

**Providing solutions &
guidance**



**Fatwā and guidance
on funeral rites for
Covid-19 related
deaths**



C.A.L.M
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الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام على رسول الله وعلى آله وصحبه ومن تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين

ALL PRAISE BELONGS TO ALLĀH AND MAY ALLĀH'S PEACE AND BLESSINGS BE UPON HIS MESSENGER, HIS FAMILY, COMPANIONS AND FOLLOWERS UNTIL THE LAST DAY

Executive Summary

- We advise and advocate all Mosques and institutions to perform the *Ghusl*, shrouding and burial of deceased Muslims, wherever possible, in the normal manner, while observing the necessary and prudent health guidelines.
- In any given command from the *Sharī'ah*, striving our utmost to fulfil the command to the best of our ability is required. This is extended to the guidance that we are issuing here.
- We urge those with the capacity to innovate solutions, to look at ways that will allow the complete or partial automation of the *Ghusl* process, affording the deceased the required dignity while exposing those doing the *Ghusl* to as minimal potential risk as possible.
- We would like to remind the community that the qualified jurists of our communities may differ on particular rulings concerning the final rites of those who have been infected by Covid-19. We advise our communities not to create hatred and division over such rulings and we remind our community that Islamic scholars and *Muftis* are sincerely striving to provide *Allāh's* guidance on these matters and help the deceased and their families.
- Those who follow the ruling of a known and respected *Mufti* are not to blame and what they do with sincerity and in accordance with the *Mufti's fatwā* is correct and acceptable in the sight of *Allāh*. Thus, they discharge the duty they owe the deceased in the sight of *Allāh*.
- It is important at this time to work for unity.



Fatwā and Guidance

The Islamic Council of Europe has been inundated with questions concerning the burial rites of deceased Muslims who were or are suspected of being infected by Covid-19. The Islamic Council of Europe endorses and commends the [NBC \(National Burial Council\)](http://nbc.org.uk/)¹ and [BBSI \(British Board of Scholars and Imāms\)](http://www.bbsi.org.uk/covid-funeralguidance/)² for their excellent and timely guidance and *fatāwa* regarding some of the issues concerning the washing and burial rites for deceased Muslims.

To compliment the guidance that has been issued by the above bodies and referred to by the [MCB \(Muslim Council of Britain\)](http://www.muslimcouncil.org.uk/), we would like to add our support and extend the aforementioned guidance by issuing guidelines that may provide answers for questions related to *Ghusl* and *Tayammum* that were perhaps not addressed. Additionally, we will address some practicalities that Mosques and families dealing with the funeral rites of deceased Muslims are facing.

In light of the limitations in place, the first principle that we need to bear in mind from the outset in this matter is the statement of the Prophet (ﷺ):

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ صَخْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: "مَا نَهَيْتُكُمْ عَنْهُ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ، وَمَا أَمَرْتُكُمْ بِهِ فَأَتُوا مِنْهُ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ، فَإِنَّمَا أَهْلَكَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَثْرَةُ مَسَائِلِهِمْ وَاجْتِلَافُهُمْ عَلَى أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ". رَوَاهُ الْبُخَارِيُّ وَمُسْلِمٌ

On the authority of Abū Hurayrah (May Allāh be please with him): "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say, 'What I have forbidden for you, avoid. What I have ordered you [to do], do as much of it as you can. For verily, it was only the excessive questioning and their disagreeing with their Prophets that destroyed [the nations] who were before you.'" [Bukhāri & Muslim]

In any given command from the *Sharī'ah*, striving our utmost to fulfil the command to the best of our ability is required. This is extended to the guidance that we are issuing here.

In the case of performing the *Ghusl* for the deceased Muslim as well as the shrouding and burial, these acts should be done, wherever possible, in the normal manner, while observing the necessary and prudent health guidelines.

¹ <http://nbc.org.uk/>

² <http://www.bbsi.org.uk/covid-funeralguidance/>

We advocate; as the aforementioned *fatāwa* have mentioned, that we take all the necessary steps as Mosques and institutions to prepare for performing the *Ghusl* for the deceased in as complete a way as possible. This will discharge the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) and ensure we do the utmost within our ability.

In order to enact the washing, shrouding and burial rites to the best of our abilities as a community and within the scope of current limitations in place, the necessary preparations that Mosques and those providing the funeral rites of the deceased need to consider and make arrangements for are the following:

- Securing a suitable place for the *Ghusl* that can be sanitised immediately after each *Ghusl* has been performed. Some Mosques have used portacabins specifically for this purpose, liaising with the council to ensure the necessary requirements have been met. Some councils may allow large tents to be erected for this purpose. Local councils are helping our communities with the final rites of our community members and through consulting them and working with best practice, we will *InshāAllāh* achieve the common good.
- The sourcing and purchasing of appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and the training of a sufficient group of volunteers to be ready to fulfil this communal obligation upon us.
- Awareness and ability to use appropriate methods and facilities to dispose of clinical waste in accordance with local authority guidelines.
- We refer Muslim graveyards to [our previous fatwā concerning multiple interment](#)¹ in a single grave if space in the graveyards become very limited.

