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THE JOURNEY OF DEATH

Kullu Nafsin dhaikatul maut

"Every soul must taste death..."

Suratul 'Ankabut - 29:57

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi rajioon

"..Indeed we are from Allah and indeed to Him we will return."

Suratul Baqara 2:156

There are only two things that are certain in one's existence. One is birth - as in the above aya - indeed we are from Allah - and the other is death - and indeed to Him we will return.

We prepare for the birth of a child, even calling the mother an 'expectant' mother but we do not call ourselves 'expectant' marhumeen even though the journey of death to the aakhira' is inevitable and unavoidable.

However, sooner or later, because of our old age or illness, or that of someone we love, or the news of the death of someone in the community, we are forced to face the reality of death, realising the need for preparation for the journey.

According to an old fable, a man made an unusual agreement with Izraeel - the angel of death. He told Izraeel that he would be willing to accompany him (as though he had a choice) only if Izraeel would send him a notice well in advance. The agreement was made. Weeks became months and the months into years. One bitterly cold night, as the man sat alone thinking of his success in life, Izraeel tapped on his shoulder. "You are here too soon" the man cried out. "You sent no messenger. I thought we had an agreement!". Izraeel whispered "Notice your hair, once it was full and black, now it has

streaks of silver in it! Observe your face in the mirror and see the wrinkles. Yes! I have sent many messages through the years! I have kept my part. I am sorry that you are not ready for me but the order of Allah cannot be averted!"

The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said:

"You have not been created to perish, but to remain forever. You only transfer from one home to another when you die."

Imam Husayn (A.S.) said to his companions on the day of Ashura:

"Death is nothing but a bridge over which you pass from this world of distress and affliction towards a vast heaven of eternal bliss. Who amongst you does not like to migrate from the (worldly) prison to the (heavenly) palace? And as for your enemies, it is like migrating from the palace towards the prison."

How do we prepare for the journey of death?

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

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

The same criteria applies 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 Allah 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 Allah (Janna), the passport must confirm bay'at to Allah, his Prophets and the A'immah. It must also testify to tawheed, adala and qiyama.

For the destination of Jahannam, there is no need of a passport at all.

The visas for Janna are even more difficult to obtain. Numerous qualifications are required amongst them truthfulness, patience, salaa, zakaah, amr bil ma'ruf, nahyi anil munkar...

The clothes are simple and easily obtainable - A kafan. The Prophet (S.A.W.) 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 Allah (qadha wajibat).

The funds to spend there must be in the right currency. In the hereafter, the only acceptable currency is thawabs. Besides daily wajibat and good deeds it is essential to invest in an investment that will yield constant return until qiyama (thawab e jari).

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 zakaat of time, wealth, knowledge... which will adopt this role.

How does death come?

When death approaches and the five senses cease to function, one sees (in spiritual vision) the whole of his/her life flash by. One also sees 3 things which claim to be friends:

1. i) One of them says - I will remain with you till your death This is worldly wealth and assets.
2. ii) The second says - I will accompany you to the entrance of your grave. These are family and friends.
3. iii) The third one says - I will remain with you forever. These are his good deeds (thawab).

Imam Zaynul Abedeen (A.S.) has said:

" Allah has said - I do not hesitate in any order except the death of a believer. He/she dislikes death and I do not like displeasing him/her. Therefore, when the time of death comes, Allah sends two angels to the believer - one is called Muskhiya and the other Munsyiya. Muskhiya makes the person generous (encouraging him/her to leave everything behind) and Munsyiya makes him/her forget the world. The angel of death (Izraeel) then arrives to remove the soul."

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Is Death painful?

For this we must first understand the aspect of punishment (adhab). Punishment for sins is in seven stages. Before we look at them it is necessary to know that adhab is not revenge of Allah, nor does Allah enjoy punishing mankind. It is a form of cleansing and curing just like a doctor who cures his patients. The cure may entail the need of pain - injections, operations.....and is not the result of the doctor being cruel to the patient but rather being merciful and kind.

Similarly, adhab cleans a person so he/she may be able to enter the pure destination of the pleasure of Allah (Janna).

