

A Guide for the Muslim Funeral

This guide has been adapted from a document prepared and distributed by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). Like many Muslim practices there can be more than one way of arranging for funerals and they are all considered correct. So, if you find a different way being followed at a funeral then just follow the Imam and the family.

Step A – Being Prepared:

Be prepared, our stay in this world is temporary and we all have to die someday. It is therefore advisable to create a will, discuss your plans with family and/or close friends.

In case someone dies, say: *Inna Lillahi wa inna elahi rajioon* (To Him do we belong, and unto Him is our return) and then contact your Islamic center, Mosque, Imam, or welfare/funeral committee. Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland's contacts are given on its funeral services page.

Step B – Washing the Body (Ghusal):

1. A male's body is to be washed by a male.
2. A female's body should be washed by a female.
3. A minor's body can be washed by either a man or a woman
4. A husband can wash his wife's body and vice versa.

PROCEDURE FOR WASHING THE BODY

1. Place the body on the washing table.
2. Keeping the private parts of the body covered, remove all other garments from the body.
3. Gently but firmly press the stomach and clean out by a towel or cloth any excretions that may have resulted by stomach pressing.

The body is now ready for washing. Body should be washed with your hands or a piece of clean cloth. Use clean and warm water to wash the body.

1. The body is to be washed three times, five times or seven times-always an odd number of times.
2. For each washing, first place the body on its left and wash the right side using warm water and soap. Then place it on its right side and wash the left side. Male's hair should be unbraided, washed and combed. Female's hair should be gathered into two braids, with loose hair at end of each braid.
3. For the final washing, scented water (non-alcoholic scent) can be used.
4. Now perform ablution (wudu) for the body. Do not forget to clean the teeth and nose also
5. Generous application of non-alcoholic perfume can be made on various parts of the body. Perfumed cotton can be placed on the front and the rear private parts and the nostrils.

STEP C – Wrapping the Body (Kafan):

1. For men, three pieces of clean, cotton preferably white cloth should be used. Each piece of cloth should be large enough to cover the entire body.
2. A similar procedure applies for women except that five pieces of cloth are used. Again each piece of cloth should be large enough to cover the body.
3. Apply non-alcoholic perfume to the kafan.
4. Use a piece of cloth and tie the top (head side) and bottom (foot side). The two tie knots should be different so as to recognize the head side.

Material Required

Name of the Cloth piece	Approximate size
1. <i>Kafan</i>	4 feet x 12 feet
2. Head Wrap	4 feet x 4 feet
3. Body Wrap	4 feet x 6 feet
4. Chest Wrap	4 feet x 4 feet
5. Body Sheet	4 feet x 8 feet

Notes:

1. Tear a one inch strip from the length of the *Kafan* sheet and use it as strings to tie the body.
2. For wrapping an adult male body, three pieces, i.e., *Kafan*, Body wrap and Body sheet are required.
3. For wrapping an adult female body, all five pieces are required.

Procedure for wrapping the body (male):

1. Spread the Body Sheet on a flat table, a firm bed or floor.
2. Then the Body wrap on the Body Sheet about one foot each from the top and the bottom edge of the Body Sheet
3. Fold the *Kafan* sheet over in half, so that its size after folding is 4 feet x 6 feet.
4. At the crease in the middle, cut a hole big enough for the head of the body to pass through
5. Unfold the *Kafan* sheet and lay it on the two sheets prepared earlier in steps 1 & 2 above; the cut hole will now be in the center of the *Kafan* sheet.
6. Lay the body on its back on one half (which is on the other two sheets) and pull the other half of the *Kafan* sheet over the whole body, making sure that the head comes out through the hole; except for the head, the rest of the body should be covered inside the *Kafan* sheet.
7. Comb the hair on top and back of head.
8. Roll the upper half of *Kafan* sheet from both the right and the left sides to gather in the center of the body
9. Wrap the lower long sides of the *Kafan* sheet over the body from both the right and the left sides (from shoulders to feet).
10. Then unroll the upper half of the *Kafan* sheet to spread it over the lower half wrapped previously on the body (as above) and wrap it along both sides of the whole body. To do this, the whole body will have to be tilted on its side to push the *Kafan* sheet under the body; first on the right side and then on the left side.
11. Wrap the left side of the Body Wrap over the body and cover it by wrapping the right side of the Body Wrap over the left side on the body.
12. Wrap the Body Sheet in a like manner, with the right side over the left side on the whole body
13. Gather at the head and tie a string, then gather at the feet and tie a string. Use another string to tie in the middle of the body.

