

v. **Sīna-band**: this should be from the chest to the navel, and down to the thighs is better.¹ Usually, a ready-made shroud is bought. These may not be according to the sunnah in terms of the height of the deceased. It may also be too long, leading to wastage of material.

Caution can be exercised by cutting a shroud from a roll of cloth, as per the requirement. If you must buy a ready-made shroud, keep the surplus cloth with you after cutting. If the shroud is bought out of the wealth of the deceased, the extra cloth will be divided amongst inheritors.

15) The shroud should be of good quality. In terms of price, it should equal the price of clothing the man used to wear for the two Eids and Friday salah. As for women, it should equal the price of clothing she would wear to visit her parents' home.²

Method of shrouding the deceased

16) After bathing the deceased, wipe the body gently with a clean cloth so the shroud does not get wet. Infuse the shroud with the smoke of incense sticks one, three, five or seven times. Do not exceed seven times.

First place down the lifāfah, the tehband on top of this, and the kafanī over this. Lay the deceased upon these and put the kafanī upon him. Then apply fragrance to the head, beard (if he has no beard, apply it to the chin), and entire body. Apply camphor to the body parts upon which a person performs prostration, i.e. forehead, nose, hands, knees, and

¹ Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 818, summarized

² Ibid

feet.

Proceed to fold the izār from the left side first, and then the right. Fold the lifāfah in the same way, so that the right portion remains on top. Tie the shroud at the top and bottom, as this will ensure it does not open.

After putting a kafanī upon a woman, her hair should be divided into two parts and placed on her chest upon the kafanī itself. The aurhnī should be laid out halfway down her back, folded over her head, and positioned upon the face like a niqab, allowing it to remain over her chest. In length, it should cover from her mid-back to the chest, whilst it should go from one earlobe to the other in width.

The izār and lifāfah should then be folded as normal. The sīna-band should be tied on top from the chest to the thighs.¹

15 sunnahs and manners pertaining to funerals

Here are four hadith of the final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ discussing funerals.

1) Whoever receives news of a funeral and offers condolences to the family of the deceased, Allah writes the reward of one *qīrāṭ* for him. The reward of two *qīrāṭ* are written by Allah if the person accompanies the funeral procession, three if he offers salah upon the deceased, and four if he is present during burial. Each *qīrāṭ* is equivalent to Mount Uḥud.²

¹ Refer to Bahār-i-Sharīat's first volume to learn more.

² Fatāwā Riḍawīyah, vol. 9, p. 401; 'Umdat al-Qārī, vol. 1, p. 400, under hadith 47

2) A Muslim harbours six rights over a fellow Muslim. (One of them is:) When he dies, one must attend his funeral.¹

3) When a person destined for Paradise dies, whoever carried his funeral bier, walked behind it, and offered his funeral salah, shall not be punished by Allah.²

4) The first reward given to a believer after they die is the participants of his funeral salah being forgiven.³

5. Prophet Dāwūd عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام once asked, “O Allah! What reward does one earn for accompanying a funeral, purely seeking to please You?” Allah replied, “Angels shall accompany his funeral when he dies, and I shall forgive him.”⁴

6) Mālik b. Anas رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ was seen in a dream after his passing and was asked, مَا فَعَلَ اللَّهُ بِكَ - “How did Allah treat you?”

He replied, “He forgave me due to a phrase Uthmān b. ‘Affān رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would say upon seeing a funeral; سُبْحَانَ الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ.”⁵ I began doing this, and this phrase led to my forgiveness.”⁶

7) Offer funeral prayers with good intentions, such as to please Allah, fulfil the obligation of funeral salah, take

¹ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, p. 1192, hadith 2162, summarized

² Musnad al-Firdaws, vol. 1, p. 282, hadith 1108

³ Musnad Bazzār, vol. 11, p. 86, hadith 4796

⁴ Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, p. 97

⁵ “Pure is He Who is alive and will never die.”

