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Burial Rituals of the Dead for Non-Muslims in the Islamic East

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One of the topics that raised humanity and continues to raise it is the issue of death,

Abstract

Objectives: this study aims at uncover that the death and afterlife are one of the issues that concern the humanity. On the contrary to life, Death is a terrifying and fearful matter that triggers human's feelings and obsessions. What will happen after life and to which place will the soul go after this life are the main questions that are asked. Therefore, human learns the burial since the beginning in which mourning was a rite since it relieves the stress that the bereaved family suffers from. Methods: a number of resources that include books of general history, language, literature, and travel books were examined and relied on in this study. Results: the results of the study show that burial rituals and places differ according to different religions. Priests and kings were buried in holy places, or their own independent shrines. As for burial, some of them were buried and others were burned. Conclusion: It is found that some burial rites of the Jews are similar to that of the Muslims in terms of uttering the phrase of monotheism (Alshmaa) before death or by anyone near him, washing their dead people and putting in the coffin.

alnatayija

1-takhtalif tuqus aldafn wamakan aldafn liakhtilaf aldiyanati.

2-kan alkahnat walmuluk yudfnwn fi alamakin almuqadasat aw alaidridrihat almustaqilat alkhassat bihim. ama min hayth aldafn falbaed yudfan walakhir yahraqu.

3-akhtilaf tariqat aldafn albaed kan yahriq walbaed alakhir yudfan walakhir yadae fi amakin ealiatan

Keywords: *religious rituals, Islamic East*

Introduction

The first beginnings of emergence of religion was linked with human's imaginations of death, its rituals and methods of burial. The history of religious beliefs turned since human begun burying his dead carefully.

Funeral rituals were holding after or before death, or in a definite and different times for a long period after a person died. On the other hand, offerings, hymns and raise of lights for spirits of the dead were one of the funeral rites that were held in the yearly anniversary. Thus, the first religious rituals were funeral ones in which food offerings were the first ones that were offered

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to the dead in order to meet their needs and satisfy them since they are deprived of food and drinks. Hence, this deprivation make them rage and go out from the underworld into the world of spirits in order to eat what they found in streets and monitor the neighborhoods to get them feel that they should remember them. Otherwise, they do harm and damn them and as such they bring them misery. Tombs and graveyards were the first altars that were chosen to present offerings.

Burial Rites Language and Terminology

In language, *altaqs* is the condition of the air, including clearness, rain, heat, and cold. However, in Christianity it refers to the rituals of the religion and its ceremonies. Whereas, It means *taksis* i.e. system and order in Greek. The plural is *tuqus*. *Altaqaysa* or *altaqaysaa* is a small place outside women's dwelling which is used to receive guests. (al bistani, 1301m, s335)

Terminologically, rituals are a group of religious rites and acts that form the practical side of the beliefs and theology and represent some parts of mythology. Thus, the religion became ritual rather than theological or mythological. (al majdi, 1998, s309)

The religious rituals of burial of non- Muslim religion will be clarified:

1- Burial Rites of the Buddhists

Buddhists were believing that the dead has three souls in which one goes to the Invisible World, another stands in the wooden chair that is put by his family at home which is called the throne of the soul and the last one goes with the body to the grave. At home, a table is prepared at a certain place or in the hall that is used for the dead of the family, and a pot for burning incense and lighting the lamps are put on it. They believe that the soul, who goes to the invisible world, goes in darkness where he cannot see his path. Therefore, they light two candles and lay them on a chair near the bed where the departed is put on it in order to light the road to his soul. (nufi, 1867, s82)

2- Burial Rites of the Jews

Jews are followers of the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). Torah is their holy book which is the first book that descends from the heaven. (al yaeqequbi, 2010, miji1, a28) Their name goes back to the word *bad*. i.e. return, repent, repentance and back to the right road (al bayruni, 1958, s255).

