrection on the Day of Judgment. On the Day of Judgment, in many cases, good deeds of a person will be exchanged for outstanding loans to satisfy the debt. However, Islam offers abundant reward to creditors who choose to forgive the loans owed to them by those who are unable to pay them back. If the deceased leaves any wealth, then its legal distribution will be executed after the payment of all outstanding debt. Normally, the next of kin and other close relatives declare in public and ask to know of any creditors so that their loan may be satisfied or to see if it will be forgiven by them, this lifts the burden of debt from the deceased. Anyone who volunteers to pay back the loan of a deceased is rewarded abundantly. How kind and compassionate is Islam towards its believers? Who wouldn't want to be a part of this 'peaceful and just way of life'?

WASIYAH AND INHERITANCE

In this modern era, Muslims have become careless in following Islamic rules and practicing Islam, thus, matters related to inheritance are being drawn according to the personal wish of those nearing death or as per the laws of the country of their residence, and in complete disregard of Islamic rules. Muslims are obligated to follow and obey the rules of Islam, under all circumstances, to avoid the sin of usurping the rights of Allah ﷻ and the rights of people. In the Qur'an, Allah ﷻ Himself clearly lays down the rules of inheritance and how much each heir is to receive shares in the wealth of their deceased relative. It is not, at all, difficult for any Muslim to read the Qur'an and understand his/her obligations so that their duties concerning inheritance could be fulfilled.

- Allah ﷻ reveals in the holy Quran:

Made obligatory upon you that when death comes to any of you, it leaves behind some wealth, to bequeath it to parents and to the relatives according to the munificent customs. This is an obligation on the shoulders of the righteous ones.⁶¹

⁶¹ Al-Qur'an 2:180

- A hadith states, "The ancestor should be present while the will is being drawn".⁶²
- The Prophet ﷺ further stated, "It is not appropriate for a Muslim, if he has enough wealth to be willed, to not have drawn a will, or spend even two nights without having a written will".⁶³
- The minimum limit of the wealth which can be willed is one-third (1/3) of the liable wealth to be left behind. The rule of Islam is that the legal heirs of the deceased be not left poor and in need.
- After paying off the loan(s) of the deceased and fulfilling the requirements of his/her will, the heirs will receive their share as set forth by Allah ﷻ.
- The honorable ibne-Abbas رضي الله عنه reported that in the early days of Islam, inheritance was the right of the children and wills were written for parents. However, Allah ﷻ cancelled from that whatever He wanted and designated to man two shares equal to the women's share. To each of the parents 1/6; to the wife 1/8, and in the absence of children, 1/4; husband receives 1/2 of the inheritance of the wife, and if the children are present, he receives 1/4.
- Since this is a serious matter in Islam and Muslims are strictly obligated to obey the rules of drawing up a will, and it is a right of the children and other relatives to receive their legal share from the inheritance, this duty should not be overlooked, under any circumstance. Many Muslims are seriously concerned and ask how they can follow the Islamic rules when they reside in countries that do not enforce Islamic rules, especially, the rules of inheritance.
- Firstly, the simple solution to this problem is to prepare a will, well in advance, according to the rules of your country of residence and assign the share of the wealth, according to Islamic rules, as much as possible. This can be made easy when a person keeps his/her will up to date, at all times. In this way, Islamic requirements will be fulfilled and simultaneously local non-Muslim authorities will be guided by this will to ensure proper distribution. There is always the possibility of discrepancies, but Allah ﷻ is always aware of your intent and obedience. And of course, in the absence of a written will, the local non-Muslim authorities are not bound to enforce Islamic rules, and

⁶² Sahih Bukhari

⁶³ Sahih Bukhari, Book 2, Volume 2

as a result, only one or few heirs will acquire the total wealth and many others who rightly deserve it will be left without it and the deceased will have to suffer the burden of violating the rights of the people.

- Secondly, those who receive the inheritance according to the rules of their country of residence, should then, according to the rules of shari'a, share the inheritance. In this way, every rule of sharia' will be satisfied and each heir will receive their legitimate share.
- There is much wisdom in Islamic rules regarding wills and inheritance. Islam wishes to see that wealth not be accumulated in the hands of one person or a few people, it genuinely desires to reduce poverty and hardship, so that all may worship Allah ﷻ without worrying about food and essentials. Nevertheless, we should obey Islamic rules, even if we don't understand the wisdom of it. Our life's main purpose is and should be to seek the pleasure of our Lord, Allah ﷻ.

