

RAMADAN

IMMERSION



**Mufti Abdul Rahman
Waheed**

Deeds For the Deceased

- Separation is inevitable. One day, either we or our loved ones will pass on. Ultimately, we will be the ones praying at each other's janazah (funeral prayer). Hence, we should mentally prepare ourselves for that final farewell.
- Understanding that returning to Allah is not a loss, but a transition to a better place, helps us bear the pain of parting. We take comfort in knowing our loved ones are in the best company, and that things can only get better from here.
- The existence of righteous, living descendants is the greatest sadaqah jariyah (ongoing charity) for those who have passed. It is seen as an investment in the Hereafter, providing continuous blessings for the deceased.
- While we live, we can honor the deceased through ongoing righteous actions that assist their journey in the afterlife, transforming grief into lasting good. The following narrations outline the specific, impactful deeds we should perform.

Deed #1: Making Istighfar (Seeking Forgiveness) & Du'a (Supplication)

- The first step after a death is to turn to Allah with continuous istighfar and sincere supplications, begging for His mercy and the forgiveness of the deceased's shortcomings and sins.

- Prayers for the deceased are as vast as mountains and making istighfar is the best gift from the living to the deceased.
 - Ibn Abbas reported The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

” مَا الْمَيِّتُ فِي الْقَبْرِ إِلَّا كَالْغَرِيقِ الْمُتَغَوِّثِ، يَنْتَظِرُ دَعْوَةَ تَلَحُّقَهُ مِنْ أَبِي أَوْ أُمِّ أَوْ أَخٍ أَوْ صَدِيقٍ، فَإِذَا لَحِقَتْهُ كَانَتْ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْهِ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا فِيهَا، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَيَدْخُلُ عَلَيَّ أَهْلِي الْقُبُورِ مِنْ دُعَاءِ أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ أَمْثَالَ الْجِبَالِ، وَإِنَّ هَدِيَّةَ الْأَحْيَاءِ إِلَى الْأَمْوَاتِ الْإِسْتِغْفَارُ لَهُمْ ”

"The deceased in his grave is like a drowning person clinging (to something), waiting for a supplication to reach him from a father, mother, son, brother, or friend. If it reaches him, it is more beloved to him than the world and everything it contains. Indeed, Allah causes the inhabitants of the graves to receive (rewards) from the supplications of the people of the earth, like mountains. And the gift of the living to the dead is seeking forgiveness for them."(Shu'ab al-Iman lil-Bayhaqi)

- Du'a is the most valuable gift for the deceased, and they receive the benefits and rewards of our du'as and righteous acts we perform on their behalf in every stage of the afterlife.
- We must prioritize dedicating our du'as to all deceased believers, as they are in greater need of our supplications than the living are in need of food and drink.
- Our du'as should be extended beyond our loved ones to every deceased Muslim, asking for Allah's mercy upon them; treating them with the same love and care as our own family.
- Proactively seek out and attend janazah, console family members of the deceased by making du'a in their presence, go above and beyond to offer them personal support, to lighten their load during this difficult time.
 - Allah tells us:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

And those who come after them will pray, "Our Lord! Forgive us and our fellow believers who preceded us in faith, and do not allow bitterness into our hearts towards those who believe. Our Lord! Indeed, You are Ever Gracious, Most Merciful."
(59:10)

- Imam al-Suyuti quoted a statement detailing how the du'as of the living are presented as gifts to the deceased in their graves:
 - One of the salaf (pious predecessors) said, "Prayers for the dead are like gifts for the living. The angel approaches the deceased with a platter of light covered with a cloth of light, and says to him, 'O the one who is in the grave, this is a gift from your loyal, beloved friend so-and-so, or your relative so-and-so.' And he rejoices at it, just as the living one rejoices on receiving a gift."

Deed #2: Giving Sadaqah Jariyah (Ongoing Charity)

- Sadaqah jariyah offers perpetual comfort to our deceased loved ones, just as giving gifts to them while they are alive brings joy to them and happiness to us.
- The essence of sadaqah jariyah is to provide enduring benefit. It refers to any charitable act that provides continuous, long-term benefits to others, such as building a mosque, digging a well etc.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) identified several acts of sadaqah jariyah that continue to benefit a person in their grave after death.
- Following the Prophet's guidance to provide charity on behalf of the deceased, Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah dedicated his fruitful garden and a well as ongoing charity for his mother.
 - Narrated Ibn `Abbas:

سَعْدُ بْنُ عَبَادَةَ - رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ - أَخَا بَنِي سَاعِدَةَ تُوفِّيَتْ أُمُّهُ وَهُوَ غَائِبٌ، فَآتَى النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ أُمَّيْ تُوفِّيَتْ وَأَنَا غَائِبٌ عَنْهَا، فَهَلْ يَنْفَعُهَا شَيْءٌ إِنْ تَصَدَّقْتُ بِهَ عَنِّي قَالَ " نَعَمْ " . قَالَ فَإِنِّي أَشْهَدُكَ أَنَّ حَائِطِي الْمَخْرَافَ صَدَقَةٌ عَلَيْهَا.

