Burial Rituals

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Required actions before and immediately after death, during the Ghusl (washing the body), Kafan, and Salat al-Mayyit.

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Introduction

Death is a reality. The Qur'an in says:

"***Every person*** (***nafs***) ***will taste death, ...***" (**Surah 3:185**)

(taste can be either sweet or bitter!).

At another place the Qur'an says,

"***... no one knows*** (***where***) ***in what land*** (***or place***) ***he will die***". (**Surah 31:34**)

Still at another place the Qur'an says,

"***Allah does not give any breather*** (***or let up***) ***to anyone for death when its fixed time comes.***" (**Surah 63:11**)

Therefore, one should not dread death but take it as crossing the bridge from this temporary life to the permanent, everlasting life. So, what should be done when one is confronted with it? This is the topic for our discussion.

Rituals for Just before (Ehtezar) and Immediately After Death

Let us create a scenario in which you are sitting in front of a very sick friend or a relative whom you have come to visit. He/she is alone in the house. You are the only other person present. Suddenly you see him/her struggling for breath. He/she is taking his/her last breath! Dying! The color of his/her face is changing. He is said to be in *Saqarat* – the pain of death. Gradually, he/she stops breathing and is dead. What should you be doing as required by the *Shariah* while the person is in the course of dying and soon after death?

I am not aware of the legal requirements here in Canada. Therefore, I will leave it to you to find out.

Before the Death, During the Saqarat ul Mawt

a) Move the dying person to face *Qibla* in such a position that the soles of his/her feet face *Qibla*. In other words, if he/she were to sit upright his/her face would face *Qibla*.
b) Recite the *Shahadah* and make him/her repeat it. It should cover *Tawhid* /*Nubuwwat*/ *Imamat* and make him/her recite dua for *Istighfar* to ask forgiveness from Allah for his/her sins.
c) Recite *Surah Yasin*, *Wassafat*, *Ayatul Qursi* and other Ayats from the Qur'an to ease the moments of *Saqarat*.

Right After the Death

d) Close the eyes and the mouth of the dead person.
e) Stretch his/her arms along his/her sides and keep his/her legs straight.
f) Cover his/her body with a sheet of cloth.
g) Inform his/her *Wali* or next of kin (if *wali* is not present) to come immediately.
h) Recite the Qur'an until the body is taken away for *Ghusl Mayyit.*

The *Wali*, the personal representative appointed by the deceased in his/her *will* or next of kin is personally responsible for all the after death rituals. His prior permission is necessary before any other person(s) can handle the body.

After Death Rituals

It covers *Ghusl*/*Kafan*/*Dafan* i.e., washing, shrouding, and burying. Basically, these are *Wajib* (obligatory) acts for all of us but *Kifai* – *Wajibe Kifai*, which means if one or more persons undertake to do, others are absolved. Else it is *wajib* on everyone.

Therefore, it is essential for all of us to know the basics to be able to carry out the rituals in case of necessity.

First Wajib Act: Ghusl Mayyit (Washing the Dead Body) Method

Step One

Clean the body thoroughly of all *najasat* (urine, stool, blood, etc). Use soap with lukewarm water and a pair of gloves.

Step Two

Make a *niyyat*, "I am washing this dead body with *SIDR WATER* Wajib Qurbatan IlaLlah" and wash the body with *SIDR WATER* (water in which a small quantity (2 handful) of berry or lotus leaves have been added or its essence squeezed from a parchment paper).

Step Three

Make a *niyyat,* " I am washing this dead body with camphor water Wajib Qurbatan IlaLlah". And wash the body with camphor water in which a little (half handful) of camphor has been added.

N.B. Take care in each case that the water does not become *muzaf* i.e. does not change in color, taste or smell.

Step Four

Make a *niyyat*, "I am washing this dead body with clean water Wajib Qurbatan IlaLlah" and wash the body with clean (tap) water.

