What benefits the deceased

When someone we love dies, we want to keep doing good for them. Some things reach them by the agreement of every school: praying for them, asking forgiveness for them, giving charity for them and paying their debts. On others the scholars differ, and this page shows each view without choosing.

Find what you need

- The deeds that continue
- Duʿāʾ and asking forgiveness for them
- Charity on their behalf
- Their debts come first
- Fasts they owed
- Ḥajj and ʿumrah on their behalf
- Reciting the Qurʾān for them
- Visiting the grave
- Things families often do
- Keeping ties with the people they loved

1 The deeds that continue

When a person dies, their own deeds come to an end, except three that keep bringing them reward.

The Prophet ﷺ said: when a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity, knowledge that is benefited from, or a righteous child who prays for him.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1631

Ongoing charity (ṣadaqah jāriyah) is a gift whose benefit lasts, such as a well, a mosque or an endowment. Knowledge that benefits can be something they taught that people still use. These are examples, not words of the ḥadīth.

A righteous child who prays for them is one of the three. The rest of this page is about what children, family and friends can still do.

> **A REPORT THAT IS WEAK**
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> These are not used on this page as proof or as comfort.
>
> - A longer list, adding a muṣḥaf left behind, a mosque, a house for travellers and a canal, is graded weak. It is not quoted here as a ḥadīth. Sunan Ibn Mājah 242 (weak)

2 Duʿāʾ and asking forgiveness for them

Praying for the dead and asking Allah to forgive them reaches them and benefits them. On this there is no disagreement: Ibn Qudāmah says he knows of none, and al-Nawawī reports that the scholars agree.
al-Mughnī 2:422–424 · al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Muslim 7:90

The Qurʾān praises the believers who pray for those who went before them:

رَبَّنَا ٱغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَٰنِنَا ٱلَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِٱلْإِيمَٰنِ

Our Lord, forgive us and our brothers who preceded us in faith.

Qurʾān, al-Ḥashr 59:10 · the opening of the duʿāʾ

Allah tells the Prophet ﷺ to ask forgiveness for the believing men and believing women.

Qurʾān, Muḥammad 47:19

Anyone can pray for them, at any time. The Prophet ﷺ said that when a Muslim prays for his brother in his absence, the angel says: and for you the same. Abū al-Dardāʾ narrated it. The ḥadīth speaks of anyone who is absent.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2732a

The Prophet ﷺ prayed for the dead at every stage. In the funeral prayer he asked Allah to forgive them. After a burial he stood by the grave and said: ask forgiveness for your brother and ask that he be made firm, for he is now being questioned. At night he went out to the graveyard of al-Baqīʿ and said: O Allah, forgive the people of Baqīʿ al-Gharqad.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 963 · Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3201 (ṣaḥīḥ, al-Albānī) · Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3221 (ṣaḥīḥ, al-Albānī) · Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 974a

When Abū Salamah died, the Prophet ﷺ taught Umm Salamah to say: O Allah, forgive me and him.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 919

The funeral prayer is itself a duʿāʾ for them. The Prophet ﷺ said that when forty men who associate nothing with Allah pray over a Muslim, Allah accepts their intercession for him.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 948

The Mālikī text notes that the early generations' practice for their dead was charity and duʿāʾ.

al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:423

DUʿĀʾS FROM THE QURʾĀN

Ibrāhīm's prayer: "Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established."

Qurʾān, Ibrāhīm 14:41

Nūḥ's prayer: "My Lord, forgive me and my parents and whoever enters my house a believer, and the believing men and believing women."

Qurʾān, Nūḥ 71:28

"My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up when I was small." The verse speaks of parents in their lifetime. It is given here as a duʿāʾ for parents, not as a ruling about the dead.