Burial rites are important in the Jewish faith and religious conscience. (al masiri, 1999ma, s287mi) Uttering the phrase of monotheism (Alshmaa), which similar to that of Muslim. i.e., is the first act that the patient says or by someone near him. (alsaedi, 1994, s58) The Jews must wash their dead people as soon as possible, then they bury them in a simple funeral after the Kaddish. (al maghlutha, 2007ma, s157) prayer is recited. After that they put him in a coffin. However, another ritual is performed for the killed person where his stained clothes are taken and his scarf is wrapped around his body so he does not lose any part of his body. (alsaedi, 1994, s156). On the other hand, the kid should be circumcised. (alsaedi, 1994, s47)

If his widow is pregnant, so she passes under the carried coffin in order to show that the deceased person is the father of her kid. The Jews usually visit the cemeteries on holidays and recite prayers in front of the graves believing that the dead intercede for them at Gods. All Jews are buried like this way and in the same place.. (al maghlutha, 2007ma, s156) except the disputants and priests. Rather, they do not bury side by side. Moreover, the priests cannot be

buried with the Jewish, but in a special place four steps away from the graveyards. It is possible to set a wall that protects the priest from the impurity that may hit him if he touches or comes close to it. (alsaeidi, 1994, s48)

Like the burial rites, the Jewish cemeteries get more attention and they are called (the house of life) or (the house of eternity). They are located outside the city limits because they are regarded as one of the sources of impurity. (alaeuzami, 2003ma, s148), The Jews visit them at feasts in order to recite prayers over the graves of the dead so they ask God's forgiveness (al msiryii, 1999m, s287m). Wooden with inscription, marble or stone markers are put above the tomb. Moreover, the cemeteries were built as cylindrical domes or towers with a conical roof. Sulkania, sajadhan, Tanurkran are one of the famous cemeteries of the Jews. Great thanks were to the Seljuks who brought the system of shrines from their homeland. The Seljuks tombs were similar to celebration grounds that are called yort. Sanjar is one of the famous shrines which is regarded as one of the wonders of the world in Merw (al waznat, 2007ms.s31- 32).

There are also several rituals that are connected with the funeral. One of the Askkenazi Jews' prayers requires asking the body's forgiveness (al masiri, 1999ma, s287mi) . The man does not have to eat or drink nor to wear the tallit near the grave in order not to embarrass them because they are not able to execute these religious requests (al saedi, 1994ma, s48)

Moreover, they do not have to touch the corpse (al maghrbi, 1989m.s33). Rather, whoever washes the dead must purify for seven days with praying. They wash the dead but they do not pray over them (al maqdisi, j4, s38). On the other hand, if a person died in a tent, whoever enters this tent is impure. Similarly, whoever touches a man that is killed by a sword, a dead person, humane bone or grave and every uncovered plate are impure for seven days (al maghrbi, 1989m.s34)

On the other hand, the burial rites of priests is different from that of the lay people because they represent monotheism. Thus, they buried either at the end of the tombs line or at the front row four steps away from the cemetery in order to protect them from the impurity (al masiri, 1999ma, s287m).

3- The Burial Rites of Zoroastrianism

Whereas the majority of religions was terrifying and warning of death, the Persian person was looking at death without fear (al taybrsi, 1966m, j2, s92). Zoroastrianism collected, organized and unified (barter. 1993m, s117) all the spiritual concepts, beliefs and thoughts such as death, afterlife, immortality, reward and punishment and account of the souls (hnunu, 1986, s89).

They were believing that the soul is not able to run away from the God of death. The soul has to pass through the bridge of sirat and Zoroaster's Paradise, that is located far east of the Alborz Mountains. Thus only the good soul can pass whereas the devil-doer soul cannot (saefan, 1999m, s126). When the patient is on the point of death, a dog is brought in and approached to him, believing that the demon comes when a person dies and when he sees a dog, he terrifies and runs away (al maqdisi, j4, s28).

