

Historical implication of burial tradition in ancient civilizations, and funerary architecture in Islam

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Abstract

In both ancient and modern civilization the subsistence of burial tradition proves a consciousness within people regarding a phase between this world and hereafter. In most of the ancient civilizations and cultures dead are dealt with honour and dignity, equal to the honour human give to their living loved ones. Islam gives right to the human even before birth, in life and subsequently after death on the basis of this notion that human as creation of Allah (swt) is created in the perfect shape. Holy Qur'an elucidates the honour of dead body in the unfolding of story of Cane and Abel. When Abel was murdered by his brother how Allah (swt) taught Cane to bury the dead body of his brother with honour. Many other Qur'anic narratives clearly explain about honour that is due to human even after death. This faith and ritual gave way to the construction of memorable tomb structures. On the basis of conformist burial tradition, throughout history since primordial time significant architectural structures of burial chambers, catacombs, tombs, mausoleums, mazars and shrines were built. Every culture offers its own tradition to bury their deceased. This research observes significant tomb structures in ancient civilization and the continuation of burial tradition and tomb architecture in Islam. Structural designs of tombs/mausoleums are based on practice and faith and explicate religious and geological factors. Furthermore, analytical observations prove that burial tradition and expansion of tomb structures is an unavoidable phenomenon based on faith and human psyche.

Keywords: Burial Tradition, Tomb Architecture, Religion, Faith and Ritual.

Introduction

Tomb is a structure manufactured over-the-ground to house the remaining parts of the dead. It is generally a blend of architectural features, structures and ornamentations. Some tombs contain marvelous structures, decorations and utilize extreme stylistic layouts and adornment inside just like exteriors. Tombs are developed in a multitude of character, sizes and structures. There are house tombs, rotunda, pyramids, monoliths, hills, rock-cut tombs, and sanctuary tombs.

In numerous ancient societies dead were covered or buried in their personal houses e.g. in Sumerian and Babylonian civilization of Mesopotamia and in this way tomb structure were constructed. With the further developments and innovations in funerary architecture, tombs made of mud bricks (e.g. Egyptian Mastabas) and rock cut or stone tombs (e.g. pyramids) have been developed usually of extraordinary size. They were usually domical and sometimes in rectangular plan. Such tombs were frequently luxurious, having garments, furniture, utensils and other daily life things of deceased.

Burial tradition or construction of tombs has always been based on faith of every culture and civilization. Sometimes royals of the society were covered in coffins and other people were directly buried in the grounds. Ancient Egyptians initially used to bury their dead underground and various daily life items and pottery was also kept with the body in the grave, as they believed on life after death. Mastabas were built for the wealthy, which were simple tombs constructed by using mud bricks. Later on pyramids and royal tombs were constructed for the royals of the society to provide them a luxurious afterlife. So was the case in other civilizations and tomb construction offer evolutionary process till its mature forms.

Funerary traditions of Roman were very much similar with the classical Greeks but the Romans used to construct royal tombs and graves. The social system of Romans permitted numerous individuals to become rich and celebrate their funerals more lavishly as compared to Greeks. Somehow or the other every civilization developed some form of burials that satisfied their faith or customs.

The concept of graves in Islam first developed in historical accounts of Ḥaḍrat Ādam (A.S). The story is narrated in Sūrah al-Mā'ida of the Holy Qur'an from where

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notion of grave emerged which was taught by a crow to Qābīl after the murder of Hābīl. There are some other accounts in Holy Qur'ān regarding significance of graves in Islam and we see a continuous tradition of burials in monotheists as well as polytheist cultures in form of mausoleums, tombs and shrines in later periods.

Burial Traditions in Ancient Civilizations.

