

"QUR'AN  
&  
SUNNAH"  
HADITH

# UNDERSTANDING ISLAM SERIES

## THINGS TO DO WHEN A PERSON IS DYING

"IMAAN  
ISLAM  
IHSAAN"  
HADITH  
QUDSI

"SEEK KNOWLEDGE FROM THE CRADLE TO THE GRAVE"  
HADITH

Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala says about death

*"He who created death and life in order to test you which of you is best in doing deeds." (AlMulk 67:2)*



Knowing that this life is a test from Allah, we must acknowledge that the final test of this life is death itself. Since the angel of death takes the souls of THOUSANDS of people every hour, the turn of someone we know is bound to come; are we prepared to handle such moments? Are we able to assist the dying person as his soul leaves the body?

Can we tell the difference between what culture is and what religion is when dealing with a sensitive topic such as death? What steps should we take if a person of knowledge is not within reach? This guide will, Insha'Allah, explain, everything we need to do in a simple step-by-step process so we are ready whenever the moment of Death arrives.

## STEP 1

### Invite righteous people to be around the dying person to :

1. Remind him of Allah, for those who are righteous are above average in knowledge and are closer to Allah.
  2. Pray for him and those who are around him and remind them of them of supplications (du'aa) from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet peace be upon him, and the angels would say Aameen to their supplications Insha'Allah.
  3. Give patience to the dying person's family. Some family members get emotional and need to be reminded about the virtues attained through patience.
  4. Serve as a reminder to astray family members who may be present at this time.
  5. To do things according to the Sunnah at the time of a person's death.
-

## STEP 2

### **Remind the departing person that they should have more hope than fear in Allah's Mercy**

Often when a person is close to death, they begin to fear all of the sins they have committed during their life. It is possible that person had lived a lifestyle where they've procrastinate repentance and they were struck with the reality of the hereafter before they had a chance to turn back to Allah. It is normal for a person in these last moments to have all kinds of fear. Anas ibn Malik may Allah be pleased with him narrates:

***“The Prophet (peace be upon him) entered on a young person dying, and said “how do you find yourself?” he said “I seek hope from Allah, and I fear my sins O Messenger of Allah,” so the Prophet peace be upon him said “They are not combined in the heart of a believing slave at this time except that Allah gives him what he wants and protects him from what he fears” (Ibn Majah, 4231)***

While it is natural for the person to have some fear, this fear should not overcome the hope a person has in Allah. At these moments, it is our duty to remind the person of the mercy of Allah, and that they should have more hope in the kindness of Allah than fearing His wrath.

Nothing comforts the soul more than reminding them of the saying of the Prophet peace be upon him:

***“None of you should die except having good thoughts about Allah.” (Muslim, 7412)***

## STEP 3

### **To moisten the face and lips**

It is from the Sunnah of the Prophet peace be upon him to moisten the lips and throat of a dying person so that he can pronounce the Shahada. The mouth becomes more dry during the last moments of death. Ayesha may Allah be pleased with her used to say:

***“The Prophet peace be upon him had a can of water with him. So he would enter his hand in the water and then he would wipe his face and say “There is no God but Allah. Death has its trials” (Bukhari, 6145)***

## STEP 4

### **To dictate the Shahaada without asking the departing person to repeat it**

This should be done as gently as possible, as not to anger the person and cause him to curse. The Prophet peace be upon him said:

***“Dictate to your dying people La ilaha illa Allah” (Aljami, 8550)***

Once the person pronounces the Shahaada you should not ask him to repeat it unless he says something different, the Prophet peace be upon him said:

***“Whoever's last words are La ilaha illa Allah, he will enter paradise.” (Abu Dawoud,)***

## STEP 5

### Pray (make Du'aa) and do not say anything except good

There is no specific du'aa to say at the time of death. The people around the person can pray with whatever comes from their hearts in the language they speak. An example of this would be to pray that Allah gives him patience, makes his death easy, protect him from the test of the grave, grant him paradise, protect him from hellfire, give his family patience, and any such good things.

