



# PREPARATIONS FOR DEATH

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## **Stages of Life**

Generally in life, there are three stages – childhood, youth and old age. After the passing away of these three stages, the fourth stage is only death. According to a blessed saying of the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) the age of his followers would normally range between sixty and seventy according to the Islamic calendar. Almighty Allah may of course grant whatever length of existence he desires.

## **Perfect Faith**

For every Muslim, it is necessary that he die with faith. In this connection, it is absolutely important that in every circumstance one should love the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and also love those who manifest love for the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam). It is also important to keep away from all those who show enmity towards Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) and those who try to degrade his blessed and exalted status. This is the true scale for perfect faith (Iman-e-Kaamil). Anybody having such virtues may caress the hope that he will leave this world in good faith by the grace of Almighty Allah.

## **Forgiveness**

To please everybody in this world is difficult since everybody has, in some way or the other, some argument to offer. Therefore, it is essential for one and all to apologise and ask for forgiveness, and it is likewise important for the others to accept the apology and to forgive those that have wronged them.

## **Will**

An important factor of life is to have a will, regarding all moveable and immoveable property, prepared while we are still living. In that respect, our elders advise us to keep the will “underneath our head” before sleep, that is to keep the will within easy reach so that if anything happens, action may be initiated accordingly.

## **Debts and distribution of property**

While we are still alive, it is necessary that we settle any debt. If that cannot be done before death, the heirs must do the reimbursement. Again, while we are still alive, it is advisable that one fourth of our property be kept aside for Esaale Sawaab, for example, sadqa-o-khairaat (alms dedicated to pious uses and charity). The remaining three fourths should be distributed equally among the children. It is not allowed to give more to the son than the daughter or vice versa and it is not permitted to give all to one heir and nothing to the other. According to the Hadith of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) it is unjust to donate more, or less or nothing to one heir.

## **Signs of Death**

When the signs of death manifest it is especially recommended to read in a loud voice Surah Yaseen and Surah Ra'd. Kalima-e-Tayyiba must be continuously read aloud till the soul reaches the chest. At that stage, no worldly matters and no crying and weeping shall be indulged into.

### **After Death**

When the person dies, it is recommended to:

1. Pass a bandage under the chin and round the head while passing the bandage on the sides of the face (cheeks) so that the mouth does not remain open
2. Close the eyes and
3. Straighten the out the arms, legs and the fingers

For ghusl, kafan and dafan (bath, shroud and burial) no time should be lost. Immediate steps should be taken to make all appropriate arrangements. A saying of the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) lays all emphasis thereon.

### **Ghusl**

It is preferable that close relatives bath the deceased. In their absence, or if no close relatives knows how to carry out the ghusl, then the task can be performed by anyone provided he is pious and trustworthy. After the bath and before the wearing of the shroud, the following may be written with the forefinger but without the use of any ink:

1. On the forehead write Bismillah hir Rahman nir Raheem, and
2. On the heart write La Ilaaha Illallahu Muhammadur Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam)

### **Kafan (shroud)**

The shroud should be of a reasonable value and according to one's capacity. It should, preferably, be white. It is better if pious people help in the covering of the deceased with the shroud. Ahad Naamah may be written on the shroud and was written on the shroud of Hazrat Maulana Sardar Ahmad (Rahmatullah Alaih), my spiritual teacher and a famous Muhaddith. "*Ya Ghaus-ul-Azam Dastageer*" may also be written on the shroud.

### **Janazah (coffin) and Namaaz-e-Janazah**

At the time of lifting of the coffin and while proceeding to the cemetery, it is advisable to perform Zikr (Remembrance of Allah) and to recite Kalima-e-Tayyiba and the Naath Shareef "*Kaabe ke Badrud Duja Thum Pe Karoro Durood.*" (A'la Hazrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh had requested that this Naath Shareef be recited at the time his Janazah is being carried).

The handles of the coffin should rest upon the shoulders of those who help to carry it. The latter should walk at a reasonable pace, neither too slow, nor too quickly. Those present must follow the funeral procession. And everybody must perform Namaaz-e-Janazah before returning home. Namaaz-e-Janazah must not be performed in the Mosque for it is Makrooh-e-Tahreemi to do so.

### **Kabr (grave) and dafan (burial)**

The grave must be situated in such a place where there is more chance for Esaale Sawaab. Surah Mulk can be recited by a pious person who knows how to recite properly and correctly.

The qualities normally required from a person who will descend into the grave are: strength, piety, faithfulness and trust. The bodily posture of the departed should be a bit on his right and some earth should be placed on the side of the body so that the body is turned towards the Qibla.

To place the Shajarah Shareef and the Ahad Naamah in the grave, preferably in a small hole in front of the face, is allowed. By the way, in my humble case, I would wish that I be placed with:

1. The blessed turban of my Spiritual Guide, Huzoor Mufti-e-Azam Hind Maulana Shah Muhammad Mustafa Raza Khan (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh), at the upper end of my head.
2. Two blessed hairs of the Beloved Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), one on each eyelid.
3. Some blessed pebbles of Madinah Shareef all alongside my body, from head down to the feet and up to the head again.

### **After Burial**

According to the blessed saying of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam), the following should be recited:

1. On the side of the head, "Alif laam meem.....Muflihoon" (2:1-5)
2. On the side of the feet, "Aamanar Rasool.....Alal qawmil kaafireen" (2:285-286)

Also, the talqin should be pronounced three times to urge the deceased to repeat it. A'la Hazrat Imam Ahmad Raza Khan (Radiallahu Ta'ala Anh) recommended that the Azaan be given loudly at the grave so that the deceased can be saved from the clutches of shaitaan and that he or she are able to answer the questions of Munkar and Nakeer. In addition, it is recommended that close relatives stay at the cemetery for about one and half hour to recite verses of the Holy Qur'an, Durood Shareef and Istighfaar and to make Dua for the departed. And if it is possible and there is no cause for any problem, they may stay there for three days and three nights and make recitations and Duas.

Arrangements may also be made for a Hafiz to recite the verses of the Holy Qur'an and to make Dua during forty continuous days at the grave of the deceased. It is forbidden to pay or receive any money for the recitation of the Holy Qur'an. However, some gift may be given to the Hafiz.

Under no circumstances should Esaale Sawaab, for example 70000 times recitation of Kalima-e-Tayyiba, sadqa-o-khairaat, Tilaawat-e-Qur'an, Urs, Fateha's etc. be stopped or neglected. It should continue according to ones capacity, in conformity with the Ahle Sunnah Wa Jama'at.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us the Taufeeq to remember our deceased and to continually send Esaale Sawaab for them, and may He in His Infinite Mercy grant us death with Imaan, Ameen.