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J. Martin Plumley

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Thesis submitted for the Degree of M.Litt

"Burial Customs of the Near East,  
with Special Reference to  
the Old Testament."

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## Foreword.

In writing this thesis it was my original intention to write // separate chapters on the Burial Customs of the most important nations of the Ancient Near East. But it soon became clear to me that this method of treating the subject would eventually entail a work of much larger dimensions than I originally intended. I have therefore adopted a comparative method, and have approached the subject from the Hebraic standpoint. In one instance only have I attempted to give a complete survey of the funeral customs of a nation other than the Hebrew People. A short survey of the Egyptian Funerary Customs appears in the Appendix to these notes. This was done in order to contrast the very complete evidence of the Cult of the Dead in Egypt with the much more meagre and incomplete evidence which relates to Funerary Practices in other nations. In the Appendix also appears a note on Amos. 6. 9-10, an important passage which contains several significant pieces of evidence concerning ~~Israelitish~~ Israelitish Funerary Rites.

Provincial work, now rendered more difficult by the outbreak of war, and the extra calls on my time by Voluntary National Service, have severely curtailed my labours. A much shorter treatise, than I at first contemplated, is the result. But if I have opened up some interesting new questions, to be more fully investigated, and, perhaps, answered by more competent scholars, I shall feel that these notes have not been compiled in vain.

I have to record my grateful thanks to Mr. D. Winton Thomas, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, for his encouragement and kindly advice in the writing of this Thesis.

J. M. P.

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## MODES OF BURIAL IN THE NEAR EAST

To the peoples of the East the events of birth and death have always been in the nature of Divine Mysteries. So it is on the occasions of birth and death that certain ceremonies and rites, which date back to the childhood of the race, have been devised. They are the visible expression of man's wonder at the cycle of life. Their persistence and survival is an indication of their importance in national religious observance. There is no evidence that any nation of the Ancient East did not observe the occurrence of death as an important occasion which demanded special rites and ceremonies. Many of these customs have vanished with the people who practised them. In some cases such traces of funerary cults as do survive are almost unintelligible by themselves, and we must look to the customs of neighbouring peoples in attempting to reconstruct the original. The funerary customs of the Hebrews must be placed in this category. The references which can be culled from the Old Testament are very fragmentary; but we cannot suppose that the Hebrews never had a system of funerary observance. In contrast to the fragmentary remains of the old Hebrew practices we have extensive evidence from Ancient Egypt, as to how the Cult of the Dead was observed by the Dwellers on the Nile. But even a great bulk of evidence can have its drawbacks. Certainly in the case of Egypt the evidence is large, but often it is absolutely contradictory. The excavations of Sir Leonard Woolley at Ur of the Chaldees have shed new light on the funerary customs of that mysterious people, the Sumerians. But there is still much work to be done in this field of investigation before it is possible to make definite announcements on the rites of the Sumerians.

The Semitic peoples disposed of their dead by burial. The practice of inhumation was usual amongst the Sumerians. Excavations at Shuruppac show that the oldest burials appear to have been made by wrapping the body in a reed mat, the corpse being laid on its right side with the knees drawn forward, and the right hand supporting the head. The left hand is placed near the face. This is the so-called Embryonic Position which is common amongst prehistoric burials, possibly also being an imitation of the normal attitude during sleep. For amongst primitive people death is thought of as a kind of sleep. Beside the reed mat burials kettle-shaped clay coffins were later in use. The Semitic Invaders of the Euphrates Valley adopted the Sumerian mode of disposing of their dead but rejected the old Embryonic Position for an extended one. Koldewey found at Babylon that the lowest levels of the time of the first Babylonian kings contained bodies lying simply in the earth, or rolled in reed mats, or roughly surrounded by mud bricks. The bodies were always laid out at full length. The next period of burial at Babylon double-urn interments occur, these being two pottery vessels with mouths joined together and lying horizontally.

From the same period come a few brick-built subterranean chambers with barrel-shaped vaulting. From about 2,000 B.C. to the close of the Persian Period the coffin was a clay sarcophagus rather like a small bathtub, round at one end and square at the other, the length rarely more than a metre.

The Hebrews hoped that at death they would receive burial, just as they understood that it was a sacred and necessary duty to bury the dead. The urgency of this duty is well illustrated in the Book of Tobit (Tob. 1. 18. and 2. 8.), nor can we forget Jacob's insistence that Joseph should give him burial at Machpelah with his great ancestor Abraham. David honoured his old enemy Saul by burying him in his ancestral grave at Zelah. Even Jehu orders his servants to bury the body of Jezebel saying "Bury this accursed woman, for she was a King's daughter."

It was hoped that the dead might be buried in the family grave, for the unity of the family persisted after death. It is interesting to note that in Crete during the early Minoan period it was a practice to use tombs, whether rude rock shelters, or elaborate stone-built tholoi, as ossuaries or charnel houses where whole villages or families continuously laid their dead over a long period of years.

Neglect of burial was too terrible a thought to contemplate. It was a horror common to other peoples of the East. As we should expect, the desire for burial was strong in Egypt, and neglect of funerary rites was considered the greatest of calamities. The force of this terror is shown most vividly in the interpretation by Joseph of the Chief Baker's dream. He was to be hung on a tree and the birds would eat his flesh. (Gen. 40. 19.) We may suppose that so dire a punishment had been merited by a serious crime on the part of the Chief Baker: for he was not only to be punished in this world, but denied the hope of immortality in the next.

In the same way the Hebrews connected their hopes of happiness in a future state with an assured burial. To lack burial was a terrible punishment. The Old Testament has several references to this neglect of burial. Frequently the Prophets warn their hearers that this is to be their doom. (Jer. 14. 16.) "The people shall be cast out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters, for I will pour their wickedness upon them." And (Jer. 16. 4.) "They shall die a grievous death. They shall not be lamented; neither shall they be buried; but they shall be as dung upon the face of the earth; and they shall be consumed by the sword and the famine; and their carcasses shall be for meat for the fowls of heaven and for the beasts of the field." (Cf. Jer. 7.33.;9.22.) Frequently wicked kings were warned of the same fate. (1 Kings, 14.11.) "Him that dieth of Jereboam in the city shall dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat."

(Of. 1 Kings, 16. 4.(Baasha) and 1 Kings 21.24. (Ahab)). As we have no evidence that animals were given any burial, but were left to the scavengers of the air, the allusion in Jeremiah (22. 19.) "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem," is clear. Jehoiakim was to be treated as an animal, thrown out of the city gates (away from the Royal Tombs) and bereft of the rites and privileges of burial. It is tempting to associate the metaphor of an ass with the Red Ass of Set, the Egyptian God of Evil. (Cf. Budge. Fetish to God. p. 78 - 80. 207). But probably the metaphor is one which would be recognised as an everyday occurrence in an Eastern city. (R.S.Rel: Sem: 690).

A modified form of this punishment of no burial was dealt to the disobedient prophet. (1 Kings, 13. 22.) "Thy carcass shall not come into the sepulchre of thy fathers." In this case burial was not denied, but burial in the family grave was definitely disallowed. To be buried elsewhere than in the family grave, whilst a valid burial, did not partake of the merits of the clan burial.

Psalm 79 (verses 2-3) gives us a glimpse of the personal feelings of the Psalmist on the horror of no burial. "The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat unto the fowls of the heaven, and the flesh of thy pious ones to the beasts of the earth. Their blood have they shed like water round about Jerusalem and there was none to bury them."

It was believed that the ghosts of the unburied roamed hopeless and despairing about the lowest pit of Sheol. For them there was no better existence than to be mere weak wraiths unable to partake of any consolations that the next world might offer. Amongst the Babylonians the dead were buried with food and water so that the descendants might not be plagued with the ghost who would otherwise prowl about the earth seeking to assuage its hunger with offal, or attacking men so that it might be appeased by offerings. If the body was unburied the spirit roamed as an uneasy ghost, until it was given a resting place in the earth. Similarly a mother who died in childbirth, like the Indian Churel, came back for her child. Normally the spirit whose body was duly buried remained in the earth, inhabiting a gloomy abode "The Land of No Return".

Jeremiah in his prophecy (8.1-3) makes reference to the time when the bones of the kings, and princes, of the priests and the prophets, and of the people would be brought forth and spread out before the powers of heaven. There was to be no re-burial. Verse 3 seems to imply that this action of disturbing the burials would bring death instead of the life that the buried desired. Actually this practice of exhuming the dead was common amongst the Assyrians.

It was a gruesome custom of war, whereby the conqueror exhibited his power over the dead as well as over the living. The act of exhumation meant the disturbing of the dead and also the defiling of the whole of the conquered territory. (Jeremias. O.T. in Light of Anc. East. ii. 280) To this barbarous practice Isaiah refers (Chap. 14.19) when he predicts the downfall of Babylon. "Thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trampled under foot."

In Palestine cremation was practised in a very early phase of culture at Gezer, though it was superseded there later by burials which seem to represent the first Semetic immigrants. It was also practised by the Philistines. But burning or cremation did not form part of Hebrew funerary practice. Probably the idea of burning was repugnant to the Hebrews because it destroyed the blood, the life-giving principle. Tacitus (History V. 5) says "It was a matter of piety with the Jews to bury rather than to burn the body." From a passage in Amos (2.1.) we can see with what horror the Hebrew regarded the burning of the human body. Divine vengeance is threatened upon the King of Moab "Because he burned the bones of the King of Edom into lime." In fact, burning was only reserved for those found guilty of unnatural sins. (Lev. 20.14 and 21.9.) Achan and his family and possessions were burned with fire because of the trespass of the Taboo at Jericho. (Josh.7.25.) There is a reference in Isaiah (33. 12) to burning as a punishment for wickedness "The people shall be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire."

The reference to the burning of the bones of Saul and his son (1 Sam. 31.12-13) is difficult. It has been suggested that this was a rare custom nowhere else noted in the Old Testament. Some commentators finding **שרף** a difficulty would emend **שפד** for **ספד** to wail. It is quite possible, however, that the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead had adopted the Philistine custom of cremation, or that fear of the bodies being found by the triumphant Philistines, led them to adopt this expedient. A similar passage in Amos (6.10.) presents difficulties. It has been suggested that in this case **מסרפין** is a late gloss to explain **דודן**. But I shall endeavour to show that the root **זרק** is to be understood. (cf Appendix)

The Hittites practised partial cremation, and buried the remains in jars as excavations at Carchemish and Egri Kyoï have proved. Burial in jars without previous cremation was a common practice in Crete during the middle Minoan period. Bodies were apparently ~~crushed~~ trussed up and thrust head foremost into the jars which were then placed in the earth upside down so that the deceased should always be head uppermost.

In some parts of the Ancient East the dead were disposed of by exposure to the wild animals. Towers of death where dead are exposed to the vultures are still common in Persia to-day. This is a custom dating back to very primitive times and is still practised amongst various tribes. The Kamtchadales, inspired no doubt by some totemistic theory, kept special dogs to eat the dead. They consoled themselves with the doctrine that those who are eaten by dogs in this world will drive fine dogs in the next. It is interesting to note that the dog or the jackal is closely connected in many parts of the world with mortuary observances and beliefs. Possibly the reference to dogs in connection with the dead in the Old Testament is a relic of the sojourn in Egypt where the dog-headed, or more correctly jackal-headed god presided over the funerary rites. It is not unlikely too that the association of the dog and the jackal with death is common to all the primitive East. The practice of giving the bodies of the dead to the dogs was observed amongst the Northern Mongolians, the Parthians, the Hyrcanians and the Ancient Persians. (Jevons. Intro. Hist. Rel. 203).

Herodotus informs us in his history (i.216) that cannibalism was practised by the Ancient Scythians as a means of disposing of their dead. A similar custom must have been observed in primitive times in pre-dynastic Egypt, for the Pyramid Texts of the Old Kingdom, which preserved very ancient rituals, definitely lead us to believe that such was the case. (Budge. Fetish to God p. 323 ff). There is no evidence that this was ever practised amongst the Hebrews, though no doubt it may have taken place in some of the heathen cults affected by the people of Israel, against which the prophets uttered their denunciations. If such practices did exist they may have become not cannibalism in actual fact but only a pretence at cannibalism. Burton in his account of the people of Dahomey claimed that the body of a person struck by lightning was eaten by the priests, as no doubt he was regarded as consecrated by the stroke of a divine power. But Skertchley claimed that they only made make-belief to eat the body. Possibly we may see in the sacrifices made at the burial a development of the old cannibalistic feast, a suitable animal, probably totemistic, being substituted for the human body.

