

Description of the Funeral Prayer

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

[In both The Sacred Mosque in Makkah and the Prophet's Mosque in Madeenah, janazah prayer is conducted after almost every congregational prayer. Learn this prayer before you leave for The Holy Land so that there will be greater depth to your participation in this prayer]

Question: What is the manner of performing Funeral Prayer?

Answer: The manner of performing Funeral Prayer is that the Imaam (the one who leads congregational Prayer) begins by pronouncing Takbeerat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allaahu Akbar [Allaah is the Greatest]") and seeking refuge with Allaah from the accursed Satan.

He then recites the Basmalah (saying, "Bismillah Al-Rahman, Al-Rahim [In the Name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy]") and Al-Fatihah (the opening chapter of the Glorious Qur'aan, Soorah number 1). It is desirable that he recites a short Soorah after Al-Fatihah, such as Al-Ikhlās or Al-'Asr, or some Ayahs (Qur'aanic verses). It was authentically related from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hadeeth of Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him and his father) which indicates this.

Then, the Imaam should pronounce the second Takbeer (saying: "Allaahu Akbar [Allaah is the Greatest]") and invoke Allaah's peace upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the same manner a person invokes Allaah's peace upon him in the final Tashahhud (a recitation in the sitting position in the second/ last unit of Prayer).

The Imaam pronounces the third Takbeer and supplicates to Allaah for the deceased with the well-known supplications (of the Prophet - peace be upon him), being attentive to mentioning the correct gender and plural pronouns for multiple funerals.

Finally, the Imaam pronounces the fourth Takbeer followed by a moment of silence and then recites Tasleem (salutation of peace ending the Prayer) once to his right only.

As for the opening invocation, there is no harm in either saying it or not. Yet it is better to omit it in accordance with the statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him): **Hasten the funeral proceedings...**

Description of the Funeral Prayer

Question: Would you please explain to us how should the Funeral Prayer be performed as reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him), because many people do not know how it should be performed?

Answer: The manner of performing Funeral Prayer was demonstrated by the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his Companions (may Allaah be pleased with them) as follows: It begins with pronouncing Takbeerat-ul-Ihram and seeking refuge with Allaah from the accursed Satan. Then, the Imaam recites the Basmalah and Al-Fatihah followed by a short Soorah or some Ayahs. Then, he pronounces Takbeer and invokes Allaah's peace upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) as one does at the end of the Prayer. Then, he pronounces a third Takbeer and supplicates to Allaah for the deceased.

The best is to say:

- *Allaah, forgive our living and our dead, those who are present among us and those who are absent, our young and our old, our males and our females. O Allaah, whoever You decree to live, let him live in Islaam and whoever You cause to die, cause him to die with 'Eemaan (Faith).*
- *Allaah, forgive him and have mercy on him, keep him safe and sound and forgive him, honour the place where he settles and make his entrance wide; wash him with water, snow and hail, and cleanse him of sins as a white garment is cleansed of dirt.*
- *Allaah, give him a house better than his house and a family better than his family. O Allaah, admit him to Paradise and protect him from the torment of the grave and the torment of Hell-fire; make his grave spacious and fill it with light.*
- *Allaah, do not deprive us of the reward and do not cause us to go astray after this.*

All of this was recorded from the Prophet (peace be upon him). If you supplicate to Allaah using other words, this is fine. For example, one may say,

- "O Allaah, if he was a doer of good, then increase his good deeds; and if he was a wrongdoer, then forgive his bad deeds. O Allaah, forgive him and give him the strength to say the right thing."

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Then, after a fourth Takbeer there is a short pause ending with one Tasleem to the right. This was narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him).

It is an act of Sunnah (action following the teachings of the Prophet) that the Imaam stands at the head of the body if the deceased is a male and by its middle if it is the body of a female as authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hadeeth of Anas and Samurah ibn Jundub (may Allaah be pleased with them both). As for the opinion held by some scholars that it is prescribed in the Sunnah that the Imam stands at the chest of the body if the deceased is a male, this is a weak opinion that has no basis as far as we know. When performing Funeral Prayer, the dead body should be positioned facing the direction of the Qiblah (Ka`bah-direction faced in Prayer), because the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: It is the Qiblah (Ka`bah-direction faced in Prayer) of Muslims while living i.e. during Prayer and after death [in the grave]. May Allaah grant us success.

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