Muslims should make it their duty to learn about this very important part of Islam. If such things did not matter, Allah ﷻ will not have gone into such detail and sent the many Prophets that He did. As it is said, "the proof is in the pudding, my friends," don't just enjoy the pudding, pay the price and earn His pleasure. This booklet is certainly not enough to cover all the rules of death and inheritance, etc., it is written just to bring your attention to such pressing matters.

SPENDING IN CHARITY AT THE TIME OF DEATH

Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه reported that a person once inquired from the Prophet ﷺ that which charity is the best and most commendable. The honorable Prophet ﷺ replied, "The charity (given) of the time of your youth: when you are healthy and strong; when you have the desire to accumulate wealth and when you fear poverty. Do not delay in giving charity or wait until your soul reaches your throat—time of death—at which time you will hastily say give this and that to such and such person. At this point, there is no benefit for you because now your wealth already belongs to such and such person."

I have come to know that some dying Muslims bequeath their entire wealth to non-profit organizations that many times do not use the

wealth, according to shari'a. I could only say to this that Allah's entrusted wealth to us is a trust from Him and we ought to use it, according to His rules and regulations, and should never leave out our loved ones in poverty and hardship. Leaving one's wealth to some charity or to so-called non-profit organizations is injustice, and to hope for reward from Allah ﷻ for this is absolute foolishness. Certainly, we should spend, as much as we can, in *sadaqa-e-jariah*, charity that receives perpetual reward and whose rewards will continue to be written in our Roster of Deeds even after our departure from this mortal world.

FATIHA AND ISAL-E-THAWAB

There are three categories of worship: physical, monetary and both physical and monetary together. Physical worship involves only the body, which are 5 times daily *salah*, reciting the holy Qur'an, *tasbeeh* and *dhikr*, supplicating and praising Allah ﷻ, etc. Monetary worship is giving *zakâh* and other forms of *sadaqa* (charity). Both physical and monetary worship is to make the pilgrimage of Hajj because money and physical rituals are undertaken in this act of worship.

When Muslims perform any act of worship, any good deed, only for the sake and pleasure of Allah ﷻ, they receive abundant *thawab* (reward) from Allah ﷻ. Now the question is, can Muslims send/transfer rewards of any of their acts of worship to a deceased Muslim or not? According to the *Mu'tazilite*, a deviated sect of Muslims that started out very early in Arabia, rewards earned from good deeds/worship cannot be conveyed to the deceased and they receive no benefit from it. The belief of the *Ahle-Sunnah wa Jamah* (traditional Muslims who follow the sunnah of the Prophet and the sunnah of his Companions) is that every conveyed *thawab* reaches the deceased and they receive full benefit from it and this is based on authentic teachings of the Prophet ﷺ.

Those following the *Mu'tazilite* strand of ideology are pretty much non-existent today. Such deviated and defiant sects are but a misfortune for Muslims, because they claim to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet, yet object to and deny essential aspects of Islam. Their denial of

Isal-e-Thawab (transference of rewards to loved ones) is a denial of many teachings of the Prophet ﷺ and sacred verses of Allah ﷻ. How ironic is it, to call yourself a believer and deny essential beliefs. Such belief and simultaneous denial of it cannot go hand in hand; it only makes one a hypocrite. The following are few proofs of the legality and undeniable truthfulness of making *dua* and *Isal-e-Thawab*.

- Nu'man bin Basheer رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ stated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Supplication is worship."⁶⁴ Anas رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ stated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Supplication is the essence of worship."⁶⁵
- These two *hadith* prove that *dua* (supplication) is *ibadah* (worship) and, in fact, the essence of worship. Allah ﷻ states:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا
وَلِرِجَالِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ ---

AND THE ONE WHO CAME AFTER THEM SUPPLICATE THAT "O SUSTAINER, FORGIVE US AND OUR BROTHERS WHO HAD BROUGHT FAITH BEFORE US."⁶⁶

