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Washing, shrouding and carrying the dead

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Preparing the dead person for burial

First question from Fatwa No. 2634

Q 1: How can we prepare a dead person for burial? Is it permissible to escort the deceased to the grave while reciting Qur'an and Dhikr (Remembrance of Allah)? Or should we be silent?

A: A: If a Muslim person is dying, we should direct him towards the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah). When we are sure that he is dead, we should close his eyes and supplicate to Allah for his sake. A person should not mention anything in his presence except what is good. Muslim reported that Um Salamah(may Allah be pleased with her) said: ﴿ "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) came to Abu Salamah (as he died). His eyes were fixedly open. He closed them, and then said: 'When the soul is taken away the sight follows it.' Some of the people of his family wept and wailed. So he said: 'Do not supplicate for yourselves anything but good, for angels say: 'Amen' to what you say.' He then said: 'O Allah, forgive Abu Salamah, raise his degree among those who are rightly guided, grant him a successor in his descendants who remain. Forgive us and him, O Lord of the Universe, and make his grave spacious, and grant him light in it.'" ﴾His jaws should be tied lest they should remain open after the body becomes cold. His clothes should be taken off. His body should be covered with a garment that completely covers him.

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It is also preferable to expedite preparing him for burying lest the smell of his body should change. His clothes should be taken off and his body should be covered from his knees to his navel at the time of the washing of his body. No one should attend the washing of the body of the dead person except whoever helps in doing so. They should also pay his debts as soon as possible in order to acquit him from debts. A dead person's bequeath should be carried out in order that he might benefit from its reward. He should also be shrouded in three white garments. Muslims should perform Funeral Prayer over him and then bury him in Muslims' graves and supplicate to Allah to forgive him after burying him.

B: You should keep silent while escorting him to the grave. You should not recite Qur'an or say Dhikr. This is the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), the rightly guided caliphs and the first generations to whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) testified to be righteous.

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family,

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