That the mother of Sa`d bin Ubada the brother of Bani Saida died in Sa`d's absence, so he came to the Prophet saying, "O Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)! My mother died in my absence, will it benefit her if I give in charity on her behalf?" The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Yes." Sa`d said, "I take you as my witness that I give my garden Al-Makhraf in charity on her behalf." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- It was narrated from Sa'd bin 'Ubadah that his mother died. He said:

يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ أُمَّي مَاتَتْ أَفَأَتَصَدَّقُ عَنْهَا قَالَ " نَعَمْ " . قَالَ فَأَيُّ الصَّدَقَةِ أَفْضَلُ قَالَ " سَقَى الْمَاءِ " . فَتِلْكَ سِقَايَةُ سَعْدٍ بِالْمَدِينَةِ .

"O Messenger of Allah, my mother has died; can I give charity on her behalf?" He said: "Yes." He said: "What kind of charity is best?" He said: "Providing drinking water." And that is the drinking-fountain of Sa'd in Al-Madinah. (Sunan an-Nasa'i)

- While the Prophet (ﷺ) encouraged digging wells, in today's world, this means fulfilling critical community needs, such as supporting religious institutions or equipping a masjid. These contributions serve as enduring charity, yielding rewards equivalent to providing a well.
- We should consistently offer sadaqah jariyah on behalf of the deceased as it is believed to act as a protector, easing the trials of the grave and it remains a source of safety throughout the Day of Judgment.
 - 'Uqbah ibn 'Amir reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ الصَّدَقَةَ لَتُطْفِئُ عَنْ أَهْلِهَا حَرَّ الْقُبُورِ وَإِنَّمَا يَسْتَظِلُّ الْمُؤْمِنُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِي ظِلِّ صَدَقَتِهِ

"Verily, charity will extinguish the heat of the graves for their people. Only the believer can seek shade on the Day of Resurrection in the shade of his charity."

(Shu'ab al-Iman lil-Bayhaqi)

Deed #3: Performing Hajj

- The Prophet (ﷺ) encouraged performing Hajj on behalf of deceased parents or relatives.
- Performing Hajj on behalf of a deceased loved one who did not complete it is a virtuous act that settles a spiritual debt to Allah.
 - It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbas said:

قَالَ رَجُلٌ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ أَبِي مَاتَ وَلَمْ يَحُجَّ أَفَأَحُجُّ عَنْهُ قَالَ " أَرَأَيْتَ لَوْ كَانَ عَلَى أَبِيكَ
دَيْنٌ أَكُنْتُ قَاضِيَهُ " . قَالَ نَعَمْ . قَالَ " فَدَيْنُ اللَّهِ أَحَقُّ " .

"A man said: 'O Messenger of Allah! My father has died and he did not perform Hajj; shall I perform Hajj on his behalf?' He said: 'Don't you think that if your father owed a debt you would pay it off?' The man said: 'Yes.' He said: 'The debt owed to Allah is more deserving (of being paid off).'"(Sunan an-Nasa'i)

- It is believed that this act is a means for them to be saved from the Hellfire and acts as a source of blessing for them in the grave.
- A child who performs Hajj on behalf of their deceased parents receives a reward for their service, while the parents receive the full reward of an accepted Hajj.
- It is reported that when a child performs Hajj on behalf of their deceased parents, the parents receive the reward of an accepted Hajj, where the angels in the heavens greet them with "Hajj Mubarak," and Allah registers that child as one of the truly obedient.

Deed #4: Reciting the Qur'an

- According to Imam al-Suyuti, reciting the Qur'an for a deceased loved one brings the same amount of reward whether it is performed at their graveside or elsewhere.
- Different views on permissibility:
 - Majority of scholars maintain that the reward of reciting Qur'an (Qira'at) reaches and benefits the deceased in their graves, particularly when intended for them.
 - A minority view holds that it is not permissible based on a Quranic verse which emphasizes that each person is responsible for their own actions and will be rewarded based on their own efforts, not the efforts of others.
 - Allah said:

وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى

That man can have nothing but what he strives for (53:39)

- The minority argued that the verse elucidates a deceased person can only benefit from their own actions, and therefore, reciting the Qur'an for them does not transfer the reward of the reciter.
- The majority argued that the verse does not contradict transferring rewards because the reciter is donating their own "striving" (reward) as a gift to the deceased. Nevertheless, this is upon the condition that they have died as a believer; with iman.
 - It emphasizes the importance of making du'a asking to die with iman.
 - It is our duty to spread the message of Islam to others so they may die with iman. However, we must recognize that guidance is in Allah's hands and trust Allah as the final Judge.
 - Like Ibrahim (AS) whose father was a disbeliever and died upon disbelief, we submit to Allah's decree without questioning the path someone dies upon.
- It is a virtuous practice to dedicate the rewards of Qur'an recitation to deceased loved ones, with scholars agreeing that such blessings reach them. Regularly engaging in this, whether individually or during grave visits, is recommended.