There is some evidence that fractional burials took place in ancient Palestine. It was also probably usual at a very early period in pre-dynastic Egypt, for in some funerary prayers we meet with the petition that the members of the body should not be severed from the body, but that they should be re-united again. The legend of Osiris relates how Set, the God of Evil, found his body, and cutting it into pieces, scattered the various parts throughout the land of Egypt. It is more than probable that the legend grew out of the early ritual of dismembering the bodies of the dead.

The intention of the custom was to prevent the ghost of the dead man returning to haunt the living. No doubt this was the reason why David, having hung the two murderers of Ishbosheth, cut off their hands and feet, so that their ghosts would not return to do harm to the living. Similar mutilations had been carried out on the kings slain during the campaign of Joshua. The Aborigines of Australia tie the hands of the dead, and take off the finger nails to prevent the corpse digging itself out again. So it is that these forms of mutilation after death are purely defensive measures by the living against the attacks of the malevolent dead.

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PREPARATIONS FOR BURIAL

In most Eastern countries, with the exception of Egypt and such Nations that practised some form of preserving their dead, burial followed speedily upon death. Amongst the Jews of the East to-day burial follows upon death, if possible, within twenty four hours. The Mohammedans bury their dead the same day, if death takes place in the morning. But if death occurs in the afternoon or in the night, burial is deferred until the following day. Deut. 21. 23 has been quoted as an argument that the Hebrews buried their dead in the same day. The body of a malefactor "shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day." But this is in reference to a special case. The criminal was an object of offence to the Righteous Yhwh, and a source of defilement to the whole land. Probably there is an older religious idea for this precaution. It may have been feared that some might resort to the place of execution for the purpose of Necromancy, a practice which ever persisted in Ancient Israel. It may even have been connected with the fear that the ghost of the dead man would return to inflict new ills upon the living.

The reason for speedy burial is due to two factors - climatic conditions and religious observances. In the first place the hot climate of the East causes very rapid decomposition of the body. In the story of the Raising of Lazarus, Martha is horrified at the suggestion of Jesus that the tomb should be opened, for the body of Lazarus had been laid in the tomb for four days, and must have already been in a state of putrefaction. Martha was aware of this fact, because she had probably availed herself of the dictate of the Law which allowed the opening of the tomb on the third day after burial to look after the dead, with perhaps the hope of finding the dead one revived to life. This hope may also have inspired the friends of Jesus to visit His Tomb on the first Easter Morning, as well as to complete the anointing of the body with spices, an act of devotion that the hasty burial on the Friday had not permitted. Expediency caused speedy burial. So it is recorded of Abraham (Gen. 23. 1-4) that he buried Sarah out of his sight. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence from the later period of embalming in Ancient Egypt that many of the bodies which were mummified were in an advanced state of decomposition when delivered to the embalmers. Why this should be the case amongst a people who took such complicated hygienic measures is difficult to understand. But the fact that nearly every mummy that exhibits this peculiarity is that of a woman seems to lend support to the statements of Herodotus concerning tendencies towards Necrophilia. (Euterpe Bk 11 c 89).

**ENT** The second and later more important reason for a speedy burial was the fear  
**E** of defilement by the dead. From the text of the Old Testament it is clear that not only men and the nation could be made unclean by death, but also things which had been in close contact with the dead. In Num. 19.11-14 regulations about this are carefully set out. The mere touching of a dead body made a man unclean for a period of seven days. Purification was

necessary before he could return to his people. But if after a period of seven days a man omitted to observe the rites of purification he still remained unclean and even defiled the tabernacle, so laying himself open to the penalty of being cut off from Israel. If a man died in his tent all who entered the tent were unclean. All the contents of the tent were also unclean, especially any open vessels from which the covering had been removed. Furthermore a man became unclean if he touched a man slain by the sword, a dead body, a human bone, or even a grave. From a context in Haggai (Chap. 2. 11-13) we can see how potent this uncleanness was, for the uncleanness from the dead was more potent than the holiness imparted by sanctified things. There is no doubt that many of these early laws relating to uncleanness as the result of contact with the dead had their origin in Egypt. The priesthood of Egypt had to observe many strict rules in the matters of cleanliness both physically and ceremoniously. Contact with the Dead was defiling, notwithstanding the Cult of the Dead. Embalmers were considered to be unclean because of their close contact with the bodies of the dead. In Ancient Thebes the workshops of the embalmers were on the Western Bank of the Nile, whereas the city proper was on the Eastern Bank. Even the workshops were of a temporary nature, being merely booths which might be destroyed when the defiling work of embalming was over.

Not only were the Relatives of the dead considered to become unclean, but the idea was extended to embrace even those who were in warfare the agents of death. (Num. 31. 19-24). The warriors were to be unclean for seven days, during which time they had to make purification for themselves on the third day and on the seventh. They were not allowed to enter the Camp until the end of the seventh day. Not only was purification to be made for the Captors but also for the Captives. All clothes had to be washed free of defilement, and all metal gear was to be passed through the fire before being purified by water. As metals would imply weapons of war and armour, there is no doubt that the reason for fire was to destroy the sacred blood, as was done in the sacrifice.

As has been observed, not only did death defile human beings but it made unclean inanimate objects. When Josiah carried out his reforms, he defiled the altars of the foreign deities by burning the bones of men on them. (2 Kings 23. 16-24), though no doubt there was another significance in his action in taking the bones from the burial place at Bethel, which was a Cultus centre. The burials which were disturbed were those of the adherents of the god of Bethel. By exposing their bones, Josiah, it was believed, caused their spirits to become restless and unhappy and at the same time defiled the sanctuary.

In his prophecy (Ezk. 43.7-9) Ezekial seems to make a reference to the defiling of the Temple by the close proximity of the tombs of the Kings. (CF Oxon: Heb: Dic: on meaning of <sup>7</sup>31/52). In another passage (Chap. 39. 11-16) he proclaims that the land is become unclean because of the number of the slain who lie unburied. For seven months this will be the case, so many are there to bury. Instructions are given that if any one finds even a single human bone he is to erect a sign over it so that the buriers may dispose of it, and the land may be at last purified.

Immediate Procedure at Death

The account of the death of Jacob in the book of Genesis is the only detailed account we have of a death-bed scene amongst the Hebrews. From the few details given there it is possible to reconstruct the main procedure at death. Unfortunately there has not been discovered amongst all the funerary scenes depicted by the Egyptians one representation of the actual death-bed scene, though one Old Kingdom tomb portrays very vividly the sudden death of a noble who collapses suddenly on the ground in the midst of his family whose grief is unmistakably depicted, whilst his wife, overcome by emotion, swoons into the arms of two attendants.

SES AT  
ATH-BED

As soon as it was known that death was very near the male relatives of the dying man gathered at his bed. It was always hoped that the eldest son would be present on this occasion to perform the last rites for the dead. According to Modern Jewish custom at least ten male relatives should be present at the death-bed. In the story of the death of Jacob all the sons were present, and Joseph acted as the Eldest and Heir. Probably this custom was instituted at an early date to emphasise the unity of the family or clan even at the time of death, when there would be the greatest danger of intrigue for the new leadership.

SS OF  
EATH

As soon as death took place the eldest son kissed his dead father. It may be held that this was only an isolated description of filial devotion, but some evidence can be adduced that the kiss was part of the rite of death. (Gen. 27.26) Isaac, before blessing Jacob, says to him "Come near and kiss me". Now it is significant that the same command is not given to Esau when he receives his blessing. The Last Kiss, the duty of the Heir, had already been given by Jacob. Isaac had given his blessing because he believed that he was at the point of death, or at least was aware of the intrigues for the future leadership of his tribe which he could not oppose in his old age, but wished to end by giving the blessing and receiving the last kiss. (Ruth 1.14) Naomi returning to her native land, is accompanied by her two daughters in law. Having lost her husband and both her sons, she was already a dead woman, for she had no male relative to represent her in the religious life of Israel. The very name that Naomi gives herself, Marah, is used of the bitter grief caused by death. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, no doubt as a token of farewell, but there was a deeper significance. It was the last kiss of death. The kisses of David and Jonathan hold a deeper significance than a farewell between two friends. They were the last kisses given between friends, whose destinies had set them to be enemies to the death. (Sam.1. 20.42).

When Elijah cast his mantle over Elisha, (1 Kings 19. 20) the new disciple asks a favour. "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and

my mother, then I will follow thee." Was this the kiss of death? In other words Elisha was willing to become a disciple of so great a prophet, but first he must put his house in order, and see that his father and mother received honourable burial. Elijah will not brook delay in following. His reply is scornful. "Yes. Go on, return," and then he recalls to the hesitating young man the urgency of his call. "For what have I done to thee".

A curious passage occurs in the book of Hoshea. (Chap. 13. 2) "Let the men that sacrifice"(or the sacrificers of man)"kiss the calves", the calves being the animals set aside for sacrifice, and not, as might be suggested, the images of gods. It would seem that before they were sacrificed they were kissed, for the kiss had undoubtedly some significance of religious character, and in this case, I believe, was part of a definite death ritual. At the end of the Orthodox Rite of burial a solemn kiss is given to dead man by the relatives and officiating priests. (Neale Holy Eastern Church ii 104b).

#### NG OF EYES

After the Kiss followed the act of closing the eyes. In a vision (Gen. 46. 4) Jacob is promised by God that he shall see his son Joseph and die in the land of Egypt. It is Joseph, too, who shall close his eyes at his death. This custom of closing the eyes is observed to-day amongst the Mohammedans. (Cf. Lane Modern Egyptians Edition 1895. page 516)

#### NG OF THE MOUTH

The mouth was next closed and bound into position by a length of material. (St. John 11.44) In the Mishna this was looked upon as an act of natural piety. The origin of this practice, apart from any natural piety, must be sought in the fear of demons entering the body and seizing upon the soul, which was considered to remain in the body for some period of time.

#### CATION

Upon the announcement that death had taken place the relatives of the dead person burst into wild lamentation and weeping. In accordance with Eastern Custom some of the female relatives with other women of the household would rush into the streets or amongst the tents of an encampment shrieking aloud, beating their breasts and throwing dust over their heads. This was a common occurrence in Egypt on the occasion of a death. The women went out from the house and announced the sad news by howling and shrieking. They let down their hair, and even tore it out, from the roots. They heaped mud and dust on their heads and soiled their clothes. Diodorus states that their clothes were torn, and it was usual for the women to bare their breasts. The noise of lamentation was later quickly augmented by the efforts of the professional mourners. This wild extravagance of grief is typical of the East to-day. It is interesting to note that the Prophet Mahomet forbade wailing at funerals, but his command is generally ignored.

CASTING OUT OF  
AND LEAVEN

As soon as death intervened various preparations had to be made. In the first place any water or leaven which was in the house was cast out for it was thought that the Angel of Death wiped his sword in these substances. Later it was thought that death was so defiling that not only was the water and leaven in the house of death made unclean, but also any water or leaven in the houses of the next three neighbours was also rendered unclean. Water and leaven would not be required for some time for the bereaved began at once to fast.

The preparation of the body was undertaken at once by the female relatives. Maspero in his book, *The Dawn of Civilisation*, p.684, mentions that among the Chaldeans old women performed the office of mourners, washing the dead body, perfuming it and clothing it in its best apparel. That this was also the custom among the Greeks we know from the *Illiad*, etc. From all available evidence there does not seem to have been any preparation of the body by women in Egypt before handing it over to the care of the *Embalmers*. The reason for this apparent neglect was the belief that the body was sacred, for the dead man was in the process of becoming a god. All the emanations of the body which washing would have destroyed were preserved by the *Embalmers* and replaced by magical means at burial.

