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Concept of Cremation in Sematic Religions and Corona Cremations of Deceased in an Early Phase of Covid-19

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Abstract
Like plague, COVID-19 is also a pandemic disease which came in the whole world. Due to its contagious nature, it had widely affected the people all over the globe. Among those people, there were individuals that belong to different faith groups all around. Their dead bodies were maltreated regardless of their family wills and religious beliefs system due to the fear of the spread of disease. So, Cremations were performed immediately of the dead soul in order to keep the living people and the land safe from the disease. It had badly affected the emotions of the people and created state of fear among them. As the dignity of the deceased is honored in all the sematic religions. The purpose of the study is to find that whether the concept of cremation for disposing deceased is permitted or prohibited in the sematic religions and whether the practice of cremation is performed in covid-19 pandemic by the people of different faith groups such as Muslims, Christians and Jews according to their wills. As both the methods of disposing deceased were performed in covid-19 such as burial as well as cremation. The methodology adopted for conducting research is qualitative. It includes both the primary and the secondary sources. The reader will come to know about the concept of cremation in Islam, Christianity, and Jewish religion that are sematic religions and whether the dignity of the deceased is valued in sematic religions. As the deceased rights according to their respective religions shall be performed to which it belongs, as it varies in every religion. Finally, every individual on their part should know that in case of a pandemic situation whether cremation be a final solution or not for saving humanity from the disease as well as its impact on the mourners, family members, and relatives of the deceased and on the community members.

Keywords: Sematic Religions Cremation, deceased, burial, disposing.

Introduction

Cremation is defined as a process of burying the dead body till it is turned in to ashes. In the process of cremation, the remainders such as constituent and the particles from the body of deceased turn to earth. As the body is closely related to it. Combustion is said to be the grave's decay. This process is done by placing the body on the ground. Then fire the whole body is disposed rapidly. An incineration of a corpse is not witnessed. The body is placed in the casket for incineration in retort. The light ashes are taken out from the retort from holes. The ashes that are heavier are taken out after the retort gets sufficiently cool. Then in the container, ashes are placed with the date and the name. It is marked that when such a process had taken place. They are either scatter in water or a land, buried in the grave or kept in a mausoleum.

However, the issue of cremating a Muslim who passes away as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic was a concern for Muslim communities across the globe largely; along with, the Christians and Jewish communities. The *Shariah* as well as many Christians and Jews prohibit this kind of behaviour. When Muslims, Christians and Jews die from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has caused suffering in their communities, they are treated poorly. For the community's safety, this research has been conducted with the goal of educating people about the methods for containing its spread. Because in Islam, cremation is strictly prohibited. Whereas In Christianity, both the methods such as burial and cremation is performed. In addition, there are other Christian groups and sects, such as the Orthodox, modern Orthodox, Hasidic movements, and *Haridi,* who follow cremation. Additionally, there are conservative religious groups that oppose the practice of cremation. However, there isn't a clear directive for burial or against the cremation procedure. Christians carry out both of these customs in accordance with their viewpoints and religious beliefs as well as the Bible.

The three ways the Jews dispose of their dead are by burial, embalming, and cremation. However, burial is the primary technique. When a person dies, they also have rights that must be fulfilled. The mourners also find significance in upholding the deceased's dignity. However, some Jews also perform cremations in accordance with their religious convictions and texts, and when Protestants, Catholics, and a significant portion of the Jewish population do cremations, mourners have no legal obligation to comply. However, the Catholic Church later outlawed this kind of behaviour. Funeral rights are not carried out, and cremation is also preferred by Orthodox Jews. The practice of cremation is also accepted by non-orthodox Jews in this.

Concept of Disposing Deceased in Sematic Religions

a. Islamic Concept of Burial and Cremation

The patient who is on the death bed is treated by the professionals of hospitals as a creature of Allah Almighty. He is the one who was suffering from the pain, tensed and in a fear situation. Such a person then would be sent to home so, that he should be surrounded by a more humane culture. In this way its dignity shall be preserved. As a result, the patient will die in a state of peace.[1] Islam, instructs its followers to quickly bury the dead body soon, preferably on the day of death. The claim of the concept of non-cremation is justified from the two evidences of the Quranic verses. Firstly, in surah *Al-Maidah* (5:53) implies,

فَبَعَثَ ٱللَّهُ غُرَابا يَبۡحَثُ فِي ٱلۡأَرۡضِ لِيُرِيَهُۥ كَيۡفَ يُوَٰرِي سَوۡءَةَ أَخِيهِۚ قَالَ يَٰوَيۡلَتَىٰٓ أَعَجَزۡتُ أَنۡ أَكُونَ مِثۡلَ هَٰذَا ٱلۡغُرَابِ فَأُوَٰرِيَ سَوۡءَةَ أَخِيۖ فَأَصۡبَحَ مِنَ ٱلنَّٰدِمِينَ 2

"Then Allah sent a crow who scratched the ground to show him to hide the dead body of his brother. He (the murderer) said: "Woe to me! Am I not even able to be as this crow and to hide the dead body of my brother?" Then he became one of those who regretted"[3]

Allah Almighty had related this precedent to teach the humanity about how to dispose of the deceased. Any other method of disposing the deceased is not permitted by Allah (SWT). Secondly, in 17:70 Quran states that;

وَلَقَدۡ كَرَّمۡنَا بَنِيٓ ءَادَمَ وَحَمَلۡنَٰهُمۡ فِي ٱلۡبَرِّ وَٱلۡبَحۡرِ وَرَزَقۡنَٰهُم مِّنَ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتِ وَفَضَّلۡنَٰهُمۡ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرا مِّمَّنۡ خَلَقۡنَا تَفۡضِيلا[4]

> ''And indeed, We have honoured the Children of Adam, and We have carried them on land and sea, and have provided them with At-Taiyibat (lawful good things), and have preferred them above many of those whom We have created with a marked preference".[5]

While keeping in line with these verses, it suggests that human soul should be deal with respect. It is not meant only for the individuals who are alive but also with the

[1] Anissa Brighet Assous, ''Cultural and Islamic values in relation with death''. *European Scientific Journal, 9*, no.3, (2013): 280-300.