The seven stages of punishment are

1. i) In this world

2. ii) When death comes
3. iii) The squeeze of the grave
4. iv) Barzakh
5. v) Day of Judgement
6. vi) The bridge of sirat (From mahshar to Janna over Jahannam)
7. vii) Jahannam

The Punishment therefore is on a graded basis. If ones sins have been answered for in this world and tawba done then Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) says that death is like a fragrant breeze. However, if the sins have not been cleansed then death is painful. Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) says: *"Whatever a mu'min suffers at the time of death, it is for the purpose of cleansing him/her from sins so that he would come into the hereafter pure and unblemished deserving the eternal reward of Allah without any obstacle between him/her and the reward."*

After burial, and when those who have buried the dead person have gone away, two angels visit the grave. One is Munkar and the other Nakeer. The soul re-enters the body and they ask questions on belief:

Who is your Lord? What is your religion? What is your book? What is your qibla? Who is your Prophet? Who are your Aamma?

This questioning is the composition of talqeen which is recited at the time of burial. Talqeen (which means to teach) should be recited daily at bed time so one is in a constant state of preparation for answering Munkar and Nakeer.

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) has said:

*"Who so ever is subjected to the questioning in the grave, is also squeezed in the grave"**
For some it will be like the embrace of two friends but for those whose sins have still not been cleansed by death, it is severe.

*Be it a grave in water, earth or where ever, for it is the abode of the soul.

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BARZAKH

wa min waraa'ihim barzakhun ilaa yawmi yubathoon

"...And before them is barzakh (a barrier) till the day of Qiyama.

Suratul Mu'minun 23:100

Barzakh is the period of time in the grave from burial upto the day of Qiyama. Life in barzakh is characterised by the liberation of the nafs from the fetters of the body. The nafs is also no longer harassed by passion and instinct. There is no question of time or space in barzakh just as in dreams, thus the horizon of a human being's vision is vastly enlarged. Everything can be imagined in a single instant.

The nafs of he/she who is virtuous is no longer constricted in the cage of the world and will delight in roaming freely through the infinite.

However, to the mu'mineen whose sins have not been cleansed by death, and by the squeeze in the grave,

Our 6th Imam has said:

"We will intercede for you on the day of Qiyama, but by Allah, I am worried about you for the period when you will be in barzakh."

The nafs is on a different realm after death, yet it does not completely sever its relationship with the body which it used as its vehicle for its destiny.

It is reported in Vol 3 of Al-Kafi that a companion of Imam Ali (A.S) was once with the Imam at the cemetery of Waadi us Salaam. He said:

"Imam stood in the cemetery as though he was addressing a gathering. I remained standing with Imam until I became tired and sat down. When I got tired of sitting I stood up again and remained standing until I got tired again and sat down once more. Finally, I stood up and said to Imam - I fear for you, seeing you stand for so long, please rest a little!"

Imam replied: "O Habba! I am standing here talking to the mu'mineen!"

Habba asked: "Do they have conversations with each other?"

Imam replied: "Yes! Once the veil is lifted you will see them gathered in circles talking to each other."

"Are you speaking of their bodies or their arwaah?"

Imam replied: "Their arwaah"

It is reported in Al Mahaasin that Abu Baseer - a companion of our 6th Imam says that there was a discussion on the arwaah of righteous mu'mineen in the presence of Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.). Imam said;

"The arwaah of mu'mineen meet each other....they talk to each other and recognise each other, when you see someone there, you will say. 'This is so and so.' Those in barzakh can also establish contact with those in the world.

In Vol 1 of Al-Kaafi it is reported that Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) has said: *"...Amongst the believers (who have died) are those for whom Friday is a day of visiting, and there are also those the balance of whose deeds permits them to see them."*

In the same volume it is reported that someone asked Imam Ali (A.S.) whether the dead were allowed to visit their relatives. Imam confirmed that they were and the questioner asked - when and how often?

