**Religious Requirements Guide**

**INTRODUCTION**

***“Every soul shall taste of death.” (Surah Aal-e-Imraan 185)***

Death is an inevitable event which no man can escape. As such, the reality of death is something which is accepted by all. For a believer, he does not consider death to be the end of life. Instead, he considers it to be the beginning of the next phase of the journey towards his ultimate abode – the Hereafter.

Death, in reality, is a gift for a believer as it is the means of uniting the lover with his beloved. With death, the lover reaches his ultimate goal for which he strove throughout his life and he is now released from the imprisonment of this earthly abode. Allah (swt) states:

***“O contented soul! Return to your Rabb while you are pleased (with Him) and He is pleased (with you). Enter amongst My bondsmen and enter My gardens of Paradise.” (Surah Fajr 27)***

Rasulullah (peace be upon him) has mentioned:

تحفة المؤمن الموت

***Death is a gift for the believer.***

Every Muslim must equip themselves with these relevant laws and masaa’il so that the correct procedure can be adopted upon the demise of any person. Often, due to us lacking in the knowledge of these aspects, we put the one who is in his final illness or the dying person through unnecessary hardship.

**May Allah (swt) accept this humble effort and allow it to be a means of benefit to one and all.**

**Final Moments**

* When a person is on their death bed recite Surah Yaaseen near the dying person.
* The focus should be around bringing the dying person’s attention towards the Allah (swt).
* It is Sunnah for the dying person is made to lie on their right side facing the Qiblah (if practical and without causing difficulty).

**Recite the Shahaadh**

* Those seated around the dying person should recite the kalimah (shahaadatain) aloud as encouragement for them to recite the kalimah; however you should not instruct them to recite the kalimah.
* Once they have recited the kalimah, it is not necessary for those around them to prompt them to recite it again as the purpose has been achieved i.e. the last words uttered by the dying person should be the Kalimah or any remembrance (zikr) of Allah (swt).

**Upon Death**

* Recite:**Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raje’oon**Verily we belong to Allah and will return to Allah

**At the moment of Death**

* After a person has died, gently straighten all their limbs.
* This should be done by flexing the elbows, shoulders, hips and knees carefully and gently. If they will not straighten (i.e. due to a stroke, etc.) do not force them, as this could cause breakage.
* Close the mouth by gently pressing the chin upwards while holding the top of the head. To hold it in this position take a strip of cotton, place it under the chin and around the head and tying it firmly at the top.
* Gently close their eyes.
* Place the toes together and bind the large toes together with a cloth strip, if this is not possible then tie at the ankles carefully.
* Remove any jewellery such as rings, necklaces, bracelets and nose studs. (It is especially important to remove rings before swelling occurs).
* Cover the deceased body with a clean (tahir) sheet.

Bathing(ghusl) and Enshrouding( putting on a kafn)

Arrangements should be made through your local Masaajid or the nearest available place with the required facilities. See our listings for all places with facilities.

Each Masaajid may have a bereavement team or lead who will be the initial point of contact. It is important that you communicate the actual burial time so the Masaajid is  aware ot the time frames and can advise accordingly.

Inform them of whether the Ghusl/Kafn is for a male or female adult or child, to enable the Masaajid to make the necessary arrangements.

The Masaajid will facilitate the whole process and inform you as to what (if anything) you will be required to bring or do to enable the Ghusl/Kafn to take place in a smooth and required manner.

Note: this is an important Islamic Ritual and as such all the Islamic principles must be adhered at all times. For more details please read the section on Islamic Process for Washing and Shrouding.

**Bathing:**

* Bathing and enshrouding the deceased is a communal obligation (fardh-e-kifaayah).
* Only women should bathe females and men should bathe males.
* It is preferable that close relatives bathe the deceased. If they are not present or unable to do so then any knowledgeable Muslim person should carry it out.
* The person carrying out the bathing must be clean of impurities (paak) and preferably with ablution (wudhu).
* It is disliked (makrooh) for a woman in the state of their period (haidh) or post-natal bleeding (nifaas) to perform the bathing.