[2] Al-Quran; 5:53.

[3] Muhammand Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Muhammand Mohsin Khan, *Translation of the meaning of the Noble Quran in the English language (*Madinah: K.S.A, Darus-Salam publishers, 2004).

[4] Al-Quran; 17:70.

[5] Muhammand Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Muhammand Mohsin Khan, *Translation of the meaning of the Noble Quran in the English language (*Madinah: K.S.A, Darus-Salam publishers, 2004).

dead person. Due to which discarding the deceased is regarded sacrilege and forbidden in Islam.[6] The reason for dissolving the deceased is that its honor shall be protected. The concept of *Fard al- Kifayah* is also an *Ijma*. The concept of *Fard al-Kifayah* includes washing, shrouding, funeral prayer and burial of the deceased. Such an obligation is performed by the whole community or by few people. But if not any individual performs the duty of *Fard al- Kifayah*, then they will be regarded sinful.[7] Every believer irrespective of his status shall be buried in the same manner.[8]

- **Concept of Cremation in Islam**

For cremation, there is no advantage for one's health. Some religions and their followers consider this practice because this method is allowed in their religions due to which they prefer this method. It is right to discourage this practice for deceased in every cost in all the disastrous conditions. If the deceased are not identified, then this process does not lead one towards the identification in future. Muslims are never cremated in Islam. As it is regarded a greater sin in Islam.[9] The respect shall be given to it. The rights of human beings are also applied to corpse. Whereas the phenomenon of dignity, the word corpse has been used for dead. To distinguish this word from animals, human corpse is used for the deceased. Similarly, the remains of a deceased means body of a dead individual. The practices of cremation along with, mass burial of deceased are against the right of human dignity.[10] The religion of Islam is grounded on principle of (Avoiding harm). It includes any type of harm including harm to soul, or any sort of pollution.[11] The hadith provides:

حَدَّثَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ عَمَّارٍ، حَدَّثَنَا عِيسَى بْنُ يُونُسَ، حَدَّثَنَا الأَعْمَشُ، عَنْ شَقِيقٍ، عَنِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ، قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ‏.‏ صلى الله عليه وسلم ‏ " سِبَابُ الْمُسْلِمِ فُسُوقٌ وَقِتَالُهُ كُفْرٌ"

[6] Hoe Loh Ing, Chong Ju lian, Mohd Khairul Amri Kamarudin, and Roslan Umar,''Covid- 19 and cremation of human corpses during disaster: National security vs religion belief''. *Journal of sustainability science and management* 16, no.1, (2021), 42.

[7] Muhammad Syukri Albani Nasution and Wulan Dayu, ''Fiqh Fardhu Kifayah for the city of covid-19.According to the fatwa of MUI and permenkes number 413/ Maqasid Syariah Analysis''. *Budapest International Research and critics institute Journal 3, no.* 4, (2020): 3005-3016, Doi: https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v3i4.1323

[8] Ekpo, C. G. & Is'haq, A. B, ''Islam and the environment; Implications of Islamic funeral practice on environmental sustainability''. *IOSR journal of research & method in education, 6*, no.1, (2016):58-63, Doi: 10.9790/7388-06115863

[9] A R Gatrad, ''Muslims customs surrounding death, bereavement, postmortem examinations, and organ transplants''. *BMJ Clinical Research* 309, (1994): 521-523, Doi: 10. 1136/bmj.309.6953.521.

[10] Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee, *Islamic Legal Maxims* (Lahore: Pakistan, 2013), 331.

[11] Muhammad bin Ismail Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Maktaba Dar us Salam, 1997).

> Ibn Masud (R.A) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, ‘‘Abusing a Muslim is a sin and murder of a Muslim amounts to infedility (kufr).’’[12]

As Shariah have made valid the killing of a person in three situations. Such conditions include *qasas*, adultery in the case of a married man which leads to stoning to death and in the crime of *Artarad*. Besides these three conditions, any killing would be regarded an injustice and mischief in the land.[13] The term desecration can be defined as the way of treating human beings, sacred places or things with great misconduct and disrespect. In this way corpse is a symbol for the person who was alive.[14] In the year, 1962, the head of the school of Islamic jurisprudence said if something is in the favor and benefitting the humanity. In that case, haram is allowed and becomes the necessary thing halal.[15]

حَدَّثَنَا عَنْ عَائِشَةَ، أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ" كَسْرُ عَظْمِ الْمَيِّتِ كَكَسْرِهِ حَيًّا "

> It was narrated from Aisha that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: Breaking the bone of one who is deceased is like breaking it when he is alive.’’[16]

At another place, the hadith provides:

حَدَّثَنَا عَن.أُمِّهِ، عَنْ أُمِّ سَلَمَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ. صلى الله عليه وسلم. قَالَ " كَسْرُ عَظْمِ الْمَيِّتِ كَكَسْرِ عَظْمِ الْحَيِّ فِي الإِثْمِ

> It was narrated from Umm Salama (Allah be pleased with her) that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, ‘‘Breaking the bone of the dead body is just like breaking the bone of a living person as regards the sin.’’[17]

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[12] Abu Zakaruya Yahya Bin Sharah An-Nawawi, *Riyadh-us-Saleheen* (New Delhi: India, 1984), Hadith, 3939.