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The first attention paid to the body was washing. (Acts 9.37). The Mohammedan custom well illustrates this procedure. The *Mughassil* (or washer of the dead) soon comes with a bench upon which he places the corpse, and a bier..... The washer takes off the clothes of the deceased, which are his perquisite. The jaw is bound up and the eyes are closed. With the exception of the washing of the mouth and the eyes, the whole body is well washed from head to foot with warm water and soap, and with "leef" (or fibres of the palm tree) or, more properly with water, in which some leaves of the lote tree ("nabk" or "sidr") have been boiled. The nostrils, ears, etc. are stuffed with cotton, and the corpse is sprinkled with a mixture of water, pounded camphor, and dried and pounded leaves of the nabk, and with rose water. Sometimes other dried and pounded leaves are added to those of the nabk. The ankles are bound together, and the hands placed upon the breast. (Lane Mod: Egypt: p.518)

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Then the body was carefully anointed. For information on this point we have to rely mainly on passages from the New Testament. (Mark 14.8: 16.1: Luke 23.56: John 12.3 & 7: 19.39). It is this anointing of the dead which must be understood in the difficult passage (Isaiah 10.27) "The yoke" (i.e. the Assyrian) "shall be destroyed because of the oil" - i.e. the oil which was used for anointing the dead. The Prophet promises that at length the Assyrian shall perish and be buried as other men.

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The corpse was also dressed in the dead man's best clothes. It is the modern Jewish and Mohammedan custom to be buried in holiday apparel. It was a custom common to the whole of the East in Ancient times. The Assyrians were buried in the dress, ornament and weapons that they wore in life. The Excavations at Ur have shown that this was the case at Early Sumerian Burials. It is in fact a custom that has come down from the very earliest times, and still survives amongst both primitive and cultured peoples to-day. In 1 Sam. 28.14 the ghost of Samuel is seen by the witch of Endor to be clad in a mantle, the distinctive dress of a prophet. In Isaiah 14.11, Babylon is represented as lying in Sheol, arrayed in all her pomp: and in verse 18 of the same chapter the kings are spoken of as being there in all their glory. Ezekial 32. 27. gives a picture of the dead lying in Sheol with the weapons of war beside them.

In Ancient Egypt from evidence afforded by those mummies which have been unrolled it is certain that occasionally, but not always, shirts or garments were placed upon the dead before the actual bandaging was begun. When the Mummy of Seti II was unrolled, the remains of garments were found, as well as two perfectly intact shirts of very fine muslin. In the early centuries of the Christian era, mummies were frequently clothed in garments made of fine linen and elaborately embroidered.

It is customary to array the dead in garments in Moslem lands to this day. "The "Kefen" or grave clothing of a poor man consists of a piece or two of cotton, or is merely a kind of bag. The corpse of a man of wealth is generally wrapped first in muslin, then in cotton cloth of thicker texture; next in a piece of striped stuff of silk and cotton intermixed, or in a Kufan of similar stuff merely stitched together, and over these is wrapped a Kashmeer shawl. The corpse of a woman of middling rank is usually clothed with a yelek. The colours most approved for the grave-clothes are white and green; but any colour is used, except blue, or what approaches blue. The body prepared for interment as above described, is placed in the bier, which is usually covered over with a red or other Kashmeer shawl." (Lane. Mod:Egypt: p.518)

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After anointing and dressing, the body was wound in linen clothes or bandages, with spices laid in between the folds. This custom was observed by the women at the burial of Jesus. It was a very old custom, probably dating back to the time of the sojourning in Egypt, and being a modification of the process of embalming, though it was never intended that the body should be preserved as in the case of mummification. There appear to be references to this wrapping of the dead in linen in the book of Ecclesiasticus (38.16) and also in Tobit (12.13.) The face was covered with the end of the turban-like wrapping that surrounded the head (John 20.7.)

According to St. John (11.44) the hands and feet were bound. This would seem to be a custom which enshrined an old belief that the dead could return to the living, probably with the intent of doing harm, and as a result the hands and feet of the dead were bound to prevent such an occurrence.

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There is no direct evidence in the Old Testament that the Hebrews practiced Embalming. In the case of Jacob and Joseph the work of embalming was carried out by the Egyptians. The embalming of Jacob was undertaken for two reasons; the long journey from Egypt to the ancestral grave at Machpelah made this necessary, and it would have been out of keeping with Joseph's position in Egyptian Social life to neglect what was deemed to be the duty of every gentleman of rank. Similarly Joseph's position demanded the same honours to be paid to him at his death, and more especially as the Funeral expenses were most probably borne by the reigning Pharaoh as a customary way of showing his gratitude for the services rendered by his faithful subject. Josephus in his antiquities of the Jews Bk. 14, Ch: 7 Sec.4 mentions that the body of Aristobulus was embalmed for a time in honey.

"The Egyptians also preserved their dead in honey. 'Abd al-Latif relates that an Egyptian worthy of belief told him that once when he and several others were occupied in exploring the graves and seeking for treasure near the Pyramids they came across a sealed jar, and having opened it, and found that it contained honey, they began to eat it. Someone in the party remarked that a hair in the honey turned round one of the fingers of the man who was dipping his hand in it, and as they drew it out the body of a small child appeared with all its limbs complete and in a good state of preservation; it was well dressed, and had upon it numerous ornaments. The body of Alexander the Great was also preserved in "white honey which had not been melted" (Budge, The Mummy p.208)

In the account of the burial of Asa (2 Chron. 16.13-14) there may be some reference to the embalming of the king's body. There is an account in the Chronicles passage of a defeat by Asa of an Ethiopian king. Perhaps we should understand by this that Asa aided Egypt against an Ethiopian inroad with a view to securing the help of Egypt against Israel. An alliance with Egypt if it did occur, and this is conjecture, did not result in much help from Egypt, but possibly Asa adopted Egyptian customs at court, including the rite of Embalming. Both the book of Kings and the Book of Chronicles tell us that Asa was afflicted with a disease of the feet and resorted to physicians for treatment. It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word רפאים is used in this connection as well as in the passage in Genesis which refers to the Embalmers of Jacob. (The use of this word in Ecclesiastes 3.3. is interesting. The word is used as the opposite to הרג to kill. We can hardly see the sense of using a term Heal as an opposite to the finality of killing. The sense demands a word meaning restoration to life. This reviving of the dead was exactly what was the profession of the Embalmers translated in the Hebrew by the term 'healers'). We also know from Chron. 16.13 that Asa prepared a burying place for himself, בָּקְרָוֹן אֶשֶׁר בְּרֵה-בֵן He was not buried in the

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tomb of the Kings. The word  $\text{קבר}$  suggests that he followed the Egyptian custom in excavating a special Tomb for himself. In Genesis 50.5 the word  $\text{קבר}$  is used of the grave of Jacob at Machpelah. But the word is used in a double sense, as a kind of play on words. To Pharaoh Joseph announces that his father has hewn out a grave for himself, taking the root meaning to dig; but the Hebrew reader understood the root meaning  $\text{קבר}$  to acquire as the result of a transaction, so to buy. This is exactly what Abraham did in the acquiring of the cave of Machpelah from the sons of Heth.

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It was not customary amongst the Hebrews to use a coffin for the dead. (2 Kings 13.21). The only mention of the word is in the account given of the burial of Joseph. (Gen.50.26) The word used is  $\text{קרון}$  meaning a chest. Probably Joseph was placed in the Osirian Coffin, a rectangular chest with four corner posts, which was in use during the period of the Middle Kingdom, when the entry into Egypt must be dated.

Amongst the people of the East to-day no coffin is used. This custom of not using a Coffin is a very ancient one amongst Semitic people. From the story of the Adventures of Sanehat, an Egyptian Tale dating back to the XII Dynasty, we have direct evidence that burial without a coffin was usual amongst the desert peoples. In a letter from Pharaoh to Sanehat the promise is made, "Thus thou shalt not die in a strange land, nor be buried by the Amu; thou shalt not be laid in a sheep skin when thou art buried." (Petrie Egyptian Tales. 1st Series p.115. )

The Babylonians buried their dead in clay bath-shaped coffins. The dead man wearing his ordinary clothes and wrapped in a mat or linen winding sheet, was laid on a mat, his head resting on a fringed and tasselled cushion, his body on one side with the legs bent up and the arms also bent so that the hands came in front of his face - the Embryonic position. Between his hands was placed a little vase or bowl of water. With him might be put such personal belongings as he might require in the next world. Then the clay coffin was inverted over the whole, and the earth replaced over it.

The word  $\text{כִּסֵּי}$  which occurs in 2 Chron. 16. 14, Is. 57.2 and Ezk. 32.25, has the meaning of a resting place. In the Chronicles passage it might be taken to mean a coffin or sarcophagus, but the sense of the passages in Isaiah and Ezekial seem to indicate a kind of bier on which the body was placed. Deut. 3. 11 has the word  $\text{שֵׁרָפָה}$  which is variously translated by bed, couch, and sarcophagus. (Driver. Deut.) (I am inclined to see in this word



## MOURNING CUSTOMS.

The usual period of mourning among the Hebrews was seven days in duration. It was necessary to observe this period before the defilement caused by death might be considered as expiated. In the account of the death of Moses the period of mourning was thirty days. In later years the Jewish authorities prescribed the period of mourning to be a year. The first seven days of the year, known as the Shiva, were the most important. During the Shiva the mourners fasted, (Cf. the Fast of David for Abner 2 Sam.3.35. and also the Fast of the Men of Jabesh Gilead for Saul and his sons 1 Sam.31.13.) were not permitted to cook any food for their own use, and were required to avoid all forms of amusement, even listening to music was forbidden. "Seven days are the days of mourning for the Dead" (Sir.22.12). The next thirty days were not so strictly observed, but the anniversary of the death was an occasion observed with great solemnity. The custom of the Anniversary is observed amongst the Orthodox Jews to this day, and is an occasion when they exhibit their piety by distributing alms to the poor members of the Synagogue. As noted in the book of Genesis the Egyptians observed seventy days as the period of mourning, and though Herodotus gives the total of days as seventy-two, the concensus of evidence from Egypt seems to confirm the accuracy of the Biblical account. Periods of mourning ranging from a few days to a number of weeks are observed among the Mohammedans and Copts of Egypt. (Lane.530 ff.552.)

As would be expected the chief Mourners were the near relations of the deceased. Attendance at funerals was indeed regarded as a pious act, and was not always disinterested. Amongst Modern Orientals it is known as "attending the merit", an act that will secure a reward from God. Companies of Professional Mourners were also hired to assist at the funeral rites. These professional mourners were, and still are, an important element in the funerals of the East. Jeremiah paints a vivid picture of them (Chap.9.17) "Consider ye, and call for the mourning women, that they may come; and send for cunning women that they may come, and let them make haste, and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush out with waters". We may compare too "Wailing shall be in all streets, and they shall say in all the highways "Alas! Alas!", and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skillful of lamentation

to wailing" (Amos.5.11). At the end of his discourse on the tribulations of old age Ecclesiastes calls to mind how "The mourners go about the streets". When Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus, it is the band of professional mourners that He puts to silence. Besides the mourners, flute players were also in attendance. To be without mourners was considered a disgrace, and only occurred when the deceased was too poor to afford this most desirable feature of a funeral.

Professional mourners were usual in Ancient Egypt. Numerous wall-paintings depict their actions and wild outbursts of grief. We cannot be wrong in supposing that the other nations of Antiquity followed the same custom of hiring mourners at their funeral rites.

At death the house of the deceased would speedily be turned into a bedlam by the lamentations and howling of the professional mourners aided by the monotonous tones of several flutes. The Relatives would begin at once a fast which would not be broken until the body had been committed to the grave. It was usual to rend the clothes, as a sign of grief and to replace the torn garments with clothes of sackcloth. The mourners would sit clad in their sackcloth in the dust, defiling their heads with the dirt of the ground. The picture of Job in his affliction immediately springs to the mind. The hair was shaved from off the forepart of the head (Jer.16.5. Is.22.12) as a further token of humiliation, and the mourners refrained from washing. Ezekial (Chap.24.17.) was, however, forbidden to observe this custom of making bald the head in addition to the other popular expressions of grief.

Robertson Smith regarded the shaving of the head as an offering of the hair in which the life of the individual was commonly believed to reside. By such an offering a permanent bond linked the dead and the living. (Cf R.S. Rel. Semites p.323, and note by S.A.Cook).