Qurʾān, al-Isrāʾ 17:24

This page is about a Muslim who has died. If the person was not Muslim, the evidence on asking forgiveness for them is different; please ask your imam. Qurʾān, al-Tawbah 9:113 · Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 976b

Duʿāʾs for the grieving

3 Charity on their behalf

Giving charity on behalf of someone who has died reaches them and benefits them. The four schools agree on this. al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Muslim 7:90 · al-Mughnī 2:422–424 · Radd al-Muḥtār 2:243 · al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:423

A man told the Prophet ﷺ: my mother died suddenly, and I think that if she could have spoken she would have given charity. May I give charity on her behalf? He said: yes, give charity on her behalf.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2760 · Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1004a

Saʿd ibn ʿUbādah's mother died while he was away. He asked whether charity on her behalf would benefit her, and the Prophet ﷺ said yes. Saʿd then gave his garden in charity for her.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2756

A man whose father died without making a will asked whether charity on his behalf would expiate for him. The Prophet ﷺ said yes.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1630

Al-Nawawī says charity reaches the dead by the consensus of scholars. The Ḥanafī text says a person may give the reward of any good deed to another; Ibn ʿĀbidīn reports that even those who held back on purely bodily worship made an exception for charity and ḥajj.

al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Muslim 7:90 · Radd al-Muḥtār 2:243

Charity for them is a gift. It does not take the place of their debts, which are paid from the estate after the funeral costs and before any bequest or inheritance (next section).

al-Sirājiyyah (al-Sajāwandī), opening chapter

4 Their debts come first

Settling the debts of someone who has died is urgent. From the estate, the funeral is paid first, then the debts, then any bequest from up to a third, and only then the heirs' shares. al-Sirājiyyah (al-Sajāwandī), opening chapter · Qurʾān, al-Nisāʾ 4:11

The Prophet ﷺ said: the believer's soul is suspended by his debt until it is settled for him. Al-Tirmidhī said the second chain is more correct than the first.

Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī 1078 (ḥasan) · Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī 1079 (ḥasan)

A man was brought for the funeral prayer who owed three dinars and had left nothing. The Prophet ﷺ told the people to pray over their companion themselves, until Abū Qatādah took the debt on himself; then he prayed over him. Later, when Allah gave him the means, he said: whoever of the believers dies leaving a debt, its payment is on me, and whoever leaves wealth, it is for his heirs.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2289 · Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 2298

The Prophet ﷺ said: every sin of the martyr is forgiven except debt.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1886a

If the estate cannot cover the debts, the Ḥanbalī text says the heirs do not have to pay from their own money, but it is recommended that someone pays, to free the one who died.

al-Mughnī 3:152–153

Paying their debt reaches them: al-Nawawī reports that the scholars agree on this.

al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Muslim 7:90

ZAKĀH THEY OWED AND HAD NOT PAID

SCHOOL	ZAKĀH THEY OWED
Ḥanafī	Without a bequest, it falls “as far as this world’s rulings go”: it is not taken from the estate, and the heirs are not ordered to pay it. If they bequeathed it, it is paid from the one-third. Badāʾiʿ al-Ṣanāʾiʿ 2:53
Mālikī	Paid only if they bequeathed it: then it is taken from the one-third, ahead of other bequests. If they did not, the family may pay it but is not obliged to. al-Istidhkār 550 · al-Mudawwanah 1:279–280
Shāfiʿī	It does not lapse at death. It is paid from the estate, even without a bequest. al-Majmūʿ 5:335, 6:232
Ḥanbalī	It does not lapse at death. It is paid from the estate, even without a bequest. al-Mughnī 2:509

A large or unclear debt, or a question about zakāh, is one for your imam or an estate adviser. The inheritance calculator takes the debts out before it works out the shares. Inheritance calculator

> A REPORT THAT IS WEAK
>
> These are not used on this page as proof or as comfort.
>
> - “The Messenger of Allah ﷺ judged that the debt comes before the bequest” is graded weak. The order above rests on the inheritance texts instead. Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī 2094 (weak)