In terms of the practicalities of washing and shrouding we offer the following guidelines:

- If the full *Sunnah Ghusl* cannot be performed, then the minimal *Ghusl* is to be done by simply pouring water on the body. That can be done in a variety of ways according to the available washing facilities.

¹Fatwā (171093): <http://iceurope.org/fatwa-ruling-on-double-interment-burial/>

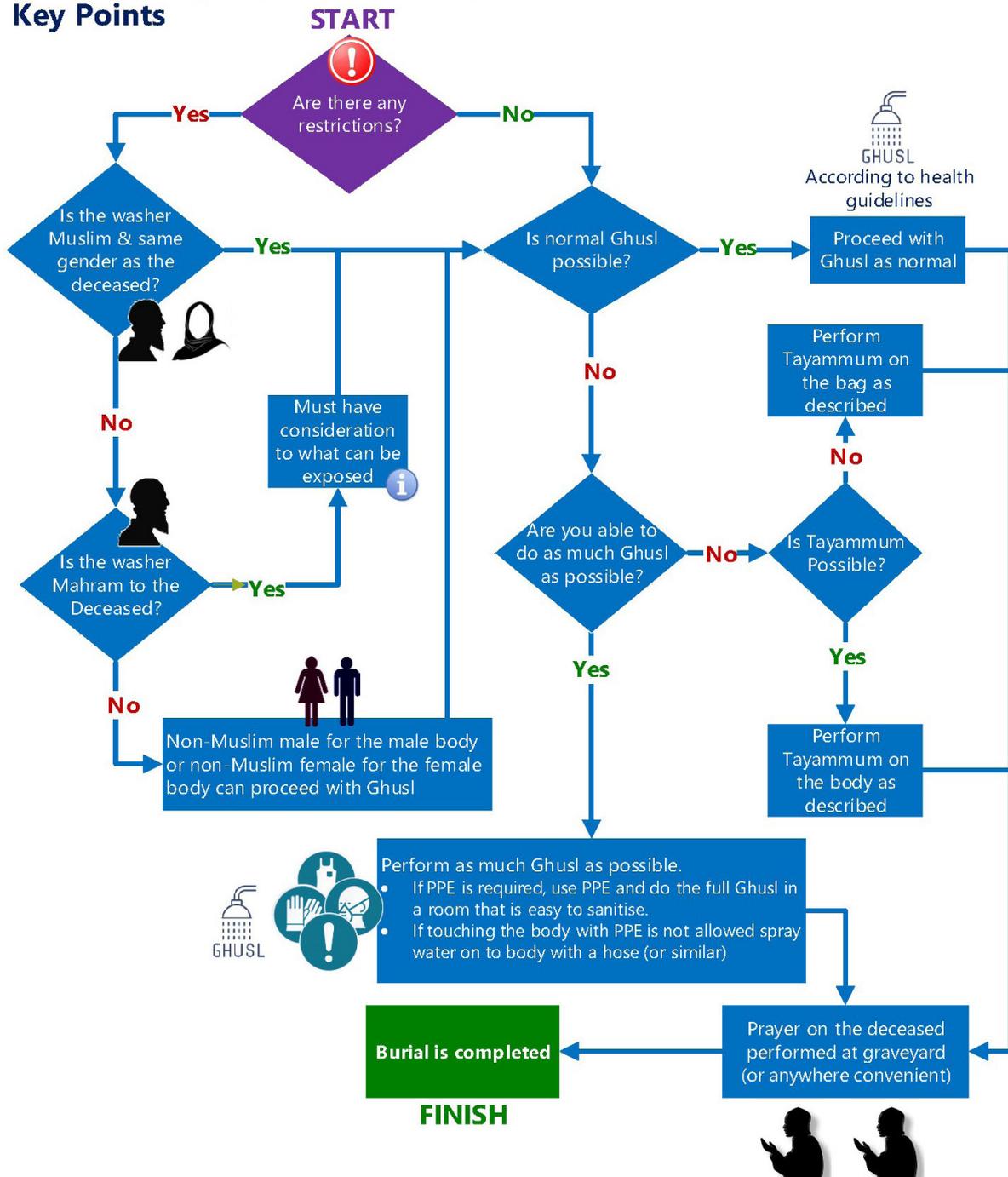


- Ideally, the *Ghusl* should be carried out by Muslim males for Muslim males and by Muslim females for Muslim females. Many schools of thought allowed *Mahrams*, male or female, to carry out the *Ghusl* for the opposite gender whilst taking into consideration which parts of the body can be exposed and which parts cannot be exposed.
- If there is no Muslim male or mahram to perform the *Ghusl*, then a non-Muslim male can perform the *Ghusl* of the Muslim male. Likewise, a non-Muslim female can perform the *Ghusl* of the Muslim female. They can be taught to do so by a Muslim, however, if that is not possible then they should be asked to pour water on the entire body. That would be deemed sufficient, and *Allāh* knows best. Most of the scholars confirmed that the *Ghusl* of the dead body does not need an intention of *'Ibādah*.
- If the *Ghusl* is not possible for whatever genuine reasons, then we should perform *Tayammum*. This is the opinion of the vast majority of the scholars.
- The *Tayammum* of the dead body is similar to the one performed by the living person.
- The person who is performing the *Tayammum* should touch the open palms of the deceased with a dusty surface of sand/soil if possible and on normal sand/soil if not possible. Then the deceased's face should be wiped gently with similar sand/soil. The one performing *Tayammum* can either touch the sand/soil again or not and then wipe the top of the hands of the deceased, starting with the deceased's right hand followed by the left one. Some schools require that the top of the hand all the way to the elbow to be wiped, the matter is flexible. It is also advisable not to be rigid in applying these guidelines as it might not always be possible to do them perfectly at all times.
- It is better to apply *Tayammum* to the body directly. However, if that is not possible then it can be applied from above the shroud or even to the plastic bag in which the body is placed.
- If no one from the same gender is able to perform the *Tayammum*, then some scholars allow a person from the opposite gender. If the family of the deceased allow this then it is sufficient, otherwise the body can be shrouded and prepared for the *Janāzah* prayer without the *Ghusl/Tayammum*.

Preparation / Arrangements

- Securing a suitable place for the *Ghusl* that can be sanitised immediately after each *Ghusl* has been performed.
- The sourcing and purchasing of appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and the training of a sufficient group of volunteers.
- Awareness and ability to use appropriate methods and facilities to dispose of clinical waste in accordance with local authority guidelines.
- Those who cannot attend *Janāzah* can pray *Salātul-Ghā'ib* (*Janāzah* prayer in absence of the body)
- Perform multiple interment burial if space in the Muslim graveyard is limited.
- If it was not possible to wash the body prior to being placed in the grave, water can be poured over the body while it is in the grave. The *Janāzah* prayer should be performed thereafter, followed by the covering of the grave (wood planks, mud etc)