The peoples of the East are not reserved in times of grief and bereavement, but give noisy vent to their sorrows. An Eastern funeral is remarkable to Western observers for its wild manifestations of grief, and its passing is rendered horrible by the screams and howls of hordes of dishevelled women throwing dust and dirt over their unbound hair. The Egyptian Wall Paintings have preserved

interesting representations of the funeral procession to the tomb, both the procession by boat across the Nile, and the procession on land to the Cemetery. It is not difficult to imagine the funeral procession of a Hebrew, for customs change but slowly in the East. The Mohammedan Procession of to-day might furnish a close parallel. The male relatives go in front of the bier (But David, not being a relative, followed behind the bier of Abner) and are preceded by four or six old men, mostly blind (Cf. Is.59.10 "Groping like blind men.... in desolate place like dead men") who chant the profession of faith, and followed by four or six schoolboys who chant passages from a poem descriptive of the Last Judgement, while the female relatives come behind the bier, accompanied by the wailing women, who celebrate the praises of the deceased. Many of the mourners bear palms in their hands. If the deceased was rich, then several camels follow, bearing bread and water for the poor at the tomb. Last of all comes an ox to be slaughtered there for the same purpose. Amongst the Jews of the East to-day the funeral procession moves quickly along the road to the burial place, because of the belief that numerous evil spirits lie in wait to attack the soul, which, it is thought, remains in the body until after interment has taken place.

The mourners seem to have gone to the grave barefoot (Ezk.24.17.) The Egyptian Tomb Paintings represent all the mourners as going barefoot, but this must not necessarily be assumed to be a religious ceremony, as it was quite usual for men and women to go about their daily work without footwear. But in the case of the Hebrews, there was a definite religious thought behind the idea of going barefoot. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet" was the command given to Moses when standing on holy ground. The deceased had in a sense become holy, and that holiness was transmitted to every part of the funeral rite. In deference to the holiness of the dead, the mourners went barefoot.

Reference to the covering of the lips is obscure. (Ezk.24.17.) Perhaps it was connected with the fast, or possibly a period of silence was enforced. This enforced silence was to avoid speaking any ill of the dead, whose ghost might hear and henceforth bear malice against the unwitting speaker.

A curious reference to smiting the thigh (Jer.31.19.) is to be explained from Assyrian customs. From the account

of the Descent into Hell of the Goddess Ishtar it is clear that to smite the thigh was a gesture of mourning amongst the Assyrians. The same gesture is also noted in the Odyssey (xiii.198). The significance of the gesture is difficult to understand, unless we are to connect the thigh with the seat of reproductive powers, and the smiting of the thigh is, therefore, an acknowledgment of the end of the power of life.

The custom of cutting and tearing the flesh to produce blood was forbidden to the Hebrews. (Lev.19.28. Dt.14.1.) but there is no doubt that the custom was widely observed. (Cf. Jer.41.5.) Herodatus mentions that the Scythians at the death of a king mutilated their noses, brows, ears and hands. Amongst some savage tribes the cutting off of fingers is a sign of profound grief. It was customary among the Arabs, especially among the women, to scratch the face until the blood flowed copiously. In the Annals of Sargon it is said of a mourning Babylonian "He crouched down upon the earth, rent his garment, took the knife (to gash himself) and broke forth into cries". The shedding of blood is not merely an outward sign of extreme grief, but there is undoubtedly a much deeper significance attached to it. The blood was the life. The shedding of blood over the dead man would bestow the power of life upon him. It has been frequently noted that in very early burials it was quite common for the earth about the body to be stained red, and possibly the body was painted red as well, to simulate the life-giving blood. Robertson Smith would see in this bloodshedding a sign of a covenant made between the living and the dead. By virtue of the blood rite the living members of the clan or group continued to be in communion with those who were deceased. S.A.Cook in the Cambridge Ancient History (Vol III p.449) notes the close connection between bloodshedding and invocation to the Deity. "The word to pray in Aramaic פשע, and perhaps in the Hebrew, פשע meant primarily to notch oneself". The shedding of blood would not only be a magical expedient to restore life to the deceased, but also it was an efficacious means of appealing to God. (For a fuller treatment of the subject Cf Jevons.Intro.Hist.Rel. p.191 ff.and R.S.Rel. Semites p.321 ff).

The Ritual which was performed at the grave of a Hebrew, is quite unknown to us. Such references as do exist in the Old Testament are extremely fragmentary and

obscure. As a matter of fact among the Jews of the East to-day there is no religious ceremony at the grave, but it would be wrong to suppose that such was the case in Ancient Israel. All the other nations of Antiquity had elaborate funeral observances. This ritual was most highly developed in Egypt. (Cf Appendix for short survey) Sir Leonard Woolley from his excavations at Ur has ventured to reconstruct the Rites performed at a Sumerian burial. (Woolley. Ur. of the Chaldees. p.52.) The Illiad and the Odyssey afford very detailed information about the early Greek Funeral Rites, but there exists in the records that we possess no clear information about the Burial of a Hebrew.

It is strange that in the Pentateuch there are detailed descriptions of the systems of sacrifice, purification, tithe, etc., but not a word about the disposal of the dead. No doubt in the original form of the Pentateuch there was a section devoted to the Ritual of Burial, very probably following the lines of an Egyptian Burial with of course severe modifications. This section was later omitted because of the fear of necromancy, lest the text should be used for unlawful purposes. It is tempting to see in the name of Caleb a hint of the existence of a special clan of funerary priests and officials. If Caleb, connected with the Hebrew **כָּלֵב** "a dog" was a Clan name, and the totem a dog, then it is not difficult to see a parallel with the dog or jackal headed god of the Funerary Rites of Egypt. Possibly following the Egyptian custom the Clan of Caleb was set apart from the rest of Israel to perform the sacred but defiling rites of the dead. There may be some point then in the threat made to the disobedient people of Israel that only Joshua and Caleb should enter survive them, Joshua to succeed as the leader of a better generation and Caleb to bury the disobedient followers of Yhwh.

At the grave it was the custom to compose poems or elegiacs on the merits of the dead. Famous examples are the Lamentations made by David over Saul and Jonathan and over Abner. Jeremiah composed a lamentation for Josiah (2 Chron.35.25). Probably these Lamentations were in the form of alternate verses recited between the Composer and the mourners. Doughty in his Arabia Deserta comments on the ability of the Arab to compose poetical biographies and histories.

Burning of incense at the burial was practiced by the Hebrews. It was a very common custom at Egyptian funerals, a large number of different varieties of incense being used.

A. Blackman, who has made a special study of the use of libations and incense in the Egyptian Funerary Cult, has shown that their use imparted to the dead man's body the moisture and warmth which it had lost during the process of mummification, and was also the means whereby the Sun God was reborn daily, and by which the corpse of Osiris was revived. It is possible that the same idea was in the mind of the Hebrews. On the other hand the smoke of incense may have been connected with the smoke of burnt offering as an appeasement to the Deity. There remains the possibility that incense may have been merely a means of purification from the defilement of death.

Zedekiah was promised (Jer. 34.5.) "Thou shalt die in peace, and with the burnings of thy fathers the former kings which were before thee so shall they burn (odours) for thee, and they will lament thee, Ah Lord". The account of the burial of Asa (2 Chron. 16.14.) mentions the burning of elaborately prepared spices. But in the case of Jehoram it is expressly stated that there was no burning made for him because of his wickedness. The Babylonians used offerings of incense. The Inscription of Sargon speaks of "stores of frankincense". At the end of the story of the journey of Ishtar to Hell, "the rising spirits of the dead smell incense" (Jeremias, O.T. and Anc. East ii 290).

The Book of Deuteronomy (at. 14.) forbade the making of offerings to the Dead. The existence of the prohibition makes it clear that offerings to the dead were practised in Ancient Israel. That the custom continued late into the life of the Hebrew Nation is clear from a passage in Sirach (30.18.) "messes set upon a grave". The practice was very common in Egypt, and no doubt it was observed throughout most of the Ancient East. Mohammedan custom allows sacrifice to be made at the graveside. An ox is usually slaughtered, and its flesh is distributed to the poor. On the occasion of the funeral of the late King Fuad of Egypt six oxen were killed near the Mosque in which the King was buried, and the flesh distributed to the needy. "This custom is called 'El-Kafferah' (or the expiation) being supposed to expiate some of the minor sins of the deceased, but not the great sins. (Lane Mod. Eg. p. 530). The sacrifice of oxen was part of the funeral rites of the Ancient Egyptians. We cannot be wrong in supposing that similar sacrifices were made at funerals in Ancient Israel.

The sacrifices were made to provide food for the dead man, even though the actual substance of the sacrificed animal was eaten by some of the mourners. It is very likely

that earlier sacrifices had had a totemistic significance, which in their turn had superceded the original human sacrifices. The dead King would be accompanied into the Next World by his wives, soldiers and slaves. The evidence from the Royal Cemeteries at Ur have proved beyond doubt that amongst the Sumerians human sacrifice was practiced at the funerary rite. The existence of Ushabti figures in the Egyptian tombs presuppose the same grim custom at an early period of the history of Egypt. A shurbanipal relates that by the same colossal bull, near which his grandfather Sennacherib was murdered, he slew Babylonian prisoners of war as a sacrifice to the dead.

Sacrifice to the dead continues to this day amongst certain primitive peoples. The Indian Practice of Suttee was a form of the same grim custom. It is not at all improbable that the custom was observed in Ancient Israel. The thunderings of the Prophets against sacrifice of the first-born to the various native deities definitely establish the fact that Human Sacrifice was not unknown amongst some of the Israelites.

The sacrifice of animals and the offerings to the dead led to the establishing of Funeral Feasts. The reference in II Sam.3.35. seems to indicate that a Funeral Feast was held for Abner. Such feasts became an institution of later Judaism. Josephus (Wars.2.1.1.) records that the custom of giving funeral feasts "is an occasion of poverty to many of the Jews, because they are forced to feast the multitude, for if any omits it he is not esteemed a holy man". It is still a custom amongst the Modern Jews to dispense alms with a liberal hand during the week of mourning in honour of the departed. Lavish funeral feasts were held on the occasions of Egyptian funerals, large quantities of food and intoxicating drink being consumed, much to the detriment of the mourners. The noisy character of funeral feasts is commented upon in the Apocryphal Book of Baruch (6.22.) "They roar and cry before their gods, as men do at the feast, when one is dead".

In connection with the funeral feast there are references to the Cup of Consolation (Jer.16.7.) and the bread of mourning. The meaning of the Cup of Consolation is not clear. Possibly the presentation of a cup of wine to the chief mourners was part of the funeral ritual.

Jeremiah says that the cup was drunk for "their father or mother". Possibly the chief mourner identified himself with the dead and symbolically drank on their behalf. Sir Leonard Woolley found in excavations that the Sumerians buried their dead with a cup or bowl in their hands.

Breaking of bread was part of the funeral rite among the Israelites as it was amongst other nations. Many different kinds of bread were presented at the funeral of an Ancient Egyptian. David at the burial of Abner would not partake of bread until sunset. Tobit bids his son "to pour out his bread upon the burial of the just" (4.17.) On the other hand Ezekial (24.17.) was forbidden to partake of the bread of men, i.e. the bread of mourning.

The bread eaten at a burial was considered to be unclean. "Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted." (Hos.9.4.) The defilement of death extended even to the funeral feast. It is not clear whether the eating of the bread had a special symbolical meaning. Possibly there may have been some idea of eating on behalf of the dead, with whom the mourners associated themselves, or even that those who partook of the funeral feast received in themselves the virtues of the dead. Brand mentions a practice as prevailing in Wales at one time, of employing Sin-Eaters, men who received a loaf over the corpse, and eating it took upon them all the sins of the deceased.

