



158529 - It is prescribed to offer condolences from the time of death, and there is no set time for its end

the question

When does the time for offering condolences to the family of the deceased begin, and when does it end?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is prescribed to offer condolences from the time of death, before the burial and afterwards. There is no specific time limit; rather offering condolences continues to be Sunnah until the bereaved is no longer grieving.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Is it permissible to offer condolences before the burial?

He replied: Yes, it is permissible before the burial and afterwards, because the time for that lasts from when the deceased dies until the calamity is forgotten. It is soundly narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) offered condolences to a daughter of his when she sent word telling him that a son of hers was dying. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Go back to her, and tell her that to Allah belongs what He takes, to Him belongs what He gives, and everything has an appointed time with Him. So tell her to be patient and seek reward with Allah."

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 17/340.

And he was asked about what some people say, that it is not permissible to offer condolences before the deceased is buried.



He replied: This is not correct. Offering condolences when the calamity – that is, the death – occurs is prescribed according to Islamic teachings.

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 17/341.

But according to the majority of scholars, the best is to offer condolences after the burial.

It says in *al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah* (12/288): The majority of jurists are of the view that the best with regard to offering condolences is that it should be done after the burial, because before the burial, the family of the deceased are busy preparing him, and because their sorrow and missing the deceased is greater after the burial. So that time is more appropriate for offering condolences. The majority of the Shafa`is said: Unless it appears that the family of the deceased are extremely distressed before the burial, in which case condolences may be offered then in order to comfort them and reduce their distress. End quote.

The scholars limited offering condolences to three days, and they quoted as evidence for that the fact that Islam permits mourning for three days only, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "It is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day to mourn for any deceased person for more than three days, except for a husband, [for whom the mourning period is] four months and ten days," and it is disliked after that...

End quote from *al-Mawsu`ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, 1/288.

But there are some reservations about quoting this hadith to prove this point, because the hadith speaks about mourning, not offering condolences. The correct view is that offering condolences is prescribed for as long as people are still grieving, even if that continues beyond three days.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Imam al-Haramayn narrated a view which says that there is no time limit for offering condolences; rather it may continue beyond three days, even for a long time afterwards, because the purpose of offering condolences is to offer supplication for the bereaved, urging them to be patient and telling them not to grieve too much, but it may take a long time to heal. This view was stated definitively by Abul-`Abbas ibn al-Qass in



at-Talkhis.

End quote from *Sharh al-Muhadhdhab*, 5/278.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said: There is no specific time limit or specific days for that; rather it is prescribed from the time the person dies, before the funeral prayer and afterwards, and before the burial and afterwards. It is better to hasten to offer condolences when the calamity is still fresh and grief is intense, but it is permissible to offer condolences after three days from the death of the deceased, because there is no evidence to limit it.

End quote from *Majmu` al-Fatawa*, 13/380.

Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The time for offering condolences is not limited to three days, beyond which it should not continue; rather whenever someone thinks that there is some benefit in offering condolences, he should do so.

End quote from *Ahkam al-Jana'iz*, 1/166.

And Allah knows best.