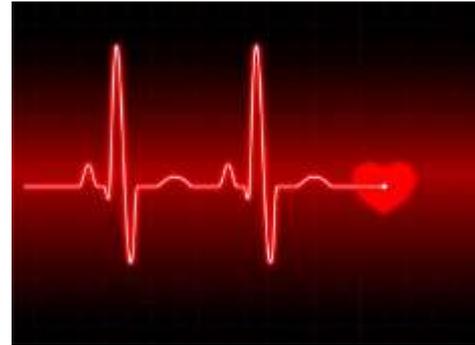
Also it is good to recite Qur'an. The Prophet peace be upon him said:

***“If you approach the sick or dead person, then only say good, as the angels are saying Ameen to whatever you say”*** (Muslim, 2079)

## STEP 6

### To place the dying person in the most comfortable position

And if possible, without any discomfort to the person, turn the person towards Kiblah. If this is not possible, any comfortable position is ok.



## STEP 7

### Checking to see if the person has indeed died

It is important to emphasize this particular point, hundreds of people are misclassified as dead around the world on a daily basis. The following are some ways to test if a person has died until a doctor arrives:

1. **Testing for a pulse:** This is probably what most people think of when testing for death, but it may not be the most effective since some patients may have a very faint pulse that eventually (appears) to come back to life. This method must be supplemented with other methods as listed below.
2. **The pupil test:** Umm Salamah narrated that the Prophet peace be upon him said:

***“When the soul leaves the body, the (faculty of) vision follows it”***(Aljam, 8554)

One of the first signs of death is to observe a wide pupil. The easiest way to test this is to gently open the eyelids of the person and aim a flashlight at his eye. If the size of his pupil changes according to the level of light, then the person is still alive.

3. **The breathing test:** It may be difficult to test for breathing by using your hand or ears, or by watching the chest, as the person may be breathing faintly. The easiest way to check breathing is to use a mirror test. Simply place a mirror near the nose of the person. If you see that a fog is building up, chances are this person is still breathing faintly.
4. **The body becomes colder:** Immediately after death, the body loses about 1 degree centigrade per hour.



5. The skin test: Following the death of a person, the skin loses its elasticity. If you (gently) pinch the person in an area full of skin, and the shape doesn't go back to its original shape, this is a sign that the person has already died.
6. The joints test: Once a person dies, their blood circulation stops, and therefore their joints become stiff. If you find it hard to bend the person's arm, this is a sign that they have died.
7. Call a doctor to certify death and also to issue a death certificate.

## STEP 8

### Closing the eyes

It is the Sunnah of the Prophet peace be upon him to gently close the eyes of the person after they die. A person's pupil becomes very wide and is unpleasant to people who are around. Umm Salamah narrated:

***“The Prophet entered on Abu Salamah when his eyes have opened. He then closed it and said ‘When the soul leaves the body, the (faculty of) vision follows it’”***  
(Aljami, 8554)

## STEP 9

### Saying the prophetic du'aa

When Abu Salamah died, the Prophet peace be upon him said the following:

***“O Allah forgive Abu Salamah (substitute the name of the person) and raise his degrees with those who are guided, and replace those whom he has left behind (with benefits), and forgive us and him O Lord of worlds. Make his grave wide for him, and light it for him.”*** (Muslim, 2080)

## STEP 10

### To wrap the jaws

When a person dies, their mouth stays open either widely or slightly, and odors will come out. Therefore, one should gently wrap the jaw of the person using a soft string or a piece of cloth. Do not put too much pressure when tying as this may leave a mark on the face of the person.

## STEP 11

### To loosen the joints

As mentioned earlier, when blood circulation stops in the body, the joints become stiff within a few minutes due to the trapped blood. This will make it very hard to wash or shroud the person and perform other burial rites. By loosening the joints of the person shortly after they die, this makes it easier to perform funeral rites. This is done by gently bending the joints of the person shortly after their death (the arms, legs, fingers, shoulders, etc.)

