

Fruits for the Week

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ETTIQUETTES FOR ATTENDING THE DEATH-BED

1. When you visit a person whose end is near, keep on reciting the Kalimah '*La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasalullah*' in a loud voice. Do not press the patient to utter the Kalimah. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has observed: *When you sit by the death-bed of any Muslim, keep reciting the Kalimah.*"
2. Recite Surah Yasin when the patient is having last breaths. The Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) has observed: "Recite Surah Yasin by the death-bed."
3. When the person has breathed his last, say: "*Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un*" (We are all creatures of Allah and we shall return to Him). The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has affirmed: "*The following three rewards are conferred on a man who recites 'Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un' in the moment of distress, firstly, blessings and salvation descend on him from God. Secondly, he receives the reward for seeking the Truth. Thirdly, his loss is compensated and a better reward in lieu of the dead and lost one is conferred on bereaved person who says 'inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi raji'un'.*" (Tabrani)
4. Mention the virtues of the dead and avoid narration of his demerits. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) observed: "*Do mention the virtues of your dead and keep silent about their vices.*" (Abu Dawud).
5. Always show patience and fortitude on the death of your near and dear ones. Do not utter any ungrateful remark. Do not delay washing the body of the deceased. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has observed: "*God shall pardon forty capital sins of man who bathes a corpse and conceals the sins of the dead person, and the man who lower the corpse in the grave, provides, as it were, a home to the deceased to live in until the day of doom.*" (Tabrani). Use a white cloth of average quality as a shroud for the body; do not use a very costly cloth nor a cloth of very low quality.
6. The Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.) said: "*God will provide dresses made of sundus (highest quality of silk interwoven with silver) and istabraq (gold thread) in Paradise for him who puts the body of a deceased in coffin.*"
7. Keep your pace quick while taking the bier to the grave-yard. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has observed: "*Make haste in the matter of funerals.*"
8. Accompany the funeral and stand your feet on seeing a funeral approaching and if you do not wish to accompany it, wait till the procession has moved on to some distance before resuming your journey or other activities. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) said: "*Stand on your feet on seeing a funeral procession approaching. Those who accompany the funeral procession should not sit down until the bier has been placed on the ground.*"
9. Do offer funeral prayers. You should also participate in funeral processions and put your shoulder under the bier for some time. The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) has observed: "*Every Muslim owes a duty to accompany the funeral procession of a deceased Muslim.*" He further observed: "*A man who participates in the funeral procession and offers funeral prayers will get a reward equal to one Carat. He who attend the burial also after saying the funeral prayers will receive a reward equal to two Carats.*" Someone submitted: "*What will be the size of these two Carats?*" The Prophet (p.b.u.h.) affirmed: "*It will be equal to the mass of two mountains.*" (Bukhari-Muslim).
10. Let the grave be excavated from north to south lengthwise. Keep the body of the deceased turned towards the Qiblah when lowering it in the grave. Start filling the grave with earth from the side of the head. Pick up the earth in both hands and throw it into the grave.
11. Stay a while near the grave after burial. Offer prayers begging mercy for the deceased. Recite some verses from the Holy Qur'an and send its blessings after the departed soul. Ask other people to offer prayers to Allah to show mercy to the dead person.
Offer some charity on behalf of the deceased according to your means. However, strictly avoid performance of unpropitious and improper rites in this case. Wallahu'Alam.

Prepared by Br. Muhaemin
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