Tomb is basically an ancient Greek term, that is specifically referred to the home for the dead or a hill rose over a cremated body. By its service, tomb is considered as a significant architectural structure that is meant as the last resting spot for the dead ones. Consequently, the term tomb is usually utilized reciprocally with funerary commemoration, funerary landmark, catacomb, and even with cenotaph (an unfilled tomb), tombstone, and grave. All execute a certain task of a tomb.¹

A tomb in its form is a structure manufactured over-the-ground to bury deceased. Several this kind of structures are independent, however some of them survive with different structures inside them that usually include holy places like mosques, churches etc. Tomb is generally a blend of architectural features, structures and ornamentations. Some tombs contain marvelous structures, magnificent surface decorations and utilize extreme stylistic layouts and adornment for interior as well as exterior. Tombs are developed in a horde of shapes, sizes and structures. There are rock-cut tombs, pyramids, monoliths, hills, rotunda, house tombs and sanctuary tombs etc. They all might shelter the remaining parts of a solitary individual or many.²

The term tomb is commonly regarded for every type of graves, funerary landmarks and memorials. In numerous ancient societies dead were covered or hidden in their houses e.g. in Sumerian and Babylonian civilization of Mesopotamia and in this way tomb structure were created. With the further developed innovations in funerary architecture, tombs made of mud bricks (e.g. Egyptian Mastabas) and rock cut or stone tombs (e.g. pyramids) have been developed usually of extraordinary size. They were usually domical and sometimes in rectangular plan. Such tombs were frequently luxurious, having garments, furniture, utensils and other daily life things associated with deceased.³

Funerary structures aren't constantly engineered/architectural, since it might be merely emblematic, as in the classical Greek and medieval period. Funerary structure is created by social orders whose faith in the hereafter is materialistic and by people who need to propagate and symbolize their worldly significance. Marvelous grand tombs have been constructed in ancient

civilizations such as in old Egypt e.g. "Khufu's Pyramid" (c. 2580–2560 B.C.), in Greece during Hellenistic period the "Tomb of Mausolus" at Halicarnassus (350 B.C.) which is the wellspring of the word catacomb or mausoleum, in antiquated Rome the "Mausoleum of Hadrian" (A.D. 135–139), in Renaissance Europe "Michelangelo's Medici Chapel" (1527), and in Asia the memorial tomb constructed in Mughal era that is the Tāj Maḥal (1632-1647) also known as symbol of love. Tombs were also considered as an essential element to show power, in many civilizations.⁴

The primary burials might have occurred as long as 50,000 years ago. This ancient burial site dated back nearly 10,000 years ago, is known as "Qafzeh" in Israel. The inhabitants were buried in a cavern. Their remnants were set in caskets with various things like garments, food etc. The remnants of the deceased were painted also before being destined to the caskets, and a tremendous dining experience was set up to commend the passing. Numerous people were buried here in a categorized way, such as families. Qafzeh is also known as one the earliest middle Paleolithic burial site.⁵ (Plate.1)



Plate.1 Ancient burial site "Qafzeh" in Israel.

Source: <https://choicemutual.com/funeral-rituals-ancient-world/>, accessed 24th September, 2020.

In Mesopotamian civilization, the inhabitants of Sumerian and Babylonia believed that the souls of their dead went beneath the surface of the earth, when departed. So they buried their dead in the ground and believing that in this way the soul can get easy access to their next underground life. They were likewise covered near their homes where they once lived, so their survivors could bring contributions, for example, food and refreshments, to

¹ Hope Valerie M, "Tombs", *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*, November 27, 2019, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/anthropology-and-archaeology/customs-and-artifacts/tombs>, (accessed 22nd December, 2019).

² *Ibid.*, (accessed 22nd December, 2019).

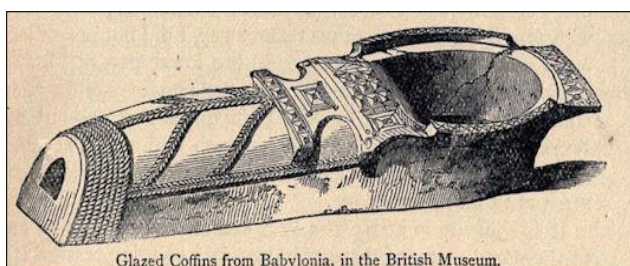
³ Amy Tikkanean, "Tomb", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, March 01, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/tomb>, (accessed 25th December, 2019).