Funeral feasts almost invariably were supplemented with some form of entertainment, provided by dancers or acrobats. In Ancient Egypt this was quite usual. Lane (Mod.Eg.533.) mentions that "it is customary among the peasants of Upper Egypt for the female relatives and friends of a person deceased to meet together by his house on each of the three days after his funeral, and there to perform a lamentation and a strange kind of dance..... Each flourishes in her hand a palm stick, or a long staff, or a spear, or a drawn sword, and dances with a slow movement and in an irregular movement pacing about and raising and depressing the body. This dance is continued for an hour

or more, and is performed twice or three times in the course of the day". Robertson Smith has pointed out that the Syriac  $\text{ܕܢܘܨܐ}$ ; in different conjugations means both to dance and to mourn. (RS Rel.Sem.p 432.) The primitive mind no doubt connected the vigorous lively movements of the dancers with some symbolic act of magic which would restore similar movement to the dead man.

The Illiad and the Odyssey as well as the Aeneid not only give long descriptions of funeral feasts but also describe various Funeral Games. The reference to the fight between the young men before the battle between the forces of David and the forces of Ishbosheth (2.Sam.2.14-16.) may infer the existence of some form of savage Funeral Games, performed in this case before the actual battle to celebrate the funeral rites of those who would be slain in the actual battle.

## TYPES OF GRAVES.

It was the ardent desire of every Israelite that he should be buried in the family grave. The unity of the group continued even after death. For this reason Abraham purchased the cave of Machpelah. David reburied the remains of Saul and Jonathan in the family grave at Zelah. Barzillai desired to be buried in the grave of his father and mother (2 Sam.19.38.) So too Nehemiah (Neh.2.5.) The Kings of Judah were buried in the Royal Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Clan or Ancestral graves existed throughout Palestine, and no doubt it was considered a disgraceful calamity for a burying place to pass out of the possession of a family. There were exceptions to this custom of clan burial. Rachel was not buried in the tombs at Machpelah (Gen.35.19.); nor was Joseph (Jos.24.32.) Certainly some of the Kings were not buried in the Royal Tombs at Jerusalem.

The site chosen for a burial place was almost invariably outside of a village or town. Our Lord met the funeral procession of the only son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7.12.) coming out of the city on its way to the cemetery. He was met by Martha outside the village of Bethany, probably near the grave of Lazarus (John 11.30). In the account of the burial of a man in the sepulchre of Elisha (2 Kings.13.21) it is clear that the burial place was some distance from a town or village. On the other hand there are instances of burials in houses and in gardens. The Tombs of the Kings were definitely inside the walls of Jerusalem. The fact that Ezekial denounced the practice of burying the Kings of Judah near the Temple precincts, possibly even in the walls and foundations, would prove this to be the case (Ezk.43.7-9.)

It was not so much the desire for quietness, that graves were placed so far away from human habitation, but rather it was a means to ensure against defilement. "According to Jewish tradition, a dead body, however deeply buried, communicated defilement all the way up to the surface, unless indeed it was vaulted in, or vaulted over, to cut off contact with the earth above it". (Edersheim. The Temple. p.346. note 1.) In later times it was the custom to whitewash the stones above graves, so that no one would unwittingly defile himself by treading on the polluted ground. Our Lord's denunciation of the Pharisees as "whited sepulchres" outwardly clean, but inwardly full of unclean things, illustrates the custom. The practice is still continued in Jewish and Moslem cemeteries in the East to this day.

With such a fear of defilement it was natural that cemeteries would be situated in wild and desolate places. "Kings and counsellors of the earth who built desolate places for themselves" (Job.3.14.) "We are in desolate places like dead men" (Is.59.10.) "In places desolate of old, with them that go down into the pit, that thou shalt not be inhabited (Ez.26.20.) The Great Pharaohs of the Eighteenth and following Dynasties were buried in the wild and barren Valley of the Kings on the Western Bank of the Nile, opposite the city of Thebes. But in Egypt this burial in desolate places was not so much for the avoidance of ceremonial defilement as an expedient to forstall the depredations of the Tomb Robbers.

The Sumerians, when burying their dead, chose for preference a high piece of ground. An old mound was considered to be suitable. The Bedouin of the present day buries his dead, if possible, in a mound or small hill. No doubt hills, in common with other natural formations, were considered sacrosanct. In the case of the Sumerians hills definitely had a special religious meaning, for the ziggurat form of their temples was a conventional representation of a hill or mountain. The Old Testament affords several interesting instances of hill burial, especially during the time of the Early History of Israel. Aaron died on Mount Hor, and was presumbaly buried there. Moses was buried in an unknown grave on Mount Nebo. Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was buried in a hill (Josh.24.33) Joshua's grave seems to have been in a hill-side (Josh.24.30.) Later at Bethel there was a cemetery situated on the slopes of a hill (2 Kings.23.16.) Burial in the sides of hills was common in Egypt, extensive tombs being cut into the rock; and it is not improbable that the Israelites adopted the custom of hill burial from that country. According to an old Syriac tradition Adam was buried in a marvellous cave at the top of a mountain. His descendants until the time of Noah were also buried in the same cave (Budge. Book of the Cave of Treasures. p.73).

The amount of money which the relatives of the dead man could afford, settled the question of the type of grave. Five main types of graves can be distinguished:-  
 (1) Graves dug in the earth; (2) Natural caves or grottoes;  
 (3) Tombs hewn out of the rock; (4) Structures erected above ground; (5) Sarcophagi.



(4).

Unlike the Egyptian Tombs these Sepulchres were not decorated or elaborately worked. Nor were they equipped with special funeral furniture, as was the Egyptian custom, but Josephus in his History of the Jews (13.8.4) mentions that "Hyrchanus opened the Sepulchre of David, who was the richest of all kings, and took from thence about 3,000 talents in money". In the History (16.7.1.) he records that Herod the Great also entered the Royal Tomb:- "As Herod had before heard that Hyrchanus, who had been king before him, had opened David's sepulchre, and taken out of it 3,000 talents of silver, and that there was a much greater number left behind, and indeed enough to suffice all his wants, he had a great while an intention to make the attempt, and at this time he opened that sepulchre by night, and went into it, and endeavoured that it should not be known in the city, but took only his faithful friends with him. As for any money, he found none, as Hyrchanus had done, but that furniture of gold, and those precious goods that were laid up there, all which he took away. However, he had a great desire to make a more diligent search, and to go further in, even as far as the very bodies of David and Solomon; where two of his guards were slain, by a flame that burst out upon those that went in, as the report was. So he was terribly affrighted, and went out, and built a propitiatory monument of white stone, at the mouth of the sepulchre, and that at a great expense also. And even Nicolaus his historiographer makes mention of this monument built by Herod, though he does not mention his going down into the sepulchre, as knowing that action to be of ill repute".

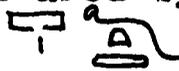
The reference by Nicolaus to entry into the tombs as an ill action explains why no special precautions were taken to safeguard these rock tombs. The actual kokim in the chambers were not sealed, but a stone was rolled over the low entrance to the tomb galleries (John 11.38. Matt.28.2.) The entrance was invariably narrow and low, nor was it concealed at all. The fear of ceremonial defilement was sufficient to keep at a distance all of the Jewish Faith; while tombs robbers would find nothing of value in the sepulchres as compared with the rich hauls hidden in the burial places of Egypt.

(4) Mausoleums, constructed above ground do not appear to have been a feature of Israelitish Burials. Such monuments of this description, which still exist in Palestine, date from Hellenistic times. Simon Maccabee (1.Macc.13.27.) raised a great monument over the family grave at Modin. "He raised it aloft to the sight, with hewn stone behind

(5).

and before. Moreover he set up seven pyramids, one against another, for his father, and his mother and his four brethren. And in there he made cunning devices, about the which he set great pillars, and upon the pillars he made all their armour for a perpetual memory, and by the armour, ships carved, that they might be seen of all that sail on the sea. This is the sepulchre which he made at Modin, and it standeth yet unto this day." Unfortunately no trace of this remarkable mausoleum remains to-day. There are several existing examples of Mausoleums in Phoenicia, the most famous of all being the so called Tomb of Hiram near Tyre. But even in Phoenicia the mausoleum type of tomb is relatively late, mostly dating from the Hellenistic Period.

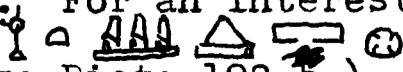
5. Between the 6th and 4th cent.B.C., the Phoenicians buried their dead in sarcophagi. These were usually made of stone, sometimes of pottery. Their shape was anthropoid, that is, the sarcophagus had a human head, and even an entire recumbent form on the lid, the body being shaped like a mummy case. Without doubt these massive sarcophagi were inspired by Egyptian types. Some of the sarcophagi were double, allowing two bodies, placed in opposite directions, to be laid in them. But there is not much evidence to show that such interments became popular among the Israelites; though very possibly isolated cases of their use occurred in that part of Israel which lay near the Phoenician border.

House Burials are mentioned in the Old Testament. Samuel was buried in his own house in Ramah (1 Sam.25.1.) Joab, too, was buried in his own house in the wilderness (1.Kings.2.34). It is possible that the word "house" is an euphemistic title for the grave. Isaiah (14.8.) speaks of the dead Kings "each in his own house". "His everlasting house" referring to the grave occurs in Ecclesiastes (12.5.) and in Job (30.23.) another description of the grave is "the house of assembling for all living". Of the terms used by later Judaism none is more significant than "the house of the living", an euphemistic phrase still used by the Modern Jewry. The Egyptians called the tomb  pr.dtt, the everlasting house.

Against this interpretation of the phrase must be taken into consideration the fact that some nations of the Ancient East definitely buried their dead beneath the floors of their houses. It was a common custom of the Hittites, for many cist burials have been found under houses at Carchemish (Mall.Anc.Hist.Nr.East p.340.) The custom was also widely practiced in Babylonia. In his book "Ur of the Chaldees" (Plate xiii.b.) Sir Leonard Woolley publishes a

(6).

picture of a house burial. It is not unlikely then that house burials were practiced in Israel, and that the passages in Samuel and Kings are to be read literally.

Two garden burials are mentioned in the Book of Kings. Manasseh and Amon were both buried in the garden of Uzza.  $\chi\zeta\upsilon\text{-}\eta\eta$  It has been suggested that  $\chi\zeta\upsilon$  is a corruption of  $\eta\eta$ . In the passage relating the death of Uzziah (2.Chron.26.23.) it is stated that burial took place  $\chi\zeta\upsilon\text{-}\eta\eta$  Here  $\eta\eta$  might be taken as an alternative for  $\eta\eta$  (gam) and so preserve the idea of a garden. But it is noteworthy that in the parallel accounts of the burials of Manasseh and Amon in the Book of Chronicles (2 Chron.33.20 and 33.24) the phrase  $\chi\zeta\upsilon\text{-}\eta\eta$  is not used, but is replaced by the word  $\eta\eta$ . Prof.D.Winton Thomas has kindly drawn my attention to the fact that in Arabic the equivalent of  $\eta\eta$  can mean a tomb. If we can read  $\eta\eta$  occurring as it does in the later book of Chronicles, as a tomb, then we must look for some other meaning for  $\chi\zeta\upsilon$  rather than trying to derive it from a corruption of  $\eta\eta$ . For an interesting parallel of a garden with a tomb cf.  w d y t, a tomb and its garden. (Budge.Eg: Dict: 192.b.)

Burial places frequently centred round Sacred Sanctuaries. There was a large cemetery at Bethel (2.Kgs. 28.16.) The later burials of the Kings of Judah seem to have been near the Temple area (Ezk.43.7 - 9). It is a common sight to-day to see in a Moslem graveyard the tomb of some local saint surmounted by its little domed chapel, and the other graves crowded round this as close as may be, as if the occupants sought the protection of the holy man. Each necropolis in Ancient Egypt must have presented a similar sight with the tombs of nobles and officials clustering round the tomb of the King, who by his death had become one of the gods. In the same way in Sumerian cemeteries the graves of commoners crowded round the royal burials.

A very ancient practice was to bury the dead beneath, or near to sacred trees. The tree was early in the history of mankind regarded as a fetish of the god. It then came to be regarded as a life giving agent. No doubt the manufacture of coffins from the wood of trees had a mystical meaning. Amongst primitive tribes the tree burial is still observed.

(7).

