

## ***SALATUL MAYYIT: FUNERAL PRAYER FOR THE DECEASED***

The Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) pronounced that anybody who attends the funeral of a believer gets a reward of one *qiraat* and anyone who remains till he is laid in the grave and its filling with earth shall get a reward of two *qiraats*. Asked about the meaning of two *qirats*, the Prophet (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) replied two *qiraats* means equal to two mountains (Majority of narrators). Except in the case of a martyr, for whom no *salat* will be performed, performance of funeral *salat* for all other persons is a *fardh-i-kifayah* for the community. It means that if some persons performed this *salat*, it shall be deemed to have been performed by the whole community but if none performed it, the whole community will be deemed to have committed a sin.

The casket or the pal of the deceased should be placed in front of the rows of the participants in the middle. If it is a male body the Imam [leader of the prayers] shall stand near the head of the body but if it is a female body he shall stand near the middle of it. Then the Imam shall chant the first Takbeer [*Allah-o-Akbar*] and recite *Surah al-Fatiha* mutely. Then he will chant the second *Takbeer* and recite *Tasliyah* [invoking blessings of Allah for the Prophet]. The customary wording of this invocation since the time of the Prophet is:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، وَبَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ  
وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ، كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي الْعَالَمِينَ، إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ

(Translation) [“O my God please bless Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad just as Thou hath blessed Ibrahim and the progeny of Ibrahim and sanctify Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad just as Thou hath sanctified Ibrahim and the progeny of Ibrahim. Verily Thou are the most praiseworthy and the most glorious”] (Muslim, Ahmad). Then the Imam will chant the third *Takbeer* then pray solemnly for the deceased. A number of prayers have been reported from the Messenger of Allah (*sallAllahu 'alayhi wa sallam*). One of them is as follows:

«اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لَهُ وَارْحَمْهُ وَعَافِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنْهُ وَأَكْرِمْ نُزُلَهُ وَوَسِّعْ مَدْخَلَهُ وَاعْسِلْهُ بِالْمَاءِ  
وَالْتَّلَجِ وَالْبَرْدِ وَنَقِّهِ مِنَ الْخَطَايَا كَمَا نَقَّيْتَ الثَّوْبَ الْأَبْيَضَ مِنَ الدَّنَسِ، وَأَبْدِلْهُ دَارًا خَيْرًا مِنْ

دَارِهِ وَأَهْلًا خَيْرًا مِنْ أَهْلِهِ وَزَوْجًا خَيْرًا مِنْ زَوْجِهِ، وَأَدْخِلْهُ الْجَنَّةَ وَأَعِذْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْقَبْرِ -  
أَوْ مِنْ عَذَابِ النَّارِ» (مسلم)

(Translation) [“O my God please forgive him; have mercy upon him; pardon him; treat him honorably; widen the space of his grave; and wash him with water, ice and snow; and cleanse him of all wrongs just as a cloth is cleansed white of dirt; award him a home better than his [worldly] home; kinsmen better than his [worldly] kinsmen; and a life partner better than his [worldly] wife; and admit him to Paradise; and protect him from the ordeal of the grave (or the Hell)”] (Muslim). Besides, if the deceased is a minor these words should be added to the prayer:

اللهم اجعله قَرطاً لابويه وَسَلْفاً اجرأوا اعتباراً وشفيعاً، وثقل به موازينهما وافرح الصبر  
على قلوبهما ولا تفتنهما بعده، ولا تحرمهما اجره

(Translation) [“ O my God please make him a vanguard for his parents; a cause of advance reward and credit for them; and their intercessor; and weigh heavy their scales with him and fill their hearts with forbearance; and do not put them on trial after him and do not deprive them of his recompense”]. Afterwards, the Imam chanting the fourth and last *takbeer* will pray for the well-being of the community in general:

«اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً، وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً، وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ»

(Translation) [“O my God please grant us well-being in this world and the world hereafter and protect us from the ordeal of Hell”]. Then he should recite *salaam* moving his face towards the right and left. That marks the end of the funeral service.

An effort should be made to arrange the gathering into as many rows [*sufuf*] as possible. The funeral *salat* should be led only by the most pious and righteous person among the community. The Messenger of Allah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) pronounced that if forty persons, who are immune from *shirk*, join the funeral prayer for a deceased Muslim Allah Almighty accepts their intercession on behalf of the deceased.

**If** perchance somebody is late in joining the funeral prayer he ought to complete the missed portion after the Imam recites *salaam*.

The conditions for the accuracy and validity of the funeral prayer are the same as for other *salats*. Funeral prayer can be performed within the precincts of a mosque or outside it. Women are also permitted to join the funeral prayer.

**Juristic** opinions differ as to who is more deserving to lead the funeral prayer of a deceased person. Some jurists opine that if a deceased person had willed that a particular person should lead his funeral prayer that person is the most deserving. After him comes the local ruler and after him the Commander of the Faithful. After them his relatives are eligible in order of precedence.

Funeral prayer can also be performed in absentia, particularly for persons who died elsewhere as well as for those who were buried without the funeral prayer.

### **Some Reprehensible Practices to be Avoided**

1. Causing unnecessary delay in the arrangement for funeral prayers and burial.
2. To sit down before the casket is placed on the ground.
3. To ride a vehicle while accompanying the funeral procession. But it is permitted if the burial ground is far away or a person is unable to walk.
4. To chant anything or recite Quran loudly while the procession is marching, or to weep or cry.
5. To take fire with the funeral procession unless it is necessary for lighting in night-time.

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