Moreover, the dead are not buried, nor fired or washed. Rather, they are exposed to sun on Towers of Silence in order to be purified from the dirt. Thus, the Magi did not cremate or bury their deceased people because fire and earth are also holy elements for them (al shaahrudi, 1941m, j9, s337) Therefore, they let their dead remain in an open space which is surrounded by walls and where the birds of prey come and consume them in order to make the process of

transferring them into the world of the dead easy (al halbi, 1951m, s31). Altars were erected on mountain tops, in castles or at downtown where they kindle a fire above them in honor of Ahura Mazda or another gods (abraham, 1985m, s146), so as to dispose the bones from the impure flesh. Then they are put in a box, that have holes, to let the deceased person sees the sun (dirawur, 1969m, s200). On the contrary, the dead were not exposed in Iran. Rather they were being burying under the ground of the house. Since the red colour refers to blood (salim, 1989m, s379- 416) the corpse is covered by red earth where iron oxide atoms are strewed abundantly. when the corpse become wet, the bones get polished with redness. This may give life to the soul.

On the other hand, in Shamanism, which is primitive paganism faith, statues, which represented their dead soldiers, are put besides the tombs. They were called (Balbal) (aleamami, 2017m, s67). For them, the body is immortal whereas the soul is mortal and receives his reward (Khalil, 2006l, s75). Thus, Zarathustra says: Those who follow the right paths to please God will inevitably go to the Paradise of Bliss, where there is immortality and perfect health. As for the misguided and lying people who follow Satan, their destination is Hell, where there is torment and punishment) (ahmadu, 2001m.s43). The priests, who is called (magi). i.e.the Magi perform these rituals (al maghlutha, 2007m, s601)

Additionally, the departed person was being massaging with wax before he was buried since they were being thought that this act prevents the corpse from being impure when it touches the earth directly (alhidri, 2006m, s277). They also thought that human become impure if he is died who cannot be touched unless religious rituals are held. Thus, those, who touched him, should wash by ox urine and water (al hidri, 2006m, s277). Zarathustra said " O servants of Mazda, let urine be brought so that those who bear the dead may wash their hair and bodies with it" (al mawsili, 1952m, s92).

However, if a person or a dog dies in the house and there is a burning fire, then that fire must be taken out of the house and not brought into the house until they have waited nine nights in the winter and a month in the summer, then they say, "This is your fire that we came to serve first, O Ahuramazda (al hidri, 2006m, s277). Therefore, the ritual of purifying the house must be practiced here in which the Zoroastrian person has to wash his body and his clothes three times, and make sacrifices to a fire. Then the house becomes thus purified (yahyaa2016m, s120-121).

If the deceased person was a Zoroastrian cleric, the impurity is transferred to nine people who are next to him, and if he was a soldier of war, then his clothes and eight people who are next to him are impure. But if he was a farmer or something similar, the impurity is transferred to seven people who are next to him, and so on. The impure person must purify himself from the sin of this dirt by hastening from the dead person's side and running along the road until he meets the first living man on the road and addresses him from afar, saying to him: "I have touched a dead person who is motionless and unable to think, and I am begging you to purify me. If he performs the usual purification procedures, he will purify the clothes or the parts that get in contact with the dead person. Otherwise, a third of the sin of the impurity will be transferred to him, due to his refusal to purify his brother (abraham, 1985, s186- 187). If a dead body is on a public road, this road becomes impure (abraham, 1985, s186- 187).

The soul stays for three days. If it is good, it will live this period in prosperity. Then the wind carries this soul to the sirat where there is a court with three judges to account him (diuranti,

j2, s434). They are not permissible to approach the dead person to the holy elements i.e. water or fire nor touch him because he is impure once he died (almaqdisi, j4, s28) The man has to perform the rituals of purification before any act of worship (saefan, 1999m, s123). Nevertheless, if the death took place at winter where the weather is rainy, the village or house should contain three rooms specified for the dead i.e. the first one is for men, the second for women and the third for children because it is difficult to bury the corpse during rain but until the ground gets dry (almusili, 1952m, s61)

It is also mentioned that the soul remains suspended for three days. In the fourth day, the wind blows. If the soul was good, pleasant smells blow and vice versa (alsaqaf, 2004m, s186).