Imam replied: *"Every week, every month, or every year depending on their spiritual rank and capacity."*

Those in barzakh can be divided into 4 groups:

1. The true mu'mineen. Perfect in faith and with taqwa in their actions. Any mistakes or sins were cleansed by worldly troubles and/or the pangs of death. They are therefore at peace in Barzakh eagerly awaiting qiyama.
2. The confirmed unbelievers and hypocrites whose reward for good deeds has been recompensed in the world and/or ease at death. They also, if required, are

further recompensed by ease in barzakh. However, they do not wish for the day of qiyama.

3. 3. Those who are neither of the above two groups. Children, those afflicted with lunacy and those who were so far away from the message of Islam that they do not know of the word of Allah. They will be in a state of slumber, their fate to be decided by Allah on the day of Qiyama.
4. 4. The final group is those of mu'mineen whose sins were not cleansed by worldly troubles, the pangs of death and the squeeze of the grave. For these, barzakh will be a place of punishment.

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RAJ'AT

The literal meaning of raj'at is to return.

In the Qur'an Allah says:

"And on that day We shall raise a witness out of every nation...."

Suratun Nahl 16:84

This indicates a day other than the day of Qiyama. According to Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.); after the dhuhur of Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (A.S.) the era of raj'at will come. Some of the Prophets and all the Aimma will be raised with selected people from their times. Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (A.S.) has further said that Imam Mahdi (A.S.) will take revenge against the assassins of the other Aimma who will be raised as well.

When the term of life of Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (A.S.) is ordained to end, he will hand over his ring to Imam Husayn (A.S.) who will conduct the burial of Imam Mahdi (A.S.).

The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said:

"He/she who does not believe in Raj'at is not of us."

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THE DAY OF QIYAMA

It is an event which concerns everything and all mankind. The whole universe enters a new stage, life and system. The Qur'an tells us that this event will coincide with the extinction of the sun and the stars, the drying up of the seas, the levelling of high and low lands, the disintegration of mountains, universal earthquakes and a great transformation. The whole world will move towards destruction and everything will be annihilated.

This will be followed by resurrection. The Prophet (S.A.W.) has said: *"Whenever you see the season of Spring, remember resurrection."* In other words, the rebirth in Spring of the plants is an example of resurrection.

If there were no resurrection, eternal life, Janna and Jahannam; then creation would be futile and vain and it would be unjust of God. Allah is neither unjust, nor does He create in vain.

It will be the day of assembly, encounter, accounting and compensation.

According to the Qur'an and the ahadith of our Ma'sumeen, it is the day when one will find one's deeds 'illustrated' and 'manifested'. Good deeds will be manifest as a source of happiness and joy whilst bad deeds will be manifest as a source of pain, suffering and torture.

The finale of the day will be the compensation of eternal bliss (Janna) or eternal punishment (Jahannam).

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IHTIDHAAR

The period of time just before death is known as ihtidhaar.

It is ehtiyaat wajib to lay the dying person on his/her back with the face and the soles of the feet facing qibla. (It may be worth noting that where it causes any difficulty the bed should be turned rather than handling the person him/herself.

It is Mustahab to:

1. Help the dying person recite and understand the Kalima, the names of the 12 Aemma, and other beliefs.
2. Recite Suratu Yaseen, Suratus Saffaat, Suratu Ahzaab, Ayatul Kursi, the 54th aya of Suratul A'raaf & the last 3 ayaat of Suratul Baqara.
3. It is also recommended to recite Dua Adeela.
4. Help him/her recite the following dua: *Allahummag fir lil kathiram min ma'asyk, waq bil minnil yaseer min taa aetik, yaa mayn yaqbalul yaseer wa y'afu anni katheer, iqbal minnil yaseer wa'afu anil katheer, innaka antal ghafurur. Allahummar humni fainnaka raheem*
"O Allah forgive me the many (sins) committed against you, and accept from me the meagre (good deeds) in your obedience. O He who accepts the meagre (good deeds) and excuses the many (sins), accept from me the meagre (good deeds) and forgive my many (sins). Surely You are The Forgiver,. O Allah! Have mercy on me for You are forever Merciful." 5. If a dying person is in difficulty, he/she should be brought to the place where he/she normally prays salaa.