- Just think how, in this verse, Allah ﷻ is relating the commendable act of later Muslims' request of forgiveness and salvation for those Muslims who came and passed away before them. This supplication, being included in the Qur'an, proves that supplication is worship and since it includes a prayer of living Muslims for forgiveness of passed Muslims, then they receiving benefit out of this is unquestionable. If this is not recognized then what is the meaning of asking forgiveness for deceased brothers and sisters who passed away before. Why would Allah mention this? May Allah forbid! If this supplication has no meaning, then one can object to the Qur'an for discussing useless and meaningless things. Since every letter and word of the Qur'an is nothing but the truth then it is proved that the benefit of supplicating reaches the intended person, resulting in their forgiveness and/or elevation of status.
- In this regard, Imam Jalaluddin Sayuti رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ writes, quoting this same verse of the Qur'an that there is a consensus of Muslim scholars on

⁶⁴ Mishkat Sharif #2230, Tirmidhi Sharif #3372, Ibne-Majah # 3828, Abu Da'ud #1479

⁶⁵ Kanz-ul-Ammal, Mishkat #2231, Tirmidhi #3371

⁶⁶ Al-Qur'an 59:10

the fact of the deceased receiving the conveyed rewards of their fellow living brothers and sisters.

- The following *dua* of Ibrahim عليه السلام is included in the holy Qur'an:

رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ۝

OUR LORD, FORGIVE ME AND MY PARENTS AND THE BELIEVERS
ON THE DAY THE ACCOUNT IS ESTABLISHED.⁶⁷

- Now, how can anyone deny that his *dua* will be rejected or not bring benefit to his parents, when it is a fact that not a single *dua* of any Prophet of Allah عليه السلام is ever rejected by Allah عليه السلام. This is one thing that makes them unique from us, common people. Thus, we cannot say that his *dua* is useless.
- Angels supplicate to Allah عليه السلام for salvation and forgiveness of *momineen*.⁶⁸ Again, this shows that from the supplications of someone others are benefitted, if it is intended for others.
- The situation of the deceased in the grave is just like one calling for help when drowning. The deceased eagerly await rewards of prayers and supplications from their relatives, loved ones and friends and when *Isal-e-Thawab* reaches the deceased, it is more beloved to them than anything else. And without a doubt due to the supplications of the living people, Allah عليه السلام showers His mercy abundantly on the deceased. And that is, without a doubt, the best and only gift we can convey to the deceased.⁶⁹
- Abu Saeed Khudri رضي الله عنه states that the honorable Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم stated, "On the Day of Judgment when good deeds, as great as a mountain will appear on the Roster of Deeds (of a Muslim), he will say, where are these from? It will be said that these are, as a result of the commemorations made on your behalf by your family and friends. Due to their supplications of repentance for you, Allah عليه السلام included its reward on your Roster of Deeds.
- Another hadith, narrated by Abu Huraira رضي الله عنه states that due to a Muslim's supplications made on *Juma'h* (Fridays) at the *Salatul-Jumah*, the ranks of the deceased are elevated.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Al-Qur'an 14:41

⁶⁸ Al-Qur'an 40:7

⁶⁹ Mishkat al-Masabih #2355, Behayqi Sahebal Iman #9295

⁷⁰ Mishkat al-Masabih, #2354, Ibne-Majah #3660

- The honorable Prophet ﷺ said, “My *ummah*, nation, is the *ummah* upon who is divine Mercy. They will enter their graves sinful but upon resurrection they will be sinless. Allah ﷻ will erase their sins because of the supplications of repentance and forgiveness from their loving momineen brothers.⁷¹
- In the well-respected book of beliefs of the Hanafi Maslak, *Sharah Aqaid-e-Nasfi*, it is said that, “Prayers of the living and their spending in charity for the deceased are beneficial to the deceased and only the Mu’tazilite are against that.
- A renowned scholar of Islam, Mulla Ali Qari, the author of *Mirqat, Sharah Mishkat*, writes, “It is an agreed upon belief of the Ahle-Sunnah that the dead receive benefit by the good actions of the living.” *Mirqat* explains in more detail the *Mishkat Shareef*, which is one of the Seven Authentic Books of Hadith.