His family is offered words of condolence within three days where a religious ceremony is held on the third day evening. The bereaved family and friends gather, food is put and charity is given for his soul. His close relatives from women sit on a carpet near the place where he died and receive condolence from women from three to ten days after death (shbib, 1971m, s167)

Mourning rituals vary according to the kinship of the dead person. If the deceased person is father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister, the mourning duration will range between thirty to sixty days, twenty five days to fifty for grandfather, grandmother, grandson or granddaughter, fifteen to twenty for cousin, ten to twenty days for a son of cousin and five to ten days for far cousin (almusili, 1952m, s133).

4- Burial Rites of the Sabians

According to Sabaeism, death is a departure and transfer of the soul and annihilation of the body (hamadat.1992m, s117). Human consists of the soul and the body. The body is driven by spiritual needs and obedience. If the Sabaen died, the soul is only reckoned since it urges the body. The body, on the other hand, goes back to its origin. i.e. earth (hamadat.1992m, s117) Whenever it goes out from this world, it ascends to the World of the lights. If it is good, it remains immortal and enjoys pleasures. On the contrary, if it is malicious, it receives different types of torture. For them, torture is a circumcision of the soul that is not confined to entering into the hell but also detaining in a place without air. Thus, they believe in transmigration (alnaashi, 1983m, s11). Therefore, they wash everyone that touches the dead person (almaqdisi, j4, s23). They also pay attention to any person who is on the point of the death in order to get his soul departed pure. Thus, they watch the patient carefully (alsaedi, 2015m, s213)

A dish of water that is constantly renewed, a piece of stone or marble and a burning light on a chair or table are all set next to the dead. Some dispense the burning light with the sunshine, saying that the sun ensures the presence of light and fire. These things remain where they were put until the third day after death (dirawur, 1969m, s196). Furthermore, new religious clothes are prepared for the patient where the stole is long in order to cover the feet. A piece of gold and silver are also put and sewn around the breast (dirawur, 1969m, s194).

On the other hand, if the patient is a priest, his family prepares the rasta (a white ritual garment that are worn on all religious occasions such as baptism, marriage and death). He is buried with his ritual apparatus including crown, scepter and seal. When death approaches, the priest prepares a wreath with tender branches of myrtle, that then worn, after the minor ablution, on little finger of his right hand. After that, he takes it to the bereaved family in order to be used when necessary or when the patient knows that he is about to die, or when he orders to do that (alzahiri, 2019m, s312).

The corpse is undressed and washed with water, that is brought in from the river when death approaches, three times from head to foot. However, if the weather is cold, some water is heated and mingled with the rest (alsaedi, 2015m, s214) because they thought that the soul has to leave the body clean (alhasani, , 1925m, s34).

Then the patient is lifted, placed on clean bedding facing the North Star, and worn clean clothes without completing the knot of the girdle until people around him realize that he is dying. After that, the wrath is put beneath the turban and the feet is covered with the ends of the stole. These things may not be used a second time for a dying person (alsaedi, 2015m, s214). Moreover, they pray over a dead person without bowing nor prostrating (huy, 1992m, j2, s854).

As for the time-period of the burial, the deceased person is not to be buried at night or next day but three hours after death before sunset. However, if this interval brings the time near sunset, the funeral is postponed until the next morning. If the soul is good, it links to the world of the lights and vice versa. The white garment is part of the purity and Sabeian faith (alsaedi, 2015m, s215). It is important to refer that the priest does not take part in the burial but the ritually pure men (hallali) who must not be blind, deaf or lame. Moreover, the lay people are to perform ablution (Rishama) and wear their rastas. i.e. religious clothes (alsaedi, 2015m, s215)

If a person died suddenly, a priest with ganzrora performs baptism and atonement ceremonies because a sudden death causes to regard the dead person is unbeliever as if he died without burial ceremony (alhusni, 1925m, s36). The cemetery is in open yard outside the city or village. This burial is like that of the Persian where they put the dead in an open place that is surrounded by walls and where the birds eat the corpses (darawur, 1969m, s200).