⁴ Alan Gowans, Roger Scruton, et al., *Architecture, Encyclopedia Britannica*, October 10, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/architecture/Religious-architecture>, (accessed 12th January, 2020).

⁵ Anthony Martin, *The History of Funeral Rites and Rituals of The Ancient World*, <https://choicemutual.com/funeral-rituals-ancient-world/>, (accessed 24th September, 2020).

their graves regularly. These were done for appeasing their Gods and guarantee the deceased a comfortable afterlife.⁶

It was believed by the Mesopotamians, that if the dead were not carefully preserved or buried, they would return to the world in the form of ghosts or evil spirits and haunt their families. Usually honey was used to preserve the corpses by the Assyrians and Babylonians in Mesopotamia. The royals of the society were covered in coffins and other people were directly buried in the grounds. Some graves were also excavated in the vaults of the brick walls. Initially Babylonian civilization used bath-tub shaped coffins. Later on slipper shaped coffins were also excavated. Some coffins were glazed and also adorned with ornamental designs.⁷ (Plate.2)



Glazed Coffins from Babylonia, in the British Museum.

Plate.2 Glazed coffins from Babylonia to preserve the corpses.

Source:<http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat56/sub363/item1523.html>, accessed 24th September, 2019.

Ancient Egyptians initially used to bury their dead underground, various daily life items and pottery was kept with the body in the grave, as they believed life after death. Mastabas were built for the wealthy, which were simple tombs constructed by using mud bricks. Later on pyramids and royal tombs were constructed for the royals of the society to provide them a luxurious life hereafter.

The ancient Egyptians introduced the process of mummification to protect the body after death. Mummification was a costly and long process, only the elites of the society such as pharaohs could afford it. The body was primarily sundried and wrapped in linen cloth initially; process of mummification further developed with new innovations with materials. The deceased was sundried then before wrapping the body in linen; all the organs of the deceased were removed from the body and kept in separate containers made of clay. Then the body was placed in a sarcophagus with all the containers, some

animals, jewelry and pottery were also placed with the body. The sarcophagus is an Egyptian casket made of stone and usually adorned with carved sculptures. It was then kept in the pyramids.⁸ (Plate.3)



Plate.3 Egyptian Sarcophagus.

Source: <https://choicemutual.com/funeral-rituals-ancient-world/>, accessed 24th September, 2019.

The Egyptian pyramids are considered one of the marvelous structures and are the most celebrated tombs ever. Their massive structures express royal influences and indicate the royalty and vitality of the individuals who made them. Khufu's pyramid might be one of the most colossal tomb constructions in Egypt. (Plate.4) This massive pyramid is erected by using huge blocks of limestone and granite. It was constructed in c. 2580–2560 B.C. (4th dynasty). It is one of the oldest pyramids of Egypt and also included in the seven wonders of the antiquated world.⁹

Pyramid tombs are related with Egypt; however pyramids were likewise embraced in twelfth-century B.C. in antiquated Rome, Pyramid of Caius Cestius, in England during eighteenth century, the Earl of Buckinghamshire at Blickling Norfolk, and in nineteenth century America, and the landmark to associated troops in Richmond Virginia). Nearly all types of structures were developed to bury human relics and accordingly worked out space of the tombs.¹⁰

It was believed by the Greeks, that the soul leaves the body like breath of air, so the significant need was to get the body to the hidden world as fast as could be expected under the circumstances, so the soul could arrive securely. The body was anointed in oil and covered in a garment, and a coin was set under the tongue to be given to Charon, the ferryman of the river Styx, who took the spirit to the next

⁶ Anthony Martin, *The History of Funeral Rites and Rituals of The Ancient World*, <https://choicemutual.com/funeral-rituals-ancient-world/>, (accessed 24th September, 2020).

⁷ *Early Man and Ancient History - Mesopotamian Culture and Life, Facts and Details*, 2018, <http://factsanddetails.com/world/cat56/sub363/item1523.html>, (accessed 24th September, 2019).