⁶ Iḥya' al-'Ulūm, vol. 5, p. 266, summarized

admonishment, and to please the deceased and the latter's family.

8) Whilst accompanying a funeral, contemplate over good and bad deaths. Think to yourself, "I do not know if I will die with my faith intact. I will be taken like this one day. I will be buried in the Earth like this." It is an act of worship and a source of reward to contemplate like this.

9) Shouldering the funeral bier is a rewardable act. The final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ shouldered the funeral bier of Sa'd b. Mu'adh رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.¹

10) A hadith explains, "He who takes a funeral bier forty steps is forgiven forty of his major sins."

It is stated in another hadith, "Allah will grant absolute forgiveness to he who shoulders all four corners of a funeral bier."²

11) The sunnah method is to shoulder a funeral bier from all four corners, one after another, and to walk ten steps each time.

The complete sunnah is to begin carrying from the right side of the deceased's head, then from the right side towards their feet, the left head side, and finally the left side towards their feet. By walking for ten steps in each position, the total

¹ Ṭabaqāt li Ibn S'ad, vol. 3, p. 329; Al-Bināyah, vol. 3, p. 242, summarized

² Jawharat al-Nayyirah, p. 39; Durr Mukhtār, vol. 3, pp. 158-159; Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 823

number shall amount to forty.¹

During funeral processions, some people shout, “Walk two steps each.” They should instead announce, “Walk ten steps each.”

12) When carrying a funeral bier, it is haram to deliberately cause harm to others by pushing or shoving, as happens in the funerals of famous personalities or when videos are being recorded.

13. There is no harm if a single person carries the body of a deceased child in his hands. People may take it into their hands one after another.² It is impermissible for women to go with a funeral procession (whether it is of a child or an adult).³

14) A husband can shoulder the funeral bier of his wife, lower her into the grave, and even see her face. Only bathing and touching the body directly without any intervening cloth are forbidden for him.⁴

15) It is permissible to recite aloud the kalima tayyiba, kalima shahāda, and poetry in praise of Allah and His Messenger when accompanying a funeral bier.⁵

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

22 sunnahs and manners regarding graves and burials

1) Allah declares:

¹ Fatāwā Hindīyyah, vol. 1, p. 162; Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 822

² Fatāwā Hindīyyah, vol. 1, p. 162

³ Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 823; Durr Mukhtār, vol. 3, p. 162

⁴ Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, pp. 812-813

⁵ Fatāwā Riḍawīyyah, vol. 9, pp. 139-158

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا ﴿٢٥﴾ أَحْيَاءَ وَ أَمْوَاتًا ﴿٢٦﴾

*Did We not make the earth a lodging for the living and the dead?*¹

Explaining how the earth is a lodging, it is stated: "In a way that the living are gathered upon it whilst the dead are inside it."²

2) It is farḍ kifāyah to bury the deceased (even if one person buries the deceased, all will be relieved of the responsibility. Otherwise, those who received news but did not bury him will be sinners). It is not permissible to lay the deceased upon the ground and enclose him in walls on all four sides.³

3) Graves are also a bounty from Allah. The dead being buried in them means they are protected from animals and other things.

4) One should bury the deceased around pious people, as being close to them will lead to blessings. **مَعَاذَ اللَّهِ** Even if the deceased was rightful of punishment, they will intercede for him. The mercy that descends upon them will also encompass him. The beloved Prophet **صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ** said, "Bury your dead amongst good people."⁴

5) There is no harm in burying the deceased at night.⁵

¹ Al-Quran, part 29, Surah Al-Mursalat, verses 25-26 translation from Kanz al-ʿIrfān

² Nūr al-ʿIrfān, p. 927

³ Bahār-e-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 842

⁴ Hilyat al-Awliyā', vol. 6, p. 390, number 9042

⁵ Jawharat al-Nayyirah, p. 141

6) It is not permissible to bury more than one person unnecessarily in the same grave. This is permitted if necessary.¹

7) It is recommended to place the funeral bier beside the grave in the direction of the qiblah, so the deceased can be lowered into the grave from that side. Do not place the body at the foot of the grave or bring it from there towards the head side.²

8) Two or three people, as required, should step into the grave. It is better if they are strong and pious. A deceased woman should be lowered into the grave by her maḥrams. If they are not present, other relatives should lower her into the grave. If they are not present either, pious people should be requested to carry out this task.³

9) Keep the body of a woman covered with a cloth when lowering her into the grave, until slabs are placed.