1. After all these *Ghusls*, the body should be gently dried with a clean towel.

2. While giving the *Ghusl* cover the body with a sheet of cloth or at least the private parts, changing the cloth after each *Ghusl*.

3. The method of giving *Ghusl* is *Tartibi* – in sequence, first head and neck, then the right side and finally the left, the way we ordinarily do our *Ghusl*.

4. While performing *Ghusl* recite surah/ayat of the Qur'an and dua.

5. The person giving *Ghusl* should belong the same gender but if not available, a *mahram* of the opposite gender can give *Ghusl* provided the body is completely covered with a sheet of cloth. Gender is irrelevant where giving *Ghusl* to the body of a child below the age of six (*tamiz* – the age of discretion).

6. The person giving *Ghusl* must know the basic *masael* relating to *Ghusl Mayyit*, but if Mu'min is not available, a Muslim will do.

7. To take or give any remuneration for giving *Ghusl* is *haram*. If any remuneration is paid or taken, *Ghusl* is *Batil* (invalid.).

8. He/she must be *tahir* and with *wudhu*.

N.B. The case given here is that of an normal death. Deaths caused by accidents (bleeding and crushed bodies) have different methods of Ghusl. In some cases, it is impossible to wash the body in which case Tayammum is done. For details, please refer to the Risalah of your Marjaa. As a general rule, as long as the body is bleeding do not undertake to start ghusl. Pack the wound with cotton wool to stop bleeding and then start the Ghusl.

Second Wajib Act: Tahnit or Hunut (Applying Camphor Powder)

After first *wajib* act has been completed, the second *wajib* act is *tahnit*. This involves applying fresh fragrant camphor powder on seven part of the body which rest on the ground when prostrating doing *Sajdah*. These are the forehead, the palms of hands, the knees, and the toes. It is *wajib* / preferable to start *tahnit* starting with the forehead and ending with the palms. Some camphor may also be applied on the tip of nose and the chest. Keep the *niyyat,* "I am doing *tahnit* / *hunut* on the dead body Wajib Qurbatan IlaLlah" before commencing *tahnit*. The body should be laid on the *Kafan* pre arranged systematically to facilitate this process.

Third Wajib Act: Kafan

Method (Shrouding/Wrapping the Body with Sheets of cloth)

After the second *wajib* act has been completed, the third *wajib* act is *Kafan* i.e., shrouding or systematically wrapping the body with three *wajib* and several additional *mustahab* pieces of cloth.

Wajib Pieces

a) Lungi (*Loin cloth*) – it is an apron like loincloth that should completely cover both the front and back part of the body from the navel to the ankles.

b) Qamis – (*Long shirt*) a piece of cloth similar to a shirt that covers the body from the shoulders to the below the knees, preferably to the ankles.

c) Chadar – (*a large piece of cloth*) that covers the entire body and long and wide enough so that the front had parts overlap and the top and the bottom parts can be tied with a string.

Mustahab Pieces

The *mustahab* (recommended) pieces of *Kafan* are:

a) Second *chadar* – a second piece exactly like the first sheet.

b) Scarf to cover the head and the neck (for females only); a turban (for male) to cover the head.

c) Briefs / knickers / shorts to cover the complete area of the private parts and a belt to tighten them around the waist, both for male and female.

d) Brassier / *seenaband* to cover the whole area of the bust or breast (for female only).

e) Cotton pad sprinkled with camphor (for females only) for placing around the private parts.

N.B. All these pieces of cloth are pre arranged systematically in their proper order in the stated sequence and kept ready on the floor over a mat so as to facilitate shrouding when the body is laid on them for *Tahnit* followed by shrouding *Kafan*.

It is *Mustahab* (recommended) that

a) The cloth for "Kafan" should be white.

b) the body should be kept in a position that the face is towards *Qibla* while shrouding.

c) two fresh twigs of a tree inscribed with *Shahadah* (*Kalma*) called *Jareedatain* wrapped in cotton wool should be kept under the armpits of both arms before wrapping the *chadar*.

d) recite *surahs/ayats* from the Qur'an and *Istaghfar* while shrouding the body.

