

Being Human: Ritual/Human Interfaces

Mortality in Islam

L3 – BEING HUMAN (2026)
Handout for student use only - not for
circulation
GARY R. BUNT

1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Every soul will taste death.
Then to Us will you be returned.
Qur'an: 29/57



2

Ritual responses

- Need to distinguish between 'natural death' and other forms of death
- Suicide > sin
- Martyrdom – different ritual responses (dependent on context)

3

Islamic responses

- Death: comes to all (and is articulated as such in the Qur'an)
- Appropriate treatment of the dead is required (dependent on circumstances)
- Follow appropriate ritual and cultural responses (as indicated in Islamic sources)

4

Process

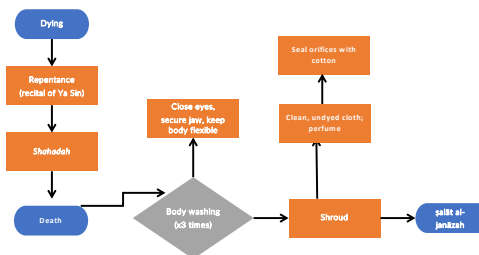
The dying should repent

Last words should be the shahadah

Body is washed (by family) in preparation for burial

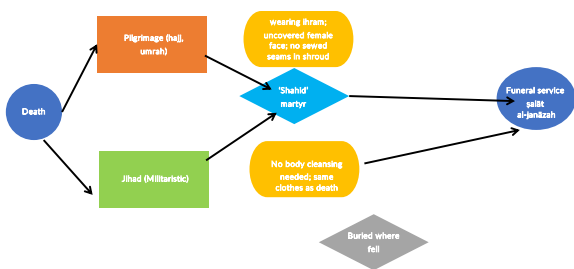
5

NORMAL PROCESS MORTALITY IN ISLAM



6

MORTALITY IN ISLAM RITUAL EXCEPTIONS



7

ṣalāt al-janāzah

- One man to say funeral prayer (standing by head of man, body of woman)
- Body oriented towards Mecca
- Feet foremost, on right side
- Body placed without coffin 6ft under, in niche or trench, which is sealed by bricks (earth slightly raised)
- Cheek bared, placed on stone
- Simple headstone

8

Practice from Sources

- Nothing specific in the Qur'an regarding funerals
- Practice of Muhammad and his followers is important precedent
- *Ya Sin* recited prior to death (s.36)

9



Opinion about Surah Ya Sin being recited (Sheikh Assim Al Hakeem)

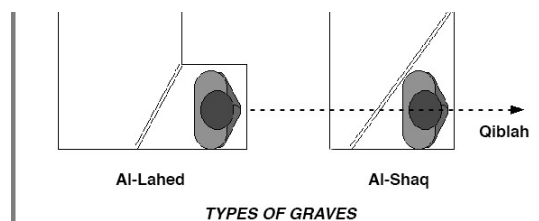
10

ṣalāt al- janāzah

- Allahu akbar (God is great) x4 times
- Test of faith in front of the angels Munkar and Nakir (the denied and denier) – answering their questions. – mourners address the deceased with advice.