⁸ Ashley Start, "Ancient Egyptian Burial Practices", October 09, 2014, <http://anthropology.msu.edu/anp455-fs14/2014/10/09/ancient-egyptian-burial-practices/>, (accessed 24th September, 2019).

⁹ *Pyramids of Giza*, Encyclopedia Britannica, April 01, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pyramids-of-Giza>, (accessed 22nd September, 2020).

¹⁰ Hope Valerie M, "Tombs", *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*, November 27, 2019, <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/anthropology-and-archaeology/customs-and-artifacts/tombs>, (accessed 22nd December, 2019).

world. Before burying the body in the ground, the body was set out for grieving by loved ones, an aspect of the custom known as “prosthesis”. Before sunrise, one or two days after the demise, a memorial service parade called the “ekphora” was held, taking the deceased to either their last resting place for “internment” or a memorial service fire for delivery to the Olympian gods. Burial sites of Greeks were marked with columns called steles or statues, which were highly painted.

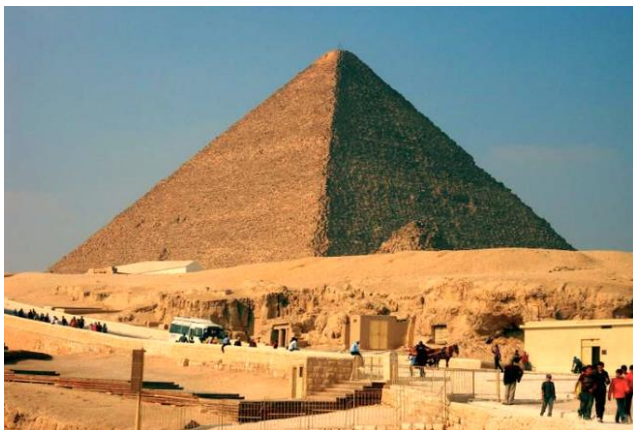


Plate.4 Pyramid of Khufu, near Giza, Egypt.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pyramids-of-Giza>, accessed 22nd December, 2020.

Ancient Greeks were very much concerned about their afterlife. Funeral wreaths highly decorated with bronze leaves, terra-cotta berries, grapes, grasshoppers and cicadas were placed on the graves. Athenian families of classical Greek period were used to bury their dead in marble sarcophagus. These marble caskets were then buried in the ground. A manmade terrace was built in marble around the grave of the wealthy.¹¹

Funerary traditions of Roman were very much similar with the classical Greeks but the Romans used to construct royal tombs and graves. The social system of Romans permitted numerous individuals to become rich and celebrate their funerals more lavishly as compared to Greeks.

Ancient Romans were the first who introduced catacombs in the 1st century. It’s a type of underground burial chambers. These underground tombs were built by early Jewish and Christian community. One of the most famous catacomb tombs exists under the city of Paris. These passages are stretch for more than 185 miles

underneath the city. In ancient times, these catacombs were also used by the military forces for secret meetings. Funeral dinners and death anniversaries were also celebrated here. Some of the catacombs in Paris were decorated with religious frescos. The Catacombs of Priscilla also contained marvelous frescos which gives a beautiful glimpse of early history of Christian art.¹²

Some of the most impressive and majestic architectural structure of tombs were certainly developed after the demise significant persons. From seven marvels of the antiquated world, two of them are tombs. One is the incredible pyramids of Egypt and the second one is the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus. Later on, the tomb of King Mausolus, the lord of Caria (Asia Minor) was also included in ancient wonders. The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus was a structure planned by Pythius of Priene.¹³

Today it is viewed as a Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The Mausoleum was situated in what is presently known as Bordum, Turkey. (Plate.5) The structure was worked around 350 B.C. out of appreciation for the late City King Mausolus. The structure turned out to be celebrated to such an extent that the term catacomb (mausoleum) was gotten from Mausolus's name and is as yet utilized today. The Mausoleum was produced using marble and took inspiration from Lycian, Greek, and Egyptian styles, but it’s no longer existed and destroyed completely due to environmental changes and negligence of the ruling powers.¹⁴ (Plate.6)



Plate.5 Artist’s recreation of Mausoleum of Halicarnassus located in Bordum, Turkey.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Mausoleum-of->, accessed 13th January, 2020.

