

SAVING FOR BURIAL EXPENSES

Q:2- "Secondly I see Muslims who save money to buy houses, cars, vacation packages, send their children to the best colleges, and afford the most elaborate Valimahs yet when Allah sends his angel of death to retrieve their souls there is no money in their savings account to pay for their funeral expenses. In fact most of the Muslims I have spoken to seem to believe it is the duty of the Ummah to bury its brother or sister or child in Islam. Is this true? Are we not asked to save for our funeral expenses?" (Ibid)

A: This is not correct. The Muslims have been advised by the Shariah not to be involved in any kind of extravagance. Moreover, the Holy Prophet has advised the Muslims that instead of spending all their money in their life-time, they should leave a substantial part of it for their inheritors, so much so that they cannot make any will for charitable purposes in excess of 1/3 rd of their property. The Holy Prophet saw while explaining this rule of Shariah, has observed in the following words:

"To leave your inheritors well-off is better than leaving them in poverty looking to the hands of others."??? (Bukhari)

Therefore, one should never presume that it is the duty of Muslim brothers to bear the expenses of his burial etc., and he should spend whatever he has in his life time. The Muslim people are required to pay the burial expenses only when a person has died in a state of poverty leaving nothing behind. But it does not mean that one should exploit this obligation of the Muslims for his extravagance or his lavish expenditure during his life time.

Contemporary fatawaa