The Aborigines of Australia place their dead in the branches of trees. The Ancient Colchians suspended the bodies of men in trees, but buried women. In the early history of Israel burial under sacred trees was not uncommon. Jacob buried Deborah under an oak (Gen.24.8) and the remains of Saul and Jonathan were buried under a sacred tamarisk tree at Jabesh Gilead, no doubt a centre of a death cult. (The parallel passage in Chronicles (1.Chron.10.12.) reads  $\eta\zeta\chi\eta$  an oak for  $\zeta\psi\chi\eta$  possibly a late attempt to get away from the association of the tamarisk tree with a death cult.) It is worth noting that in the purchase of the cave of Machpelah, Abraham not only purchased the cave but also "all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about" (Gen.23.17.) In other passages Abraham dwells under trees or plants them; so that there is evidence that the sacred tree played an important part not only in worship, but also in the cult of the dead.

Apart from the ancestral graves and places associated with the local sanctuaries provision was made in Ancient Israel for common burying places. "The graves of persons of the people" (Jer.26.23.) and from a later source (Matt.27.7.) we know that public provision was made for the burial of strangers.

There are few references in the Old Testament to memorials erected over graves. Jacob set up a pillar on the grave of Rachel (Gen.35.20.) Josiah, when destroying the sanctuary at Bethel, noticed the memorial, and was told that it indicated the grave of a prophet. The mention in Ezekiel 39.15. of the setting up of a sign by an unburied corpse or bone is obviously only a temporary measure. Absalom is said to have erected some kind of monument ( $\tau'$ ) in the King's dale during his lifetime; (2 Sam.18.18.) but whether it was originally intended as a funeral monument is not easy to say, though the placing of the reference immediately after the story of Absalom's death would suggest that such was its purpose.

Memorials or tombstones are part of Mohammedan Funerary usage. "Over the burial vault is constructed an oblong monument (called "tarkeebah") of stone or brick, with a stela or upright stone (called a "Shahid") at the foot and head. The Stelae are mostly plain, but some of them are ornamented; and that at the head is often inscribed with a text from the *Kuran*, and the name of the deceased, with the date of his death.

A turban, cap, or other head-dress is also some times carried on top of the head stone, showing the rank or class of the person or persons buried in the tomb. Over the grave of an eminent sheykh, or other person of note, a small square building, crowned with a cupola, is generally erected".

The writer of the Syriac Book of the Cave of Treasures comments on the memorials set over graves. "In the days of Serug the worship of idols entered the world. In his days the children of men began to make themselves graven images, and it was at this time that the introduction of idols into the world took place..... For when one of them died, they used to make an image of him and set it up upon his grave, so that the remembrance (of his appearance) might not pass from before their eyes. And error, having been sown broadcast in all the earth, the land became filled with idols in the form of men and women". (Budge. Book of Cave of treasures. p.137 ff.) Possibly the Syriac writer was nearer to the truth in explaining the origin of anthropomorphus figures of deities than he realised.

The Israelites were forbidden to make representations of the human form, just as the Mohammedan is also forbidden to do so. It is not likely then that we shall ever discover in Palestine funeral statues like the magnificent Ka Statues which were part of Ancient Egyptian Funerary Usage.

Heaps of stones are mentioned in the Old Testament as having been erected over certain graves. A great heap of stones was placed over the bodies of Achan and his family (Jos.7.26.) and also over the burial place of Absalom (2.Sam.18.17.) But they were erected for contumely, and not for honour. No doubt, as is the custom of primitive tribes in many parts of the world to-day, passers-by would add to the dimensions of the mound by hurling a stone, accompanied by a word of reproach, onto the heap.

## Appendix. Egyptian Burial Customs.

In dealing with the Burial Customs of Ancient Egypt a real difficulty presents itself, a difficulty which arises, not from lack of evidence but because of the very detailed mass of information that has survived. The favourable climate of Egypt has preserved the sources of our information more perfectly than the historical remains of any other country. But of the great mass of evidence which is ours, much is very contradictory. Egypt had a long history. It might be supposed that during that long period old customs would die out as new customs took their place. But such was not the case. The Egyptian had an exaggerated respect for the past, and rather than forget the customs of former times he incorporated ancient practice with new observance, however contradictory one might be to the other. Many ancient customs were quite meaningless to the Egyptian of a later age, and very possibly he frequently wrongly interpreted the meaning of ancient rites. It was the tragedy of her history that Egypt never succeeded in breaking with the past. Prof. Adolf Erman writes of this attitude of mind: "A strange curse lay upon the Egyptians, they could not forget". Not only was this true of their Funerary Practices, but of all their works, theological, artistic and cultural. So it is, that the study of the Egyptian Faith, especially in regard to the doctrines of the Hereafter, will often remain quite incomprehensible.

One fact must be recognised in pursuing the study of Egyptian Funerary Customs; the whole funerary Cult was originally only intended for the king, and it was the result of a gradual democratisation of religious ideas that it was borrowed early in the Old Kingdom for the nobles and the officials. This Aristocratic view is typified by the costly "Ka" Statues of that period, many of them superb works of art, and obviously only in the reach of very wealthy men. But the Cult extended more and more as time went on, and gradually percolated to other and lower ranks of the population. But its kingly origin was never forgotten, and traces of it appear again and again.

It is impossible to say how the Burial Cult grew up. Possibly in its early stages it might have been not so much a wish for Immortality as a means to prevent the ghost of the dead man returning to earth to haunt and harm the living. Even the funeral offerings may have been a kind of peace offering to pacify vengeful spirits. Yet very early there

must have arisen that universal yearning for Immortality, and almost as early the Legend of Osiris must have come into being. To Osiris, the Great God, men looked for deliverance from the dangers of the next world. The death, resurrection and triumph of Osiris are the real key to the understanding of the Egyptian Cult of the Dead. It was believed that by his death and embalming, and by virtue of the magical and religious rites enacted at the grave, the deceased became identified with Osiris the dead king par excellence, and shared his victory over death.

#### Pre-Dynastic Burial.

The Early burials were at first very simple. The body was laid in a narrow trench with the knees drawn up to the body on the left side, (the Embryonic Position) and in due course the body decayed and fell to pieces. It was customary to place in the hand of the deceased some article which would be of some use to him in the next world, such as jars and bowls of food and drink, weapons and other personal effects. Quite early in this period there were added articles which could only have been of supernatural service: Models in clay of boats, oxen, hippopotami, maid servants grinding corn, and of a woman with enormous thighs, obviously to provide the deceased with the delights of love.

Later graves of this period show an elaboration in the disposal of the dead. The body is still laid in the crouching position, but it is wrapped in a mat or a hide, or placed in two great jars. The body would then dry, and become desiccated, so forming a natural mummy. There was no attempt to preserve the body by artificial means.

More elaborate means were sometimes adopted to secure the body by digging a deeper grave, lining it with bricks and covering the top with a huge stone to prevent the earth falling and crushing the contents of the grave. An even more secure method was to dig a short shaft in the rock, which opened below on a small chamber. The opening to the chamber was walled up, and the shaft filled with rubble and stones. But such burial was only for the very important and wealthy.

It is not possible to state what rites were observed at the burial. Probably in the complex and bewildering ceremonies of later periods there survived much which dated back to the time of these primitive burials.

Dynastic. Old Kingdom.

With the tombs of the kings of the early dynasties we begin to find more elaborate forms of burial. For example, the great tomb at Neqada, a 1st Dynasty burial, is a sunken rectangular brick building with a roof of slight timber, with steps leading down to the burial chamber. In the centre was a chamber containing the body of the king, surrounded by four chambers with wooden walls containing food and household goods. Similar types of graves were constructed by this king's successors at Abydos. But it is not until the end of the 2nd Dyn. that there appears a tomb entirely constructed of stone. This is the tomb of Khasekhemui Hezef at Abydos. It is probably the oldest stone structure of its kind yet known. This form of tomb construction did not long remain the exclusive property of the King, the nobles copied it closely, and began to build their tombs around that of the king, so that the site of the royal burial became a veritable necropolis.

The tomb became more complicated in structure. The burial chamber remained under the ground, but a structure was now built over the top. This was a rectangular building with sloping sides (Mastaba). It had developed out of an earlier custom of heaping up stones as a primitive monument over the grave. With the construction of the Mastaba and its adoption by the nobles the kings began to assert their importance by enlarging the superstructures over their tombs. By the addition of masonry to the original Mastaba the Pyramid was evolved. The Pyramid built by Deser at Saqqara consists of a series of mastabas placed one on top of the other. The pyramid form was continued by the first king of the 3rd Dyn. Seneferu who built his pyramid at Medum, and also constructed a curious shaped pyramid at Dahshur. These structures were only a prelude to the building of the magnificent pyramids at Gizeh. The Great Pyramid built by Khufu, and the 2nd and 3rd Pyramids constructed by Khafra and Menkaura demonstrate the ultimate form of the pyramid tomb. An interesting fact is that in the case of the 1st and 3rd Pyramids the burial chamber is not underground but in the mass of the structure. The Desire for Immortality and the Sanctity of Kingship, aided by the resources of a prosperous country, were the causes which led to the construction of these huge structures.

With the passing years the type of grave changed. The Mastaba still continued especially where there was a flat necropolis. The Pyramid form in its greatest grandeur ceased. Expense and a slowly changing order of society initiated by the long feudal struggles between the nobles made pyramid

building impossible. Small brick pyramids were constructed, and this type of tomb is met with late in Egyptian history in provincial centres, where they were built by people of small means, being imposing in appearance while simple and convenient to construct. An important development was the Rock-hewn Tomb. This was a series of galleries with rooms cut into the living rock. This type of tomb had been constructed as far back as the 4th Dyn. but it grew in popularity in later years. Its latest and most magnificent form is to be seen in the Royal Tombs in the Valley of the Kings near Thebes.

As in the early period so at this time it was thought that offerings of food were necessary for the happiness of the dead. It was not possible to place the offerings in the grave, but a tomb chapel was built for this purpose, where offerings might be made. This was the origin of a great class of priests whose sole duty was to present the necessary offerings. Also huge endowments were left to these chapels so that there would always be a supply of offerings.

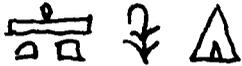
It was necessary that there should be some link between the dead man and his offerings. With this idea in mind there was placed in each chapel a statue of the deceased. The statue became a substitute for the body and the appointed offerings were made to it. Such statues were very accurate and lifelike representations of the dead so that it is possible to-day to gaze upon the actual likeness of the great kings of the past. The idea of substituting a statue for the actual body was not difficult to the Egyptian whose mind could in the realm of Religion accept an hundred and one absurdities. Moreover the Ka Statue was a source of comfort to him, for through it, should his body be destroyed, he could still be assured of the Immortality which he hoped would be his portion. The Ka Statue was set up in a small chamber in the Mastaba, which also served as the Mortuary Chapel. In the early forms of Mastabas there was a false door set in the east side of the structure. By this door it was thought that the deceased could come from the tomb to receive the offerings placed there. Later a small chamber was hollowed out and the false door placed at the extreme end of it. The walls of the chamber were decorated with scenes of the necessary offerings being brought to the tomb----the servants bringing

food and household furniture, the hunting dogs, which the deceased had used, being led by trusted slaves, or Mortuary Priests performing their rites on his behalf.

As the years passed the Mastabas of the nobles became more and more splendid until some of them became almost like mansions. The fashion of the wall painting changed, and much that was secular crept into the detail of the pictures. There were representations of agriculture, of cattle tending, hunting, snaring of birds, craftsmen and sailors, musicians and dancing women, butchers and wine-traders, and whatever would appear interesting and attractive to an Egyptian of the upper classes. No doubt all these pictures had some reference to the tomb. The cattle, game, fowls, the corn and the wine were placed there to be used as offerings at the grave. The artisans work for the deceased, the ships bring gifts to him, the dancers and musicians are there to amuse him. But a close examination shows that this was becoming increasingly a matter of secondary importance. It was not really necessary to show how the boatmen quarrelled and abused one another. Nor was it necessary to perpetuate on the wall the conversation of the workmen, or the song of the sowers, or the names of the dancers' movements. It seems that there was an attempt to render the decorations of the tomb more varied and artistic, even if a pretext for them had to be forcibly adduced. Probably there had been a change of ideas in the funeral ceremonies, and the idea had arisen that the feast days of the dead should be joyous occasions. For this large chambers with gay artistic decorations would be more suitable than narrow rooms with monotonous paintings.