P.S. The order in which the pieces of *Kafan* are systematically arranged and kept to facilitate wrapping is as follows:

From Bottom to the Top (arranged before the body is placed)

Belts (Upper, middle and lower to tighten the whole *kafan*)		male	female
Chadar	wajib	male	female
Chadar	Mustahab	male	female
Scarf	Mustahab	–	female
Turban (Amama)	Mustahab	male	–
Qamis (long shirt)	wajib	male	female
Loin Cloth	wajib	male	female
Briefs/knickers	Mustahab	male	female
Belt (to tighten briefs)	Mustahab	male	female
Brassier (to cover the chest)	Mustahab	–	female
Cotton Pad	Mustahab	–	female

The wrapping is then done from the top to the bottom to finally reach the belts to tie up the whole body after shrouding.

Fourth Wajib Act: Salaatul Mayyit

The next *wajib* act is *Salaatul Mayyit* – (Namaz-e-Janaza) for a six-year-old child or even lower than six if the child during his/her life used to pray *salaat* and could distinguish good from bad (*Mummaiz*)

Method

The body, in a coffin, is laid before the person(s) praying in congregation, head on the right side of the congregation and the face towards *Qibla*. Those praying, stand close to the coffin in a row(s) stretching along both sides from the middle of the coffin. Imam stands in front reciting loudly and *Mu'mineen* follow the recitation. It is recommended that they all be in (*wudhu*). For a female *mayyit*, Imam stands near the chest of the *mayyit*.

The Salaat

The *salaat* has no *ruku* or *sujud*. It is offered in a standing position. There are five *Takbirs* with recitations after each *Takbir*.

Method of Namaz-e-Mayyit

There are 5 *Takbirs* (i.e. saying Allahu Akbar) in Namaz-e-Mayyit, which is prayed as follows:

After making Niyyat to offer the prayers and pronouncing the

First Takbir one should say:

"أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأشهد أن محمد رسوله. أشه

."د أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأشهد أن محمد عبده ورسوله أرسله بالحق بشيراً ونذيراً بين يدىَّ الساعة

Ash hadu an la ilaha illal lah wa ashhadu anna Muhammadan Rasulullah. Ash haduan la ilaha illallahu wahdahu la sharika lah. Wa Ashhadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa Rasuluh, arsalahu bil haqqi bashiran wa nadhiran bayna yada yis sa'ah.

After the 2nd Takbir one should say:

"اللهم صلي على محمد وأل محمد ، اللهم صلي على محمد وأل محمد وبارك على محمد وأل محمد ورحم محمد
وأل محمد كأفضل ما صليت وباركت وترحمت على إبراهيم وأل إبراهيم إنك حميد مجيد وصلي على جميع الأنبياء
."والمرسلين والشهداء والصديقين وجميع عباد الله الصالحين

Alla humma salli 'ala Muhammadin wa 'ali Muhammad. Alla humma salli 'ala Muhammadin wa Ali Muhammad wa barik 'ala Muhammadin wa Ali
Muhammad warham Muhammadan wa Ala Muhammadin ka afzali ma sallayta wa barakta wa tarah hamta 'ala Ibrahima wa Ali Ibrahima innaka Hamidum Majid wa salli 'ala jami'il ambiya'iwal-mursalina wash-shuhada'i was-siddiqina wa jami'i 'ibadilla his-salihin.

After the 3rd Takbir one should say:

"اللهم إغفر للمؤمنين والمؤمنات ، اللهم إغفر للمؤمنين والمؤمنات والمسلمين والمسلمات الأحياء منهم والأموات تابع بيننا وبيهم بالخيرات إنك مجيب الدعوات إنك على كل شيء قدير."

