

When someone dies

Death brings a short list of duties — wash, shroud, pray, bury, settle debts — and a longer question about grief, on which the Companions themselves did not agree.



What to say

قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

“They say: indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him we return.” The verse gives the words before it promises the reward for them.

Qur'an 2:156

A right, not a kindness

حَقُّ الْمُسْلِمِ عَلَى الْمُسْلِمِ خَمْسٌ رَدُّ السَّلَامِ، وَعِيَادَةُ الْمَرِيضِ،
وَاتِّبَاعُ الْجَنَائِزِ، وَإِجَابَةُ الدَّعْوَةِ، وَتَشْمِيتُ الْعَاطِسِ

“The Muslim's right upon the Muslim is five” — and following the funeral is one of them, beside answering the salam and visiting the sick.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1240

The shroud

كُفِّنَ فِي ثَلَاثَةِ أَثَوَابٍ يَمَانِيَةٍ بَيْضٍ سَخُولِيَّةٍ

‘A’ishah: he ﷺ was shrouded in three white Yemeni cloths of cotton, with no shirt and no turban among them.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1264

The prayer over him

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ وَعَافِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنْهُ وَأَكْرِمْ نَزْلَهُ وَوَسِّعْ
مُدْخَلَهُ

“O Allah, forgive him, have mercy on him, give him ease and pardon him; honour his arrival and widen his entry.” Four takbirs, standing, no ruku’.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Jana'iz

Do not delay

أَسْرِعُوا بِالْجِنَازَةِ، فَإِنْ تَكُ صَالِحَةً نَحِيرُ تَقْدِمُونَهَا

“Hasten with the funeral: if she was righteous, it is good that you send her on.” Burial is not an occasion to be arranged at leisure.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1315

Weeping, or wailing

إِنَّ الْمَيِّتَ لَيُعَذَّبُ بِبُكَاءِ الْحَيِّ

‘Umar cited: “The dead is punished by the weeping of the living.” ‘A’ishah rejected that reading and cited Qur’an 35:18. The Companions did not settle it.

Sahih al-Bukhari 1290 • 1286 • they differed

The waiting after a husband

وَالَّذِينَ يَتُوفُونَ مِنْكُمْ وَيُذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ
أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا

“Those who are widowed wait four months and ten days.” For anyone else, no more than three days of mourning; the detail of ihdad the schools set differently.

Qur'an 2:234 • Sahih al-Bukhari 5335 • schools differ

Then visit the graves

نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْ زِيَارَةِ الْقُبُورِ فَرُورُوهَا

“I forbade you to visit the graves — so now visit them.” A visit for the living, who are reminded where they are going.

Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Jana'iz

What keeps going

مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ جَارِيَةٍ أَوْ عِلْمٍ يُنْتَفَعُ بِهِ أَوْ وَلَدٍ صَالِحٍ يَدْعُو لَهُ

“...except three: an ongoing charity, knowledge from which benefit is taken, or a righteous child who prays for him.”

Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Wasiyyah