[13] Sheikh Abdur Rehman Keelani, *Taiseer al-Quran* (Lahore: Pakistan, Maktaba Al-Islam, 1435 H).

[14] Imogen Jones, ‘‘A grave offence; corpse desecration and the criminal law’’. *Legal studies* 37, no.4, (2017):599-620. Doi: https://doi.org/10.111/lest.12163

[15] A R Gatrad, ‘‘Muslims customs surrounding death, bereavement, postmortem examinations, and organ transplants’’, *521-523.*

[16] Hafiz Abu Dawud Sulaiman bin Ash’ath, *Sunan Abu Dawud* (Riyadh: Saudi Arabia, Darussalam: 2008), Hadith, 3207.

[17] Muhammad Bin Yazeed Ibn Majah Al-Qazwini, *Sunan Ibn Majah* (Riyadh: Saudi Arabia, Maktaba Darrusalam, 2007), *Hadith, 1617.*

The family members shall not enter the place of burial; unless, it is performed by the officials. The coffin shall not be reopened.[18] Embalming, cremation shall be avoided so, that the body of the deceased must not get disturbed.[19]

If the cremation and the mass burial are carried out; then it will be extremely emotional for the loved-one, relatives and friends. When respect is given to the deceased, the sufferings and pain of the loved-one will ease with the help of it. The corpses shall not be cremated based on the motive of religion. As a result of cremation, the mass burials shall also be avoided. It shall only permit in that case if the circumstances of the present time do not allow for the graves to be used individually. There is an Islamic legal maxim that,

الضرورات تبيح المحظورات

"It means, necessity permits the prohibited."[20]

Even the remains of the body are also treated with respect just like the bodies of an individual. The deceased shall be disposed in the last by the way of burial which is a respectable process.[21] As the diseases in past started from epidemic. When the death approaches to the Muslim, it is obliged on other Muslims that they shall perform the obligations of funeral and burial. The Prophet (pbuh) had given guidance that a burial shall be performed quickly. There are some people in the society who do not demand burial for the covid-19 deceased patients. The reason for it is the fear of spreading the virus. While on the other hand, Shariah demands that the body must be treated well. There are also some individual who do not accept to bury the deceased for the reason that virus can be transmitted from the deceased to the living individual.[22]

- **Command for those who died due to Covid-19 Pandemic**

Those Muslims who died due to Covid-19 pandemic they are cremated instead of burying them. Is it valid to cremate a deceased Muslim?

To cremate a dead body is the act of disgrace and abasement done to the deceased. A person who is alive is as respectable after death as when he was alive. It is the responsibility of a Muslim that when a person dies then after performing its funeral

[18] Muhammad Syukri Albani Nasution, and Wulan Dayu, ''Fiqh Fardhu Kifayah for the city of covid-19. According to the fatwa of MUI and permenkes number 413/ Maqasid Syariah Analysis'', 3005-3016.

[19] Ekpo, C. G. & Is'haq, A. B, ''Islam and the environment; Implications of Islamic funeral practice on environmental sustainability'', 58-63.

[20] Nyazee, *Islamic Legal Maxims*, 331.

[21] Loh Ing Hoe, Roslan Umar, Mohd Khairul Amri Kamarudin, Chong Ju Lian, ''Dignified human corpse in disaster; A need of new treaty''. *International journal of Academic Research in business and social sciences, 8*, no.5, (2018):537-537. Doi:10.6007/IJARBSS /V8-i5/4141

[22] Nyazee, *Islamic Legal Maxims*, 332.

prayer, he shall be buried. To cremate a dead body is against the humanity. It is also against the method of burial which has been described by Shariah. Because from the life of Prophet (pbuh) till the present era, the dead person are buried in a common graveyard. After the few days of death and burial, everything of a deceased will be finished. So, that's why the Muslims due to the fear of the pandemic must not keep the Muslims deprive from their right of funeral and burial processes.[23]

- **Corona Cremations of Deceased Muslims in an Early Phase of Covid-19**

1. In the last year in the month of December, a baby who was twenty days old was cremated forcefully. There was no consent of his parents and the family. When the parents of the baby were tested for pandemic covid-19, there results came were negative. Sometimes, it also happened that the authorities came to know later that the deceased who was cremated had not any disease. Such bad policies were adopted by Sri Lanka which has targeted the people of the minority groups.[24]

2. The hospital handed over the dead body was of the Muslim woman named Anjum. She was admitted to AIIMS on 4 July, 2020. She had covid-19. It happened on 6 July, 2020.The administration of the hospital informed her family that she died on the same day at 2 o'clock. The dead body which the officials of hospital earlier handed to them was not of Anjum. They informed to the AIIMS immediately and came to know that her dead body was wrongly handed to the family of Kusmlata. They had cremated according to the rituals of Hindu.[25]

