

98189 - How a woman is to be shrouded

the question

How is a woman to be shrouded when she dies?.

Detailed answer

The madhhabs (Hanafi, Maaliki, Shaafa'i, Hanbali and Zaahiri) are agreed that it is mustahabb for a woman to be shrouded in five pieces of cloth.

See: Badaa'i' al-Sanaa'i' (2/325); Mawaahib al-Jaleel (2/266); al-Majmoo' (5/161); al-Mughni (3/390) and al-Muhalla (5/120).

Ibn al-Mundhir said: Most of the scholars from whom were learned were of the view that a woman should be shrouded in five pieces of cloth."(Al-Mughni 3/391).

'Ata' said: A woman may be shrouded in three pieces of cloth. Narrated by 'Abd al-Razzaaq in al-Musannaf (3/273).

A number of scholars are of the view that these five pieces are: an izaar (lower garment or waist wrapper), a khimaar (head cover), a gamees (chemise), and two large pieces of cloth that are wrapped around her. This is the view of the Maalikis, Shaafa'is and Hanbalis.

See: Mawaahib al-Jaleel (2/266), al-Majmoo' (5/162) and al-Mughni (3/392).

They quoted as evidence the report narrated by Abu Dawood (3157) from Layla bint Qaanif al-Thaqafiyah who said: I was among those who washed Umm Kulthoom the daughter of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when she died. The first thing that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) gave to us was the hiqa' (lower garment) then the dar' (chemise), then the khimaar (head cover), then the milhafah (wrapper), then she was wrapped in the last wrapper. She said: And the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was sitting by the door with her shrouds, handing them to us piece by piece. It was classed as da'eef by al-Albaani in

Irwa' al-Ghaleel (723), but this hadeeth has corroborating evidence in a report narrated by al-Jawzi from Umm 'Atiyah (may Allah be pleased with her) who said: We shrouded her in five pieces of cloth and we covered her as a living woman is covered. Al-Haafiz said: Its isnaad is saheeh. Fath al-Bari (3/159).

Ibn Qudaamah said: This is mustahabb because a woman is covered more than a man when she is alive, because her 'awrah is more extensive than his, and the same applies after death. End quote.

See: al-Mughni (3/391).

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: How should a man be shrouded and how should a woman be shrouded?

He replied:

It is better for a man to be shrouded in three pieces of white cloth among which there is no chemise or turban. This is what is best. And a woman should be shrouded in five pieces: a waist-wrapper, a chemise, a head-cover and two wrappers. If the deceased is shrouded in one piece of cloth that covers everything, that is permissible, whether it is a man or a woman. The matter ibroad in scope."(Majmoo' Fatawa Ibn Baz 13/127).

It says in Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (3/363): A woman's shrouding starts with the waist-wrapper which covers the 'awrah and surrounding area, then a chemise covering the body, then covering the head and areas close to it, then she should be wrapped in the two wrappers. End quote.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baz, Shaykh 'Abd al-Razzaaq 'Afeefi, Shaykh 'Abd-Allah Ghadyaan, Shaykh 'Abd-Allah ibn Qa'ood.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said in al-Sharh al-Mumti': With regard to shrouding a woman in five pieces of cloth there is a marfoo' hadeeth (i.e., one which is attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)), but its isnaad includes a narrator who is majhool (unknown), hence some of the scholars said that

a woman may be shrouded as a man is shrouded, i.e., in three pieces of cloth that are wrapped over one another.

Even if the hadeeth is not saheeh, this view is more correct, because the basic principle is that men and women are equal in terms of shar'i rulings, unless there is evidence to the contrary. Where there is evidence that one of them is to be treated differently, that should be followed, otherwise the basic principle is that they are equal.

Based on this we say: If the hadeeth about shrouding a woman in five pieces of cloth is proven to be saheeh, then that is what should be followed. If it is not proven, then the basic principle is that men and women are equal with regard to rulings, except when there is evidence to the contrary. End quote.

Al-Sharh al-Mumti' (5/224).