

CAN A NON-MUSLIM DIE AS A SHAHEED?

A Puerto Rican sister who had accepted Islam and who lives in New York writes:

Q. I am back from a trip to my country of origin, Puerto Rico. I currently live in the U.S.A. I was formerly a Christian. It is more peaceful than New York. I know that this dunya is temporary, but it was amazing just seeing the farms, mountains, and the many beauties of Allah all around. It is also a secluded place.

In Puerto Rico it is common to bury two or three family members in the same grave. The bones of the existing inmate are placed in a small box and also left in the grave. My great grandmother had died many years ago, then after her my great grandfather. Thirty years after he was buried, his grave was opened. When the coffin was opened, they were shocked and astounded. They could not believe their eyes. His body and clothes were in the very same condition they were 30 years ago. His body was just as it was the day he had died. Furthermore, a beard had grown on him.

How is this possible? He was not a Muslim. Or is it possible he had Imaan in him? I was under the im-

pression that only the bodies of the Shuhada do not decompose. Please throw some light on this wonderful episode.

A. The body of your great grandfather remaining intact even after 30 years of burial and even a beard having grown, is a clear sign that he had died with Imaan, and added to his Imaan, Allah Ta'ala had bestowed to him the rank of shahaadat (martyrdom). Allah Ta'ala operates in wonderful and mysterious ways which we do not comprehend.

No one can claim with certitude that a certain person has died as a Mu'min or a Kaafir. Only Allah Ta'ala knows. The wonderful condition of your great grandfather's body is clear testimony for his Imaan – that he either had Imaan all along which he was concealing, or for some reason just prior to the arrival of Malakul Maut, Allah Ta'ala guided him and gave him the Taufeeq of Imaan. Allah Ta'ala guides whomever He wills, and He misguides whomever He wills.

About a century ago, a young French girl who had embraced Islam and kept it secret for fear of her parents and family, had died whilst she was young. She was buried in the graveyard in Paris.

However, it happened that a grave was opened up in Jan-natul Baqi (the cemetery in Madinah where thousands of Sahaabah are buried). Every one was astonished to see the fresh body of the young French girl in the grave. Allah Ta'ala has transferred her body from Paris to Madinah while the body of the well-known Aalim was miraculously taken from that grave and cast into the cemetery of kufristan (Paris) in the grave where the girl had been buried.

This disaster had befallen the Aalim as a consequence of his preference for the Christian practice of abstention from ghusl of janaabat. Frequently, when he was in need of a Waajib ghusl, he would comment that it was very convenient for Christians, for they were not required to take ghusl when in the state of janaabat. Although the Aalim would take ghusl, his attitude of preference was kufr. Preference for any custom or practice of kufr is kufr even if one abstains from the actual act of kufr. Muslims should take note and examine their hearts when they speak favourably of kuffaar practices or deprecate Islamic teachings/practices. They do so at the peril of extinguishing their Imaan.