3. There is a boy of 19 years old. His name was Mohammad Minhaj. He was also cremated forcefully. As he had some complications regarding the covid-19 in the last month of the October. His brother Mazeer Minhaj told that eighteen members of the family was tested and were also quarantined by the authorities. They demanded fifty thousand rupees in Sri Lanka (£ 214, £ 258) for cremating the body of Minhaj. Mazeer told that they had not any choice besides that and were scaring.[26]

4. There was another case in which the family was not given permission for the burial of a deceased Muslim. The remains of a Muslim who was died were buried in

[23] A Ali Qasmi, Covid-19: Islamic Instructions & Modern Queries, (Darul Qalam Deoband, 1441 H): p 35

[24] Sinhala's Saroj Pathirana, ''Covid-19: Sri Lanka forcibly cremates Muslim baby sparking anger, 2019, Accessed March 20, 2024, https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-55359285

[25] Swarajya, ''Delhi: Cremation of a Muslim lady and burial of a Hindu, mixing of the dead bodies by AIIMS'', Accessed March 20, 2024, https://thelogicalindiaindian.com/news/ delhi-aiims- hospital-mixes-bodies-22228

[26] Akanksha Saxena, ''Sri Lanka's forced cremations spark anger among Muslims'', Accessed March 20, 2024, https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-sri-lankas-forced-cremations-spark- anger-among-muslims/a-56428204

Shamshanghat or the ground of cremation. Because of the fear that deceased might have died due to pandemic covid-19. The family members were denied by the caretakers of the five graveyards of Muslim. Mohammad Khawaja Mian who was fifty-five years old. He died on 22nd May due to the cardiac arrest. The residents of that area came while carried the burial at gandhamguda in Hyderabad. The son of the deceased named Mohammad Basha told that wherever they go they were given the same answer. At Mallapur, a graveyard whose caretaker refused for permitting the burial because the deceased was not the local of that area.[27]

5. A man named Bishrul Hafi Mohammad Joonus lives in Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka. He was seventy years old. He died due to the pandemic covid-19. His dead body was cremated in the ocean of India. Fayaz Joonus who was his son told that Bishrul Hafi Mohammad Joonus had a disorder of kidney. The result of his test came positive on 1st April, 2020. On that day he also died. Because of the fear of spreading virus, his funeral prayer was not performed. His dead body was taken for cremation in a car. A police man was supervising it. Prayers were performed by them outside that cemetery. The funeral prayer performed by the Muslims was not like that.[28]

6. There was a man who was sixty-five years old and was a Muslim. He died due to covid-19. His dead body was cremated when the trustee presented it. But the guards of the cemetery does not allow that his body should be buried. The event occurred in Jogeshwari in the civic hospital. One of the members of his family said that when the dead body was taken for the burial in the kabrastan of Malad Malwadi they denied its burial. Because of the result of his covid-19 was positive. It was on the authorities of the local to allow burial at sharp 4a.m. said by its family member. The police of the local and politician urged a lot that trustee might allow but they did not permitted it. Then they requested at the crematorium of Hindu for the cremation of the deceased. When they got the permission, the dead body was cremated sharp at 10 a.m. finally.[29]

7. Many Muslims dead bodies were cremated in Sri Lanka who was not even tested positive for the result of covid-19. There were twenty-five thousand cases for

[27] IANS, ‘‘Muslim man buried in 'shamshan ghat' after 'kabristan' denies entry’’, Accessed March 20, 2024, https:/ /www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay?newsID=713249

[28] Shereena Qazi and Ashkar Thasleem, ‘‘Anguish as Sri Lanka forces Muslims to cremate COVID-19 victim’’, Accessed March 20, 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/3/anguish-as-sri-lanka-forces-muslims-to-cremate-covid19victims#:~:text=Bishrul%20Hafi%20Mohammed%20Joonus%2C%20a,registered%20151%20cases%20so

[29] Sanjana Bhalerao, ‘‘Mumbai: Family of 65-yr-old Muslim man who was cremated allege three cemeteries denied permission for his burial’’, Accessed March 20, 2024, https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/mumbai/mumbai-family-of-65-yr-old-muslim-man-who-was-cremated-allege-three-cemeteries-denied-permission-for-his-burial-6344656/

pandemic covid-19 out of which one hundred and twenty-four deaths were occurred. It included Muslims who were more than fifty in number and were forcefully cremated. In the month of May, a man who was a Muslim found that they wrongfully cremated his mother. He said when his mother's death took place while she was in the hospital. Her dead body was taken away and a pot was handed to him in which the ashes were present of his mother. On the very next day, he was informed that the result of his mother was negative. They mistakenly cremated the lady. They belong from a poor family. The families of Christians and Muslims are battling against cremation legally.[30]

8. Fathima Rinozza, a lady who was forty four years old, lived in Sri Lanka in the city of Colombo. Due to some problem in respiratory tract; she was taken to the hospital, admitted there and was suspected of having covid-19. Fear ran among the authorities that she might be infected through virus. Mohammad Shafeck told that from that day when the doctors admitted her. The officials along with police and that of military reached his wife. They had sprayed all over inside and outside the house while kicking them out. They were told for quarantine for the period of fourteen days and were released. After that news received by them regarding the death of Fathima Rinozza. The son of Fathima was told to visit the hospital to identify the body of her mother. The officials told him that the reason of her death was somehow linked to pandemic covid-19 due to which the body was not given to them. Besides this, her son was also forced that he should sign some papers for allowing cremation. The doctors also told him that they need some parts from her body for test due to which they had to remove them from the body. Number of Muslims was cremated in Sri Lanka due to covid-19 on March 31, 2020. Those eleven dead bodies were finally cremated which also included Muslims. It was told by the doctor named Sugath Samaraweera that according to the policy of the government anyone who dies due to covid-19 or those who are suspected of having covid-19 and dies from it they all will be cremate.[31]

b. Concept of Cremation in Christianity

- **Concept of Disposing the Deceased through the Process of Cremation**

People of different faiths such as Muslims, Christians and Jews had different reactions during covid-19 pandemic.[32] The world suffered a lot due to the health