Tomb architecture is observed not only in ancient civilizations but somehow or the other all western cultures followed burial traditions that prove the significance of

¹¹ Anthony Martin, *The History of Funeral Rites and Rituals of The Ancient World*, <https://choicemutual.com/funeral-rituals-ancient-world/>, (accessed 24th September, 2020).

¹² “The unbelievable story of the Paris Catacombs”, *Walks of Italy*, February 06, 2017 <https://www.walksofitaly.com/blog/art-culture/paris-catacombs>, (accessed 21st September, 2020).

¹³ “Priene”, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, November 25, 2013, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Priene>, (accessed 19th January, 2020).

¹⁴ “Mausoleum at Halicarnassus”, *Wilstar.com*, <https://wilstar.com/wonders-of-the-world/mausoleum-at-halicarnassus/>, (accessed 13th January, 2020).

burials since primordial times in both polytheist as well as monotheist cultures. Based on traditions tombs are developed in a multitude of character, sizes and structures throughout history.



Plate.6 Ruins of Mausoleum at Halicarnassus at Bodrum, Turkey.

Source: https://www.ancient.eu/Mausoleum_at_Halicarnassus/, accessed 13th January, 2020.

Concept of grave and funerary architecture in Islam

There are various references in *Sūrah*¹⁵ of the Holy Qur'ān¹⁶ about the concept of graves in Islam. The concept of grave in Islam first developed in historical accounts of Ḥaḍrat Ādam (A.S). The story is narrated in *Sūrah* al-Mā'ida of the Holy Qur'ān 5:27 (Chapter 5, verse 27); translation of which explains that, Allah Almighty has blessed Ḥaḍrat Ādam (A.S)¹⁷ and his wife Ḥaḍrat Amman Ḥawwa (A.S)¹⁸ with a large number of children. Usually in every pregnancy, they were blessed with twin children, a baby boy (a male) and a baby girl (a female). At that time Allah Almighty permitted him (Ādam) to marry his daughters with his sons according to a rule. The rule was that, the female of one pair of twin will be married to the male of the other twin pair. His first twin male was named Qābīl (Cain) and his twin sister Iqlimah. Their second pair of twin had Hābīl (Abel) and his twin sister Labūdah. By the passage of time, the boys grew up and their age of marriage came nearer. It was decided as per the rule set by Allah Almighty that Qābīl will be married to Labūdah and Hābīl with Iqlimah, but Qābīl did not agree with this decision because he wanted to marry his own twin sister

Iqlimah as she was more beautiful than Labūdah. They all performed their daily duties efficiently. Hābīl became a shepherd; he took care of the animals whereas Qābīl was responsible for the plantation and grew natural products, trees and vegetables. At that time, it was mandatory for everyone to pay material contributions towards Allah Almighty, as a gesture of thankfulness for the bounties of Allah Almighty.¹⁹

The boys grew up and their age of marriage came nearer. They were already familiar about the decision of their father but Qābīl insisted on marrying Iqlimah but Adam refused him. Due to the insistence of Qābīl, except if both (boys) to present an offering (*niāz*) towards Allah Almighty and the one whose offering will be accepted would wed Qābīl's sister. So Qābīl brought a few products grown in the soil as an offering/submission towards Allah Almighty. When, Hābīl brought meat from a portion of his flock and placed all the stuff on a hill top, Qur'ān says;

“...when each offered a sacrifice; it was accepted from the one but not from the other”.²⁰

The clear gesture of acceptance of any offering was that a fire would originate from the sky and gobble up the selected offering and the offering which was not burnt up by the fire was considered as not accepted by Allah Almighty. Hābīl's offering was accepted, while Qābīl's offering was rejected. He became extremely furious and became an enemy of his brother Hābīl. In his wrath and jealousy, Qābīl attacked his brother and murdered him. It is horrifying to the point that a man killed another innocent man which was his own twin brother. One *hadith* narrated below presents a strong aversion to this demonstration, yet such *hadiths* are not completely acknowledged by the Muslim Ummah²¹.