10) Recite the following when lowering the deceased into the grave: بِسْمِ اللَّهِ وَ بِاللَّهِ وَ عَلَى مِلَّةِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ⁴⁻⁵

11. Lay the deceased on their right side such that their face is towards qiblah. Untie the knots of their shroud as these

¹ Bahar-e-Shariat, vol. 1, p. 846, Fatawa Hindiyah, vol. 1, p. 166

² Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 844

³ Fatāwā Hindīyyah, vol. 1, p. 166

⁴ With the name of Allah and upon the religion of Allah's Messenger
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

⁵ Tanwīr al-Abṣār, vol. 3, p. 166

are not required now, and there is no harm if they are left tied.¹

12) The one untying the knots of the shroud should recite the following supplication: **اللَّهُمَّ لَا تَحْرِمْنَا أَجْرَهُ وَ لَا تَفْتِنَّا بَعْدَهُ**
2_3

13) Close the grave with adobe/unbaked bricks.⁴ If the ground is soft, it is permissible to place planks of wood.⁵

14) Soil/earth will now be placed in the grave. It is recommended to use both hands and cast soil three times, beginning from the head side of the deceased.

With the first, recite the following verse from Surah Ṭāhā:

مِنْهَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ⁶

With the second handfuls, recite:

وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمْ⁷

¹ Fatawa Hindiyyah vol. 1, p. 166; Jawharat al-Nayyirah, p. 140

² “O Allah! Do not deprive us of his reward and do not trial us after him.”

³ Hashiyat al-Ṭahawī ‘alā Marāqī al-Falāh, p. 609

⁴ Using fire-baked bricks on the inside of the grave is forbidden. Nowadays, cement walls and slabs are commonplace. The inner side of these which projects into the grave should be plastered with mud. May Allah protect Muslims from the effects of fire. **أَمِينٌ بِجَاهِ خَاتَمِ النَّبِيِّينَ**
صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

⁵ Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 844

⁶ From it, We created you.

⁷ And into it, We are returning you.

With the third, recite:

1 وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ تَارَةً أُخْرَى

Place the remaining earth on the grave using a spade or anything similar.²

15) It is disliked to place more earth than that taken out of the grave.³

16) Any earth or soil clinging to the hands can either be shaken off or washed away.⁴

17) Do not shape the grave to have four distinct corners, but instead make it concave like the hump of a camel. It is better to sprinkle water on the grave 'after the burial', and the grave itself should be a hand-span high or slightly more.⁵ After burial, calling azan is very beneficial for the deceased and a rewardable act.⁶

18) Following the burial, it is recommended to recite the first and last part of Al-Baqarah.

Recite from **الْمَّ** to **مُفْلِحُونَ** at the head of the deceased, and from **أَمَّنَ الرَّسُولُ** until the end whilst at the feet side.⁷

¹ And from it, We will extract you once again.

² Jawharat al-Nayyirah, p. 141

³ Fatāwā Hindīyya, vol. 1, p. 661

⁴ Bahār-e-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 458

⁵ Ibid, vol. 1, p. 846, summarized; Radd al-Muhtār, vol. 3, p. 168

⁶ Fatāwā Riḍawīyyah, vol. 5, p. 370, derived

⁷ Bahār-e-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 846

19) It is recommended to stay near the grave after burial for the time it takes to slaughter a camel and distribute its meat. This will make the deceased feel comfortable and help them easily answer the questions of Nakīrayn without panic. During this time, recite the Quran, pray for the deceased, and seek forgiveness for them. Especially pray for them to remain steadfast in answering Nakīrayn’s questions.¹

20) It is permissible to place the Shajarah or ahd nāmah in the grave. It is better to make a niche in the qibla-facing wall in front of the deceased face and place these inside. In *Durr al-Mukhtār*, it is stated writing ahd nāmah on the shroud is permissible, and one can hope for forgiveness by doing so.