The following are *hadith* narrated by various Companions of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

- Once the honorable Prophet ﷺ was asked by a Companion, “I used to be good to my parents when they were alive. Now when they have departed, how can I be good to them?” The Prophet ﷺ replied, “With your *salah*, make *nafl* (voluntary) *salah* for them and with your *saum* (fasting), observe *nafl* fasts for them.” This clearly means that with your *nafl* acts of worship be good to them, and they will receive benefit from your deeds done in their name.
- The honorable A’isha Siddiqah رضي الله عنها relates that the Prophet ﷺ said, “If a Muslim has passed away on whom was due the obligatory *saum*, fasting, so his/her *wali* (guardian or trustee) can fulfill the left over fasts for him.”
- Anas رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever enters a graveyard and recites Surah Ya’sin so due to it, Allah ﷻ reduces any pain and suffering of those buried there and the one reciting it, gets *thawab* equal to all of them.⁷²
- Ali رضي الله عنه narrates that the honorable Prophet ﷺ stated, “One who passes by the graves and recites Surah Ikhlas 11 times and sends

⁷¹ *Sharah-e-Sudur*, pg 128

⁷² *Ibid*, pg 130

the reward of its recitation to the dead, will receive reward equal to the reward conveyed to all the dead buried there.⁷³

- Allama Badruddin Aini, one of the commentators of Sahih Bukhari, writes in his commentary, *Hidaya*, that Muslims have, from the very beginning and in all times, sent rewards earned from the recitation of the holy Quran to the deceased and even the rejectionists do not deny this fact, and the scholars of *Ahle-Sunnah wa Jamah*, have *ijma* (consensus) on the practice of *Isal-e-Thawab*.
- Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal رحمته الله states, "Whenever you visit the graves, recite *Surah Fatiha* and *mauzatayn*, the two last *Surahs*, and *Surah Ikhlas* and convey the reward acquired through their recitation to the residents of the graves so it certainly reaches them."⁷⁴
- Imam Qurtubi, a great exegete and commentator of the holy Qur'an states that Shaykh Azauddin bin Abdus Salam issued *fatwas* (edicts) that rewards earned from the recitation of the holy Qur'an do not reach the deceased. When he passed away, some of his colleagues saw him in their dream and asked, "What do you now say about *Isal-e-Thawab*?" He said, "After dying, I have recanted my verdicts, because here, I have seen that, with the Grace of Allah رحمته الله *thawab* does reach the deceased."⁷⁵

In short, there are numerous *ahadith* in *Sahah Sitta* (The 7 Authentic Books of Hadith) narrated by the great Companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, including Aisha رضي الله عنها, Ibne-Abbas رضي الله عنهما, Bureedah رضي الله عنها, Abdullah bin Umar رضي الله عنهما, Zayd ibne-Arqam, Abu-Huraira رضي الله عنه, Anas رضي الله عنه, Ali رضي الله عنه that support the practice of *Isal-e-Thawab* and prove that it certainly reaches the deceased. Furthermore, great scholars such as, Shah Waliullah Muhaddith Delhvi, Imam Shabi, Allama Badruddin Aini, Imam Hanbal, Zafrani, Imam Nawawi, Imam Qurtubi, Imam Jalaluddin Sayuti, Malik bin Dinar, Hammad Makki, Allama Qazi Samiullah Panipati, Allama Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddith Dehlvi, all agree and clearly write in their books that *Isal-e-Thawab*, whether the worship is of physical or monetary nature, its reward reaches the intended recipient and the sender too receives equal amount of reward.

⁷³ Dar Qitni, Durr-e-Mukhtar and Sharah Sudur, pg 130

⁷⁴ Sharah Sudur, pg 130

⁷⁵ Ibid, pg 123

The above mentioned proofs in support of *Isal-e-Thawab* should suffice to show that this practice is Islamic and the best and only way to benefit Muslims who have passed away. We should not disregard our deceased loved ones because soon, we, too, will be in need of prayers and supplications to assist us in the *Alam-e-Barzakh*.

Finally, allow me to quote the founder of the Madarsa-e-Deoband (India), Maulana Qasim Nanotwi, whose followers are, generally, the ones who oppose the practice of *Isal-e-Thawab*. Perhaps, they may begin to practice it and help their loved ones be forgiven and resurrected sinless, just like the true Muslims of the Ahle-Sunnah.

