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Burying the dead in a coffin

Fatwa No. 3913

Q: We live in Sydney, Australia. Burying dead people here should be done by putting them in coffins which are then put in the grave. The grave should be filled with earth. Is it permissible in Islam to do this? A group of our brothers say that it is permissible to do so while others say that it is not. Some of our brothers send the corpses of their dead relatives to their countries of origin because they think that it is not permissible for them to bury them in coffins. The Ministry of Health does not permit burying the dead except in coffins. We tried to convince them with our viewpoint, but we have not achieved any progress in this regard until now. If we are sure that it is not permissible for us to bury our dead in coffins, then this can be an argument against the Ministry of Health in the area where we live. Otherwise, this will be an argument against our brothers who send the corpses of their relatives to their original countries though they waste much money that can be used in useful matters for Muslims. You alone can give us a Fatwa in this regard. Your Fatwa will be a place of concern for Muslims in Australia. We hope to receive your response soon.

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A: Burying a dead person in a coffin is not in accordance to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. It was not authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) or the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) ordered or did this. All goodness is in following the righteous predecessors and all evils is in innovating new matters in religion. Moreover, doing so brings similarity between Muslims and non-Muslims. Moving the corpse of a dead person to his original country in order for them to be buried there without any necessity is not permissible. Being buried in a coffin in the place where a person dies is not an excuse for moving him as long as there is a cemetery for Muslims.

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

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