And the accounting is certain, and the book (the Qur'an) is the truth, and Janna is real, and Jahannam is real,

And indeed there is no doubt in the hour of resurrection.

Indeed Allah shall raise the dead from the graves.

Indeed Allah shall raise the dead from the graves.

O Allah! I hope to receive Your favour, Your generosity and rahma I expect for entering Janna,

O Allah! I hope to receive Your favour, Your generosity and rahma I expect for entering Janna,

O Allah! I hope to receive Your favour, Your generosity and rahma I expect for entering Janna,

O Allah! I hope to receive Your favour, Your generosity and rahma I expect for entering Janna,

For my conduct gives me no right for obtaining Your pleasure as I was not obedient,

For my conduct gives me no right for obtaining Your pleasure as I was not obedient,

Except that I believe in Your Oneness, and Your Justice.

Except that I believe in Your Oneness, and Your Justice.

I depend upon Your favours and Your generosity, pardon me in the name of the Prophet and his progeny, Your beloved friends.

I depend upon Your favours and Your generosity, pardon me in the name of the Prophet and his progeny, Your beloved friends.

You are the most Generous, the most Merciful

You are the most Generous, the most Merciful

O Allah! Send blessings on the best of Your creations, Muhammad and on his most pure progeny.

O Allah! Send blessings on the best of Your creations, Muhammad and on his most pure progeny.

O Allah! Send blessings on the best of Your creations, Muhammad and on his most pure progeny.

It is Ihtiyaat wajib to ask the permission of the wali (guardian) of the dead person before doing the above.

Wajib Kifaii means A act that is wajib upon all, but once performed by one individual, it is no longer wajib upon the others.

Ihtiyaat Wajib means it is wajib to follow the fatwa, but the muqallid may refer to another mujtahid.

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GHUSL OF A MAYYIT

It is wajib kifaii to give Ghusl to the mayyit of every dead Muslim. If a foetus of 4 months or more is still-born it is wajib to give it Ghusl. If it has not completed four months, but it has formed features of a human child, it must be given Ghusl, as a precaution. In the event of both of these circumstances being absent, the foetus will be wrapped up in a cloth and buried without Ghusl.

If there is ayn najasat on any part of the dead body, it is wajib to first remove it before giving Ghusl. And it is preferred that before the mayyit is given Ghusl, it should be clean and free from all other najasat. It should therefore be cleaned and washed thoroughly.

Ghusl for a dead body is similar to Ghusl of Jumu'a. Ghusl is first given to the head and neck, then the right side of the body, and then the left side.

3 ghusl are given to the mayyit in the following order:

1. 1. Aabe Sidr (water mixed with the leaves of the Sidr – beri, lotus tree).
2. 2. Aabe Kaafur (water mixed with camphor).
3. 3. Aabe Khalis (pure water).

The quality of "Sidr" leaves and camphor should neither be so much that the water becomes mixed (Mudhaaf), nor so little that it may be said that "Sidr" leaves and camphor have not been mixed in it at all.

The person/people giving ghusl to the mayyit must be:

1. 1. Shia Ithna Asheri
2. 2. Baligh
3. 3. Sane
4. 4. Aware of the rules of ghusl
5. 5. The same sex as the dead person (Except when this is impossible, Please refer the risala of your marja' of taqleed.)

One who gives Ghusl to the dead body should perform the act with the niyyat of Qurbat, that is, obedience to the pleasure of Allah.

The following acts are mustahab:

1. 1. At least 2 people should give ghusl. One should pour water whilst the other should help to turn the mayyit.
2. 2. The soles of the mayyit should face qibla.
3. 3. Ghusl should be given a covered building and not under the open sky.
4. 4. The people giving ghusl should be on the right side of the mayyit.
5. 5. Those giving ghusl should ask for forgiveness for the mayyit and recite duas.
6. 6. The mayyit should be dried after giving the 3 wajib ghusl.

It is haram to look at the private parts of a mayyit and if a person giving Ghusl looks at them, he commits a sin, though the Ghusl will not be void. Thus those giving ghusl must ensure that the private parts remain covered all the time.