In *Tehzir-un-Naas*, Maulana Nanotwi recounts a story of the honorable Shaykh Junayd Baghdadi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ. He writes, “One day Shaykh Junayd Baghdadi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ—one of the greatest *waliullah*—was sitting in the company of his disciples and saw a disciples face full of sadness. He asked, “Why are you sad?” He replied, “I had a vision that my mother is suffering in Hell.” The Shaykh رحمۃ اللہ علیہ had from before recited *Kalimah Tayyibah*, 125,000 times and had learned from a narration of a *hadith* that if such and such amount of *Kalimah-Tayyibah* is recited and its reward is sent to a deceased then they will be forgiven by it. So he quietly conveyed the reward of that to the disciple’s mother. As soon as he conveyed the reward, he saw the face of his disciple lit up with happiness. The Shaykh asked, “What is the reason of your happiness?” He replied, “I see that my mother has been moved to Heaven.” So the Shaykh رحمۃ اللہ علیہ said, “This confirms the authenticity of the *hadith* about *Isal-e-Thawab* and its benefits.”⁷⁶

What more can be said in support of this beneficent mercy of Allah ﷻ for His beloved human creation. If someone persists on denial then there is no cure for arrogance and stubbornness. Certainly, this belief is part of our ‘belief in the unseen’ but if we could see that our loved ones who have passed away are in pain, would we not do everything to relieve them or if we see them in pleasure, would we not wish to increase their pleasure, because we would want others to do the same for us.

Allah ﷻ grants rewards abundantly for the good deeds we do with the intent to please Allah ﷻ and with *ikhlas* (sincerity). These rewards

⁷⁶ *Tahzeer-un-Naas*, pg. 34, Matba Qasmi (Deoband, India)

are registered in our *Na'ma-e-A'mal* (Roster of Deeds). They become our assets, so to say. Just like we withdraw from our assets/ savings and send to our loved ones, usually, in times of emergencies, through Western Union or what have you; in the same way, through *Isal-e-Thawab*, we pray to Allah to transfer from our Roster of Deeds and send our rewards to our deceased loved ones. Why would Allah ﷻ object to this because by it we are assisting His creatures who were related to us and worshipped Him with us. This is an act of mercy and who could be more merciful than Allah ﷻ. When we show mercy to others, He being Ever-Merciful, shows Mercy and Grace on all of us.

I simply do not understand what the problem is with those who deny the practice of *Isal-e-Thawab*, either they want to disconnect the help line of Allah ﷻ that is a link to the deceased Muslim or they want to disconnect us from the holy Qur'an or bar us from giving *sadaqa* and charity or do they want our money for themselves and have an agenda to disconnect us from our beloved Prophet Muhammad ﷺ or they are simply stingy, jealous and people of hate that cannot stand others finding benefit. How dare they snatch away the holy Quran from the hands of those who recite it to convey the reward of its recitation to the deceased? May Allah ﷻ save us from the mischief of all mischief makers.

HOW TO DO FATIHA AND ISAL-E-THAWAB

What follows is the traditional method of *Isal-e-Thawab*. This *Isal-e-Thawab* can be practiced alone or collectively and by inviting and feeding poor members of the community in the name of the deceased. Those who feed the poor and needy people of their community are considered by Allah ﷻ as a debt on Him, for which He rewards abundantly.

Usually at *Isal-e-Thawab* the entire Qur'an is read and then after *hamd-o-naat* (praising Allah ﷻ and sending *Salawat* to the honorable Prophet ﷺ) the deceased is remembered in the final prayers. Then *Fatiha-Khawani* takes place in the following way (English translations are provided for an understanding of the Arabic recitations).

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

AUDHU BILLAHI MINASH-SHAYTA NIR-RAJEEM
"I SEEK PROTECTION IN ALLAH, FROM THE ACCURSED SHAYTAN"

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

BISMILLA HIR-RAHMA NIR-RAHIM
"IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST-MERCIFUL, EVER-FORGIVING"

DUROOD SHAREEF—(RECITE ONCE)

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ
سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

O ALLAH! SEND BLESSINGS UPON OUR BELOVED MUHAMMAD ﷺ
AND UPON THE FAMILY OF OUR BELOVED MUHAMMAD ﷺ AND SEND
UPON HIM YOUR BENEFICENCE AND PEACE.

