

For non-Mahram Persons to see the Deceased

Q: Janaa'iz-40: It is the custom in most places is to allow the family to see The deceased before placing her into the bier. However, many other people also look at the deceased with them. Is this permissible? Can the husband see the wife's face after death? Can he lower her into the grave?

Answer: Rasulullaah SAW. mentioned that a woman is an object of concealment. Rasulullaah SAW. also stated that Allaah's curse is on the man who looks at a non-Mahram woman as well as the woman who is seen by a non-Mahram man.' Since these Ahadeeth do not differentiate between the living and the dead, it will be forbidden to look at a person after death when one could not look at them during their lifetimes.

When Hadhrat Faatima RADI. was asked what the best thing for a woman is, she replied, "That she does not see men and they do not see her" Rasulullaah SAW. liked her reply very much and made du'aa for her.

It was Hadhrat Faatima RADI. who initiated the practice of holding a sheet over the grave when, burying a female. Before she passed away, she made the bequest that her grave be covered so that no male can even see her height or size. Such was her degree of modesty yet the people who take her name today go into people's homes and feel no shame to look at the faces of non-Mahram women!

People like the father, son, grandfather, uncle, brother, nephew and grandson may look at the face of a woman because it is always Haraam for them to marry her.

However, it is necessary for women who are non- Mahram to vacate the room at the time. Men with whom it is not always Haraam for the woman to marry may not see her.

These include all cousins. The practice stated in the question is therefore not permissible.

If there are no Mahram males to carry a woman's body to the grave or to lower it inside, assistance may be taken from a pious and Allaah-fearing person. This may also be done when there are insufficient Mahram males available and they require more help. In these cases, help may even be taken from husband. Although it is forbidden for the husband to touch the deceased wife's body and to bathe her, it is permissible for him to see her face.

The husband may also enter the grave with the Mahram males. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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