Alla hummaghfir lil mu'minina wal mu'minat. Alla hum maghfir lil mu'minina wal mu'minati wal muslimina wal muslimat, al ahya'i minhum wal amwat tabi'baynana wa baynahum bil khayrati innaka mujibud-da'wat innak 'ala kulli shay'in Qadeer.

After the 4th Takbir he should say:

"اللهم إن هذا عبدك وابن عبدك وابن أمتك نزل بك وأنت خير المنزلين به ، اللهم إنا لا نعلم منه إلا خير ما أنت أعلم به منّا. اللهم إن كان محسناً فزد في إحسانه وإن كان مسيئاً فتجواز عنه واغفر له. اللهم إجعله عندك في أعلى عليّين واخلف على أهله في الغابرين وارحمه برحمتك يا أرحم الراحمين."

Alla humma inna hadha 'abduka wabnu 'abdika wabnu amatika nazala bika wa anta khayru manzulin bihi Alla humma inna la na'lamu minhu illa khayra wa anta a'alamu bihi minna. Alla humma in kana mohsinan fa zid fi ihsanihi wa in kana musi'an fatajawaz anhu waghfir lahu. Alla hummaj'alhu 'indaka fi a'la'illiyyin wakhluf 'ala ahlihi fil ghabirin warhamhu bi-rahmatika ya ar hamar Rahimin

If the dead body is that of a female one should say:

"اللهم إن هذا أمتك وابنة عبدك وابنة أمتك نزلت بك وأنت خير المنزلين به ، اللهم إنا لا نعلم منها إلا خير ما أنت أعلم به منّا. اللهم إن كانن محسنةً فزد في إحسانها وإن كانت مسيئة فتجواز عنها واغفر لها. اللهم إجعلها عندك في أعلى عليّين واخلف على أهلها في الغابرين وارحمها برحمتك يا أرحم الراحمين."

Alla humma inna hazihi 'amatuka wabnatu 'abdika wabnatu amatika nazalat bika wa anta khayra manzulin bihi Alla humma inna la na'lamu minha illa khayra wa anta a'lamu biha minna. Alla humma in kanat mohsinatan fa zid fi ihsaniha wa in kanat musi'atan fatajawaz 'anha waghfir laha. Alla hummaj'al ha

'indaka fi a'la 'illiyin wakhluf 'ala ahliha fil ghabirin warhamha bi-rahmatika ya ar hamar Rahimin.

Thereafter he should pronounce the 5th Takbir and complete the salaat by reciting Surah al-Fatiha.

Fifth Wajib Act: Dafan, Burial

After the *salaat*, the body should be buried in a Muslim graveyard. It cannot be buried in non-Muslim graveyard unless a portion of that graveyard has been specifically reserved for Muslims. If that does not exist, the body should be sent to a Muslim country for burial. In case that is not possible, it may be buried in the graveyard of *Ahlul Kitab* – Christians /Jews/Zoroastrians. Conversely, a non-Muslim cannot be buried in a Muslim graveyard.

Method

The coffin, having been brought in a graveyard, is placed a short distance away from the dug up grave and moved slowly to the grave by pausing for a few seconds, putting back on the ground and lifting up again, three times. At the fourth time, it is finally lowered into the grave with head first and is put to rest on its right side with the face towards *Qibla* as a *wajib* act. This position should be maintained all that time. A piece of cloth should be spread over the grave while lowering the body of a female so that the bystanders should not be able to see and in the absence of *mahram,* close relatives should lower the body in the grave.

After the body has been laid in the *lahad* the ties at both ends of the *kafan* should be unfastened and some earth should be put under the cheek of the *mayyit*. An earthen pillows should be done up under the head to rest it a little above the ground.