Procedure for wrapping the body (female):

1. Spread the Body sheet on a flat table, a firm bed or floor
2. Lay the Chest wrap on the Body sheet about two feet each from the top and the bottom edge
3. Then lay the Body wrap on the Chest wrap about one foot each from the top and the bottom edge of the Body sheet.
4. Fold the *Kafan* sheet over in half, so that its size after folding is 4 feet x 6 feet.
5. At the crease in the middle, cut a hole big enough for the head of the body to pass through.

6. Unfold the *Kafan* sheet and lay it on the three sheets prepared earlier in steps 1-3 above; the cut hole will now be in the center of the *Kafan* sheet.
7. Lay the body on its back on one half (which is on the other three sheets) and pull the other half of the *Kafan* sheet over the whole body, making sure that the head comes out through the hole; except for the head the rest of the body should now be covered inside the *Kafan* sheet.
8. Comb and brush the hair in two groups loose or braids; spread one group on the right breast and the other group of hair on the left breast.
9. Roll the upper half of *Kafan* sheet from both the right and the left sides to gather in the center of the body.
10. Wrap the lower long sides of the *Kafan* sheet over the body from both the right and the left sides (from shoulders to feet).
11. Then unroll the upper half of the *Kafan* sheet to spread it over the lower half wrapped previously on the body (as above) and wrap it along both sides of the whole body. To do this, the whole body will have to be tilted on its side to push the *Kafan* sheet under the body; first on the right side and then on the left side.
12. Fold the Head wrap in half; raise the head and upper part of the body to slip about one half of the Head wrap under the body.
13. Then fold the other half over and around the head so that the face is not covered and the lower edge of the Head wrap covers the hair on the breast.
14. Now wrap the left side of the Body wrap over the body and cover it by wrapping the right side of the Body wrap over the left side on the body.
15. Next in alike manner wrap the Chest wrap with the right side of the wrap over the left side of the wrap on the body.
16. Use the *Kafan* strings to tie around the body; one just below the shoulders, another in the middle on the navel, and third string a little above the knees on the thighs.
17. Cover the face with the Head wrap.
18. Lastly wrap the Body sheet all over the body with the right side over the left side on the body; gather at the head and tie a string and then gather at the feet and tie a string. If necessary tie a string in the middle of the body also.

Note:

Some Islamic Centers or Mosques prepare *Kafan* packages with material and other items needed such as soap, scissors, gloves, etc. Islamic Center of Boston, Wayland carries such packages prepared by its volunteers. More information is available on the website. You may want to check with your Islamic Center or the funeral home first.

STEP D Janazah Prayer:

Try and attend the prayer of a deceased even if you do not know him/her. Remember that the entire *Janazah* Prayer is said standing only. Like any other prayer, this prayer is also offered facing *Qibla*.

1. Form at least three rows. The body of the deceased should be kept in front of the Imam.
2. The Imam stands approximately by the center of the body if the deceased is a male, and by the shoulder if the deceased is a female
3. If the prayer to be offered is for more than one person, then the bodies should be placed one in front of the other male body closest to the Imam and female body further away.

The following procedure is used to offer the *Janazah* prayer:

The Imam

Takbeer#1: Raises hands and says *Allah u-Akbar* loudly, recite *Thana* and *surah Fatiha* silently.