SURAH AL-KAFIRUN—(RECITE ONCE WITH BISMILLAH)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ۝ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ۝ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ
عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝ وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ ۝ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ
عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ۝ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ۝

SAY OH UNBELIEVERS, • I WILL NOT WORSHIP WHOM YOU WORSHIP, • AND NEITHER
WILL YOU WORSHIP WHOM I WORSHIP • AND I AM NOT TO WORSHIP THAT WHICH YOU
WORSHIP • AND NEITHER WILL YOU WORSHIP THAT WHICH I WORSHIP • FOR YOU IS
YOUR OWN ESTABLISHED SYSTEM AND FOR ME IS THE SYSTEM ESTABLISHED BY ALLAH •

SURAH AL-IKHLAS—(RECITE THREE TIMES WITH BISMILLAH)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَلِدْهُ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝
وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝

SAY IT FOREVER THAT HE INDEED IS ALLAH, THE ONE • ALLAH INDEED IS SELF-SUFFICIENT
• HE NEITHER BEGET NOR WAS HE BEGOTTEN • NOR IS THERE AN EQUAL TO HIM •

SURAH AL-FALAQ—(RECITE ONCE WITH BISMILLAH)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ۝ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ۝ وَمِنْ شَرِّ
غَاسِقٍ اِذَا وَقَبَ ۝ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفّٰثٰتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ۝ وَمِنْ
شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ اِذَا حَسَدَ ۝

PRAY! THAT I SEEK REFUGE WITH THE LORD OF EARLY DAWN; • FROM THE WICKED-NESS
OF HIS CREATURES • AND FROM THE WICKEDNESS OF THE ONE THAT CAUSES DARK
SPELLS UNDER COVER • AND FROM HER WICKEDNESS WHO BLOW SPELLS ON KNOTS •
AND FROM THE WICKEDNESS OF THOSE ENVY, WHEN THEY ARE JEALOUS. •

SURAH AN-NAS—(RECITE ONCE WITH BISMILLAH)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ۝ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ۝ إِلٰهِ النَّاسِ ۝
مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَفِیِّ ۝ الَّذِیْ یُوسَّسُ فِی
صُدُوْرِ النَّاسِ ۝ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ۝

PRAY! THAT I SEEK REFUGE WITH ALL MANKIND'S LORD • WITH EVERYONE'S, ALMIGHTY
KING, • WITH EVERYONE'S WORSHIPING DEITY • FROM THE WICKEDNESS OF THOSE
WHO WHISPER EVIL THOUGHTS QUITE SECRETLY • THOSE WHO WHISPER EVIL INTO THE
HEART OF PEOPLE, • FROM JINN OR MANKIND •

SURAH AL-FATIHA—(RECITE ONCE WITH BISMILLAH)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ۝ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ ۝
مَلِكِ یَوْمِ الدِّیْنِ ۝ اِیَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِیَّاكَ نَسْتَعِیْنُ ۝
اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِیْمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِیْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ
عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ غَیْرِ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّیْنَ ۝

ALL PRAISE IS DUE TO ALLAH, THE LORD OF ALL KINGDOMS • THE ALL-MERCIFUL AND
EVER-FORGIVING • OWNER OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT • IT IS YOU, WHOM WE
WORSHIP AND SPECIFICALLY SEEK ASSISTANCE OF • WALK US ON THE STRAIGHT PATH •

SURAH AL-BAQARAH, VERSES 1-7 AND 285-286—(RECITE ONCE)

الَّذِينَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِمْ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١﴾
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۗ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٣﴾
أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤﴾

ALIF LÂM MĪM. • THE BOOK IN WHICH THERE IS NO DOUBT OF ANY KIND; GUIDANCE FOR
THE FEARFUL ONES: • WHO BELIEVE WITHOUT WITNESSING, AND KEEP PERFORMING
SALĀH, AND SPEND FROM WHAT WE HAVE GIVEN; • AND WHO BELIEVE IN WHATEVER IS
SENT DOWN TO YOU AND WHATEVER IS SENT DOWN BEFORE YOU, AND THEY BELIEVE IN
THE HEREAFTER AS WELL; • THEY ARE GUIDED FROM THEIR LORD, AND THEY INDEED
ARE THE SUCCESSFUL. •

أَمِنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ
وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ ۗ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۗ غُفْرَانُكَ
رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٥﴾ لَا يَكْفُرُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وَسَعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا
مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا
إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ
وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا ۗ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