5 Fasts they owed

If someone missed obligatory fasts and could have made them up before they died, but did not, the schools differ on what the family does. If they could not make them up, for example because they were ill until they died, nothing is owed: al-Nawawī reports no disagreement in his school, and gives the same as the view of Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik and most scholars. al-Majmūʿ 6:368–371

The Prophet ﷺ said: whoever dies owing fasts, his next of kin (walī) fasts on his behalf.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1952 · Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1147

A man asked: my mother died owing a month’s fast; shall I make it up for her? He said: yes; the debt of Allah has more right to be paid. In other versions it was a sister, and in one the fast was a vowed fast.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1953 · Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1148a

A woman asked about her mother, who owed a month’s fast. He said: fast for her.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1149a

Ibn ʿUmar, when he was asked, used to say: no one fasts for another and no one prays for another. Mālik records this in the Muwaṭṭaʾ, without a full chain.

Muwaṭṭaʾ Mālik, Fasting

In the texts read for this page, the heir is never obliged to fast: the Ḥanbalī and Shāfiʿī texts say the heir is not obliged to, and the Ḥanafī and Mālikī texts do not have anyone fast for them.

al-Mughnī 3:152–153 · al-Majmūʿ 6:368–371 · Radd al-Muḥtār 2:424–425 · al-Mudawwanah 1:279–280

SCHOOL	MISSED RAMAḌĀN FASTS	VOWED FASTS	WHO, AND FROM WHAT
Ḥanafī	A poor person is fed for each day (fidyah, in the amount of zakāt al-fiṭr). The heir may not fast or pray for them. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:424–425	*Not confirmed*	Binding if they made a bequest for it, from the one-third. Without a bequest, if the heir pays it voluntarily, it is valid, if Allah wills. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:424–425
Mālikī	No one fasts for another (Ibn ʿUmar's statement, in the Muwaṭṭaʾ). If they made a bequest for it, a poor person is given a mudd for each day. Muwaṭṭaʾ Mālik, Fasting · al-Mudawwanah 1:279–280	*Not confirmed*	If they made a bequest for it, from the one-third. Without a bequest, it is the family's choice: they may feed for them or leave it, and are not compelled. al-Mudawwanah 1:279–280
Shāfiʿī	Two views. The new view, the better known: a mudd of food for each day, from the estate, and the heir's fasting is not valid. The old view, which al-Nawawī calls the chosen one and a group of the school's verifying scholars hold sound: the heir may fast for them, or feed. al-Majmūʿ 6:368–371	The same as Ramaḍān fasts, on both views. al-Majmūʿ 6:368–371	The heir is not obliged to fast. al-Majmūʿ 6:368–371
Ḥanbalī	A poor person is fed for each day. They are not fasted for. al-Mughnī 3:152–153	The heir, or anyone, may fast for them. It is not an obligation. al-Mughnī 3:152–153	Feeding comes from what they left; fasting is voluntary. al-Mughnī 3:152–153

The amounts (a mudd, or the amount of zakāt al-fiṭr) are as the texts give them. This page does not turn them into money; ask your imam for a local figure.

A REPORT THAT IS WEAK

These are not used on this page as proof or as comfort.

- “Whoever dies owing a month’s fast, a poor person is fed for him for each day”, as words of the Prophet ﷺ, is graded weak. Al-Tirmidhī says the sound version is Ibn ʿUmar’s own statement. Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī 718 (weak)

6 Ḥajj and ʿumrah on their behalf

A ḥajj can be done on behalf of someone who has died. The schools differ on two practical points: whether it is paid for from the estate, and who may go. Where the schools do not require it, a family can still do good for them: the Ḥanafī text hopes an heir’s ḥajj for them will suffice, and the Mālikī text says to give charity or the like on their behalf.

A woman of Juhaynah said: my mother vowed to do ḥajj and died before doing it; shall I do ḥajj for her? The Prophet ﷺ said: yes, do ḥajj for her. If your mother owed a debt, would you not pay it? Pay Allah, for Allah is more deserving of fulfilment. In another report the question was about a sister.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1852 · Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 6699

A woman said of her mother: she never did ḥajj; shall I do ḥajj for her? He said: do ḥajj for her.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1149a

Of a man who had died, the Prophet ﷺ said: had he been a Muslim, and you had given charity or done ḥajj on his behalf, it would have reached him.