11

Types of graves

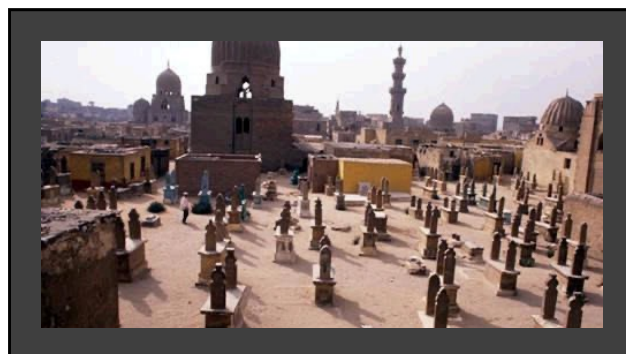


Source: marahaba.qa

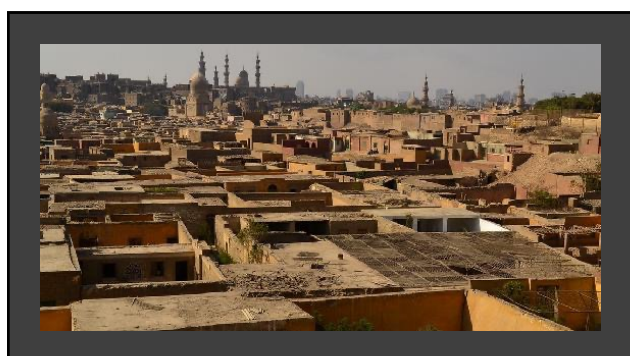
12



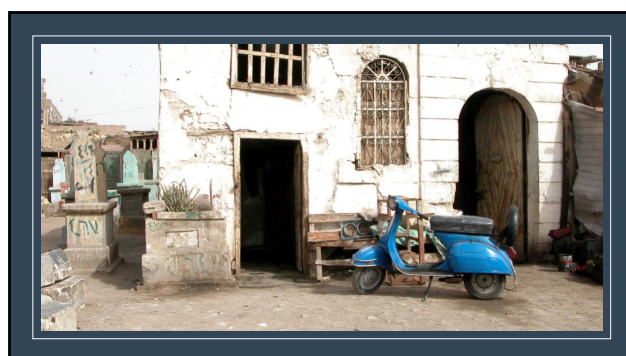
13



14



15



16

Hadith

- Al-Tirmidhi narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "When the deceased – or one of you – is buried, there come to him two black and blue angels, one of whom is called al-Munkar and the other al-Nakeer. They say: 'What did you say about this man?' and he says what he used to say: 'He is the slave of Allah and His Messenger. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.' They say: 'We knew that you would say that.' Then his grave is made spacious for him, seventy cubits by seventy, and it is illuminated for him. Then it is said to him: 'Sleep,' and he says: 'May I go back to my family and tell them?' They say: 'Sleep like the bridegroom who will be woken by none but the dearest of his family to him,' until Allah raises him from that resting-place of his."
- But if he is a hypocrite he says: 'I heard the people saying something so I said something like what they said. I do not know.' They say: 'We knew that you would say that.' Then it is said to the earth: 'Squeeze him.' So it squeezes him until his ribs interlock, and he will continue to be tormented therein until Allah raises him from that resting-place of his."

17

Understanding Islamic Funeral Rituals



18

[Channel 4, Muslims in UK struggling to carry out burials within 24 hours](#)

Video

19



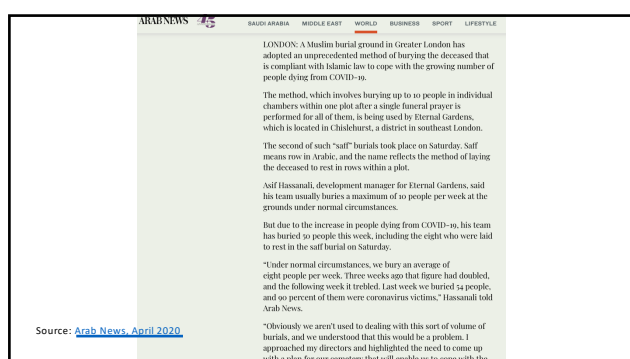
20



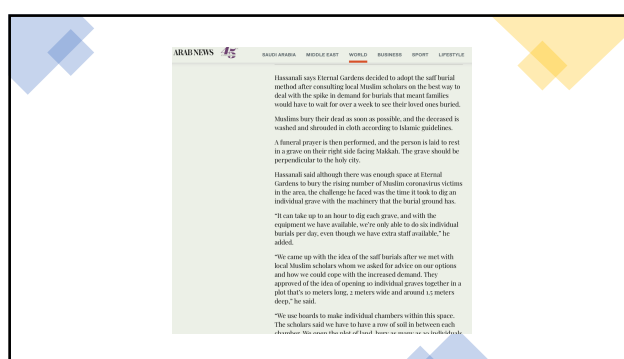
21



22



23



24

Tomb Visits

25

Ziyara

- Different interpretations as to whether this is acceptable
- Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328) prohibits the practice (as it might turn a grave into a sanctuary)
- This applies even to the Prophet Muhammad's grave (and others of his family) according to some interpretations.