There is no rule for Jabirah in Ghusl of Mayyit, so if water is not available or there is some other valid excuse for abstaining from using water for the Ghusl, then the dead body should be given one tayammum instead of Ghusl.

It is ehtiyaat mustahab to give, three tayammums, and in one of the tayammum, there should be a Niyyat of "ma-fizzimmah". This means that a person giving tayammum resolves that this tayammum is given to absolve him of his responsibility.

A person giving tayammum to the dead body should strike his own palms on earth and then wipe them on the face and back of the hands of the dead body.

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HUNOOT

After having given ghusl to the mayyit it is wajib to give Hunoot with the niyya of Qurbatan Ilallah. Hunoot means to apply some camphor on the 7 parts of the body which are placed on the ground during sijda beginning with the forehead. The other parts being both the palms, both the knees and the big toes of both feet. It is not necessary to rub the camphor; it must be seen on these parts. The camphor used should be powdered and fresh. It is mustahab to apply camphor on the nose tip also.

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TAKFEEN (Shrouding a mayyit)

KAFAN

Kafan is the cloth used to shroud the mayyit. It must be put on the mayyit after the 3 wajib ghusl. The minimum (wajib) kafan consists of 3 pieces of cloth. However, it is Mustahab to use 8 pieces in all for a woman and 7 pieces in all for a man.

It is mustahab that the kafan be of white cloth. (About 11 yds of material if it is 90" in width for an adult)

The 3 wajib pieces of kafan are:

1. 1. A wrap round which must cover the body from the navel to the knees but it is Mustahab to cover the body from the chest to the feet. (approx 90"x41")
2. 2. A shirt which must be large enough to cover the body from the shoulders to the upper half of the legs but it is mustahab for it to be long enough to cover the upper part of the feet. (approx 108"x36")
3. 3. An overall sheet of cloth (chadar) which must be wide enough to wrap round the mayyit with one side overlapping the other, and long enough so that both ends (at the head and feet) can be tied up after the mayyit has been wrapped. (90"x90")
4. The mustahab pieces for both men and women are:
5. 4. A piece of cloth to cover the private parts. (approx 63"x14")
6. 5. A piece of cloth to cover the private parts which must be long enough to wrap round both legs. (approx 108"x45")
7. 6. A scarf like piece to cover the hair just as in salaa for women and to be would round the head like a turban for men.(approx 63"x17")
8. 7. A second overall 'chadar' like the wajib one. (90"x90")
9. The extra mustahab piece of kafan for a woman is:
10. 8. A piece of cloth to cover the chest area. (approx 54"x14")

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Jareeda (Mustahab)

Jareeda are fresh twigs (without leaves) cut from a tree.

A lot of emphasis has been given by our Aimma, to place jareedas on both sides of the mayyit. The reason given, that as long as the twigs remain green, the mayyit will be safe from 'fishare qabr' (the squeezing of the grave).

It is better to use the twigs of a date palm, if not available then twigs from a pomegranate tree. However, if these are not available then twigs from any tree will suffice.

The twigs should be of arms length and the twig on the right side should touch the armpit. The twig on the left side should be kept above the armpit.

The overall 'chadar' is then wrapped around the mayyit.

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Diagrams illustrating the various pieces of Kafan

and are the authorities on the whole world, and all these Imams are the rightly guiding and the pious?

“O son of Mary, when the two angels favoured by Allah and appointed by Him approach you, and ask about your god and your prophet, your qibla and your Imams, do not be afraid or grieved or worried, but say in reply: Allah is my God, Muhammad is my prophet, the Qur'an is my book, the Kaaba is my Qibla, Ali ibn Abi Talib is my Imam, Hasan Mujtaba is my Imam, Husain, the martyr of Karbala is my Imam, Ali Zaynul Abideen is my Imam, Mohammed Baqir is my Imam, Ja'far Saadiq is my Imam, Musa –al- Kaazim is my Imam, Ali Riza is my Imam, Muhammed Jawaad is my Imam, Ali Haadi is my Imam, Hasan Askari is my Imam and Hujjatul Muntadhar is my Imam.