Sunan Abī Dāwūd 2883 (ḥasan)

A man may do ḥajj for a woman: al-Bukhārī’s chapter heading says so.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1852

SCHOOL	IF THEY DIED OWING THE OBLIGATORY ḤAJJ	A DEPUTY WHO HAS NOT DONE THEIR OWN ḤAJJ
Ḥanafī	Without a bequest, the heirs are not bound to it (“as far as this world’s rulings go”). If an heir does it for them anyway, Abū Ḥanīfah said: I hope it will suffice for them, if Allah wills. With a bequest, it is done from the one-third. Badāʾiʿ al-Ṣanāʾiʿ 2:221-222	Valid: the condition is only that the deputy can perform the rites. Al-Badāʾiʿ says sending such a person is disliked. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:603–604

SCHOOL	IF THEY DIED OWING THE OBLIGATORY ḤAJJ	A DEPUTY WHO HAS NOT DONE THEIR OWN ḤAJJ
Mālikī	Without a bequest, something else is given for them instead, such as charity. With a bequest, it is carried out, preferably by someone who has done their own ḥajj. al-Mudawwanah 1:485 · al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 2:18	Disliked for someone able to go who has not done their own to begin with another's. Hiring oneself out for ḥajj is disliked (the well-known view). al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 2:18 · al-Mudawwanah 1:485
Shāfiʿī	Paid from the whole estate, whether or not they asked for it. Al-Nawawī: ḥajj for the dead is valid if it is the ḥajj of Islam, and also a voluntary ḥajj they made a bequest for, on the sounder view. al-Majmūʿ 7:109–110, 7:117 · al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Muslim 7:90	They must have done their own ḥajj first. al-Majmūʿ 7:109–110, 7:117
Ḥanbalī	Enough is taken from the whole estate for a ḥajj and an ʿumrah on their behalf, whether or not they asked for it. al-Mughnī 3:233	They must have done their own ḥajj of Islam first. If they have not, it counts as their own. al-Mughnī 3:235–236

The Ḥanbalī and Shāfiʿī condition rests on a ḥadīth: the Prophet ﷺ heard a man say "Labbayk on behalf of Shubrumah" and asked: have you done ḥajj for yourself? He said no. The Prophet ﷺ said: do ḥajj for yourself, then do ḥajj for Shubrumah.

Sunan Abī Dāwūd 1811 (ṣaḥīḥ)

7 Reciting the Qurʾān for them

Whether the reward of reciting the Qurʾān reaches the dead is a real and long-standing difference among Sunni scholars. Both sides are given here, and neither is chosen. Every school agrees that duʿāʾ and charity reach them, so a family can always do those with certainty. al-Mughnī 2:422–424 · al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Muslim 7:90

Those who say it reaches. The Ḥanafī text: a person may give the reward of any deed, prayer, fasting, charity or other, to another, and this is the position of Ahl al-Sunnah. The Ḥanbalī text: any act of worship whose reward is given to a dead Muslim benefits him, if Allah wills. In the Mālikī texts, later scholars, among them Ibn Rushd, held that the reward of reciting the Qurʾān, given to the dead, reaches them.

Radd al-Muḥtār 2:243 · al-Mughnī 2:422–424 · al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:423

Their reasoning, in Ibn Qudāmah's words: the sound ḥadīths show that charity, ḥajj and fasting done by others reach the dead, so other deeds do too.

al-Mughnī 2:422–424

Those who say it does not reach, as their school's best-known position. Al-Nawawī: the well-known position of al-Shāfiʿī is that the reward of recitation does not reach the dead, while some of his companions said it does. Khalīl: the Mālikī school is that it does not reach; three views are reported in the school.

al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Muslim 1:89–90 · al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:423

Their evidence: "And that there is not for man except that for which he strives", and the ḥadīth that a person's deeds end at death except three.