It is not supposed that the tomb is deep or higher than the ground. Rather, it is often flat with the existence of an additional hole behind the head which is left empty. It is called allahadd. Then the corpse is put in the grave and a few stones are put on his rasta and one on his mouth (sabhani, s181). This is because many of their ancestors have exhumed graves of their dead people finding that their shrouds have piled in their mouths. This leads to death of the family of the deceased person one after another. Therefore the stones are put on his breast (alhasni, 1925m, s36).

However, some of the rich built brick tombs in which names of the dead are written on alabaster tombstone. This is rare in Mandaism. During the burial, a clean piece of raw material, white linen, or reed mat is spread on the ground where a ritual meal is laid on it. It includes a flat loaves of bread where the bread grains have been washed and dried under the sun rays. A grilled fish that is prepared by the priest, roast morsels of fat of a slaughtered sheep, pieces of coconut, long-grain almonds, walnuts, pomegranate, quince, grapes and raisins are all put on it. A couple sits in which each holds a loaf of bread with their right hands. The loaves are broken them into two parts. Then all drinks from one bowl that is full of river water (alsaedi, 2015m, s202-203). and supplicates for the deceased person. Leftovers are sent to the poor or thrown into the river if there are not. Everyone and those who touch the corpse or the things are to wash three times. At the same day, the Zidqa Brikha, which is one of the ritual ceremonies for the souls of ancestors, is performed. It is also one of the ritual duties over the souls of the ancestors (al eadwi, 2012m, s82).

It is performed by the priest or someone from the public in the courtyard of the priest's house or a place close to the river. They should be barefoot. A qintha, that is clay box with a tray-like top where incenses, are put. There is also a toriana. i.e. clay table where they can sit (dirawur,

1969m.s205-207).

If the deceased person is groom or bride who died during a day of marriage procedures or the next week that followed it, masiqta is not recited to him/her nor a wrath is put on his/her head or any holy book is hold during funeral. On the other hand, when one of the couple died after the first seven days without the necessary rituals of baptism, two masiqta are read. In the days of panja, the duty of eating food for the souls of the recently deceased and ancestors, weather spiritual or living, becomes sacred (dirawur, 1969m.s223)

Women are not allowed to walk behind the funeral, fearing that any of them is impure which leads to harm the soul of the dead. Thus, the rituals become useless (marani, 1981m, s135).

Moreover, Women must not cry over the dead, nor tear garments and hair, nor scatter dust over their heads, nor beat their breasts (alhayk, 2016m, s280) These acts are forbidden because tears will become a river which the soul of the dead person has to ford. Tearing hair will become as chains on his feet. They also believed that if the person died in the season of Panja, his soul will escape the dangers and tortures of the purgatories (dirawur, 1969m, s196).

However, women perform the ritual meal that is called *lofani* for the dead person. Whereas, neighbors and relatives assist them by grinding grains, baking breads and bringing vegetables, fruits, fish and birds to be slaughtered (marani, 1981m, s123- 136).

There are differences between the rituals of Parsis and Mandan Masqi. The Parsi is vegetarian except for cow-products, whereas the Masqita includes the slaughter of both a sheep and a dove. There is the existence of egg and the sacrament with milk only for the Paris but it is forbidden for the Masqita. The Masqita has a formula that is pronounced over ritual meals. On the other hand, the Parsi pronounce baj which is certain words or prayers that are recited in honour of particular beings such as yazatas or the guarding spirits of the living or the dead Farvashis before eating their meal and make it more elaborate at ritual meals. The Parsis have three forms of prayers that are recited as grace before eating meals. One of them is long that is recited by priests in the inner religious ceremonies. After death, the Baj is performed that is accompanied by ritual meals especially at the dawn of the day after the third night after death. They eat sacramental bread. The yasnas, that corresponds to the masqita are performed in his name at the fire-temples. These food and clothes were intended to feed and clothe magically the spirit in the other world (dirawur 1969m, s223- 224).