○ Ali ibn Abi Talib said:

من مر على المقابر فقرأ (قل هو الله أحد) أحد عشرة مرة ثم وهب أجرها للأموات أعطي من الأجر بعدد الأموات

Whoever passes by the graveyard and recites "Qul huwallahu ahad" (Surah al-Ikhlās) eleven times and then gifts the reward to the deceased, will receive the reward of the number of deceased. (Shu'ab al-Iman lil-Bayhaqi)

- It is recommended to recite Surah al-Fatiha, Surah al-Ikhlās and Surah al-Takathur and send the rewards to the people of the graves, as on the Day of Judgment, they will testify and plead to Allah on the reciter's behalf.
 - Abu al-Qasim ibn Ali al-Zanjani narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah, who said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

من دخل المقابر ثم قرأ فاتحة الكتاب و {قل هو الله أحد} و {ألهاكم التكاثر} ثم اللهم إني جعلت ثواب ما قرأت من كلامك لأهل المقابر من المؤمنين والمؤمنات كانوا شفعاء له إلى الله تعالى.

Whoever enters the graveyards and then recites the opening chapter of the Quran (Surah al-Fatiha), "Say, He is Allah, the One," (Surah al-Ikhlās) and "The mutual rivalry for worldly gain distracts you," (Surah al-Takathur) then says, "O Allah, I have made the reward for what I have recited of Your words for the people of the graveyards, the believing men and women, who will be intercessors for him with Allah Almighty." (Sharh as-Sudur)

- Imam al-Qurtubi, along with the majority of scholars, consider it recommended to recite Surah Yaseen in the presence of someone who is dying or next to their grave.
 - Ma'qil ibn Yasar reported the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

اقْرَؤُوا يَيسَ عَلَي مَوْتَاكُمْ

"Recite Surah Ya-Sin over your dying men." (Sunan Abu Dawud)

- It is encouraged us to recite Surah al-Fatiha for the deceased. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal mentioned when visiting the graveside, a person should recite Surah al-Fatiha as the reward reaches the deceased.
 - Talhah Ibn 'Abdullah said:

صَلَّيْتُ مَعَ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ عَلَي جَنَازَةٍ فَقَرَأَ بِفَاتِحَةِ الْكِتَابِ، وَقَالَ: إِنَّهَا مِنَ السُّنَّةِ

"I prayed over a dead person along with Ibn 'Abbas. He recited Surat al-Fatiha and he said: This is the Sunnah." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

- Ibn 'Abbas said:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ (ﷺ) قَرَأَ عَلَي الْجَنَازَةِ بِالْفَاتِحَةِ

"Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) recited al-Fatiha for a deceased" (Al-Dhahabi)

- Based on the Sunnah and scholarly opinion, the most highly encouraged Surahs to recite for the deceased are Surah al-Fatiha, Surah al-Ikhlās, Surah Yaseen, and the Mu'awwidhatayn (Surah al-Falaq and Surah an-Nas).

- We should make it a priority to recite these chapters upon the deceased, whether at the graveside or elsewhere. After reciting, ask Allah to convey the thawab (reward) to the deceased.
- While reciting the Qur'an at the graveside is permissible, we should not turn the site into a place of worship. Instead, visit our loved ones with the intention of gifting them the reward of our actions.
 - Incorporate visiting the graveside into our family routine, not just in times of grief.
 - This act softens the heart, it is a source of healing and serves as a reminder of the Hereafter.
 - Ensure we recite the Qur'an and make du'a not only for our deceased loved ones but for all the residents of the graves.
 - Remember that if we visit the graveside often, our graves will likely be visited by others when we are gone.

Conclusion

- Don't Be Deceived By The Temporal
 - Real healing after loss comes from accepting that true freedom from pain exists only in Jannah, not in this world.
 - We were meant to face trials here, and Shaytan deceived us into thinking this world is a permanent home of pleasure.
 - Allah tells us:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُم بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ

O humanity! Indeed, Allah's promise is true. So do not let the life of this world deceive you, nor let the Chief Deceiver deceive you about Allah. (35:5)

- Engage In Muraqabah (Spiritual Mindfulness)
 - By practicing muraqabah we consciously direct our mind toward the reality of the Hereafter and break free from worldly illusions.
 - Begin your practice through daily life scenarios that will elevate your iman.
 - Example: Imagining the Angel of Death Taking Your Soul
 - Visualize yourself on your deathbed seeing the Angel of Death present to take your soul.

- Reflect on that exact, terrifying moment when the soul is extracted from the body.
- In that instant, only the state of your faith and your deeds matter, and worldly pursuits become irrelevant.
- Let that moment fuel an immediate desire to repent and prepare yourself for the Hereafter.
- Aim For Husn Al-Khitam (A Good Ending)
 - We should aim for our death to be a source of solace for those we leave behind, ensuring we bring healing, not heartbreak.
 - Make your final act your best, as the last impression becomes your lasting impression.
 - Live a life in ibadah so that you will die in a state of ibadah, making it easier for others to console those you leave behind.
 - For example, knowing we passed in a state of obedience (i.e. in sujood) makes our passing beautiful and eases the hearts of our family.