Qurʾān, al-Najm 53:39 · Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 1631

Later Shāfiʿī scholars: a group of the school, among them Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, chose the view that the reward reaches, "and people act on it". Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ advised making it a duʿāʾ: after reciting, say "O Allah, convey the reward of what we recited to so-and-so."

Mughnī al-Muḥtāj 4:110–111

SCHOOL	GIVING THE REWARD OF RECITATION	RECITING AT THE GRAVE
Ḥanafī	It reaches. In the school's words, the reward itself reaches them. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:243	Part of visiting: recite Yā Sīn and other sūrahs, then say: O Allah, send the reward of what we recited to so-and-so. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:242
Mālikī	The school's position (Khalīl): it does not reach. Ibn Rushd: if a man recites and gives its reward to the dead, it is permitted and the dead receives it. al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:423	Disliked, as it was not the practice of the early generations. Later scholars: no harm in it. al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:423
Shāfiʿī	Well-known position: it does not reach. A group of the later school, among them Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, chose that it reaches, especially when it is followed by a duʿāʾ asking Allah to convey its reward. al-Nawawī, Sharḥ Muslim 1:89–90 · Mughnī al-Muḥtāj 4:110–111	Recommended: recite what is easy, then make duʿāʾ for them (al-Shāfiʿī's text). al-Majmūʿ 5:310–311
Ḥanbalī	It reaches, if Allah wills. al-Mughnī 2:422–424	No harm (Aḥmad's later position). al-Mughnī 2:422–424

Paying people to recite: the Mālikī text calls hiring oneself out for an act of worship disliked (the well-known view). The Ḥanafī text counts taking a fee for dhikr and recitation among the wrongs at funeral gatherings (see "Things families often do").

al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 2:18 · Radd al-Muḥtār 2:240–241

REPORTS THAT ARE WEAK, OR NOT ABOUT THIS

These are not used on this page as proof or as comfort.

- The report "Recite Yā Sīn over your dying", often quoted for the dead, is graded weak in both places it appears. Abū Dāwūd placed it in a chapter on reciting for someone who is dying. Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3121 (weak) · Sunan Ibn Mājah 1448 (weak)
- Reports about reciting Yā Sīn in a graveyard, which some books quote without a chain, could not be traced for this page and are not given here.
- The ḥadīth of the palm stalk placed on two graves is sound, but it is about the palm stalk, not about recitation. Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1361

8 Visiting the grave

Visiting graves is recommended for men, and the four schools say so. The Prophet ﷺ first forbade it, then said: visit them, for they remind you of death. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 977a · Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 976b · Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī 1054 (ṣaḥīḥ) · Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3235 (ṣaḥīḥ)

On arriving, greet them with the words the Prophet ﷺ taught his Companions:

السَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَهْلَ الدِّيَارِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَلاَحِقُونَ أَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ لَنَا وَلَكُمُ الْعَافِيَةَ

Peace be upon you, people of these dwellings, believers and Muslims; we shall, if Allah wills, join you. I ask Allah for well-being for us and for you.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 975

Then pray for them and for the whole graveyard. At al-Baqīʿ the Prophet ﷺ said: O Allah, forgive the people of Baqīʿ al-Gharqad. Ibn Qudāmah says that adding "O Allah, forgive us and them" is good.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 974a · al-Mughnī 2:421–425

Do not sit on graves, and do not pray towards them.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 972a

The Ḥanbalī text calls leaning on graves or walking on them disliked, and recommends taking off your shoes between the graves unless there is a need. The Prophet ﷺ told a man walking between the graves in sandals to take them off.

al-Mughnī 2:421–425 · Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3230 (ḥasan)

The Shāfiʿī text says not to touch or kiss the grave.

al-Majmūʿ 5:310–311

The Mālikī text sets no fixed day, time, length or wording. Reflect, keep busy with duʿāʾ, and do not eat or drink on the graves.

al-Dardīr 1:422

The Ḥanafī text says to stand while visiting and making duʿāʾ.

