

## WHEN A MUSLIM IS AT THE POINT OF DEATH:

Family members of the dying person and his/her closest friends should be informed and should be present at his side to help him turn his thoughts to Allah, encourage him very gently to repent, remind him about all the good deeds that he did, about Allah's mercy, and Allah's forgiveness. Those who are present near a dying Muslim should do the following:

- They should be kind and patient.
- They should never leave him alone.
- They should give him hope

They should prompt him very gently (encourage without insistence) every now and then to say the Shahada: "La ilaha il lallah", which means 'There is no God but Allah,' in a very kind and sincere manner as these may be his last words.

## WHEN DEATH OCCURS:

Many deaths occur in medical institutions. There is occasionally a concern that a Muslim who dies in such an institution may not be treated in accordance with Islamic tradition especially when family members may not be present at the time of death.

If death is expected, the family may contact their local funeral director or mosque at this stage to facilitate arrangements.

There have been concerns relating to how the body of the deceased may be handled and this can be quite distressful to the family, particularly when the handlers are of the opposite gender and the family may not be present.

In order to counteract these possible problems emerging, a number of guidelines are suggested and initiatives have been set up to reduce this anxiety for all concerned.

It is preferable that hospital staff wear gloves and avoid unnecessary handling of the body of the deceased.

The body should **NOT** be washed in preparation for the funeral, except for any necessary cleansing which may be required.

The washing in preparation for burial is a very important duty which the deceased's family members or members of the community are obliged to perform.

When death comes the body should be handled with the utmost respect, gentleness and decency.

Firstly, please ensure that the following procedures have been carried out, preferably by staff members of the same gender as the deceased:

- Any tubes, false teeth, contact lenses or artificial limbs should be removed
- Any incisions plugged so as to prevent a flow of blood.
- Close the eyes of the deceased.



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- Bind the lower jaw with a bandage or a strip of cloth tied on the top of the head in order that the mouth is held in a closed position.
- The ankles must be fastened together with a bandage or strip of cloth to avoid opening of the legs.
- Arms must be placed straight down the side of the body with straightened fingers.
- The body, still fully clothed, should then be wrapped in a sheet.
- Anybody in the state of Janaabat (in need of compulsory BATH), Haidh (menstruation) or Nifas (postnatal bleeding) should not appear in the presence or of close proximity of the body.
- Quranic recitations should not be performed near the body until after Ghusl (Bathing of the deceased) is given.
- If death occurs in Hospital then the family should wait for the body to be placed in the hospital mortuary before leaving.
- The staff should inform the doctor as soon as possible, to arrange for the death certificate at the earliest convenience
- The funeral takes place as soon as possible so it is crucial that the death certificate be arranged promptly
- The body shall remain at the hospital mortuary, untouched, until such time when the paperwork has been issued to release the body to the family.

## Important Note for the Nursing Home, Hospital or Doctor

Kindly note that the Muslim Funeral takes place as soon as possible, usually **within 24 hours**, but this may be as soon as **6 hours** after death. Therefore there is usually some urgency in ensuring that the "Cause of Death" be available as soon as possible. Your understanding and assistance in this regard will be highly appreciated.