O son of, when the two angels favoured by Allah and appointed by Him approach you, and ask about your god and your prophet, your qibla and your Imams,

Do not be afraid or grieved of worried, but say in reply:

Allah is my God, Muhammad is my prophet, the Qur'an is my book, the Kaaba is my Qibla, Ali ibn Abi Talib is my Imam, Hasan Mujtaba is my Imam, Husain, the martyr of Karbala is my Imam, Ali Zaynul Abideen is my Imam, Mohammed Baqir is my Imam, Ja'far Saadiq is my Imam, Musa –al- Kaazim is my Imam, Ali Riza is my Imam, Muhammed Jawaad is my Imam, Ali Haadi is my Imam, Hasan Askari is my Imam and Hujjatul Muntadhar is my Imam.

"Allah, the glorious and dignified, is my Rabb, Muhammed peace of Allah be upon him and his progeny, is my Prophet, Islam is my religion, the Qur'an is my book, Kaa'ba is my Qibla, Ameerul Mu'mineen Ali ibne Abu Talib is my Imam, Hasan Mujtaba is my Imam, Husain, the martyr of Karbala is my Imam, Ali Zaynul Abideen is my Imam, Mohammed Baqir is my Imam, Ja'far Saadiq is my Imam, Musa –al- Kaazim is my Imam, Ali Riza is my Imam, Muhammed Jawaad is my Imam, Ali Haadi is my Imam, Hasan Askari is my Imam and Hujjatul Muntadhar is my Imam.

Allah is my God, Muhammad is my prophet, the Qur'an is my book, the Kaaba is my Qibla, Ali ibn Abi Talib is my Imam, Hasan Mujtaba is my Imam, Husain, the martyr of Karbala is my Imam, Ali Zaynul Abideen is my Imam, Mohammed Baqir is my Imam, Ja'far Saadiq is my Imam, Musa –al- Kaazim is my Imam, Ali Riza is my Imam, Muhammed Jawaad is my Imam, Ali Haadi is my Imam, Hasan Askari is my Imam and Hujjatul Muntadhar is my Imam.

my Imam, Muhammed Jawaad is my Imam, Ali Haadi is my Imam, Hasan Askari is my Imam and Hujjatul Muntadhar is my Imam.

These symbols represent the names of the twelve Imams in Arabic script, arranged in two lines.

All these great persons, may Allah's peace be upon them, are my Imams, my leaders, my chiefs, and my intercessors and I keep friends with them and have hatred for their enemies in this world as well as in the world to come."

Another set of symbols representing the names of the twelve Imams, arranged in four lines.

Understand, ...daughter of....., that Allah, the Almighty and Exalted, is the best Rabb, that Muhammad is the best Prophet, and that the commander of the believers, Ali son of Abu Talib and his offsprings, the twelve Aemma are the best of Imams

These symbols represent the names of the twelve Imams in Arabic script, arranged in two lines.

And that the message Muhammad brought from Allah is true,

A large block of symbols representing the names of the twelve Imams in Arabic script, arranged in four lines.

And death is true, the questioning in the grave by Munkar and Nakir is true, the resurrection of the dead is true, the appearance before Allah is true, the siraat is true, the balance is true, the disclosure of the book of one's deeds on the day of qiyama is true, Janna is true, Jahannam is true and that there is no doubt about the coming of the inevitable hour of reckoning, and that Allah will raise the dead from their graves

Final block of symbols representing the names of the twelve Imams in Arabic script, arranged in four lines.

Hand symbols and Arabic calligraphy.

Do you understand, O daughter of, may Allah keep you safe and guide you to the right path. May Allah through His mercy acquaint you with your Awliyaa at the abode of His rahma

Hand symbols and Arabic calligraphy.

O Allah! Make the earth spacious for her on both sides and elevate her soul to Yourself. O Allah! Forgive us, forgive us.

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MOURNING AND CONDOLENCE

Hand symbols and Arabic calligraphy.

"Indeed we are from Allah and to Him we shall return"

Although death as the above aya of the Qur'an illustrates represents a return to the Creator, it nevertheless remains a painful experience for the survivors.