[30] Hannah Ellis-Petersen, ''Muslims in Sri Lanka 'denied justice' over forced cremations of Covid victims'', Accessed March 20, 24,https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/04 /muslims-sri-lanka-justice-forced-cremations-covid-victims

[31] Pathirana, ''Covid-19: Sri Lanka forcibly cremates Muslim baby sparking anger''.

[32] Adelaide Madera,'' The implications of the covid-19 pandemic on Religious exercise:

crises and challenges that posed to individuals belonging from various religious communities. Due to the increased rate of death from pandemic covid-19, there is a need to ensure the legislation. As well as provide guideline on the method of the disposal of the deceased such as cremation for the security of the individuals and society. As cremation is the speedily process of disposing the deceased. Cremation is not the only solution for all the religions for all human corpses because in some religions it is prohibited.[33] In Judaism, there are certain sects including Orthodox, Hasidic movements, modern orthodox and *Haridi* maintained against the process of cremation a biblical statement and disapprove it as Jewish law has forbidden it.[34] *Devarim* in *Torah* states, ‘‘Bury, you will bury him the same day; for the (unburied body) is a curse to God’’. (21: 23).[35]

As religion have a central role in influencing the attitudes of people towards cremating the deceased. There are some religions like Islam in which the cremation of dead body is forbidden. The question arises that for the national security whether the society put aside their beliefs and religion to allow a state to take a precedent in case of the disaster?[36] Among the Christians mostly, the concept of cremation is not preferable. There are some conservative denominations who asserts on the content mentioned in Bible which disapproves and discourages the cremation. For example, in Old Testament 34:6 states that *Moses is buried by God's choice after his passing.*[37] Furthermore, Corinthians states in 15: 35-55 says, *‘‘this passage will then be fulfilled when our bodies, which are dying, have been changed into bodies that will never die.*[38] Whereas *Thessalonians* states 4:16, *because the dead in Christ will rise first, the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a loud command, the voice of the archangel, and the sound of God's trumpet.*[39]

The process of cremation saves the land. The point of view of Phipps is that due to the cremation the area becomes scarce due to which it is endorsed widely. Those people who choses about cremation they get to know that many acres of an area is already given to the cemeteries.[40] Some people wishes for cremation as disposing

Preliminary remarks’’. *Law* 10, no. 44, (2021): 1-10, https://doi.org/10.3390/laws10020044

[33] Ing, Lian, Kamarudin, and Umar, ‘‘Covid- 19 and cremation of human corpses during disaster: National security vs religion belief’’, 42.

[34] Ibid; Pg.38

[35] Torah; 21:23

[36] Ing, lian, Kamarudin, and Umar, ‘‘Covid-19 and cremation of human corpses during disaster: National security vs religion belief’’, 40.

[37] Old Testament 34:6

[38] Corinthians 15: 35-55

[39] Thessalonians 4:16

[40] Norman L. Geisler and Douglas E. Potter, ‘‘From Ashes to Ashes is burial the only

after their death. Because of the motive of the maintenance of grave which is significant. As they do not want their family to be overburden. Finance is also another motive, because the expenses in performing both the procedures are different.[41] In religions, the religious motive also plays an important role for choosing burial or cremation of the deceased.[42] When any individual dies, the process of cremation should neither be performed before 36 hours; nor should it be delayed for five or six days. The time period of extending or shortening for conducting this procedure is decided under different scenarios.[43] Phipps is among the eminent supporters of practicing cremation in Christianity.[44]Phipps further argues for allowance of cremation because it has not given much but rather little importance towards disposing the deceased.[45] Such as his words regarding this matter was, ‘‘*Give the dead space to bury the dead’’.*[46]

In view of the Paul, the body is regarded an earthly tent which has to be demolished when used.[47] On concluding, he presented his view on the death by saying, *we have faith in... and would rather be at home with the Lord, far from the physical body*. [48]

- **Perspective of Burial for Disposing Deceased in Christianity**

Death is considered the seal of burial and death is not final; hence, proved by resurrection. Burial is regarded a symbol that is significant in *Gospel* as a part that is crucial. Because according to the Christians belief system, burial is a process which preserves the sanctity of soul.[49]

- **Burial Practice is Supported by the Christian of an Early Age**

Christian option?’’*Christian Research Journal* 21, no.1, (1998): 4-5.

[41] Brenda Mathijssen and Claudia Venhorst. *Cremation and Crematoria, Funerary Practices in the Netherlands* (Emerald Publishing Limited, ProQuest Ebook Central, 2019), 158, http://ebookcentral.Proquest.com/lib/rug/ detail.action?docID=5853319. DOI:10.1108/978-1-78769-873-42019 1008

[42] Ibid; Pg. 159

[43] Ibid; Pg. 162

[44] Exod 24: 17

[45] Norman L. Geisler and Douglas E. Potter, ‘‘From Ashes to Ashes is burial the only Christian option?’’, 1.