Radd al-Muḥtār 2:242

SCHOOL	VISITING	WOMEN VISITING
Ḥanafī	Recommended. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:242	On the soundest view, the permission includes women. Al-Ramlī: not allowed if the visit is made to renew grief, weeping and wailing; if it is for reflection and mercy without weeping, no harm for older women, and disliked for young women. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:242
Mālikī	Permitted, rather recommended, with no fixed day, time or wording. al-Dardīr 1:422	Three views: forbidden; allowed with proper covering; allowed for older women and not for young women where harm is feared. al-Dardīr 1:422
Shāfiʿī	Recommended for men, by consensus. al-Majmūʿ 5:310–311	Mildly disliked, in the view of most of the school. Al-Rūyānī held that it is not disliked. al-Majmūʿ 5:310–311
Ḥanbalī	No disagreement that men may visit; Aḥmad held visiting better than not. al-Mughnī 2:421–425	Two narrations from Aḥmad: disliked, and not disliked. al-Mughnī 2:421–425

On women: a ḥadīth says the Prophet ﷺ cursed women who visit graves often. Al-Tirmidhī reports that some scholars held this was before the permission, which then included men and women, and others held that it is disliked for women.

Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī 1056 (ḥasan)

> **A REPORT THAT IS WEAK**
>
> These are not used on this page as proof or as comfort.
>
> - A longer version, adding “those who build mosques over them and set up lamps”, is graded weak. Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3236 (weak)

9 Things families often do

Many families do these things out of love for the one who died. Here is what the schools say about them, so that you can decide with your imam. No one should be shamed for what they did before they knew.

The Sunnah is that neighbours and relatives cook for the bereaved family. The Prophet ﷺ said: prepare food for the family of Jaʿfar, for what has happened has occupied them. All four schools recommend it.

Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3132 (ḥasan, al-Albānī) · Radd al-Muḥtār 2:240-241 · al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:419 · al-Majmūʿ 5:320 · al-Mughnī 2:410

The family hosting meals for visitors, including on set days such as the first, the third or after a week: all four schools discourage it. The Ḥanafī and Ḥanbalī texts call it disliked, the Mālikī text a disliked innovation, and the Shāfiʿī text an innovation that is not recommended. Ibn Qudāmah allows it when there is a real need, such as guests who have travelled from far away.

Radd al-Muḥtār 2:240-241 · al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:419 · al-Majmūʿ 5:320 · al-Mughnī 2:410

Gatherings of reciters for a khatm, or for particular sūrahs, with food: the Ḥanafī text calls these disliked too. It says feeding the poor is good.

Radd al-Muḥtār 2:240-241

Paid recitation: the Ḥanafī text says that where such gatherings involve wrongs such as taking a fee for reciting the Qurʾān, there is no doubt they are forbidden, and a bequest for them is void.

Radd al-Muḥtār 2:240-241

Ibn ʿĀbidīn adds that it is disliked especially when some of the heirs are minors or are absent.

Radd al-Muḥtār 2:240-241

After the funeral, the debts and any valid bequest, what is left belongs to the heirs. On the property of orphans, the Qurʾān says: “Those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming fire into their bellies, and they will be burned in a Blaze.”

al-Sirājiyyah (al-Sajāwandī), opening chapter · Qurʾān, al-Nisāʾ 4:10

The fortieth day: the research behind this page found no classical text on it, so this page says nothing about it.

