

Shaking Hands with the Bereaved Family after the Burial

Q: Janaa'iz-16: People usually stand in rows to shake hands with the bereaved family after the burial to see them off. What is the ruling in this regard?

Answer: It is Masnoon both before and after the burial to express one's condolence to the bereaved family both verbally and in writing. This may be done whenever one is able to do so within three days. After three days have passed, it becomes Makrooh unless one of the two persons was not present. Condolence refers to consoling them, exhorting them to exercise patience and extolling the virtues of this. One should also make du'aa for the deceased by saying, "May Allaah amplify your rewards' grant you great recompense and forgive your deceased."

When Rasulullaah SAW.'s daughter Hadhrat Zaynab RADI. lost her child. Rasulullaah SAW. consoled her by saying. "Whatever Allaah takes and gives belongs only to Him and everything has been given a stipulated period of time (to live) . Be patient and look forward to the rewards of your patience.

Gathering at the house of the deceased and then regarding it as necessary to shake hands conflicts with the Sunnah practice. The books of Fiqh state that it is Makr'ooH to gather at the deceased house and for all to then express their condolences in turn. What should be done after the funeral is for the people to disperse and engage in their activities, leaving the bereaved family to tend to their affairs. This further proves that it is also Makrooh to gather for the Faatiha after the funeral.

Shaking hands is not a prerequisite for expressing condolence. It is Sunnah to shake hands when meeting a Muslim after a while and one may even embrace the person if one meets him after a long time. However, there is nothing like a handshake of condolence. One need only greet with Salaam and express one's words of condolence. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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