[46] Luke 9:60

[47] Norman L. Geisler and Douglas E. Potter, ‘‘From Ashes to Ashes is burial the only Christian option?’’, 2.

[48] 2 Corinthians. 5:8.

[49] Norman L. Geisler and Douglas E. Potter, ‘‘From Ashes to Ashes is burial the only Christian option?’’, 2.

Burial is a practice of Christians and their beliefs irrespective of whether in a service the body is there or not. As knowledge regarding their burial places, their life in such a perspective which has been made by God will be restored one day. So, the truth of the Christians is proclaimed in this way properly.[50]

As the religion of Christianity is practiced in Colombia, Portugal, Italy and Paraguay. Muslims are predominantly residing in Tunisia, Iran and Lebanon countries. Whereas people of multi-religions lives in U.S.A, India, Nigeria, Indonesia, New Zealand.[51] During the first wave of pandemic covid-19, the rituals that were traditionally performed for honouring deceased were banned completely. In some of the countries, were allowed only limited attendees in an events. Whereas in other countries, all the gatherings were banned. Even families were not allowed to contact with dead and it was the responsibility of the local authorities to burry deceased. In Italy and United States of America (USA) deaths due to covid-19 warranted cremation. Cremations were performed along with, mass graves for burial in India and Colombia. Many rituals of the religions were affected. For example, in first wave in Italy, the last rituals were not allowed or they should be restricted to the few relatives.[52]

- **Corona Cremations of Deceased Christians in an Early Phase of Covid-19**

Leaders of the church has approved cremations as the number of deaths from the virus keeps rising, despite the fact that cremation is seen locally as a Hindu rite rather than that of Christians. Reluctantly, the local Church is choosing cremation over traditional burial of Christians for those who died of the spreading COVID-19 pandemic in India. "We don't have many options''. As of yesterday, five cremation-burials were performed, according to Bishop of *Aleppy* named James *Anaparambil*, in Kerala on August 10 telling the Register. The burial trench must be ten feet deep in accordance with COVID-19 regulations, as stated by *Anaparambil* Bishop, the leader of the *Aleppy Diocese*, which is located near the Arabian Sea shore. However, the water level prevents us from digging deeper than two feet. In addition, many people are afraid to bury COVID-19 victims in crowded cemeteries. While cremation is permitted by canon law, Christians in India rarely cremate their deceased because it is largely seen as a Hindu tradition. "the practice of cremation is allowed by Church provided that it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the bodily resurrection,"

[50] Ibid; Pg.: 6

[51] Frances Adiukwu ., Leila Kamalzadeh., Mariana Pinto da Costa., Ramdas Ransing., Renato de Filippis., Victor Pereira-Sanchez., Amine Larnaout., Jairo M. Gonzalez-Diaz., Mario Eid., Zulvia Syarif., Laura Orsolini., Rodrigo Ramalho., Ramyadarshni Vadivel and Mohammadreza Shalbafan, ''The grief experience during the covid-19 Pandemic across different cultures''. *Annals of General Psychiatry,* 21, no. 18, (2022): 1-4, https://doi.org/10.11 86/s12991-022-00397-z

[52] Ibid; Pg.: 3

according to the Catholic Church of Catechism (2301). It is necessary to bury the ashes. In response, Bishop *Anaparambil* called an urgent conference and approved the first cremation after an old *Mararikkulam* Catholic parishioner passed away on July 28 due to COVID-19. Indeed, in the wake of this widely publicized the practice of cremation for Christians a number of other denominations Christian; likewise, announced that local congregations might use cremation in situations where burial of Christians was not feasible due to protocols of health publicly. Among them were Jacobite, Orthodox, and Protestant churches.[53]

c. Concept of Cremation in Judaism

In Rome, Castiglioni, when the *Rabbi Hayim* (Vittorio) died, he was not buried; rather, he was cremated. And the ashes after cremation were buried in the cemetery of Jewish people. In one of the newspapers of Jewish pointed out the position of Castiglioni. According to the law of Jewish, cremation is allowed and is preferred to the burial traditionally, by an Italian *Rabbinate* as minority one.[54] *Rabbi Yisrael Hayim* Braun in 1901 from Halle in Germany worked and published a pamphlet named *Beit Yisrael*. In his work, he gathered different opinions of Orthodox Rabbis of Central Europe about the problem of burring the Jew's ashes that were cremated who during their lives were based on requests.[55]

Emergence of the technology of cremation in 1870's with its movement socially of supporting, debates were raging among the society of European both generally, as well as, among the circles of religions especially. Those who were the proponents of the process of cremation focused on the benefits of hygiene which they would gain through the deceased disposing of this kind. Additionally, some framed their rejection of illogical theological ideas like "the world to come" and "the resurrection of the dead" as "enlightened." In the year 1886, the process of cremation unilaterally was forbidden by Catholic Church. When the declaration of papal was codified later in canon which denied the ecclesiastical burial to any individual who should be asked for cremation; until or unless, before the death they shall be repented. Another pamphlet that was published in the year 1898, in which the Protestant of the German church was also against cremation. The authorities of Jewish, Italian Rabbis were

[53] Anto Akkara, ''COVID-19 Pandemic Forces India's Catholics to Adopt 'Hindu' Cremations'', Accessed 20 March, 2024, https://ewtn.co.uk/covid-19-pandemic-forces-indias-catholics-to-adopt-hindu-cremations/,14/08/ 2020