## STEP 12

### **To take off the outer garments**

This makes it easier for the person performing the washing and shrouding, as it becomes harder to take off the clothes when the joints become stiff. This is done for both males and females by their respected gender or their spouse (according to the opinion of the majority of scholars).

## STEP 13

### **To cover the body completely**

Once the outer garments are removed, it is only natural to cover the person.

The covering must be done using one cloth that covers the entire body, including the face. Also, if a family member arrives late and wants to see the face of the dead person, they are permitted to do so. Jabir may Allah be pleased with him narrated:

***“When my father was killed, I used to uncover the cloth off his face and cry, and the Prophet peace be upon him was not telling me to stop.” (Bukhari, 1187)***

## STEP 14

### **The permissibility of kissing the deceased**

It is human nature that a person may want to kiss his dead family member one last time before he is buried. It is from the abundant mercy of Allah that this practice is not only permissible in Islam but from the Sunnah. Ayesha may Allah be pleased with her narrates:

***“The Prophet –peace be upon him- used to kiss Uthman ibn Math’oon when he died, until I saw the tears fall on his eyes.” (Tirmidhi, 1000)***

Also, Ibn Abbas may Allah be pleased with him narrates:

***“Abu Bakr- may Allah be pleased with him- kissed the Prophet peace be upon him after his death.” (Bukhari, 1241)***

## STEP 15

### **To have all the necessary documents on hand**

It is important to know where the ID Document of the deceased is, as it will be needed for burial purposes. Also the death certificate must be on hand for the burial to take place. Also establish who the deceased left his / her will with.

# STEP 16

## It is an obligation to speed up the burial

Finally, we must end this list by mentioning that it is not permissible to delay the burial of a person except for a necessity, or if some family members who are on the way – but not to delay unnecessarily. This is clear from the words of the Prophet peace be upon him:

*“Hasten the funeral, as if it was a good soul, then it is a favor you are doing him, and if it was other than that, so it is an evil that you are lifting from around your necks.”*(Bukhari, 1252)

# STEP 17

## To remember the deceased

It was the Sunnah of RSAW to visit the graves of the deceased regularly and to make Dua for them.

---

## The journey of death

When one undertakes to travel in the world there are numerous preparations to be made:

1. Tickets (means of travel)
2. Passport
3. Visas
4. Inoculations/Health certificates
5. Clothes (befitting the particular climate of the country of destination)
6. Money (in the right currency or recognized changeable funds)
7. Ensure that all is settled at home e.g. bills paid and etc
8. Leave behind someone trustworthy to look after affairs

The same criteria apply to the transitional journey of death. The only difference being that we must be prepared all day, every day as the date of travel is not known. Fortunately, the tickets are provided by Almighty and we do not have to bear the cost.

Since there is a choice of destinations, the passport and visa requirements vary. For the destination of the pleasure of Almighty (Jannah/Heaven), the passport must confirm Bay'at to Almighty, his

Prophets and the infallibles (Aimma). It must also testify to oneness of God (Tawheed), Justice (Adala) and Day of Judgment (Qiyama).

For the destination of hell (Jahannam), there is no need of a passport at all. The visas for heaven are even more difficult to obtain. Numerous qualifications are required amongst them truthfulness, patience, prayer (Salaa), poor rate (Zakaa), invite towards good values (Amr Bil Maroof), forbidding from Evil (Nahi Anal Munkar) and etc.

The clothes are simple and easily obtainable - A kafan (Shroud). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) has said: **“One of the qualities that purify the heart is to acquire a Kafan.”**

Make sure all debts are paid or provisions made for them; be they in monetary terms or in the form of someone's feelings. Always keep a record of the dues to Almighty (Qadha Wajibat).