In the *hadith* the Prophet Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (pbuh) said,

“No person is murdered unjustly, however the liability is laid on the primary child of Adam, who concocted (invented) the custom of executing on the earth” (translation of *Hadith* from Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī).

After the murder, Qābīl became worried about what to do with the dead body, because no one had died before that on earth. Then Allah Almighty sent a crow who scratched

¹⁵ *Sūrah* is an Arabic word, its mean chapter. Every chapter of the Holy Qur'ān is known as *sūrah*. The holy Qur'ān is consisting of one hundred and fourteen (114) *sūrah*s from which eighty-six (86) are classified as *Makki* (Mecca) and twenty-eight (28) are *Madni* (Medina).

¹⁶ Holy Qur'ān (Koran in English) is the holy book of Muslims.

¹⁷ Ḥaḍrat Ādam (A.S) (Adam in Bible) was the first man on earth sent by Allah almighty when he created the world. He is known as the father of all humans.

¹⁸ Ḥaḍrat Amman Ḥawwa (A.S) (Eve in Bible) she was the second person sent by Allah almighty on the earth, after Ḥaḍrat Ādam (A.S). She was his wife. She is known as the mother of all mankind. Her grave is in Jeddah the city of Saudi Arabia. The word Jeddah is derived from an

Arabic word “*jid*” it means mother. The city got the name Jeddah because of Ḥaḍrat Amman Ḥawwa (A.S), as she is considered the mother of all human beings. Her grave is situated in this city.

¹⁹ “Tafsīr *Sūrah* al-Mā'ida Ayah 27”, *Verse by Verse Qur'ān Study Circle*, February 7, 2013,

<https://versebyversequranstudycircle.wordpress.com/2013/02/07/tafseer-surah-al-maidah-ayah-27/>, (accessed 15th December, 2019).

²⁰ “Tafsīr *Sūrah* Al-Mā'ida Ayah 27”, *Verse by Verse Qur'ān Study Circle*, February 7, 2013,

<https://versebyversequranstudycircle.wordpress.com/2013/02/07/tafseer-surah-al-maidah-ayah-27/>, (accessed 15th December, 2019).

²¹ *Ummah* derived from the word *ummat*. It means community.

the ground to tell Qābīl the best way to shroud the dead body of his sibling. The crow started digging the earth with its beak and after a hole was dug, he put whatever was in his mouth in the hole and covered it with the dirt. Qābīl, in his disgrace, started to revile himself and he turned out brimmed with blame. The idea of the wrongdoing finally conveyed to the killer, as he understood in fact that it was so horrible to kill anybody, the more so as the unfortunate casualty was a guiltless and upright man. Loaded with laments (mourn, wail), Qābīl was set apart with profound distress. The Qur'an states,

"At that point he got one of the individuals who lamented." 5:31 (Chapter 5, verse 31)

The Qur'an states that the tale of Qābīl and Hābīl was a message for humanity, as it had educated them the outcomes of homicide and how to bury dead in grave and that the murder of an individual would be equal to killing entire of humanity.²² This narration taught human how to honour their dead and how they should be buried.

The grave of Hābīl is now situated in the West Mountains of Damascus, near Zabadani valley in Syria. After some time, a mosque structure was constructed with the grave and it's known as Nabī²³ Hābīl's (Abel) Mosque. (Plate.7)



Plate.7 Nabī Hābīl (Abel) Mosque.

Source: <https://structurae.net/en/structures/nabi-habeel-mosque>, accessed 15th December, 2019.

