

Participating in the janāzah of a Muslim brother or sister is not only the right of the deceased, but it is also a means of great reward and a chance to reflect on our own life and death. However, not having the correct understanding of this aspect of our life makes us complacent and negligent. Below are some Ahādīth of Rasūlullah ﷺ and some sayings of pious predecessors by which we can truly understand and value our time at the graveyard.

### Virtues of Visiting the Graveyard

Rasūlullah ﷺ says:

*Visit the graves, for verily this will make you abstinent from the world and (cause you) to remember the hereafter. (Ibn Majah)*

The command in this Hadīth is to visit the graves in general and is not specific to the time of janāzah. We should make it a habit to go to the cemetery at other times as well. We should go and ponder upon our deaths and take heed from those who once walked amongst us on this earth and are now unable to do any good deeds. We should ponder upon the family and wealth they have left behind that is now of no use to them.

### Virtues of Performing Salāt-ul-Janāzah and Participating in the Burial

Rasūlullah ﷺ says:

*Whosoever performs the janāzah salāt of a deceased, he will receive one qīrāt of reward and whosoever participates in the burial will receive another. (Muslim)*

**Note:** One qīrāt is equal to the mount of Uhud.

It is human nature that when a person becomes habituated to something, the real significance of that action slips his mind. It is then only carried out as a habit with no real spirit or purpose. This is also the case with participation in janāzah. It has become a mere habit. Neither is the concept of earning reward in our mind nor do we take heed of this great warning.

### Virtues of Throwing Soil in the Grave

Rasūlullah ﷺ says:

*Whosoever throws soil on (the grave of) a muslim, he will receive reward for each piece of soil. (Shamā'il-e-Kubrā)*

The 'ulamā have mentioned that it is sunnah to throw three hands full of soil in the grave.

### Silence at the Funeral

Barā Ibn 'Āzib ؓ narrates that once he attended a funeral with Rasūlullah ﷺ. When they reached the graveyard the grave was not ready so Rasūlullah ﷺ sat down whilst waiting and we all sat around him. Barā ؓ narrates that we were so quiet that it was as though birds were on our heads. Rasūlullah ﷺ sat quietly in deep thought. After a while he looked and said, "O Allah we seek your refuge from the punishment of the grave." (Ahmad)

Imām Gazālī ؒ very concisely sums up our situation at the grave. He says, "Nowadays, many of those attending the janāzah can be seen laughing, smiling

and talking. If they do talk about the deceased it is how much wealth he has left behind and who is entitled to it. There is probably no one who ponders upon his own death and the stages after death!"

### Praying for the Deceased

'Uthmān ؓ narrates that when Rasūlullah ﷺ would finish the burial he would stand by the grave and say, "Seek repentance for your brother and ask Allah ﷻ to grant him steadfastness as he his being questioned now (by the angels). (Abū Dawūd)

When the deceased is placed in the grave, the angels come and question him in regards to his Lord, his Dīn and his belief in regards to Rasūlullah ﷺ. If he is successful the rest of his stay in the grave will be like a stay in paradise. If he fails... Therefore, we should be focused on the destiny of the deceased and engage ourselves in making du'ā and making istighfār for the deceased.

When Mālik Ibn Dīnār's ؓ brother passed away Mālik started to cry profusely and he said, "I will not be able to rest until I come to know of the good fate of my brother. (Ahwāl-us-Sādiqīn)

Rasūlullah ﷺ has explained the condition of the deceased person in a hadīth . He says that he is like a drowning person who is screaming for help and hoping that someone will help him. The deceased awaits the du'ā of family and friends. These du'ā's and istighfār are more precious to him than the entire world and its contents. (Ihyā-ul-'Ulūm)

We should therefore make it a habit that we send thawāb for our deceased daily. We should try to re-

**"HOW CONCERNED AND RESTLESS WE BECOME WHEN OUR CHILDREN ENTER THE 11 PLUS EXAM HALL AND HOW MUCH WORRY AND CONCERN DO WE HAVE WHEN THE DECEASED ARE BEING QUESTIONED BY THE ANGELS? SUCH A GREAT WORRY FOR RESULTS WHICH WILL DETERMINE A SCHOOL AND SUCH LITTLE WORRY FOR A RESULT WHICH WILL DETERMINE JANNAH OR JAHANNUM?"**

cite some part of the Qur'an, e.g. Surah Yāsīn. If this is too difficult then the least we can do is recite "qul howa allāho ahad" three times.

When we hear or see the condition of the homeless and starving we feel great sadness and concern. We think that if I could I would help each and every one of them, I would. The deceased who are being punished in the grave are in much worse condition and are in much more need; and we CAN help them.

Also remember that if we remember those who have gone, Allah ﷻ will make those who we leave behind remember us when we go.

### Taking Heed

Along with gaining reward, one other benefit of participation in the janāzah is for us to remember our death and make preparations for it. The Sahābah ﷺ and Sulahā ﷺ would take great heed from this. 'Umar ﷺ would say, "Death is a great reminder."

When 'Uthmān ﷺ would see the grave he would cry profusely. Someone asked him the reason for this. He replied, "The grave is the first stage of the stages of the hereafter. If a person is successful in this, all the following stages will be easy." (Tirmidhi)

When Abu Hurairah ﷺ would see a janāzah being taken, he would address it saying, "My friend, go to your Lord, we are soon to follow." (Ihyā-ul-'Ulūm)

Usayd Ibn Hudhayr ﷺ says, "When I see a janāzah, the only thing I can think about is what is about to happen to the deceased in the grave." (Ahwāl-us-Sādiqīn)

'Amash ﷺ, a famous tābi'ī says, "When we would participate in a janāzah, we would not know who we should console as each and every person would be

sad and grieved (in concern for the deceased's and their own hereafter). (Ahwāl-us-Sādiqīn)

### Some other Etiquettes of Janāzah

We should not entertain bad thoughts nor mention bad things about the deceased even though his life may have been full of sin and disobedience. It is possible that Allah ﷻ forgives him and enshrouds him in His mercy whilst we are deprived of this due to our sins.

After your brother passes away leave him alone and do not attack his honour. (Abu Dawud)

Do not say bad things about the deceased as they have reached their deeds. (Bukhāri)

Only mention the good things of your deceased. If they are from the people of Jannah (and you talk evil about them) you will be sinful. And if they are destined to hell then that punishment is enough for them. (Nasā'ī)

It is also very disrespectful to walk over other graves. We should take great care that we abstain from this.

Rasūlullah ﷺ has said,

"I prefer to walk over hot coal or a sword edge than to walk on the grave." (Ibn Mājah)

May Allah ﷻ give us the ability to value our visits to the graveyard and make it a means of us spiritually assisting the deceased and taking heed for our own deaths. Amīn.

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# Etiquettes of Janāzah

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