THE PROPHET EMBRACED WHATEVER WAS REVEALED TO HIM FROM HIS LORD, AND ALL
OF THE FAITHFUL ONES; EACH ONE ACCEPTED ALLAH, HIS ANGELS, HIS BOOKS AND HIS
PROPHETS—THAT “WE DO NOT DIFFERENTIATE AMONG THE PROPHETS, IN BELIEVING
THEM.” AND ALL SAID, “WE LISTENED AND OBEYED YOU. O OUR SUSTAINER, MAY WE BE
FORGIVEN, AND IT IS TOWARDS YOU THE RETURN.” • ALLAH DOES NOT COMMAND
ANYONE, EXCEPT TO HIS ABILITY. THE BENEFIT OF THE GOODNESS EARNED IS HIS, AND
UPON HIM IS THE BURDEN OF THE MISDEED ACQUIRED. “O SUSTAINER, DO NOT SFIZE
US IF WE HAVE FORGOTTEN OR HAVE ERRED. O SUSTAINER, AND DO NOT PLACE A
BURDEN UPON US, AS YOU HAD PLACED UPON THOSE WHO WERE BEFORE US. O
SUSTAINER, DO NOT BURDEN US WITH WHAT WE ARE INCAPABLE OF, AND FORGIVE US,
AND GRANT US SALVATION AND HAVE MERCY ON US. YOU ARE OUR MASTER, SO HELP
US AGAINST THE DISBELIEVING PEOPLE.” •

DUROOD-E-TUNAJJINA (INCLUDED BELOW) OR DUROOD-E-TAJ

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ
وَعَلَى آلِ سَيِّدِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَوةً
تُنَجِّنَا بِهَا مِنْ جَمِيعِ الْأَهْوَالِ وَالْأَفَاتِ
وَتَقْضِي لَنَا بِهَا جَمِيعَ الْحَاجَاتِ
وَتُطَهِّرُنَا بِهَا مِنْ جَمِيعِ السَّيِّئَاتِ
وَتَرْفَعُنَا بِهَا أَعْلَى الدَّرَجَاتِ
وَتُبَلِّغُنَا بِهَا أَقْصَى الْغَايَاتِ مِنْ جَمِيعِ
الْخَيْرَاتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ وَبَعْدَ الْمَمَاتِ
إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

OH ALLAH, SHOWER BLESSINGS ON MUHAMMAD OUR MASTER, AND HIS FAMILY, SUCH BLESSINGS BY MEANS OF WHICH YOU MAY RELIEVE US OF ALL ANXIETIES AND CALAMITIES. YOU MAY SATISFY ALL OUR NEEDS. YOU MAY CLEAN US OF ALL EVILS AND THANKS FOR WHICH YOU MAY GRANT US HIGH POSITION AND HIGH RANK AND STATUS IN YOUR PRESENCE, AND YOU MAY LEAD US TO THE UTMOST LIMIT OF OUR ASPIRATIONS AND CAPACITY IN WHATEVER IS BEST IN THIS WORLD AS WELL AS IN THE WORLD HEREAFTER AS YOU HAVE COMPLETE POWER OVER EVERYTHING.

Then make supplication by first praising Allah ﷻ and then sending the reward earned through these acts of worship and recitations to the honorable Prophet ﷺ and in this way, say:

O, Allah ﷻ accept all of this from us and if we have erred in performing any act then O Allah ﷻ forgive us, and kindly reward us, not according to our deeds, but according to Your Magnificence and Grace. We humbly present this reward to our beloved Prophet ﷺ as a gift and *hadya*, O Allah ﷻ kindly accept it.

O Allah ﷻ we further send this reward and blessing—through seeking the *wasila* (intercession) of our Prophet ﷺ—to all the other Prophets and Messengers, to all the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ to all the *Ahle-Bayt* (the Prophet's progeny) to all the *Auliya* (friends of Allah ﷻ) of this ummah, to all the pious and righteous scholars of Islam, to the devotees of all the four orders of *tariqah* (Qadriya, Chishtiya, Naqshbandiya, and Suharwardiya) to all the *Momineen* and *Mominaat* and *Muslimeen* and *Muslimaat*, and finally include the name and make *dua* of forgiveness and ultimate salvation for whoever the *Isal-e-Thawab* is and then make *dua* for all the attendees, their relatives—deceased or living—for yourself, family, friends and the entire Muslim Ummah.

