

The Funeral Prayer

صَلَاةُ الْجَنَازَةِ

WHEN DEATH COMES

- 1

Close the eyes, and say a good word — the angels say *āmīn* to what is said
- 2

Cover the body with a clean sheet
- 3

Hasten the burial — settle debts without delay
- 4

Wash the body, shroud it, pray over it, bury it
- 5

No wailing, no striking the cheeks, no tearing of clothes. Tears are permitted; the tongue is not

Muslim · ṣaḥīḥ; Bukhārī · ṣaḥīḥ. These four are farḍ kifāyah – binding on the community until some undertake them.

WASHING & SHROUDING

Washed an odd number of times — three, five, or more — beginning with the right and the places of wuḍū.

Camphor or scent in the final washing. The hair of a woman is loosened, washed, and plaited in three.

Men are washed by men, women by women; a spouse may wash a spouse.

A martyr of the battlefield is neither washed nor prayed over — he is buried in the clothes he died in.

Shrouded in three white sheets for a man, five for a woman. One who dies in iḥrām is shrouded in his two garments, the head left bare.

Bukhārī, Muslim · ṣaḥīḥ

STANDING TO PRAY

The imām stands at the head of a man, at the middle of a woman.

The rows are made odd in number — three, five, seven — and straightened.

There is no bowing, no prostration, and no sitting. The whole prayer is made standing. It is prayed without adhān and without iqāmah.

AFTER THE BURIAL

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ، وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لِلَّهِ لَلْجُفُونَ

Said on entering. Visit the graves — they remind you of the hereafter.

Do not sit upon a grave, nor build over it, nor take it as a place of prayer.

Three things reach him still: an ongoing charity, knowledge benefited from, and a righteous child who supplicates for him.

Muslim · ṣaḥīḥ; Bukhārī · ṣaḥīḥ

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

To Allah we belong, and to Him we return.

Q 2:156

FOUR TAKBĪRS, STANDING

01 Raise the hands, say the takbīr, then recite al-Fātiḥah

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Recited quietly. Some add a short passage after it.

Bukhārī · ṣaḥīḥ

02 Takbīr, then the ṣalāt upon the Prophet ﷺ

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعَلَى آلِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

The same words said in the tashahhud of every prayer.

03 Takbīr, then supplicate for the deceased

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ، وَعَافِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنْهُ، وَأَكْرِمْ نُزُلَهُ، وَوَسِّعْ مَدْخَلَهُ، وَاعْسِلْهُ
بِالْمَاءِ وَالثَّلْجِ وَالْبَرَدِ، وَنَقِّهِ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا يُنْقَى الثَّوْبُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ

O Allah, forgive him and have mercy on him, pardon him, honour his arrival, widen his entry, and cleanse him of his sins as a white garment is cleansed of dirt. For a woman, *lahā* in place of *lahu*; for more than one, *lahum*.

Muslim · ṣaḥīḥ. This is the heart of the prayer – the whole standing is for this supplication.

04 Takbīr, a short pause, then the salām

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ

Turned to the right, and to the left. The prayer is complete.

05 For a child who has not reached maturity

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ فَرَطًا وَذُخْرًا لَوَالِدَيْهِ

O Allah, make him one who goes ahead, and a treasure stored up, for his parents. There is no asking of forgiveness for one who bore no sin.

06 At the graveside

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَعَلَى سُنَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ

Said as the body is lowered, laid on its right side facing the qiblah. Three handfuls of earth from each who is present. Then stand a while and ask forgiveness for him — he is being questioned now.

Abū Dāwūd · ṣaḥīḥ

07 If you arrive after the burial

The prayer is not missed. It is prayed at the grave itself, in the same four takbīrs, standing — as he ﷺ prayed over the woman who used to sweep the masjid, after they had buried her by night and had not told him.

The one who was buried without a prayer has a right upon whoever comes to know of it. It is prayed at the grave for up to a month after the burial, and some allow it longer.

Bukhārī, Muslim · ṣaḥīḥ

08 Ṣalāt al-ghā'ib — for one who died elsewhere

When a Muslim dies in a land where no one prayed over him, he is prayed over in absence, facing the qiblah, in the same four takbīrs — as he ﷺ prayed over the Negus on the day he died in Abyssinia. Where the funeral prayer has already been offered in the land he died in, the scholars differ; the safer practice is to supplicate for him rather than to repeat it.

It is prayed in the masjid or at the place of burial. There is no fixed hour for it, and it is not delayed to gather a larger congregation.

Bukhārī, Muslim · ṣaḥīḥ

Whoever prays over a funeral has one qīrāt, and whoever stays until the burial has two — each like the mountain of Uḥūd.

Bukhārī, Muslim · ṣaḥīḥ

OFFERING CONDOLENCE

أَعْظَمَ اللَّهُ أَجْرَكَ وَأَحْسَنَ عَزَاءَكَ وَغَفَرَ لِمَيِّتِكَ — may Allah make great your reward, make beautiful your consoling, and forgive your deceased. Then feed the family; do not ask them to feed you.

Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī · ḥasan. Prints A2; scale to 141% for A1.