Talqin is then recited. The following is the full text of *Talqin.*

The person reciting the talqin should hold with his right hand the right shoulder of the dead body and should place his left hand tightly on its left shoulder and take his mouth near its ear and shaking its shoulders should say three times:

Isma' ifham ya .....{here the name of the dead person and his father should be called. For example, if the name of the dead person is Muhammad and his father's name 'Ali it should be said thrice:

إسمع إفهم يا محمد إبن علي...هل أنت على العهد الذي فرقتنا عليه من شهادة أن لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأن محمد صلى الله عليه وأله عبده ورسوله وسيداً نبيّياً وخاتم المرسلين ، وأن عليّ أمير المؤمنين وسيّد الوصيّين وإمام إفترضت طاعته على العالمين وأن الحسن والحسين وعلي بن الحسين ومحمد ابن علي وجعفر ابن محمد وموسى ابن جعفر وعلي إبن موسى ومحمد ابن علي وعلي ابن محمد والحسن ابن علي والقائم الحجة المهديّ صلوات الله عليهم أئمة المؤمنين وحُجج الله على خلقه أجمعين وأئمتك أئمة الهدى أبرار يا.....

Isma 'ifham ya Muhammad bin 'Ali}. And then he should say: Hal anta 'alal 'ahdil lazi farqtana 'alayhi min shahadati an la ilaha illal lahu wahdahu la sharika lah wa anna Muhammadan sallal lahu 'alayhi wa Alihi 'abduhu wa Rasuluhu wa sayyidun nabiyyina wa khatamul mursalina wa anna 'Aliyyan Amirul mu'minina wa sayyidul wasiyyina wa imamu nif taradhallahu ta'tahu 'alal 'alamina wa annal Hasana wal Husayna wa 'Aliyyabnal Husayni wa Muhammadabna 'Aliyyin wa Ja'farabna Muhammadin wa Musabna Ja'farin wa 'Ali ibne Musa wa Muhammadabna'Aliyyin wa 'Aliyyabna Muhammadin wal Hasanabna 'Aliyyin wal Qa'imal hujjatal Mahdi salawatullahi 'alayhim a'i'mmatul mu'minina wa hujajullahi'alal khalqi ajma'ina wa a'immatuka a'immatu hudan abrar ya .....

(*here the name of the dead person and his father should be called*) *and then the following words should be said:*

إذا أتاك الملكين المقربين رسولاً من عند الله تبارك وتعالى وسألك عن ربك وعن نبيّك وعن كتابك وعن قبلتك" وعن أئمتك فلا تخف ولا تحزن وقُل في جوابهما اللهم ربي ومحمد صلى الله عليه وأله نبيّي والإسلام ديني والقرءان كتابي والكعبة قبلتي وأمير المؤمنين عليّ بن أبي طالب إمامي والحسن ابن علي المجتبى إمامي والحسين ابن علي الشهيد بكربلاء إمامي وعلي زين العابدين إمامي ومحمد الباقر إمامي وجعفر الصادق إمامي وموسى الكاظم إمامي وعلي الرضا إمامي ومحمد الجواد إمامي وعلي الهادي إمامي والحسن العسكري إمامي والحجة المنتظر إمامي هؤلاء صلوات الله عليهم أجمعين أئمتي وسادتي وقادتي وشفعائي ، بهم أتوالى ومِن أعدائهم أتبرء في الدنيا والأخرة ثم أعلم يا....

Iza atakal malakanil muqarraabani Rasulayni min 'indillahi tabaraka wa ta'ala wa sa'alaka 'an Rabbika wa 'an Nabiyyika wa 'an dinika wa 'an Kitabika wa 'an Qiblatika wa 'an A'immatika fala takhaf wa la tahzan wa'qul fi jawabi hima, Allahu Rabbi wa Muhammadun sallal lahu 'alayhi wa Alihi nabiyyi wal Islamu dini wal Qur'anu kitabi wal Ka'batu Qiblati wa Amirul mu'minina 'Aliyybnu Abi Talib imami wal Hasanubnu 'Aliyyi nil Mujtaba imami wal Husaynubnu 'Aliyyi nish-shahidu bi-Karbala imami wa 'Aliyyun Zaynul 'Abidina imami wa Muhammadu nil Baqiru imami wa Ja'faru nis Sadiqu imami wa Musal Kazimu imami wa 'Aliyyu-nir Riza imami wa Muhammadu nil Jawadu imami wa 'Aliyyu nil Hadi imami wal Hasanul 'askari imami wal Hujjatul muntazar imami ha ula'i salawatullahi 'alayhim ajma'in A'i'mmati wa sadati wa qadati wa shufa-a'i bihim atawalla wa min a'daihim atabarra'u fid dunya wal akhirati thumma i'lam ya ..... here the name of the dead person and his father should be called and thereafter it should be said:

