

Delaying the Burial to Wait for Friends and Family

Q: Janaa'iz-89: Following from the question above, it is asked: Can the burial be delayed to wait for the arrival of a child, spouse or other family member?

Answer: When a death is confirmed, preparations for the burial should commence as soon as possible. (Note the following Ahadeeth:)

1. After visiting an ailing Sahabi by the name of Hadhrat Talha bin Baraa? RADI. Rasulullaah SAW. addressed the Sahabah RADI. saying, "It appears to me that death is imminent for Talha. Inform me as soon as he passes away and hasten with the preparations because it is inappropriate to hold back the body of a Muslim amongst his family after he has passed away."
2. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar RADI. states that he heard Rasulullaah SAW. say, "When any of you passes away, do not hold him back, but hasten his burial. Then recite the opening verses of Surah Baqara (until MUFLEEHUN) at the headside of the grave and the closing verses (from AA?MANR- RASOOLU) at the side of the feet."
3. Rasulullaah SAW. once addressed Hadhrat Ali RADI. saying, "O Ali Three things are not to be delayed; salaah when the time arrives, a funeral when it is ready and the marriage of a person when a compatible spouse is found."
4. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, Hasten the funeral because if the deceased was a good person, you are taking him to a better place and if he was otherwise, then it is evil that you are carrying on your shoulders."

It is because of such Ahadeeth that the Fuqahaa have also emphasised hastening burial proceedings. Maraaqil Falaah states that hastening the shrouding of the deceased accords him honour. A Hadith states, "It is inappropriate to hold back the body of a Muslim amongst his family after he has passed away."

In fact, amongst the reasons for transporting of the deceased the deceased more than two miles to be Makrooh is the fact that this would delay the burial. Hadhrat Jaabir RADI. states that when his father was martyred at Uhud, his aunt intended to bury him in their family's graveyard. Rasulullaah SAW. how eve,(had an announcement made that all the martyrs were to be brought back to the place where they had fallen. This Hadith has been reported by both Tirmidhi and Abu Dawood. The prohibition for transporting the deceased is because of the delay it causes to the burial.

Waiting for the arrival of family and friends would delay the burial proceedings, which is wrong, since according due honour and respect to the deceased would be to hasten the procedures. In fact, the Fuqahaa have also stated that it is Makrooh to delay the Janaazah salaah to after the Jumu'ah salaah for the purpose of having a large congregation.

It is evident from all of the above that when a person passes away in your town, it is best and Mustahab for the person to be buried there. Texts from various sources have been quoted in the foregoing pages to substantiate this. Some of these are Durrul Mukhtaar (Vol.1 Pg.840), Kabeeri (Pg.563), Rasaa'ilul Arkaan (Vol.1 Pg.159) and Tahtaawi alaa Maraaqil Falaah (Pg.337).

However, if the family of the relatives insist on taking the body home. it is best for the people of your town not to perform the Janaazah salaah because their insistence is on account of them wanting to perform the Janaazah salaah. By you performing the Janaazah salaah, there will be danger of the laws of the Shari'ah being flouted by the Janaazah salaah being repeated.

It is best for you to make du'aa for the person and to convey Isaale Thawaab for him. If any of you are able to travel with the family to the town, they may do so to perform the Janaazah salaah there. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

Fatawa Rahimiyyah vol.3