Regarding the requirements of Baj, i.e. prayers that are uttered religiously in hounor of special beings or souls that protect the living and the dead:

- 1- The priests recite them and hold Bareshnum.
- 2- They must be recited over sacred breads, fruits, water, milk-products such butter and ghee.
- 3- The existence of fire burning in a vase with sandalwood frankincense
- 4- They must be recited in enclosed place where pomegranate seeds are put in front the priest as in the Mandaean ritual. After that, it ends with the performance of jashans which is dinner where people gather and have the sacred bread.

Fruits, ritual food and the main jashans ceremonies are afringan which is more sanctity than the lay meal. However, it is less than the yasna. Afrinjan prayers are recited by all priests even those not reach the second degree of Martab. They are called zoti, whereas the chief officiant is raspi. His assistant tends the fire upon which the incense is thrown. The Zoti sit and a tray upon which a sheet of white cloth and contains myazd. i.e.fruits, seasonal flowers, milk, wine,

sherbet and fire vase. Preliminary ablution where the Parsis replace the yardna, that is used by Mandaean, by water that is taken from the temple cistern which must be fed from a stream or running water and not from pipe-water. While the priest lets water-vessel brim over three times. Thus ablution are made like this way instead of immersion in living water and all objects and utensils are dipped three times. There is also another type of ablution. It is the simplest Mandaean ablution of the myrtle twigs which is regarded as an elaborate ceremony (dirawur 1969m, s238).

Any ritually pure person of the priestly caste bake the sacred bread which is flat, unleavened and round. They are made from wheat flour and ghee, whereas the preparation of haoma, that resembles that of Mandaean misha, is done by pounding in in a mortar. It is a golden-coloured medical plant with branches and sprigs that grows in Iran and Afghanistan. Its branches with that of pomegranate are pounded in a mortar with little water where the resultant juice is used. Sabaen, on the other hand, use dates and sesame. Thus, the parsi fire-table is bigger where a water-vessel is put on a small table. Their qibla is towards the south whereas the Sabi the north. The parsi priest sits on a stone slab. The sabi, on the other hand, sits on a log or reed stool (dirawur 1969m, s242). Black or blue clothes are forbidden. The snakes had been sacred and do not pollute the water because water is the symbol of life and fertility. Rather they do not use water for wash, except where necessary (Khalil, 2006m, 92).

On the other hand, the woman in puerperal has to sit in a circles of stones for seven days (Khalil, 2006m, 93).

5- Burial Rites in Christianity

Daniel said " if the human believes in afterlife in which all injustices, all mistakes are corrected and the offender is punished and the doer of good is rewarded ". This was one of the different ideas that spreads among Christianity and one of the most reasons that leads to the victory of this religion (diurint, j2, s394). They put their dead people in aron. The word aron is Hebrew. It is a wooden box where is used to put the dead person in and bury with him (ali, 1993m, j5, s164). Moreover, there are many ways that the Christ are performed to express their sorrow either by wearing the mourning clothes or by moaning over the dead (aibn alhaji, j3, s235).

They were cutting their hairs partly or completely and then threw them on the tomb in honor of Gods. On the contrary, the hair was thrown over idols during the pilgrimage to houses of Gods in honor of and out of respect for them, they even sacrifice the most precious thing he owns (ali, 1993m, j5, s164), The cemeteries, temple and church are called sarcophagus which some said it is Ajami but it is Greek because many of the Christ ancestors bury their dead people in churches (ali, 1993m, j5, s168) They were using music and singing instruments during funerals (abu ashaq, 1948m, s31)

Conclusion

The most prominent results reached through the research can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Burial rituals and places differ according to different religions. Priests and kings were buried in holy places, or their own independent shrines. As for burial, some of them were buried and others were burned.
- 2- Some burial rites of the Jews are similar to that of the Muslims in terms of uttering the phrase of monotheism (Alshmaa) before death or by anyone near him, washing their dead

- people and putting in the coffin.
- 3- In Zoroastrianism, mourning rituals vary according to the kinship of the departed person, if father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or sister died, the mourning period ranges between thirty to sixty days.
 - 4- For Sabians, the burial must be done after three hours of his death and before sunset. The deceased person is not buried at night.
 - 5- The Christians were using music and singing instruments during funerals.

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