Offerings were by no means as varied and plentiful as the inscriptions might lead us to believe, but most tombs would have a priest or family of priests to look after the regular placing of offerings. The old idea had been that the relatives should look after the tomb, but there was other work to be done during a man's lifetime, and so the regular charge of a family tomb was handed over to a priestly family who were often complete strangers. Even people of moderate means began to follow this example, and there are even cases of Mortuary Priests making provision for the upkeep of offerings at their graves. In some cases the king made provision for the offering at the tomb of some pecunious but faithful subject. The highest class of the people subsisted on the favour of the king for their livelihood. It is easy to see that petition would be made to him for provision of a

grave or of even offerings for the grave. This was probably a favour in the Old Kingdom, whereas it had been the rule in Pre-Dynastic times when the rites of burial had been confined to a much smaller circle. But by this time, just as it was expected that Anubis would supply the dead with offerings, so it was expected of the king.



"The Offering that the King Gives" is the prayer more often uttered than any other at the tomb. It was a petition that has come down from the mists of antiquity for its opening words are almost meaningless. But for the Egyptian it was the prayer of prayers. For thousands of years it persisted, meaningless and distorted, but ever with its ancient wording. As long as the Egyptian belief existed, so long was it enscribed on all tombs and on all objects deposited in them. It was an important formulae, for the mere recitation of the words by a passer-by ensured the dead of a supply of the necessary food and drink in the next world. It was always a matter of horror to the pious Egyptian to think that in the next world he might go hungry and thirsty, and be compelled to eat filth and nameless abominations. On many of the tombs there were place inscriptions to some future reader exhorting him to say the ancient prayer, and warning him of the horrible consequences of defiling or destroying the tomb. But in spite of such intreaties and warnings, as time passed, countless tombs fell into decay. Their owners were forgotten. The revenues attached to them were confiscated and even the masonry of the tomb was appropriated for the building of some new tomb. It was as if the dead preyed on the dead. Often old tombs were robbed (An occupation not unknown to the Modern Egyptians). Old tombs, despoiled of their original occupants, were taken over to provide for a new burial. Old names and titles were chiselled out, and the name of the new occupant added. Other tombs which had been robbed of their masonry were soon at the mercy of the drifting desert sand which rose year by year over the ruins to form new levels on which later generations built new tombs. At Saqqara near the tomb of Teti, over the tombs of his time are those of the New Kingdom, and above these in turn graves were built during the Hellenistic period. All alike are shattered and pillaged.

Now and then a pious successor would undertake to restore a ruined grave. This was an action of Religious Merit. But few, who boasted that they performed this pious duty, could actually have done so. The boast was often little more than a pious humbug. In fact what could have been the use of restoring the graves when ancient robbers had penetrated to the

actual sarcophagus and had destroyed the body in their search for the valuable ornaments buried with it.

The body was treated to preserve its natural appearance. Natron and Asphalt were applied and the limbs were wrapped in bandages. This having been done the soul could find its natural abode, and might once more awake. The face was covered with a mask of linen and stucco, and the finished mummy laid in a sleeping position on its left side, the head being supported on a head rest. The coffin was a rectangular chest of wood or stone. The shape was simple. It was either a polished chest with a flat cover, or it had in addition four corner posts and an arched lid. (This was the legendary form of the coffin of Osiris, with whom the dead man was identified.) A natural difficulty presented itself to the mind of the Egyptian: How could the deceased, confined in his coffin, come forth to see the sun? The use of magic solved the problem. A door was painted on the inside of the coffin to enable the dead man to come forth, or more often at the upper end of the coffin on the side to which the fact of the mummy was turned was painted a large pair of eyes by which the dead man might see.

Later during the Middle Kingdom the coffin was painted with brightly coloured funerary texts arranged in rows. These texts commended the deceased to the protection of the Gods who guarded the dead, Anubis, Osiris, Keb and Nut, Isis and Nephthys and most important of all Amset, Hapi, Duamutef and Kebehsenuf, the four sons of Horus, who helped Osiris in his misfortunes. Later, more especially in the Middle Kingdom, we find in connection with these four sons of Horus a curious custom beginning. The entrails of the corpse were placed in four jars with stoppers modelled to represent the heads of men. (At the end of the 18th Dyn. the four human heads were superceded by the heads of a man, an ape, a jackal, and an Hawk. These Jars, usually named Canopic Jars, went out of fashion after the 21st Dyn, for the viscera were embalmed separately and returned to their original position in the body at the time of bandaging).

With the mummy were placed various amulets. The number of these increased as time passed. In primitive times it was only an occasional amulet that was buried with the body but later these magical symbols were placed on the body in such profusion that they literally covered the body.

In addition to these arrangements greater security and happiness were ensured for the dead by ceremonies performed at the actual Mummification and at the funeral. These rites reflected much of the legendary history of the gods. Every action in the Funerary Rite was accompanied by a proper formula which referred to a prototype in the acts of the gods. The Ritual of embalming has only survived in a late form, but we are not likely to be far from the truth in supposing that the learned Kherheb and the Embalmers represented the gods who prepared the body of Osiris.

At the funeral the Ceremonies were long and mystical in their significance. The fact that many of the rites had their origin in the mists of Antiquity makes it difficult to give any really accurate and rational interpretation of their real meaning. The main outlines of the Ceremonies may be distinguished.

"The principal person at these ceremonies was a priest called the Sem, but the Kherheb and several other personages took part. When the dead man had been sprinkled with water, and incense had been offered before him, three persons proceeded to the grave and wakened the Sem, who had swathed himself in wrappings before he laid down. When he had slowly raised himself in the appointed manner, the four together undertook the part of those sons of Horus who had taken care of Osiris. At a further stage of the performance, when the Sem wore a peculiar decoration over the breast, and carried a staff, he represented Horus, son of Osiris. Some called out, "O Isis, Horus is come, that he may embrace his father". The Kherheb cried "Hasten that thou mayest see thy father". The Sem priest then exchanged his attire for a panther skin, and while the animal to be sacrificed was being cut up near him, he announced to the deceased "I have rescued this my eye out of his mouth. I have cut off his thigh". Then the Sem presented the thigh of the animal to the deceased, as Horus once presented his own eye, which Set had torn out, to his father. But before the deceased could devote himself to enjoying this food, the most important of all the ceremonies must be performed on his behalf---the Opening of the Mouth and of the Eyes. Twice with small oblique axes, and once with a chisel was the face of the deceased touched, and when that and all else had been done, and when the Sem with his little finger had opened mouth and eyes, the dead man was once more able to receive food. The Sem raised his staff and assigned to him his food. Finally he annointed the dead man and burnt incense before him, gave him

a head cloth, clothed him in bandages, and gave him a staff and flail, similar to those carried by Osiris" (Erman Egypt.Rel.Cf. too Budge. Book of Opening of the Mouth. A detailed description of the ceremony from Mss. of the 19th, 20th and 21st Dyn. Though the above work gives a late version of the ceremonies enacted at the grave it presents a very full description of the rites, many of which must have been of very ancient usage.)

There were in addition to this ceremony of Opening the Mouth a whole series of ceremonies connected with the sacrifices and oblations at the grave, in which spells were recited containing a wearisome number of puns on the objects presented. (Cf. Budge. Liturgy of Funeral Offerings).

During the Middle Kingdom there grew up two other means by which the deceased might be made happy in the belief that the Gods would favour him. The first was by placing in one of the temples a statue of the dead man. Alive he had taken part in the festivals at the temples when offerings had been made to the dead, so that it was believed that by his statue's presence he might, when dead, partake of the feast of good things offered to the dead.

There was a third means by which the Egyptian might hope to secure for himself a happy future in the Hereafter. This was to be buried at the sacred city of Abydos. Osiris the God of the Dead was worshipped there, and tradition had it that his head was buried there. We know that the mysteries of Osiris were celebrated at Abydos. The Early Kings of Egypt were buried there. Fortunate was the man who could find his last resting place there. Every pious Egyptian hoped that he might be buried in Abydos, close to the grave of Osiris. If such a hope was not possible of fulfilment, then he did the next best thing by making a pilgrimage to the sacred shrine, whilst alive, or after death by having his mummified body taken to Abydos and placed for a short time in the temple of Osiris, so that he might witness the Divine Mysteries. Afterwards his body would be brought home to the newly prepared tomb.

#### New Kingdom.

Under the New Kingdom, the customs and ceremonies of the past were continued and new rite added. Occasionally older customs dropped out of use, but only because their place had been taken by some newer and richer conception.

The form of the tomb followed the fashions set in the Middle Kingdom. The Nobility still built for themselves brick pyramids and mastabas, whilst others had tombs hewn out of the rocky cliffs. In the case of the Kings the rock hewn tombs were developed to their most magnificent form. The Royal Tombs in the Valley of the Kings were constructed on the principle of a long tunnel running into the rock and opening into a number of subterranean chambers. To illustrate the greatness of these tombs, the Tomb of Seti I. may be mentioned. It is nearly 500 ft. in length and descends from the ground level to a depth of about 150 ft. The walls of the tombs were painted with religious texts and pictures, so that some Egyptologists, notably Erman, have seen in this form of the tomb a resemblance to the Underworld ruled over by Osiris, of whom the dead King, lying in the Gold House (i.e. The Tomb Chamber) was the personification.

At this period there appears provision for those who could not afford a tomb though they might be able to provide for a cheap form of mummification. Enterprising people secured old tombs long empty, and developed them as communal graves. By this method the poorer people could share in the privileges of the rich. Soon no doubt these communal tombs were piled high with coffins and funeral equipment thrown together in a jumble, but it was at least a tomb.

Still there were some who were too poor to afford even this form of grave, but who desired to partake of the privileges of burial and so gain a place in the realm of Osiris. They adopted a pathetic expedient. Small wooden dolls fashioned in the shape of mummies were buried at the entrance of large tombs. The figure was inscribed with the name of the deceased, wrapped in a scrap of linen, and placed in a small coffin. By this means it was hoped that the deceased might partake of the benefits accorded to the occupant of the tomb. Where the actual bodies of the poor were buried is not easy to say. Possibly they were simply wrapped in a piece of reed matting and buried in the fringe of the desert. It is not unlikely that many of the poor were cast into the Nile to be devoured by the crocodiles which were denizens of the river in Dynastic times.

The texts on the walls of tombs of this period are interesting, for they are not as in the Old Kingdom merely a recitation of offerings for the dead, nor are they all religious texts. But we find records of incidents in the life of the deceased, so that it is possible to learn much of his everyday life from the pictures. It is from these tomb pictures that we are able to reconstruct so much of the

details of the funeral of the deceased, from the process of mummification to the actual entombment.

With the rise of the New Kingdom the form of the coffin underwent a radical change. Instead of being merely a strong box to prevent injury to the body, the coffin was now made in the form of a human figure. Nests of coffins became the rule, each coffin being a replica of the one it enclosed. Such coffins were decorated with the figures of Gods and sacred emblems. It is evident that these coffins were manufactured in large numbers on a mass production scale. Suitable spaces were left on the coffins for the names of the deceased, and these were added at the time of the embalming. It is obvious that these were added at the time of the embalming. It is obvious that the mercenary element of coffin making did not lend itself to conscientious workmanship.

A new feature of the New Kingdom burials was the large number of Ushabti figures which are to be found in the tombs. Such figures had occurred occasionally during the Middle Kingdom; but they afforded no clue as to their use as only the names of the deceased were written on them. The numerous examples dating from the New Kingdom clearly indicated their use by the agricultural implements they hold in their hands and by the inscription written on them. The usual inscription reads thus: "O thou Ushabti, when I am called and when I am required to do any kind of work, which is done in the Underworld, and am required at any time to cause the fields to flourish, to irrigate the banks, to convey the sand from the East to the West, thou shalt say, here am I." As superstition increased a new terror connected itself with these figures, what if the dead man met in the next world an enemy who ordered the Ushabti to be disloyal to him, as had been his experience in his lifetime. To defeat such a calamity it was customary to add to the inscription on the Ushabti the words: "Obey him only who made thee, do not obey his enemy." These Ushabti represent in all probability an ancient funerary victim, who was slain to accompany the deceased into the Next World., and to perform the menial tasks which might be demanded of the dead. In every tomb of the New Kingdom and onwards these figures occur. Many officials had large boxes full of Ushabtis buried with them. Often they numbered 365--- one for each day of the year. In the tomb of Seti I Belzoni found over 700 of these figures.