When a loved one dies, powerful and conflicting emotions are aroused – sadness over the loss and confusion about the future. To suppress the expression of grief is unhealthy but to allow our grief to overwhelm us is to selfishly overlook the true meaning of death.

One should continually recite

Hand symbols and Arabic calligraphy.

and the Qur'an.

It is haram to physically harm oneself through grief. Whilst weeping over the dead, it is ihtiyat mustahab that one's voice should not be very loud.

It is mustahab to console the bereaved family and friends.

When friends or relatives are grieving for a loved one, greet them with a warm handshake and say:

Hand symbols and Arabic calligraphy.

"May Allah soften your grief"

Often there is not much more one can say – do not try to explain, just be there with them. Soothe them, console them with warmth and weep with them. No matter how hard one tries, we must accept that sometimes especially at the death of a loved one, we do not understand His Rahma.

It is makruh to eat with the bereaved in their homes and putting them under unnecessary inconvenience.

It is mustahab to send food to and serve the family of the deceased for three days.

There is no way to replace a loved one, but one can supplement our normal good deeds with further virtuous acts on behalf of the marhumeen. E.g. Sadaqa, Imparting religious education, donating to welfare projects such as the building of roads, hospitals, water supplies etc...

One should remember the dead with good memories, pray for them and ask for forgiveness for them. It is reported that one day the Prophet (S.A.W.) was escorting a funeral when he heard some people praise the one who was being buried. The Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

"I swear by the Rabb of the Ka'ba, that the path to Janna has become secure for this person because mu'mineen have witnessed his goodness and Allah does not reject their testimony."

(Mustadrakul Wasa'il V1 Pg 147)

Death is an opportunity to examine our own lives and evaluate how we are fulfilling our purpose of existence. Death is a lesson that shakes us out of our complacency and makes us rethink our priorities. The Prophet (S.A.W.) said to Abu Dharr:

"When you are escorting a funeral remind yourself of your own death, fear it and remember that you too will meet it one day."

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SALATUL WAHSHAT/HADIYA MAYYIT

"A dead person does not bear greater hardships in his/her grave at any time than the first night."

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

On the day of burial it is recommended to give sadaqa, asking for rahma (mercy) for the marhum/marhuma.

In addition as a gift, one should pray Salatul Wahshat if one is a near relation or Salatul Hadiya Mayyit with the niyya of pleasing Allah and seeking forgiveness for the dead person.

Wahshat means loneliness and anxiety. This salaa can be recited at any time during the first part of the night of burial, but it is better to pray it at the beginning of the night after Isha salaa.

Respect the sanctity of the grave yard. The prophet (S.A.W.) has said:
"If I have to walk over burning desert or fire or to place my foot on the edge of a sharp sword, I would prefer it to trampling on the grave of a Muslim."

He also said to Imam Ali (A.S.):
"Ya Ali! Allah considers a few things undesirable for my followers. One of them is laughing in a graveyard....."

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SALATUL IJARA

Salatul Ijara is hiring someone to offer the qadha salaa* for a marhum/marhuma with payment. The person may also be paid for performing the qadha sawm and hajj.

If a person did not pray some of his wajib salaa, and did not perform their qadha, in spite of being able to do so, after his death, it is upon his eldest son, as ihtiyate wajib to perform the qadha. If the son cannot do so, he may hire someone to perform them. The qadha salaa of a mother are not wajib upon the eldest son – however, it is better if he performs them.

If a person makes a wasiyya (will) that all his/her qadha wajibaat must be performed, then it is the responsibility of the executor of his/her will to ensure that the qadha are performed.

*As long as a person is alive, no other person can offer his/her qadha on his/her behalf, even if he/she is unable to offer them.

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WRITING A WILL

"..It is prescribed for you when death approaches any one of you to make a will (wasiyya); if he/she leaves behind wealth , for his/her parents, and his/her near relatives....., a duty upon the pious people."

Suratul Baqara - 2:180

"It is not appropriate for a Muslim to pass 2 nights without his/her will being near his/her pillow."