Takbeer#2: With hands folded says *Allah u-Akbar*

The followers

Say *Allah u-Akbar* silently and recite *Thana* and *surah Fatiha* silently

With hands folded say *Allah u-Akbar* silently and

loudly and then invokes peace and blessings on the holy prophet silently (*durood*)

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Takbeer#3: Hands still folded says *Allah u-Akbar* loudly and recites *dua* for the deceased silently

With hands folded say *Allah u-Akbar* silently and recite *dua* for the deceased silently

Takbeer#4: Hands folded says *Allah u-Akbar* loudly and immediately thereafter loudly calls *Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah* (twice), turning the head first to the right and then to the left.

With hands folded say *Allah u-Akbar* silently and then say *Assalamu alaikum wa Rahmatullah* (once) silently turning the head to the right and then again turning the head to the left.

This concludes the Janazah Prayer.

Notes:

1. **Thana:**

سبحانك اللهم وبحمدك، وتبارك اسمك، وتعالى جدك، ولا إله غيرك

Subhaanaka allaahumma wa bihamdika wa tabaaraka ismuka wa ta'aala jadduka wa laal ilaaha ghayruka

Translation: Glory be to you Oh Allah, and praise be to You, and blessed is your name, and exalted is Your Majesty, and there is none to be served besides.

2. **Surah Fatiha (Quran Chapter 1):**

الحمد لله رب العالمين، الرحمن الرحيم، مالك يوم الدين، إياك نعبد وإياك نستعين، اهدنا الصراط المستقيم، صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين

Al hamdu lil lahi rabbil 'alamin. Arrahmanir rahim. Maliki yawmiddin. Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in. Ihdinas siratal mustaqim. Siratal ladhina an'amta'alaihim, ghairil maghdubi'alaihim wa ladhallin.

Translation: All praises and thanks be to *Allah*, the Lord of the worlds, the most Gracious, the most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. You alone we worship, from You alone we seek help. Guide us along the straight path - the path of those whom You favored, not of those who earned Your anger or went astray.

3. **Invoking peace and blessings on the holy Prophet as given below:**

اللهم صل على محمد وعلى آل محمد، كما صليت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم، إنك حميد مجيد
اللهم بارك على محمد وعلى آل محمد، كما باركت على إبراهيم وعلى آل إبراهيم، إنك حميد مجيد

Allaahumma salli alaa muhammadin wa alaa muhammadin kama sallayta alaa ibraaheema wa alaa aali ibraaheema innaka hameedun majeed. Allaahumma baarik alaa muhammadin wa alaa aali muhammadin kamaa baarakta alaa ibraheema wa alaa aali ibraheema innaka hameedun majeedun.

Translation: Oh Allah ! Shower Your mercy upon Muhammad (upon him be peace) and the followers of Muhammad (upon him be peace), as You showered Your mercy upon Ibrahim (Alayhis salaam) and the followers of Ibrahim (Alayhis salaam). Behold You are Praise worthy, Glorious. Oh Allah! Shower Your blessing upon Muhammad (upon him be peace), as you showered Your blessings upon Ibrahim (Alayhis salaam) and the followers of Ibrahim (Alayhis salaam). Behold You are Praise worthy, Glorious.

4. *Dua* that is recited after the third *Takabeer*:

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِحَيَاتِنَا وَمَيِّتِنَا وَشَاهِدِنَا وَغَائِبِنَا
وَصَغِيرِنَا وَكَبِيرِنَا وَذَكَرِنَا وَأُنْثَى اللَّهُمَّ مَنْ
أَحْيَيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَأَحْيِهِ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ
تَوَفَّيْتَهُ مِنَّا فَتَوَفَّهُ عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ ❁

Allaahumma ighfir lihayyinaa, wa mayyitinaa, wa shaahidinaa, wa ghaa-ibinaa, wa sagheerinaa, wa kabeerinaa, wa dhakarinaa wa unthaanaa. Allaahumma man ahyaytahoo minnaa fa ahyihee alal islaam wa man tawaffaytahoo minnaa fatawaffahoo alal iemaan.