26

Ziyarah – Other Interpretations

- Pilgrimage permitted to important figures, for example Sufi saints, where there are specific practices for appropriate intercession.

27

Qadiri Sufi Order

The **Qadiri Sufi Order** is another prominent example of an order presenting its activities online: this is part of a variety of networks and movements based on the principles established by the twelfth century scholar Abdul Qader Jeelani (1077–1166), which have spread worldwide.

The Qadari Order has posted a range of multimedia materials online. In terms of spirituality and religious experience, the dhikr ritual invocation of the names of Allah, Qur'an verses and other recitations has a performance element.

Also see Qadiriyya Dhikr:
<https://youtu.be/9BzQusfYDsE?t=20m2s>

28



Member of Baye Fall Sufi order from the Qadiriyya Sufi School, Senegal.

29



[A Sudanese Sufi mystic attends a weekly Sufi religious ceremony at the tomb of Sheikh Hamed al-Nil, a 19th-century Sufi leader of the Qadiri Sufi order.](#)

30



[A Sudanese Sufi mystic dances during a weekly Sufi religious ceremony at the tomb of Sheikh Hamed al-Nil, a 19th-century Sufi leader of the Qadiri Sufi Order.](#)

31

Tidjaniya Sufi Order

The Tidjaniya Sufi Order has a strong presence in west and northern Africa, and is linked to diaspora communities and networks through online materials: one example is Tidjaniya Way, which highlights the life of the order's founder, Sidi 'Ahmad al-Tijani (1737–1815) through a biography accompanied by an audio reading (Ahmad Tijani, 2012).

In terms of an understanding of the order's sacred spaces, an album depicts shrines in Senegal through video, photos and plans of religious sites. These include film of group dhikr (hadra) invocations in a shrine in the zaouiya (school) of Sidi Abdel Moutalib Tidjani Dakar, Senegal (Tidjaniya.com).

Ahmed Tijani,
<http://www.tidjaniya.com/en/ahmed-tijani.php>



32

Key teachers of the order, such as El-Hadji Malick, also have busy Facebook pages -which link to video, information and networks (for example, in Tivaoune, Senegal).



33

In India, the Shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia (d. 1325) has a web resource giving historical background, practical visitor information, and biographical data about this particular saint

([Shrine of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia](#)).

34



35

Religious meetings and rituals are recorded and posted online from many shrines: activities at Data Ganj Bakhsh shrine (honoring 'Ali Hujwiri, d. 1077) in Lahore, Pakistan, have been recorded and posted on YouTube by the Faizaneraza Network, which has a multimedia website, online TV channel, and presence on Facebook and other social media.

Bombers have in the past targeted this shrine, and after a 2010 terrorist attack, clips were also featured online. ([Faizaneraza Network](#))

36



37

Another prominent Sufi site is the mausoleum of Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi (d. 1273) in Konya, Turkey, has been turned into a museum: the virtual tours available online often reflect the touristic potential of the space, including ritual performances by the Whirling Dervishes as part of a sound and light show.

([Kale Pazarlama](#))

[Whirling Dervishes of Damascus](#)

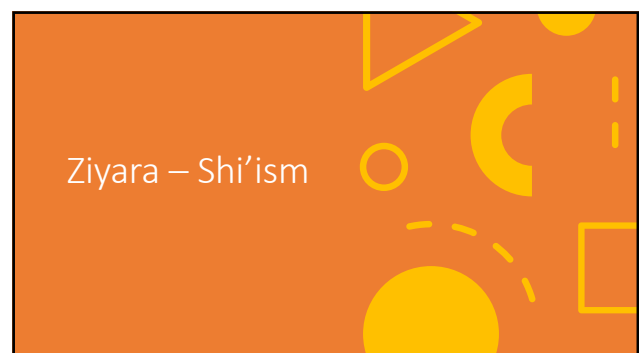
38

Treasury of Death Anniversaries - Makhzan-i a'ras (by Muhammd Najib Qadiri)

- Wedding of a holy person to God
- Often on death anniversary
- Travel to tomb > circumambulation + prayer
- Specific ritual and saying
- Scattering of roses
- Recitation from Qur'an specific number of times

• [RENARD, 62]

39



40



WALKING OVER TO THE SHRINE OF HUSAYN BIN ALI, (KARBALA), IRAQ



41



42



43



Mashad, Khorasan,
Iran



44



45



46



47

Karbala, the site of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Hussain ibn Ali's martyrdom in 680 C.E. and one of the most important religious sites for Shi'a Muslims, has been rendered in 3-D.