It is permissible to ‘write’ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ on the chest and forehead of the deceased. One person made a will for this to happen after his death. He was seen in a dream and asked what took place with him.

He said: “As I laid in my grave, angels of torment arrived. When they saw بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ written on my forehead, they said, ‘You have avoided punishment.’”²

21. One can ‘write’ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ on the forehead and لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ on the chest, but only after washing the deceased and before placing a shroud upon them. The ‘writing’ should be with the first finger of the right hand, not

¹ Ibid with Changes

² Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 848; Durr Al-Mukhtār, vol. 3, p. 153; Fatāwā Tātār Khāniyyah, vol. 2, p. 170

by using ink.¹

22) It is necessary (*wājib*) to bury the bones of the deceased which come out of the grave.²

21 sunnahs and etiquettes of visiting graveyards

Here are three hadith of the final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ regarding graveyards and visiting them.

1) “I once forbade you from visiting graves, but visit them now, for they will draw your attention away from this world and remind you of the Hereafter.”³

2) No person passes by the grave of a person he knew in the world and gives salam, except the deceased recognises him and replies.⁴

3) He who visits both or one of his parents graves every Friday will be forgiven and recorded as righteous.⁵

4) It is sunnah to visit the graves of Muslims and a great privilege to visit the shrines of saints and martyrs. Conveying reward to them is a commendable and rewardable action.⁶

5) If one desires to visit the grave of any Muslim (or saint of Allah), it is recommended to offer two units of voluntary

¹ Bahār-i-Sharīat, vol. 1, p. 848, with changes; Radd Al-Muhtār, vol. 3, p. 186

² Fatāwā Riḍawīyah, vol. 9, p. 406, derived

³ Sunan Ibn Mājah, vol. 2, p. 252, hadith 1571

⁴ Tārīkh Baghdād, vol. 6, p. 135, hadith 3175

⁵ Shu‘ab al-Imān, vol. 6, p. 201, hadith 7901

⁶ Fatāwā Riḍawīyah, vol. 9, p. 532

salah at home (at a non-disliked time). In every unit, one should recite Āyat al-Kursī once and Al-Ikhlāṣ three times after Al-Fātiḥah. He should then convey the reward of this salah to the deceased. Allah will create light in the grave of the deceased and grant immense rewards to that individual (i.e. the sender of the rewards).¹

6) Avoid trivial speech and actions when on the way to visit a grave or shrine.²

7) Neither kiss the grave nor touch it, but stand at some distance from it.³

8) It is forbidden to perform *sajdat al-ta'zīm* (prostration of reverence) before a grave. If this is done with intention of worship, it is an act of disbelief.⁴

9) One should use the old path in the graveyard where there have never been graves of Muslims, even in the past. One should not traverse a new path. It is stated in *Radd al-Muḥtār*: "(By digging up the graves in a graveyard) It is forbidden to walk upon the new path made upon this."⁵ In fact, even if one thinks a path may be new, it is impermissible and a sin to walk upon it.⁶

10) It has been seen at the shrines of many saints, that the graves of Muslims are demolished to make flooring for the

¹ Fatāwā Hindīyyah, vol. 5, p. 350

² Ibid

³ Fatāwā Riḍawīyyah, vol. 9, pp. 522-526

⁴ Fatāwā Riḍawīyyah, vol. 22, p. 423

⁵ Radd al-Muḥtār, vol. 1, p. 612

⁶ Durr al-Mukhtār, vol. 3, p. 183

benefit of visitors. Laying down, walking, standing, reciting the Quran, reciting litanies, and sitting etc. upon such floors is forbidden. One should recite Al-Fātiḥah from afar.