[54] Adam S. Ferziger, ''Ashes to outcasts: Cremation, Jewish Law, and identity in Early Twentieth- Century Germany''. *AJS Review* 36, no. 1, (2012): 71. DOI:10.1017/S03640094 12000037

[55] Ibid; Pg.: 73

deliberately all over in 1880s and the year 1890s including various religious leaders had involved the issue over other locals. First collection of Jewish community based on legal response was *Beit Yisrael* which dedicated an issue of the process of cremation solely and the ashes interment. Such a publication was coming at that time in Germany, there were nine crematoria functioning. On the basis of statistics taken from Gotha, published in the year 1878, as the first facility of the cremation industrially in Germany. In twentieth century, the number of cremation of people was reached in thousands. Furthermore, the number increased to 14,000 in the year 1918. This number includes Protestants, Catholics and hundreds of Jewish people were involved at such who choose this choice.[56]

The crematorium of Hamburg began its work in 1892, and the emergence of the city as a central point for the moment to promote such kind of disposing the deceased socially. Opposite to this, the community of Jewish named Hamburg was long and lasts till an early time period of twentieth century. As it is among important centres the life of German Jewish people. On accounts of both, the published opinions of *Oberabbiner* (Chief rabbi of Hamburg) and *Mordecai Rabbi Markus* of Hirsch are of significant importance in ‘‘*Beit Yisrael*.’’ Hirsch the Prague’s chief *Rabbi* was unequivocal regarding his opposition to the concept of cremation as well as his criticism regarding those who opt this path. Among his instructions for the Jewish society of burial in Hamburg was that one should neither involve before the hand with the corpse nor with ashes after done with the procedure. Nonetheless, he also instructed that the ashes shall be burry by the family. And that should be in the section which is separate in the cemetery of Jewish dedicated to that person solely.[57]

- **The Concept of Burial and its Importance in Jewish Religion**

In the society of the Jewish people, almost only and the main method of disposing the deceased is burial. Besides burial, the other possible ways of treating the corpse are embalming as well as cremation. In Jewish, the burial is perceived as meritorious. Generally, the societies of burial are mentioned in the *Talmud* of Palestine. The burial of that society includes both the verbal and non-verbal tasks. In verbal, the roles include performing prayers, ceremonies are conducted and things alike. The practical tasks include bearing the deceased, purification, grave digging and the burial in actual. The roles that were performed its status was low relatively and were assigned to the lower people of standing and to those people who were hired were non-members of the society of those times. The procedure of performing the deceased ritual is paralleled to the development of society of burial.[58]

[56] Ibid; Pg.: 74
[57] Ibid; Pg.: 75
[58] Stefan C. Reif., Andreas Lehnardt., Avriel Bar-Levav, *Death in Jewish life: burial and*

Furthermore, the traditions of burial are not postponed usually for the mourner's convenience or for any social purpose.[59] After dressing, an earthly sand of an *Israel* is sprinkled in coffin. In the genesis of Biblical book, God declares, ''*You will return to the soil for from it you were taken. You are made from dust and to dust shall you return''*. A practice of seeking forgiveness is performed mostly by the members of the *herva Kadisha* from the dead person during an act unintentionally while doing *Taharah.*[60]

- **Concept of Cremation in Jews**

In view of some of the Jews, cremation is the traditional burial. For some Jews, cremation is seen as frightening process to control and coping with the death process. The body in their view is taken as God belonging: *''We borrow the body in life on the condition that we protect it as best as possible; after death''*, says the tradition that one have not any authority to change, destroy or harm the body in any means. Much of the Jews are cremated in genocide while following holocaust. The laws of Jews inclines generally towards the bereaved comforts which brings to them. [61]

Some of an individual tell their wishes to their family members as will. In Judaism, the Jews who are liberal permits the cremation. And the choice of cremation or burial is left upon an individual. It is necessary to respect the choice of the dead for disposing. The arrangements of funeral are either made by the director of the funeral directly, by synagogue or the society of the burial.[62]In Jewish tradition, burial is regarded as the only manner of disposing the deceased in an acceptable way. The belief of Jews regarding, the body returns to the earth from whence it originated, while the soul returns to God, its creator. Embalming is regarded as the reintegration of the body in an unnatural way with the world naturally.[63] Cremation is seen as a solution sociologically and the environment becomes favourable. In *lieu*, a service is held memorial. It takes place after the process of cremation. In cemetery, might be the

mourning customs among Jews of Europe and nearby communities (de Gruyter: Berlin, Rethinking Diaspora 1, 2014): 12. Doi: https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvbkjvh6

[59] Rabbi Mark A, *Jewish ritual, reality and response at the end of life: A guide to caring for Jewish patients and their families* (Durham: North Carolina, 2017): 30.

[60] Ibid; Pg. 31

[61] Rabbi Michele Brand Medwin, *Guide to Jewish customs regarding death and mourning.* (Temple Shalom Monticello, New York, 2011): 10

[62] Rabbi Alexandra Wright, *On the death and mourning: A guide-Liberal Judaism* (The Montagu centre: London, 2008): 4.

