# 98189 - How to Shroud a Woman in Islam

**the question**

How is a woman to be shrouded when she dies?

**Summary of answer**

It is recommended to shroud a woman in five pieces of cloth. This reflects her modesty and the respect accorded to her even after death.

**Detailed answer**

Praise be to Allah.

## The Number of Cloths for Shrouding a Woman

The Madhhabs (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi`i, Hanbali and Dhahiri) agreed that it is recommended for a woman to be shrouded in five pieces of cloth. (Bada'i` As-Sana'i` , 2/325; Mawahib Al-Jalil, 2/266; Al-Majmu`, 5/161; Al-Mughni, 3/390; and Al-Muhalla, 5/120)

Ibn Al-Mundhir (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Most of the scholars from whom were learned were of the view that a woman should be shrouded in five pieces of cloth." (End quote from Al-Mughni 3/391).

`Ata' said: A woman may be shrouded in three pieces of cloth. (Narrated by `Abd Ar-Razzaq in Al-Musannaf, 3/273)

## Details of the Five Cloths Used for Shrouding a Woman

A number of scholars are of the view that these five pieces are: an Izar (lower garment or waist wrapper), a Khimar (head cover), a Qamis (chemise), and two large pieces of cloth that are

wrapped around her. This is the view of the Malikis, Shafi`is and Hanbalis. (Mawahib Al-Jalil, 2/266; Al-Majmu` 5/162;  and Al-Mughni, 3/392)

## The Role of the Prophet's Example in Shrouding

They quoted as evidence the report narrated by Abu Dawud (3157) from Layla bint Qanif Ath-Thaqafiyyah who said: I was among those who washed Umm Kulthum 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 Khimar (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 inauthentic by Al-Albani in Irwa' Al-Ghalil (723), but this Hadith has corroborating evidence in a report narrated by Al-Jawzi from Umm `Atiyyah (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-Hafidh said: Its chain of narration is authentic. (End quote from Fat-h Al-Bari, 3/159)

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: This is recommended 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 from Al-Mughni, 3/391)

## Flexibility in Shrouding Practices

Shaykh Ibn Baz (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 is broad in scope." (End quote from Majmu` Fatawa Ibn Baz, 13/127)

It says in Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'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-`Aziz ibn Baz, Shaykh `Abd Ar-Razzaq `Afifi, Shaykh `Abdullah Ghadyan, Shaykh `Abdullah ibn Qa`ud)

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti`:

With regard to shrouding a woman in five pieces of cloth there is a Marfu` Hadith (attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)), but its chain of narration includes a narrator who is 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 Hadith is inauthentic, 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 Hadith about shrouding a woman in five pieces of cloth is proven to be authentic, 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 from Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti`, 5/224)

For more details, please see the following answers: 154750, 72303, 201085.

And Allah knows best.