11) One should stand facing the deceased's face when visiting and should leave from the direction of their feet so that one remains in their line of sight. One should not approach from the head-side, as the deceased will have to turn his head to look.¹

12) Stand in the graveyard such that one's back is to the qiblah and face towards the occupants of the graves. After this, one should say:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَا أَهْلَ الْقُبُورِ، يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَلَكُمْ، أَنْتُمْ لَنَا سَلَفٌ
وَوَحْنٌ بِالْآخِرِ

Peace be upon you, O people of the graves! May Allah forgive us and you. You are our precursors, and we are to follow.²

13) Whoever enters the graveyard and recites the following, all believers that have passed away since Allah created Prophet Ādam عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام will then pray for his forgiveness.³

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ الْأَجْسَادِ الْبَالِيَةِ وَالْعِظَامِ النَّخْرَةِ الَّتِي خَرَجَتْ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا
وَ بِيْكَ مُؤْمِنَةٌ، ادْخُلْ عَلَيْهَا رَوْحًا مِّنْ عِنْدِكَ، وَسَلَامًا مِّنِّيْ

¹ Fatāwā Riḍawiyah, vol. 9, p. 532

² Mirqāt al-Mafāṭīḥ, vol. 4, p. 253, under hadith 1765, derived

³ Muṣannaf Ibn Abī Shaybah, vol. 8, p. 257, hadith 22

O Allah! O Lord of these deteriorated bodies and decayed bones that left this world whilst believing in You! Have Your mercy and my salam reach them!

14) The final Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ announced:

Whoever enters the graveyard, recites Al-Fātiḥah, Al-Ikhlāṣ, and Al-Takāthur, and then prays as thus, “O Allah! Whatever I have recited of the Quran, convey its reward to the believing men and women in this graveyard”, all these believers will vouch for him on the Day of Judgement.¹

15) It is mentioned in a hadith, “Whoever recites Al-Ikhlāṣ eleven times and conveys its reward to the deceased, shall attain reward equal to the number of the former.”²

16) Incense sticks should not be lit upon graves, as this is bad etiquette and an ill omen. If used to provide pleasant scent to visitors, it should be inserted in an empty place near the grave if available, as providing pleasant fragrance is desirable.³

17) Imam Aḥmad Razā Khān رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ mentions, “As narrated in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ said to his son as he passed away, ‘When I die, neither should a female wailer nor fire accompany me.’”⁴

18) Lanterns and candles etc. should not be placed on top of

¹ Sharḥ al-Ṣudūr, p. 311

² Durr al-Mukhtār, vol. 3, p. 183

³ Fatāwā Riḍawīyah, vol. 9, pp. 482-525, selected

⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, p. 75, hadith 192; Fatāwā Riḍawīyah, vol. 9, p. 482

graves, as this is fire, and keeping fire upon the grave is harmful to the deceased. If the intention is to light the way for travellers at night or those that are reciting the Quran, then the lantern or candle should be placed to one side of the grave in an empty place. That vacant place should not be the position of a grave that has now been effaced.

19) The following four days are preferable for visiting graves: Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.¹ It is superior to visit after fajr on Friday.²

20. It is superior to visit graves on blessed nights, especially Laylat al-Barā'ah.³ Similarly, it is superior to visit graves during auspicious days as well, such as both Eids, on the 10th of Muḥarram, and during the first ten days of Dhū al-Ḥijjah.⁴

21) When visiting a graveyard, instead of talking unnecessarily and thinking about useless things, remember your death and shed tears if possible. Remember your sins and contemplate the punishment in the grave. Ensure to repent of your sins. Imagine that just as these dead people are laying in their graves alone, you too will be in the same position one day.

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

صَلُّوا عَلَى الْحَبِيبِ

¹ Fatāwā Hindiyah, vol. 5, p. 350

² Fatāwā Riḍawiyah, vol. 9, p. 523

³ Fatāwā Hindiyah, vol. 5, p. 350

⁴ Ibid