



(Part No : 8, Page No: 421)

Burying the Dead

(Part No : 8, Page No: 422)

The eighth and twentieth questions of Fatwa no. (5611):

Q 8: What is the difference between a Lahd and a Shaq in the grave? Where to dig for each of them?

A 8: Lahd (a crevice on the side of a grave facing the direction faced for Prayer) is digging in the solid ground downwards, and then inclining the ditch at the side facing the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer) so that the deceased is placed on the side cavity facing the Qiblah. This can only be done on firm ground. A Shaq (a rectangular hole in the bottom of a grave in which the body is buried) is digging the grave horizontally in the ground so that the dead is placed horizontally. This can be done in soft ground, such as sandy ground.

Q 20: How deep should a grave be dug?

A 20: It was narrated by [Abu Dawud](#) in his Sunan (Hadith compilations classified by jurisprudential themes) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated, ([Dig graves, make them wide and deep.](#)) It was preferred by [Al-Shafi`y](#) and Abu Al-Khattab that the grave be as deep as the height of a human being. [`Umar ibn `Abdul-`Aziz](#) preferred that it be dug to the height of a person's navel. Ahmad preferred that it be dug as deep as a person's chest. All these heights are similar to each other. It is a Sunnah (a commendable act) to dig the grave as deep as what will prevent the wind from coming out of it and protect it from being attacked by beasts.

(Part No : 8, Page No: 423)

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

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