162565 - Where Does the Imam Stand in The Funeral Prayer?

the question

Where should the Imam stand in relation to the deceased in the funeral prayer, if the funeral is for a man or a woman?

Summary of answer

The Sunnah in the funeral prayer, if it is for a man, is for the Imam to stand in line with his head. If he is offering the funeral prayer for a woman, he should stand in line with the middle of her body.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Sunnah in the funeral prayer , if it is for a man, is for the Imam to stand in line with his head. If he is offering the funeral prayer for a woman, he should stand in line with the middle of her body. That is because of the report narrated by Samurah ibn Jundub (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: I offered the funeral prayer behind the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) for a woman who died in childbirth, and he stood in line with the middle of her body. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 1331 and Muslim, 964)

And Imam Ahmad (12701) and Abu Dawud (3141) narrated that Nafi` Abu Ghalib Al-Khayyat (may Allah have mercy on him) said: I saw Anas ibn Malik offer the funeral prayer for a man, and he stood in line with his head. When that bier was taken away, the bier of a woman of Quraysh or of the Ansar was brought, and it was said to him: O Abu Hamzah, this is the bier of So and so, the daughter of So and so; please offer the funeral prayer for her. So he offered the funeral prayer for her, standing in line with the middle of her body. Al-`Ala’ ibn Ziyad Al-`Adawi was among us, and when he saw that he stood in a different place with relation to the man and the woman, he said: O Abu Hamzah, is this how the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used

to stand in relation to a man and in relation to a woman, as you did? He said: Yes. He said: Al-`Ala' turned to us and said: Remember this. This narration was classed as authentic by Shaykh Al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him)

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"The Sunnah is for the Imam to stand in line with the woman's buttocks, and there was no difference of opinion concerning the Hadith, and it is more effective in screening her from the rest of the congregation. With regard to a man, there are two views; the correct view, according to the consensus of the scholars, and many of them stated it categorically, as it is the view of the majority of our earlier companions, is that he should stand in line with his head. The second view was stated by Abu `Ali At-Tabari, who said that he should stand in line with his chest. But the correct view is the former, which was narrated from the majority, and that is that he should stand in line with his head. This was also narrated by Al-Qadi Husayn from his companions." (Sharh Al-Muhadhdhab, 5/183)

Ash-Shawkani (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "What is implied by these two Hadiths – the Hadiths of Samurah and Anas (may Allah be pleased with them) – that the Imam should stand in line with the head of a man and in line with a woman's middle, is the view of Ash-Shafa`i and it is correct." (Nayl Al-Awtar, 4/80)

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"It is Sunnah for the Imam to stand in line with a man's head and in line with a woman's middle, because that is proven from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in the Hadith of Anas and Samurah ibn Jundub (may Allah be pleased with them). As for the view of some scholars, that the Sunnah is to stand in line with a man's chest, this is a weak view for which there is no evidence as far as we know." (Majmu` Al-Fatawa, 13/142)

And Allah knows best.