Key Points



We further recommend those with the capacity to innovate solutions, to look at ways that will allow the complete or partial automation of the *Ghusl* process, affording the deceased the required dignity while exposing those doing the *Ghusl* to as minimal potential risk of infection as possible. It may become necessary to deal with multiple cases of *Ghusl* for several deceased Muslims at the same time and provision for this needs to be included in the design.

As a final word in this guidance, we would like to remind the community that the qualified jurists of our communities may differ on particular rulings concerning the final rites of those who have been infected by Covid-19. These differences are extended to *Ghusl*, *Tayammum*, shrouding, the use of body bags and burials. These differences may arise due to the medical advice such scholars have received and due to the potential harm they deem to be real harm posed to the community in fulfilling these final rites. We advise our communities not to create hatred and division over such rulings and we remind our community that Islamic scholars and *Muftis* are sincerely striving to provide *Allāh's* guidance on these matters and help the deceased and their families. If the *Mufti* arrives at the correct ruling, he earns a double reward and if he errs then *Allāh* still rewards him with a single reward due to his sincere striving as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

وعن عمرو بن العاص رضي الله عنه سمع رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: "إذا حكم الحاكم، فاجتهد، ثم أصاب، فله أجران، وإن حكم واجتهد، فأخطأ، فله أجر" (متفق عليه)

'Amr bin 'Al-'Ās (May Allāh be pleased with him) said: "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) saying, 'When a judge utilises his skill of judgement and comes to a right decision, he will have a double reward, but when he utilises his skill of judgement and commits a mistake, he will have a single reward.'" [Al-Bukhāri and Muslim]

Those who follow the ruling of a known and respected *Mufti* have no blame on them and what they do, with sincerity and in accordance with the *Mufti's fatwā*, is completely correct and acceptable in the sight of *Allāh* and thus, they discharge the duty they owe their deceased in the sight of *Allāh*.

For community leaders, families and heads of families, it is important at this time to work for unity. May *Allāh* grant us the ability to unite and strengthen one another through all of our tests and not allow our hearts to harbour any enmity for each other, divide and thus increase the calamity for all of us by transforming it from a calamity in our worldly affairs and making it a calamity in our religion.

وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا ۚ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ 3:103

Hold fast, All of You together, to the Rope of Allāh (i.e. This Qur'ān), and be not divided among yourselves, and Remember Allāh's Favour on you, for You were enemies one to another but He joined Your hearts together, so that, by his Grace, You became brethren (in Islāmīc Faith), and You were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved You from it. Thus, Allāh makes his Ayāt (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.,) clear to you, that You may be guided.

(Sūrah Aal 'Imrān: 103]

Allāh knows best.

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