Many Muslims from all over the world came there for the *ziyārat*²⁴ of the mosque and grave. After this incident the concept of grave or burial tradition developed on earth. All the Muslims from all over the world, either they belong to

any sect (*shī'ā*, sunni etc.) every Muslim community buries their dead underground and make graves. The process of funeral as a mark of identity in Muslim community involves *ghussal*, which is bathing of the corpse/dead with clean water and after that wrap it in plain white cloth called *kafan*. After completing all the funeral activities, the deceased is then taken to the graveyard and buried in the soil and this ritual is called "*dafan*". According to *shari'ah*²⁵ Muslims are bound to bury their dead underground.

Burial tradition in Islam offers dissimilar beliefs and issues. One of the most important issues among various sects (school of thoughts) of Muslims like Sunni, Ahl-i Hadīth, Brailvi and *Shī'ā* etc. is about making of tombs above the graves of the loved ones and visiting them. It has been described from the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) that he stated,

"O Allah, don't make my grave an icon, revile of Allah be upon the individuals who consider the graves of their prophets as spots of worship".²⁶

These words of Prophet make clear that making graves as the spot of worship is prohibited in Islam, but people still out of veneration give respect to graves more specifically of Holy figures such as Sufi saints and built impressive tomb structures.

Making graves places of worship is prohibited in Islam and in the following of some sects ladies are also prohibited from the Visit (*ziyārat*) of graves. It is explained in *Ṣaḥāḥ-i Sittāh*²⁷ that Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Revile be upon the ladies who visit the graves."²⁸ In view of various *hadīth* there are dissimilar ways of burial traditions in various cultures but significance of making graves has a predetermined position in Islam that dead should be buried with honour. Regarding construction of graves a narration from the Holy Qur'an in *Sūrah al-Kahaf* which is about the *Aṣḥāb al-Kahaf*²⁹ provides accounts of earliest tombs. The incident is narrated as:

The People of the Cave were sure subjects of King Daqiyānūs (Emperor Decius, who was a Roman king). He had asserted Godhood. These youngsters' (*Aṣḥāb al-Kahaf*) followers of Allah run away from the nation of Daqiyānūs and took asylum/refugee in a cavern. The Almighty put them to sleep and made them nod off for a long time. At that point when Allah woke them up one of them was sent

²² "Tafsīr Sūrah al-Mā'ida Ayah 27", *Verse by Verse Qur'an Study Circle*, February 7, 2013, <https://versebyversequranstudycircle.wordpress.com/2013/02/07/tafseer-surah-al-maidah-ayah-27/>, (accessed 15th December, 2019).

²³ *Nabī* is an Arabic word means Prophet. Prophet is the innocent one sent on earth by Allah almighty for the welfare and betterment of mankind.

²⁴ *Ziyārat* means visiting and seek blessings. This term is specifically used for holy places.

²⁵ *Shari'ah* is the Islamic laws, based on the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of holy Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.W. These laws are compulsory for every Muslim.

²⁶ Sayyid Murtadha al-'Askari. "Building of Tombs in the Light of Qur'an and Hadīth", *Al-Islam.org*, <https://www.al-islam.org/building-tombs-light-quran-hadith-sayyid-murtadha-al-askari>, (accessed 14th April, 2019).

²⁷ *Ṣaḥāḥ-i Sittāh* also known as *Kuṭub al-Sittāh* means "The Authentic six books". They are the authentic six books of *Hadīth* compiled by six Muslim scholars after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

²⁸ Sayyid Murtadha al-'Askari. "Building of Tombs in the Light of Qur'an and Hadīth", *Al-Islam.org*, <https://www.al-islam.org/building-tombs-light-quran-hadith-sayyid-murtadha-al-askari>, (accessed 14 April, 2019).