The funds to spend there must be in the right currency. In the hereafter, the only acceptable currency is rewards (Thawabs). Besides daily obligatory (Wajibat) and good deeds it is essential to invest in an investment that will yield constant return until Qiyama (Thawab-e-Jariya). Leaving behind someone to look after your affairs can be in the form of bringing up a righteous child and/or serving mankind by giving Zakaa of time, wealth, knowledge, which will adopt this role.

## **Air Janaza**

When we are leaving this world for the next one, it shall be like a trip to another country. Where details of that country won't be found in a glamorous travel brochures, but in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadiths.

Where our plane won't be Indian Air Lines, British Airways, Gulf Air or Emirates, but Air Janaza.

Where our luggage won't be the allowed 30 KGs, but our deeds no matter how heavy they weigh. You don't pay for excess luggage. They are carried free of charge, with your Creator's compliment.

Where our dress won't be a Pierre Cardin suit or the like, but the white cotton shroud.

Where our perfume won't be Chanel, Paco Rabane, but the Camphor and Attar.

Where our passports won't be Indian, British, French or American but Al-Islam.

Where our visa won't be the six months leave to stay or else, but, The "La Ilaha Illallah."

Where the air hostess won't be a gorgeous female, but Izrael and its like.

Where the in-flight services won't be 1st class or economy but a piece of beautifully scented or foul smelling cloth.

Where our place of destination won't be Heathrow Terminal 1 or Jeddah International Terminal but the last Terminal Graveyard.

Where our waiting lounge won't be nice carpeted and air-conditioned rooms but the 6 feet deep gloomy Grave (Qabr).

Where the Immigration Officer won't be His Majesty's officers, but Munkar and Nakeer.

They only check out whether you deserve the place you yearn to go.

Where there is no need for Customs Officers or detectors.

Where the transit airport will be Al-Barzakh.

Where our final place of destination will be either the Garden under which rivers flow or the Hellfire.

This trip does not come with a price tag. It is free of charge, so your savings would not come handy.

This flight can never be hijacked so do not worry about terrorists.

Food won't be served on this flight so do not worry about your allergies or whether the food is Halal or Haram?

Do not worry about legroom; you won't need it, as your legs will become things of the past.

Do not worry about delays. This flight is always punctual. It arrives and leaves on time.

Do not worry about the in-flight entertainment program because you would have lost all your sense of joy.

Do not worry about booking this trip, it has already been booked, the day you became a fetus in your mother's womb.

Ah! At last good news! Do not worry about who will be sitting next to you. You will have the luxury of being the only passenger. So enjoy it while you can. If only you can! One small snag though, this trip comes with no warning.

**Are you prepared.....you better be prepared!**

## **Ready or not, some day it will all come to an end**

There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days. All the things you collected, whether treasured or forgotten, will pass to someone else. Your wealth, fame and temporal power will shrivel to irrelevance. It will not matter what you owned or what you were owed. Your grudges, resentments, frustrations, and jealousies will finally disappear. So, too, your hopes, ambitions, plans, and to-do lists will expire. The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away. It won't matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived, at the end. It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant. Even your gender and skin colour will be irrelevant.

So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured? What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built; not what you got, but what you gave. What will matter is not your success, but your significance. What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught.

What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered or encouraged others to emulate your example.

What will matter is not your competence, but your character.

What will matter is not how many people you knew, but how many will feel a lasting loss when you're gone.

What will matter are not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you.

What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.

Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident. It's not a matter of circumstance but of choice.

Choose to live a life that matters.

**“We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.”**

 **Islamic Interfaith Research Institute**

**Suite 1403 Nedbank House, 30 Albert (Inguce) Street Durban 4001**

**Phone Office: 031 304 7862 Fax: 086 504 7020**

**Our 24 Hour Call Centre No: 08611 786 11**

**E-mail: [info@iifri.com](mailto:info@iifri.com) Website: [www.iifri.com](http://www.iifri.com)**

**Shop Online – DVD's, CD's, MP3's, and Study Module's  
Free Information**

**Handle with care - May contain Qur'anic verses**