MARKING, BUILDING AND WRITING ON GRAVES

When ʿUthmān ibn Maẓʿūn was buried, the Prophet ﷺ carried a stone himself, placed it at his head and said: I mark my brother's grave with it, and I shall bury beside him those of my family who die. He forbade plastering graves, sitting on them and building over them. In other reports, writing on them is named as well. Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3206 (ḥasan) · Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 970a · Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī 1052 (ṣaḥīḥ) · Sunan Abī Dāwūd 3226 (ṣaḥīḥ)

	ḤANAFĪ	MĀLIKĪ	SHĀFIʿĪ	ḤANBALĪ
A marker stone	*Not confirmed*	Allowed: a stone or a piece of wood on the grave, without engraving. al-Dardīr 1:425	Recommended: a marker at the head. al-Majmūʿ 5:296–298	No harm: a stone or a piece of wood, so that the grave is known. al-Mughnī 2:376
Building over the grave	Forbidden if it is for decoration; disliked if it is to make the grave strong. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:237–238	Disliked. Forbidden, and to be taken down, if done for show, or in land endowed or set aside for public burial, or in another's land without permission. The gloss allows a small structure only to mark the grave, even in such a cemetery. al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:424–425	Disliked. In a public endowed cemetery it is forbidden and taken down, without disagreement. al-Majmūʿ 5:296–298	Disliked. al-Mughnī 2:378–379
Plastering	Not done. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:237–238	Disliked, as is whitewashing. al-Dardīr and al-Dasūqī 1:424–425	Disliked. al-Majmūʿ 5:296–298	Disliked. Smoothing it with clay is allowed. al-Mughnī 2:378–379
Writing on it	Allowed if needed, so the grave is not lost or disrespected; otherwise disliked. Writing Qurʾān, poetry or praise on it is disliked. Radd al-Muḥtār 2:237–238	Engraving the name or the date on the marker is disliked, and forbidden if done for show; engraving Qurʾān is disliked, and al-Dardīr says it ought to be forbidden. al-Dardīr 1:425	Disliked, the name or anything else. A marker stone at the head is recommended. al-Majmūʿ 5:296–298	Disliked. al-Mughnī 2:378–379

A REPORT WITH A DISPUTED GRADING

These are not used on this page as proof or as comfort.

- Jarīr's words, "we used to regard gathering at the family of the deceased and their preparing food as a form of wailing", are often quoted. Their grading is disputed: sunnah.com prints them as weak (Darussalam), while al-Nawawī and Ibn ʿĀbidīn call the chain sound. This page does not rely on them; the schools' own statements above carry the point. Sunan Ibn Mājah 1612 (grading disputed)

10 Keeping ties with the people they loved

Honouring the people your parent loved is among the finest kindness to that parent.

Ibn ʿUmar gave his own donkey and turban to a man whose father had been a friend of ʿUmar, and said he heard the Prophet ﷺ say: the finest kindness is for a son to keep ties with those his father loved. It appears in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim under the chapter on keeping ties with the friends of one's father and mother.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2552a

After Khadījah died, the Prophet ﷺ spoke of her often, and when he slaughtered a sheep he sent portions to her friends.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 3818

The Prophet ﷺ told a woman that she could perform her late mother's vowed ḥajj on her behalf, as a debt owed to Allah. The sections on fasts and ḥajj above give the schools' conditions.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī 1852

Keep praying for them and giving for them, as above.

A REPORT THAT IS WEAK

These are not used on this page as proof or as comfort.

- A well-known ḥadīth listing what a child can still do for parents after death (praying for them, asking forgiveness for them, carrying out their pledges, keeping the ties that come only through them, and honouring their friends) is graded weak. Its points that have sound support are given on this page from those sound texts instead. Sunan Abī Dāwūd 5142 (weak)

Related pages

Visiting a grieving family: what to bring, what to say, and how long to stay.

Duʿāʾs for the grieving: duʿāʾs for the one who died and for those left behind.

Inheritance calculator: the debts and bequests come out before the shares.

The widow's ʿiddah: the waiting period after a husband dies.

This guide gathers the evidence; it is not a fatwa, and it has not been reviewed by a scholar. Where the schools differ, each view is shown and none is chosen. Weak reports are named as weak and are not relied on. Where you are unsure, ask your imam.

Last checked against its sources: October 2026 · Sources · Something wrong? Tell us