[63] Rabbi Michele Brand Medwin, *Guide to Jewish customs regarding death and mourning.* (Temple Shalom Monticello, New York, 2011): 7

ashes are interred. It is preferred as scattering which the survivors are provided with such a place where the closeness of their loving family is felt.[64]

- **Corona Cremations of Deceased Jews in an Early Phase of Covid-19**

Yehudah Meshi-Zahav, head of *Zaka*, told the news outlet, "Numerous pleas from Jewish communities worldwide are being received to stop cremation of remains due to government orders," Zaka chief executive *Yehudah Meshi-Zahav*. "We shall do everything in our power to uphold Kavod HaMeis, or the dignity of the deceased, as we fight for it every day. *Rojah* resorted to *Rabbi Avigdor Nebenzahl*, the president of the *Rabbinical* Council of *Zaka* and a former chief rabbi of Jerusalem's Old City. He decided on Friday that, in order to keep the body from being incinerated, the Jewish community in Bucharest would be allowed to have a Christian bury a coronavirus sufferer who passes away on Shabbat. The first victim of the coronavirus named *Ruben Bercovich* from the community of Jew was cremated in Argentina near Buenos Aires on 30 March, 2020 on Thursday forcefully by the local bodies despite the protest from the Jewish community. He was not given permission to be buried by the guards of the graveyard. Argentina is not further committed to cremate Jews despite the wishes of the families. But families are encouraging by the countries to cremate the dead bodies.[65]

Discussion and Analysis

Covid-19 which is also known as novel corona-virus that came in 2019 for the first time in the city of China named Wuhan. It had affected every individual, people living in large population all over the world. It was declared a pandemic disease globally by World Health Organization. This disease is very much contagious and severe from all diseases of the twenty-first century like that of plague that came which came in the 14th century.

In Islam, the process of disposing deceased is strictly condemned and is prohibited. Because in Islam, burial is the one and only preferable and correct practice which is performed by the Muslims and is allowed. There are many verses in Quran and traditions of the Holy prophet (pbuh) that are against the cremation and prohibits such practice in any situation and are in favor of the practice of burial by all the groups and sects of Muslims. In Islam, not any cremation was done at the time of plague. But in covid-19 many Muslims deceased were cremated as such a harm was never posed in Islamic history. Even in severe state of covid-19, the religious bodies of Islam did not

[64] Ibid: Pg.8

[65] Marcy Oster, ‘‘Bucharest Jews can bury coronavirus dead on Shabbat to avoid cremation, a rabbinical authority rules’’, Accessed March 20, 2024, https://www.jta.org/quick-reads/bucharest-jews-can-bury-coronavirus-dead-on-shabbat-to-avoid-cremation-a-rabbinical-authority-rules

allowed to cremate the dead bodies because the dignity of the deceased is same like that of a person who is living.

Furthermore, in Christianity, there are various groups and sects of people including Orthodox, Hasidic movements, modern orthodox and Haridi who practice cremation. As well as, those conservative denominations who discourages this practice of cremation. But no direct command is found for burial or for the prohibition of the practice of cremation. In early times, Christians used to bury the deceased. Even now-a-days such practice is performed. But on the other hand, there are people at an early times as well who use to prefer cremation for disposing deceased. Even now there are some Christians who use to practice cremation. Both the practices are performed by Christians based on their perspectives and beliefs according to their religion and their scripture named Bible. But it cannot be said that the cremation is preferable over burial in Christianity. The most acceptable method of disposing the deceased is burial. Among the Christian denominations in Covid-19 announced that local worshippers might use cremation in situations where burial of Christians was not possible due to procedures and protocols of health for the public. It includes Jacobite, Orthodox, and Protestant churches.

In Jewish religion, the methods for disposing deceased are burial, embalming and cremation. But the main method among these procedures is burial. There are also rights of deceased that must be performed when death occurs. Significance is also by the mourners for preserving the dignity of the deceased. In an early time, burials were performed which is a preferable method among many Jews. But there are some Jews who also practice cremations based on their religious beliefs and scriptures and no rights will be performed by mourners when cremation is practiced by Protestants, Catholics and number of Jews. But later on, Catholic Church prohibits such practice. Orthodox Jews also prefer cremation funeral rights are not performed. Non-orthodox Jews also accepts cremation as practice in this modern age. There are liberal Jews as well who prefer both burial and cremation according to their choice. Jews strictly condemned, and protests start by the Jewish community this practice of cremation due to covid-19 when first case of corona cremation took place.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In every religion, the method of disposing deceased varies. In all the sematic religions including Islam, Christianity and Jewish, the burial practices and funeral rituals are different. As it is based on the significance given by the respective religions for disposing deceased grounded in their religious texts and scriptures. Muslims, Christians and Jews were poorly targeted due to this contagious disease in the wake of covid-19. As it has hallmarked in the history of man because cremation is not a

usual practice that should be performed generally like that of burial one. It is performed by some of the Christians and Jews according to their wishes and wills respectively. Therefore, besides that, burial is the only practice which preserves the dignity and honor of the deceased. However, fear of the disease along with, the imposition of the practice of cremation has doubled the panic, annoyance and hassle among an individual worldwide when the disease came in 2019 for the first time.

So, people must know that whenever any pandemic disease came, what measures should be adopted for controlling the spread of disease in order to not violating the rights of human beings that are against their respective religions. According to the circumstances and situations of the time, by keeping in view the dignity of the deceased; along with, the choice of the family members, the preventive and precautionary measures should be adopted and implemented wholly for the sake of mankind in line with their respective religious teachings. So, that the self-esteem of the deceased should not be affected and reduced by adopting practices such as that of cremation. Hence, one should stay away from all those practices that should harm the soul of the deceased and also affects the emotional well-being of the living individuals mutually.