**Shrouding:**

* After the bathing is completed the decease should be enshrouded, preferably with white material.
* It is Sunnah to enshroud a male in three cloths: (1) upper garment (qamees), (2) lower garment (izaar) and (3) overall sheet (lifaafah).
* It is Sunnah to enshroud a female in five cloths: (1) upper garment (qamees), (2) lower garment (izaar), (3) headband (aurni), (4) overall sheet (lifaafah) and (5) chest band (seenah*–*band).

**Important Points**

* It is ONLY permissible for the mahram woman of the deceased male to see his face. Similarly, only the mahram males may view the face of the deceased female.
* The Quran may be recited next to the body before the Janazah is carried away.

**Funeral Prayer (Janazah Salaah**)

* he funeral prayer (janazah salaah) is a communal obligation (fardh-e-kifaayah).
* The funeral prayer must be arranged quickly and the deceased should be buried in the nearest cemetery (Muslim/Muslim Section).
* It is highly disliked (makrooh-e-tahreemi) to perform the funeral prayer while the sun rises, when it passes the meridian (Zawaal) and when it sets.
* The funeral prayer is a supplication to Allah (swt) for the deceased.

**The Burial (Dafn)**

* After the funeral prayer has been performed the deceased should be buried as soon as possible.
* Burying the deceased is a communal obligation (fardh-e-kifaayah).
* The deceased should be carried and then placed at the qiblah side of the grave.
* It is desirable that mahram or close relatives of the deceased female to enter the grave to lower the body.
* It is desirable to hold a sheet above the grave while lowering and burying a female. If there is fear of her shroud opening, then it is obligatory (wajib) to do so.
* Those that enter the grave to help lower the body should face the qiblah.
* It is Sunnah to turn the body onto its right side, so the entire body and face are towards Qiblah.
* The strips of cloth tied at the head side, chest and leg side should now be untied.
* After covering the recess/body with unbaked bricks, bamboo or timber, the remaining of the grave should be filled with soil which was dug out to make the grave.
* It is desirable for those present to pour soil back into the grave three times with a handful of soil.
* The grave should be filled and raised above the ground and shaped like the hump of a camel.
* It is advisable to remain behind for a little while after having buried the deceased.
* One should engage themselves in the remembrance of Allah (swt) and supplicate (dua) for the forgiveness of the deceased and ask Allah (swt) to make it easy for them to answer the questions in the grave.

#### Consoling the Bereaved ( Ta’ziyah)

* It is from the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (saw) that one should console and comfort a Muslim who is in distress.
* The period of ta’ziyah is three (3) days.
* When visiting for ta’ziyah, one should engage in individual remembrance of Allah (swt), recitation of the Quran, etc. and covey the reward to the deceased.
* Prophet Muhammad (saw) taught the Sahabah RA to express sympathies with the bereaved and assist them at the time of their grief and sorrow.
* Prophet Muhammad (saw) encouraged the Sahabah RA to prepare food and send it for the family, as they have been struck with a tragedy and would not be able to see to their own needs

Bequests (Wasiyyah), Inheritance and Islamic Wills

* When a person passes away, the burial expenses (i.e. shroud, grave fees, etc.) should be paid from the wealth (estate) they have left behind.
* After paying for the burial expenses, all debts of the deceased will be settled from the remaining estate.
* If the decease has left behind any bequests, only after all the debts have been settled will any bequests of the deceased be fulfilled.
* The bequests will be fulfilled from ONLY one third (1/3) of the estate that remains after paying for the burial expenses and settling of any debts.
* Lastly, after fulfilling any bequests from one third (1/3) of the estate, the remaining estate will be distributed among the heirs of the deceased according to the Islamic guidance of estate distribution which have been predetermined and stipulated in the Holy Quran.
* It is extremely important for Muslims to leave a Will that is in accordance with Islamic guidelines and therefore avoid the estate being distributed in a non-Islamic manner.
* The purpose of preparing an Islamic will is to inform one’s heirs of the outstanding obligations one has regarding the rights (huqooq) of Allah (swt) or the rights (huqooq) of the creation.