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.)

A wasiyya (will) constitutes the set of instructions whereby one directs his/her heirs or administrators regarding the following:

1. i) Distribution of wealth after death
2. ii) Performing of qadha waajibaat e.g. salaa, sawm, hajj... (Even if the deceased does not mention it in his/her will, it is wajib for the heirs to pay for Qadha salaa, sawm, zakaa, khums or Hajj if they were due. Priority must be given first to debts and burial expenses).
3. iii) Any directive regarding his/her burial.

Even though Islamic law does not insist upon it, it is best to write down one's will. Present day requirements and the laws of the land make it obligatory that a person should have a written will to ensure speedy disposal of wealth and avoid unnecessary hardship to their heirs and executors of the will.

In Islamic law, a person has the right of disposing one third of his/her wealth according to his/her wishes only by making a will. The remaining two thirds must be divided according to the shares specified by shari'a.

According to shari'a there are 2 causes which give rise to the right of inheritance:

1. 1) Nasab (consanguinity or blood relationship)
2. 2) Sabab (relationship by marriage)

The nasabi heirs are divided into 3 categories:

1. i) Parents and children
2. ii) Grandparents, sisters, brothers and their siblings
3. iii) Uncles and aunts

long as there is even one person alive from the first category, no other relative from the second or third category will receive anything from the 'estate'*

The Sababi heirs - husband or wife inherit from each other regardless of the presence of any relative in the 3 nasabi categories.

*Estate

It is the collective name for everything one owns. It consists of:

-All properties, goods, and investments in one's name.

-Any specified portion of goods and investment in which one is a co-owner.

Total Estate minus Burial expenses, outstanding debts, outstanding Khums, Zakaa, Kaffara, Nadhr, Hajj.....

Equals Net Estate

Net Estate

1/3 This to be disposed off according to one's wishes.

2/3 This is distributed to the Sababi & Nasabi heirs according to Shari'a

From the 2/3 of the net estate the share of the Sababi heirs (Spouses) is as follows:

1. The wife's share on her husband's death is 1/8 if there are children and 1/4 if there are no children
2. The husband's share on his wife's death is 1/4 if there are children and 1/2 if there are no children.

The remainder is divided so that the parents get 1/6 each.
 Finally, the children inherit the balance so that the son/s get twice that which the daughters inherit. If there is no will then the entire net estate will be divided according to the shares above.

Miscellaneous Orders

- A wife is not entitled to land of her husband - be it agricultural or residential. She only inherits the house on the land according to her proportional shares in inheritance.
- The personal Qur'an, ring and clothes in which the deceased dies in belong to the eldest son.
- If the deceased is heavily in debt, the debts must be settled first even if it means that his/her heirs will receive nothing.
- A murderer does not inherit from his/her victim, even if he/she is the nearest or only relation of the victim.

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SAMPLE WILL

This is the last will and testament of

son/daughter of.....

currently residing at

.....

.....

made on.....

I hereby revoke all former wills and testaments made by me and declare this to be my last will.

I testify that I am a practising Muslim of the Shia Ithna Asheri faith believing in one God, His Prophets- the last of whom is Muhammad (S.A.W.) and the institution of Imama with the Imam of the time being Imam Muhammad Al-Mahdi (A.S.)

I appoint

of.....

.....

to be the executor of this, my WILL.

I DIRECT that all my debts, funeral and testamentary expenses be paid as soon as is convenient after my death.

I DIRECT my Executors to pay the World Federation of K S I M C (a registered charity in the U K) a sum calculated by my to be spent by them as KHUMS charity.

After all these payments have been made the remainder of my estate should be divided in the following proportions.

One third of the estate - here forth known as portion A
Two thirds of the estate - here forth known as portion B

Portion A

Portion B

This conforms to the Shia Ithna Asheri laws of inheritance.
In witness, whereof I, the said

.....

have signed my name on this

.....

Signed by the said

.....

In the presence of us both present at that time, who in his/her presence and in the presence of each other have hereto subscribed our name as witnesses:

1.....

.....

2.....

.....

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