[Battle of Karbala 3D](#)

[Battle of Karbala](#)

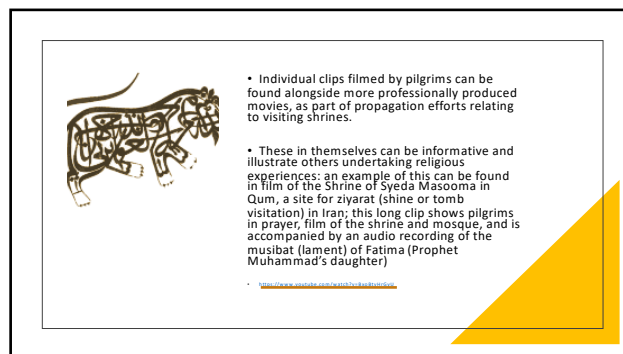
[Karbala Google Earth](#)



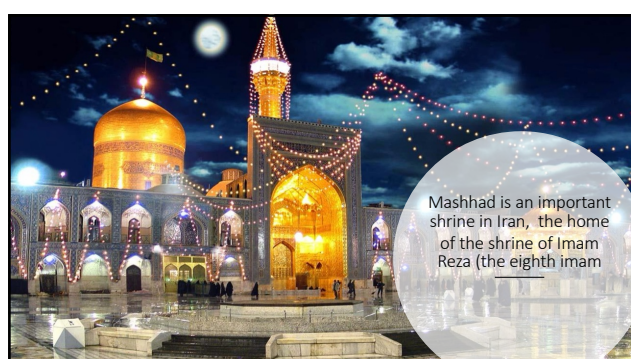
48



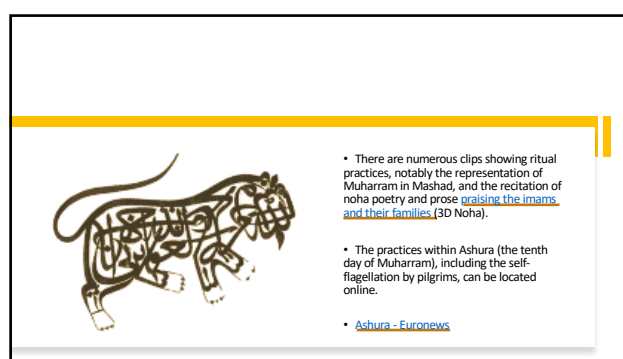
49



50



51



52



Taziyah Passion Play

- Many videos showing the Ta'zieh passion plays - ritualistic performances depicting the martyrdom of Imam Hussain - can be viewed

53



Ashura (2014 Euronews film)

54



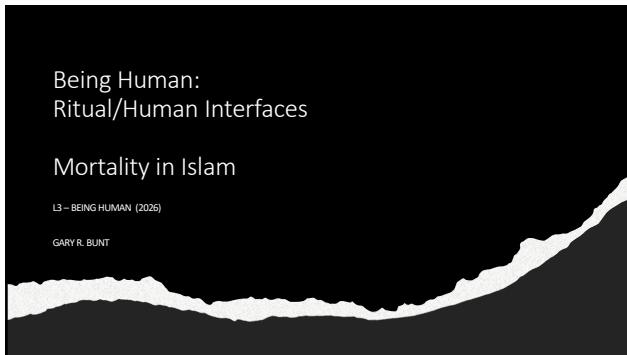
[2019 Al Jazeera on Ashura](#)

55



[Day of Ashura in Lahore - 2019](#)

56



57