Then distribute fruits and food. Again, give thanks to Allah ﷻ, and always bear in mind the time of your passing; this will compel you to do more and more good deeds. This method of *Fatiha-Khawani* is the bare minimum; however, a shorter version of *Fatiha-Khawani* is to recite Surah Fatiha once and Surah Ikhlas three times, and convey its reward as mentioned above. In the name of loved ones, Muslims can do many more good deeds. The more money they spend in honor of Allah's creations, the more they guarantee a safe haven for themselves in the Hereafter.⁷⁷

Now, allow me to include here a generic "Oath/Pledge" to make liable those who willingly undertake the obligation of a loved one's *janâza*. This is simply voluntary and to serve as a reminder and which may bring comfort to elderly parents/grandparents that the undersigned will fulfill their *janâza* obligation.

OBTAINING PROMISE AND OATH

Muslims are free to make covenants that ensure their rights are fulfilled and not usurped. This is within the bounds of Islam and it is a *sunnah* of Allah ﷻ and of His Prophets to make covenants with His creations. Thus, for our peace of heart and surety that every legal process is followed after our death, we should take oath from next of kin, *wali* (trustee) and/or friends. It would be good to have this oath in writing, because it will bring comfort. I think this is a good idea to make someone responsible and so they may receive abundant rewards from Allah ﷻ. This should not be labeled as *bida'* or *shirk*, as everything new is labeled this by narrow-minded people. So have it signed and depart peacefully and with dignity.

FINAL PRAYER

MAY ALLAH ﷻ GRANT US GUIDANCE TO LIVE THIS LIFE LIKE A MOMIN AND TO DEPART WITH OUR SOUL IN THE STATE OF IMAN.

MAY ALLAH ﷻ GRANT US A DIGNIFIED LIFE AND A DIGNIFIED DEPARTURE FROM THIS WORLD TO THE HEREAFTER, AMEEN!

⁷⁷ This Fatiha and *Isal-e-Thawab* is translated from the Urdu book, *Thawab-ul-Ibadaat*, by Allama Mufti Muhammad Shafi Okarvi.

Oath / Pledge

THE UNDERSIGNED DECLARES THAT HE/SHE WILL ENSURE THAT THE JANÁZA AND BURIAL PROCESS OF THE ONE NAMED HEREUNDER WILL BE RENDERED ACCORDING TO THE RULES OF ISLAMIC SHARI'A AND AS PRACTICED BY THE AHL-SUNNAH WA-JAMAH. THE UNDERSIGNED TAKES FULL RESPONSIBILITY OF ENSURING THAT ANY UN-ISLAMIC ACTIVITY WILL NOT BE BROUGHT INTO PRACTICE IN THEIR RITES OF JANÁZA AND THAT HE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE IF IT HAPPENS AND NOT THE DECEASED. THE UNDERSIGNED UNDERSTANDS THAT THIS OATH IS VOLUNTARY BUT THE SIGNEE BECOMES RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE DECEASED IN THE COURT OF ALLAH ﷻ ON JUDGMENT DAY. MAY ALLAH ﷻ GRANT US A DIGNIFIED LIFE AND MAKE FOR US OUR DEPARTURE FROM THIS WORLD IN THE MOST DIGNIFIED WAY, AND MAY HE FORGIVE US AND BLESS US ALL. AMEEN!

I, _____, SON OF _____,

PROMISE _____ DAUGHTER/SON/WIFE OF

_____ WHO IS MY _____

TO PERFORM ALL OF HIS/HER PROPER ISLAMIC PROCEDURE REGARDING THE BURIAL PROCESS AND DELIVER THE ISLAMIC RIGHTS RELATED TO IT, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, SO MAY ALLAH ﷻ GRANT ME THE KNOWLEDGE, STRENGTH AND TAWFIQ TO FULFILL THIS OATH.

_____ IN THE PRESENCE OF
LOCATION (CITY & COUNTRY)

WITNESS 1 NAME

SIGNATURE

WITNESS 2 NAME

SIGNATURE

SIGNATURE

DATE

THIS OATH IS SUBJECT TO MY ACTUAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE DEATH AND MY PRESENCE THERE AT THE TIME OF DEATH AND DURING THE BURIAL PROCEDURE OF THE DECEASED NAMED HEREIN.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

“SURELY TO ALLAH WE BELONG AND TO HIM WE SHALL RETURN.”