



Manner of Burial

Fatwa No. 1666

All Praise is due to Allah Alone, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, and Companions.

The Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta' read the Fatwa request submitted by his Excellency the Director of the Islamic Cultural Centre in Italy via his Eminence the Secretary General of the Muslim World League to his Eminence The Chairman that was sent by the General Secretariat under No. 2\853 and dated 17\5 \1397 A. H. in which it is mentioned that:

Muslims in Italy are keen that their dead are buried according to the Islamic Shari`ah (law) with regard to the shape of the graves, their direction, the fashion of burying the dead, and the direction to which they are directed. The questioner requested issuing a Shar`y (Islamic legal) Fatwa on this, clarifying it by shapes and pictures so that it would be used by the administration of the Centre as a document to be shown to whoever wants to know the manner of burial according to the Din (religion) of Islam.

The committee answered as follows:

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It is a Sunnah (commendable act) to make a Lahd (a crevice on the side of a grave facing the direction faced for Prayer) inside the grave as the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) did for the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him). A Lahd is a rectangular crevice on the side of a grave facing the Qiblah (direction faced for Prayer towards the Ka`bah) that the dead person is placed in. It is related by Muslim in his Sahih (authentic) Book of Hadith on the authority of `Amir ibn Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, (That Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with them both, said during his illness of which he died: 'Make a Lahd for me in the side of the grave and set up bricks over me as was done with Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him).) If the soil is loose, stones should be used to make a semi-Lahd.

Graves should not be made in the form of a Shaq, meaning, a rectangular hole in the bottom of a grave in which the body is buried and over which a roof is placed to protect the dead. This is proven by what is related by Abu Dawud, Al-Nasa`iy, and Al-Tirmidhi from the Prophet (peace be upon him) who said: (The niche in the side of the grave is for us and the excavation in the middle is for others.) However, if making a Lahd is impossible, it is permissible to make a Shaq because Allah (May He be Exalted) says: (Allâh burdens not a person beyond his scope...) He also says: (... and has not laid

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And He (may He be Exalted) says: (So keep your duty to Allâh and fear Him as much as you can...) Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) says: (When I command you to do anything, do of it as much as you possibly can.)

It is preferable that the grave is wide and approximately of a fathom in depth for it is related by Abu Dawud from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he said: (Dig graves, and make them wide and deep.) Since the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not specify the degree of the depth of graves, this matter is flexible and may be decided according to the condition of the soil; whether it is hard or loose and in a way that will better protect the dead against being eaten by beasts and so on.

Concerning the fashion of burying the dead and directing them in their graves, it is preferable, if possible, to enter their head from the side in which their legs will be located in the grave. Then, the body should be drawn carefully and placed on its right side in the Lahd that is made in the grave facing the Qiblah. The foregoing is narrated by 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar, Anas, 'Abdullah ibn Yazid Al-Ansary, Al-Nakh`y, and Al-Shafi`y (may Allah be pleased with them all). It is also proven by what was narrated by Al-Imam Ahmad with its Sanad (chain of narrators) on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn Yazid Al-Ansary that Al-Harith entrusted the former to follow him when he died. 'Abdullah ibn Yazid Al-Ansari thus offered the Funeral Prayer for him and put him in the grave from the side of his legs, and said: This is a Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet).) Moreover, it was narrated by Ibn 'Umar and Ibn 'Abbas (That the Prophet was drawn carefully from the side of his head.) Thus, the body may enter the grave horizontally from the side facing the Qiblah or from the side in which the head will be placed if this is easier for those who are doing the burial. This is because the preference of entering the body from the side in which the legs will be located in the grave is only meant

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because of its ease for those who undertake the task of the burial and its gentleness for them and for the deceased. Hence, whatever fashion can achieve such ease and gentleness is preferred. This matter is flexible and what is meant is to consider the practice of the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them all) and to follow the Sunnah (whatever is reported from the Prophet) and achieve ease and gentleness. However, if something appears that makes other fashions easier and more gentle, then this should be followed.

The deceased is to be put in the Lahd on his right side with his face facing the Qiblah. Something that is elevated is to be put under the head of the deceased, meaning, a brick, a stone, or some dust. Moreover, a layer is to be set up over the deceased. It should be drawn near the back end of the grave so that it does not overturn on its face; it should be supported by something from the back so that it does not turn about to the rear. Bricks are to be put carefully to the back thereof while clay is to be used to block the small gaps separating the bricks so that no dust can pass. This is supported by the saying of Sa`d ibn Abi Waqqas: "Set up bricks over me as was done in the case of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him.)"

Those who undertake the task of the burial should say while putting the body in the Lahd: 'Bismi-I-Lah Wa `ala Millat Rasuli-I-Lah Salla Allahu `Alayhi Wa Sallam, which means, in Allah's Name and

adhering to the religion of the Messenger of Allah, (peace be upon him) for it is related by Al-Tirmidhy on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both) (That whenever the Prophet (peace be upon him) put the deceased in the grave, he used to say: In Allah's Name and adhering to the religion of Allah's Messenger.) Al-Tirmidhy commented: 'This is Hadith Hassan Gharib [a good Hadith that is strange to come from this chain of narration].'

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

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