إن الله تبارك وتعالى نعم الرب وأن محمد صلى الله عليه وأله نعم الرسول وأن عليّ بن أبي طالب وأولاده

المعصومين أئمة الإثنى عشر نعم الأئمة وأن ما جاء به محمد صلى الله عليه وأله حقاً وأن الموت حق وسؤال منكر ونكير حق والبعث حق والنشر حق والصراط حق والميزان حق وتطاير الكتب حق وأن الجنة حق والنار حق وأن الساعة أتية لا ريب فيها وأن الله يبعث من في القبول.

Annal laha tabaraka wa ta'ala ni'mar-Rabb wa anna Muhammadan sallal lahu 'alayhi wa Alihi ni'mar Rasul wa anna 'Aliyyabna Abi Talib wa awladahul ma'suminal A'i'mmatal ithna 'asharah ni'mal A'i'mmah wa anna ma ja'a bihi Muhammadun sallal lahu 'alayhi wa Alihi haqqun wa annal mawta haqqun wa suwala munkarin wa nakirin fil qabri haqqun wal ba'tha haqqun wan nushura haqqun wassirata haqqun wal mizana haqqun wa tatayiral kutubi haqqun wa annal jannata haqqun wan-nara haqqun wa annas sa'ata a'tiyatun la rayba fiha wa annallaha yab'athu man fil qubur. Then the following words should be said:

أفهمت يا...

Afahimta ya .... (*here the name of the dead person should be called*) *and thereafter the following should be said:*

"ثبّتك الله بالقول الثابت وهداك الله إلى صراط مستقيم وعرّف الله بينك وبين أوليائك في مستقر من رحمته."

Thabbatakallahu bil qawlith thabit wa hadakallahu ila siratim mustaqim 'arrafallahu baynaka wa bayna awliya'ika fi mustaqarrim min rahmatih. Then the following words should be uttered:

"اللهم اجعل جف الأرض عن جنبيه واصعد بروحه إليك ولقّه منك برهانه اللهم عفوك عفوك."

Alla humma jafil arza 'an jambayhi vas'ad biruhihi ilayka wa laqqihi minka burhana Alla humma 'afwaka 'afwaka.

After burial *Talqin* is recited once more over the grave.

Surah Al-Qadr is recited seven times over the grave after the burial and a short dua of *Maghferat* for the deceased is also offered.

Ghusl for touching a dead body (Mase Mayyit)

If a person touches any part of a dead body including bone but not hair of a human being which has

become overall cold and has yet not been given complete Ghusl al- mayyit either consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or involuntarily while a sleep or awake, with any part of his body including nail, he should do Ghusl Mase Mayyit (Ghusl for touching a dead body).

Therefore, those who performed Ghusl al-Mayyit for the deseased person, having touched the body before three ghusls were completed shall have to do Ghusl Mase Mayyit. They cannot say their prayers or similar acts of worship till they have done the Ghusl.

Salaat-ul-Wahshat

This the namaaz prayed usually on the first night of the burial between Magrib and Isha prayers for the peace of the departed soul. It consist of two raakaats as follows:

a) In the first rakaat recite Ayatal Kursi after Sura Al Hamd

b) In the second rakaat recite ten times Sura Al-Qadr after Sura Al-Hamd

c) After the prayers recite Dua for the pardon and peace of the departed soul.

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