Translation: Oh Allah ! Forgive those of us that are alive and those of us that are dead; those of us that are present, and those of us who are absent: those of that are young, and those of us that are adults; our males and females. Oh Allah! Whomsoever of us You keep alive, let him live as a follower of Islam, and whomsoever You cause to die, let him die as a Believer.

If the deceased is a male child, the invocation is:

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهُ لَنَا قَرِيبًا وَاجْعَلْهُ لَنَا آجِرًا وَذُخْرًا وَاجْعَلْهُ لَنَا شَافِعًا وَمُسْتَفْعًا

Allaahumma ij'alhu lanaa faratan, wa j'alhu lanaa ajran wa dhukharn wa j'alhu lanaa shaafi'an wa mushaffa'an.

If the deceased is a female child, the invocation is :

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهَا لَنَا قَرِيبًا وَاجْعَلْهَا لَنَا آجِرًا وَذُخْرًا وَاجْعَلْهَا لَنَا شَافِعَةً وَمُسْتَفْعَةً

Allaahumma ij'alhu lanaa faratan, wa j'alhaa lanaa ajraan wa dhukhran wa j'alhaa lanaa shaafi'atan wa mushaffa'atan.

Translation: Oh Allah, make him/her (this child) a source for our salvation; and make him/her a source of reward and treasure for us; and make him/her an intercessor for us, and one whose intercession is accepted.

STEP E Funeral:

1. When not carrying it, and as much as possible, one should walk in front or beside the bier.
2. All idle talk should be avoided. It is preferred to either be silent or better still praying or doing *zikr*; recite *surah Fatiha* and *surah Ikhlas*.
3. No music to be played and one should avoid loud outburst of emotions.
4. When entering the cemetery, one should say:
Assalam alaikum yaa ahlil kuboor (Peace be upon you O people of the graves)

STEP F Burial:

A grave should consist of two parts. Lower part is smaller than the upper part. Both parts of the grave, should however, be spacious and uniformly excavated and dug to a depth of at least five feet.

1. The body of the deceased should be slowly and gently put on the ground of the lower part of the grave. The face of the deceased should be toward the *qibla*.
2. The deceased's head should be raised a little from the ground by using a hard object like stone or a brick or hard soil, but under no conditions any foreign object including a pillow should be put in the grave.
3. Now make a roof on the lower part of the grave by using a large stone or laying bricks side by side or a very hard wood slab.
4. Everyone accompanying the *janazah* should pour three handful of soil on the roof of the grave. The remaining part of the grave should then be filled up with soil. Again all present and if able should contribute at least three handful of soil to finally complete the grave.
5. If permitted by the local regulations, the grave can be raised above the ground so that it is not more than a foot above it.

Note:

In many parts of USA, the local regulations require a casket. If so, a grave of 5 feet or as deep as required by the local regulations is dug with no two distinct parts. Body in a casket is lowered in the ground by cemetery staff. A concrete slab is placed on top of the grave and nothing is done to raise the head of the deceased.

Although burial is permitted at all-times, burial at sun-rise, high noon and sunset should be avoided.

1. When the body is lowered into the grave, one typically recites
Bismillah-i wa'ala millat-i rasulilah
Translation: In the Name of Allah, (we bury) according to the way of the Prophet of Allah.
2. When throwing the **first** handful in the grave one typically recites
Minhaa khalaqnaahum
Translation: From the (earth) did We create you.
3. During the **second** handful:
Wa minhaa nu'eedukum
Translation: and into it shall We return you.
4. And the time of the **third** handful:
Wa minhaa nukhrijukum taaratan ukhrraa
Translation: and from it shall We bring you out once again.