²⁹ *Aṣḥāb al-Kahaf* "People of the Cave". They are famously known as seven sleepers according to Qur'an.

to the city to buy a few victuals. The individuals of the city got dumbfounded at the coin which he offered on the grounds that it had a place with an old age.³⁰

The individuals of the town were believers and when they knew about the young sleepers of the cave who left their nation for the sake of religion, they surged towards the cavern. The young people of the cave refused to come back to the city and prayed to Allah to return them to their past state. Allah Almighty put them back to their past sleeping condition as though they were again dead. The individuals of the town were confused and want to know what ought to be finished with them but only Allah Almighty knows what happened to them. The individuals of the town, who had the conclusive words suggested that they would assemble a mosque over the resting spot of the sleepers of the cavern and some said that a tomb structure should be created over the graves. This cave is situated in the vicinity of Ephesus, in Turkey. The cave is of great importance in Christianity as well as in Islam.³¹ (Plate.8) such narratives from the Holy Qur'ān were the fundamental rationales behind Islamic tomb architecture.

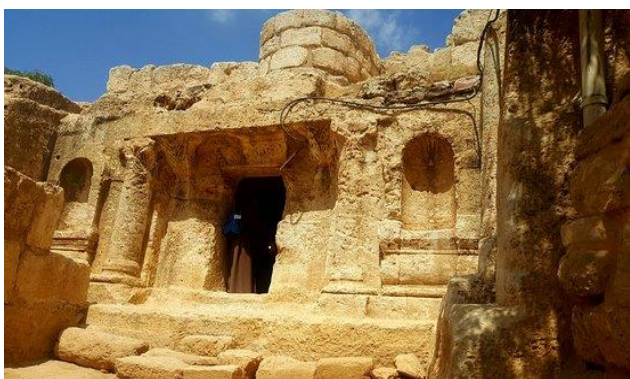


Plate.8 The Cave of Seven Sleepers (Aṣḥāb al-Kahaf).

Source: https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293986-d2578779-r125835924-Ahl_Al_Kahf-Amman_Amman_Governorate.html, accessed 14th April, 2019.

Qur'ānic narratives gave way to the construction of graves and this way burial tradition that was practiced since primordial times and in all ancient civilizations further continued in Islamic cultures as well.

As discussed before according to Islamic orders, tombs or dead are not meant to worship but just a remembrance of demise of holy figures or loved ones to give them honour even after their death graves are made. Furthermore, a ritual that is practiced and is persistence in all Islamic culture is reciting various *surahs* from the Holy Qur'ān in order to seek forgiveness from God for the souls of departed loved ones.

This ritual of connectivity with God, gave way to many other traditional practices that are observed on shrine of Sufi saints followed by visitors such as *Raqṣ-i Darwāish (Sam'ā), qawāli and dhamāl*. *Sam'ā and dhamāl* belong to Sufism and Sufi practices in Islam according to which dance is an idiom of devotion and a way of connectivity with God. As a concluding paradigm it will not be hypothetical that tomb architecture is an epitome of sustained connection with divine and to remain firm that divine who creates you will turn you to ashes of destruction one day.

Conclusion

Historical burial tradition is an unavoidable phenomenon that is observed since primordial times till today in both polytheist and monotheist cultures. Evolution in burial tradition is also inevitable as man's socio-religious concerns even after departing from this world for hereafter demand a memoir for a kind of connectivity with the world where he spends years of his life with loved ones. On the other hand, reciprocal connectivity of humankind with departed souls of loved ones is equally a matter of concern. Continuation of burial tradition in all monotheist/polytheist cultures provide opportunity to remain connected with their noted companions/loved ones who departed from the world. Institution of building burials involved architectural demonstrations that evolved variety of structures, designs, embellishments and a range of arts and crafts applications. Based on significance and ritual practices tomb structures kept on increasing and developing and this never-ending phenomenon in core was the basis of tomb legacy. Existing tomb structures from past and present demand serious preservation concerns so that the art of tomb architecture, a valuable built legacy, could be transferred to posterity with unadulterated theology that had been foundation of creation and evolution of such immemorial structures.

³⁰ Sayyid Murtadha al-'Askari. "Building of Tombs in the Light of Qur'ān and Hadith", *Al-Islam.org*, <https://www.al-islam.org/building-tombs-light-quran-hadith-sayyid-murtadha-al-askari>, (accessed 14 April, 2019).

³¹ *Ibid.*, (accessed 14 April, 2019).