Magic continued to play its part in the funeral customs. This is to be seen most clearly in the number of amulets which were buried with the mummy. A late text states that no fewer than 104 amulets were necessary. The significance of many of them is difficult to understand. Some will always remain unintelligible to us. Amongst the most important may be mentioned the Heart Scarab. This was a stone figure of a beetle laid on the breast over the heart. The Doctrine of Osiris demanded the ethical purity of the individual. At the Judgement the heart was weighed in the balances against the feather of truth. The Heart Scarab was believed to enable a man to escape an unpleasant future destiny by taking the place of his heart. The efficacy of this amulet was enhanced by the fact that it was the symbol of the Sun God Ra, and also because it had upon it the words of power. "O heart that I have from my mother. O heart that belongs to my spirit, do not appear against me as witness, provided no opposition against me before the judges, do not contradict me before him who governs the balance, thou art my spirit that is in my body..... do not suffer our name to stink.....tell no lie against me before the god."

A very ancient amulet was the Ded, associated with Osiris. The Book of the Dead claimed that this amulet was the backbone of Osiris. Modern Egyptologists have seen in the form of the Ded a conventional representation of a tree trunk with branches  or bands of metal. Budge held that the writers of  the Dead were right in saying that the amulet represented the backbone as the oldest form of the hieroglyph represented the sacrum. The purpose of the amulet was to put the dead under the protection of Osiris. As frequently used as the Ded amulet was the Tet  which was especially associated with Isis the wife of  the Dead Osiris. Here again the real meaning of the  amulet is obscure. There have been many suggestions as to what it represents. The most popular suggestion is that it represents a buckle. (For the suggestion that it represents the Uterus of the goddess see Budge. Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection). Other amulets included the Headrest, the heart, the steps etc. The Ankh  the sign of life, was a very ancient symbol, coming  down from Pre-Dynastic times. Its original meaning is unknown, and was probably unknown to the Dynastic Egyptians. The Eye of Horus was a popular amulet, for it had the power to help both the dead and the living.

Religious Books were deposited in the tombs. The most famous of all is the so-called Book of the Dead, of which there have survived several recensions. The most complete form comes from Ptolomaic times. This Version contains 150 chapters. The book was a collection of religious texts, interspaced with hymns to the Gods and magic spells. Much of the contents of the book dated back long before the New Kingdom. Many of the texts were to be found on the coffins of the Middle Kingdom. In short the book was a book of magic to enable the deceased to pass safely into the next world and to enjoy the benefits promised by the Gods. Later in the 19th Dyn. a new book was produced, the Book of the Amduat, a kind of guide to the Underworld with the necessary spells and passwords for the deceased to use in his journey through the Realms of the Dead, regions which were full of dangers to the ignorant and unprepared. Other religious books to help the deceased were added later, such as the Book of Two Ways; the Book of Breathings; the Book of Traversing Eternity, to mention but a few.

Many of these funerary papyri were beautifully written and illustrated with finely drawn and coloured pictures or vignettes. But on closer examination they are found to be full of mistakes and inaccuracies. This was largely due to the fact, as in the manufacture of coffins, these papyri were written in large numbers, spaces being left for the name of the deceased to be filled in when necessary. This mass production did not lead to accuracy. The obscurity of some very ancient texts was made more obscure by ignorant scribes. Many of the papyri were written by the deceased during their life time so that these copies are more accurate than the mass produced copies, though in many places the text is almost meaningless owing to the following of already corrupted texts. As in the case of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the text of these funerary books was regarded as sacred, and treated as such even when the passage made the most arrant nonsense.

#### Saitic Period.

Following upon the Great Period of Egyptian History and the Decline during the 20th Dyn. came the period known as the Saitic Period, which began with the 26th Dyn. and ended with the Persian occupation of Egypt. The Saitic Period was a period of revival after the decline and with the rise of the fortunes of Egypt came a revival of interest in the past. The Egyptians began to look back to the Old Kingdom as the great Golden Age of Egypt, and as a result of

this admiration for the past there grew up a slavish following of the funerary customs of the early period.

The texts of the Pyramid Age were copied, and the decoration of the tombs closely resembled that of the Old Kingdom tombs. If anything the tombs were more gorgeous and more sumptuously furnished. Very little is to be seen of the secular life of the people as was shewn on the walls of the New Kingdom tombs. Instead there are a series of archaic texts and tables of funerary offerings.

The coffins of the period followed the fashion of past days, and take the form of Osirian Coffins, rectangular chests with corner posts. The sarcophagi are particularly interesting both on account of their massive size and their workmanship. They were constructed of hard black basalt or dark granite. They must have been extremely hard to work, but the finished articles are marvels of technical skill. The outside of these sarcophagi were covered with texts, which spoiled their appearance, but which, and this was of supreme importance to the Egyptian, afforded mighty magical protection to the dead.

The Cult of the Dead had not only grown in importance but also in popularity. The benefits of burial rites were being more and more extended to the masses. No doubt enterprising men had made a commercial proposition out of the funeral in Egypt. It is from this period that Herodotus gained his information about the history and customs of the country. Much of what he wrote must be regarded with suspicion, for very often he only obtained a garbled version of the true facts. The Egyptians of his time, more especially the educated priests who viewed foreigners with suspicion, were not above indulging in a little gentle leg-pulling at the expense of the Greeks. Their modern successor, the Dragoman, is not above inventing history to gull the voracious but ignorant tourist. But making allowance for these factors, Herodotus does contribute much interesting and valuable information about the customs current in the Egypt of his day. It is interesting to note that in his information about the methods of mummification he shows that at that time even the poor were enjoying the privileges of embalming at a price within their means. Not only were the rites of burial reserved for the people of Egypt, but even foreigners were partaking of the benefits of the funerary rites. Graves of Syrians buried at Memphis have been found (5th Cent. B.C.) with gravestones of apparently foreign workmanship, bearing scenes which do not

follow Egyptian tradition, but with inscriptions praying for the blessing of Osiris and committing the mummified body to the care of Anubis, the ancient God of the Dead.

#### Ptolomaic Period.

With the coming of Greek rule new changes took place in the life and beliefs of the Egyptians. Some of the old ideas disappeared in company with some of the old Gods. The Greek Deities usurped their places. But the Cult of the Dead continued, though modified by the tenets of Hellenism. The tombs were no longer so complicated in construction, often being little more than pits dug in the ground, but the mummies were as richly adorned as ever they had been. The mask which fitted over the head was gilded instead of being painted as in former times. Towards the end of the Ptolomaic Period the mask was replaced by a portrait of the deceased boldly conceived in natural colouring. It is possible to see to-day in these portraits a very good likeness of the deceased.

Whilst magic held full sway in Egypt, it seems to have lost its original force in the burial rites. Probably it was already beginning to descend to the lower position of black magic, which so often goes hand-in-hand with the basest superstition. Now a nobler ethical note began to creep into the funerary beliefs. The new conception of happiness did not depend so much on the recitation of religious texts and the provision of magic spells, as on the deeds of men in this world. To do good was the only justification in the eyes of the Gods, and not cajoling by the mystic observance of ancient rites. (Cf. Griffith. Stories of the High Priests p.20.)

#### The Roman Period.

As in the Greek Period so in the Roman Period the old Cults continued, but continually changing and being modified. Even the functions of the Gods changed, so that Osiris no longer protected the dead, but it was the squat figure of Bes who had usurped his ancient place. Yet at no time had the mummies been so elaborately wrapped, nor had the outer cases been so richly decorated.

During this period a curious custom arose. The mummies of relatives were kept at home for some time, as though the mourners were loathe to part with them. For this purpose they were placed in coffins provided with a door that opened like that of a cupboard, or they were laid on magnificent biers with open sides. Diodorus refers to this custom in his account of

Egypt. (1.91.) "The great number of Egyptians who keep the bodies of their ancestors in magnificent chambers, enjoy the sight of those who have been dead for several generations, and they feel great satisfaction in seeing the features and forms of these bodies, and look upon them, to a certain extent, as contemporaries. In his Life of St. Anthony, Athanasius quotes St. Anthony as commanding his disciples to bury his body in the desert, and not to embalm him lest he be gazed upon as a holy relic.

μη ἀφέετε τινὰς τὸ σῶμα μου λαβεῖν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, μήπως ἐν τοῖς οἴκοις ἀποθῶνται. τούτο γὰρ χάριν εἰσηλθὼν εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ ἦλθον ὧδε. οἴδατε δὲ καὶ πῶς αἰεὶ ἐνετρέποντο τοὺς τοῦτο ποιοῦντας, καὶ παρηγγέλλον παύσασθαι τῆς τοιαύτης συνήθειας.

Such burials were only for the rich, but provision was made by the Government Authorities that the poor should have proper burial. This was not a simple matter, for each one must be buried in the cemetery of his home town. There was a brisk trade done in the conveying of mummies by boat to the regulation burying grounds and cargoes of mummies must have been a common sight on the Nile in Roman times. The mummies would be landed and laid in the sand, where hundreds of other mummies were already carefully arranged, each equipped with a small wooden label, giving the name and some pious sentence. Here would occur Egyptian Religious sentences such as "Lives they soul", or Greek formulae "Grieve not, no one is immortal." "To everlasting remembrance". But the occurrence of such sentences as "He is gone to rest", and "He is gone forth into brightness", with the addition of the Christian monogram show that here too were laid the mummified remains of the Early Christians of Egypt.

Mummification did not die out with the coming of Christianity. It survived for nearly five centuries. Not all of the population of Egypt became Christian during those first five centuries. The old Religion still existed, though debased by the introduction of Greek and Roman deities, and buried under a mass of ignorant superstitions and magic of the lowest type. For many years the Christians continued to have their bodies mummified and we are probably not wrong in supposing that many of the old funerary customs survived and were used in a mutilated form at their funerals. St. Anthony

(6)

had preached against the custom of mummification, other Christian preachers condemned it too, but no doubt it was the Christian Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead which finally put an end to the practice. By the end of the 5th Cent. the practice had almost died out. The old Religion and its belief were forgotten, and all that remembered of the splendour of the Ancient Gods remained in the hands of ignorant quacks and unscrupulous imposters on human credulity.

Appendix Notes on Amos 6.9,10.

This is an important passage for it is one of the very few passages in the Old Testament which affords us even a fragmentary idea of the performance of a definite funeral rite. The Text as it stands is difficult, but with a little emendation the sense becomes clear.

עשרה אנשים

Ten men in a house. These are not the victims who are to die, but the usual witnesses at the deathbed of one. It is usual today amongst the Jews for ten witnesses to be present for prayer at a death. We should read as referring to the dead man.

זָזִיָּה אֶחָד וְיִמְרוּ

Emend  $\text{זָזִיָּה אֶחָד וְיִמְרוּ}$   
the Waw at the end of  $\text{וְיִמְרוּ}$  is a reduplication of the Waw at the beginning of the next verse or possibly is misplaced ( $\text{וְיִמְרוּ} = \text{וְיִמְרוּ}$ )

דודו

Here represents the next of kin.

וּמְסַרְפוֹ

Emend  $\text{וּמְסַרְפוֹ}$  "his Purifier" The third pers. suffix can refer to the dead man or to the house, for at death the house was rendered unclean and had to be purified. But the first sense is better.

ואמר אשר ברכו

The speaker is the Kinsman and the one who is addressed the Purifier who is engaged in removing the defiled things from the corners of the house.

העוד עִמָּךְ

Is there still anything which is defiled in the house with thee?

אֶמַר אֵינִי

The Purifier denies that there is.

וְאָמַר הֵם

The Kinsman then bids all to be silent, possible to cover the lips. ( $\text{אֵינִי} = \text{אֵינִי}$ )

כִּי לֹא לְהַזְכִּיר

The reason is that it is not the time to accuse in the name of the Lord. For the meaning accuse for  $\text{זָכַר}$  Cf 1 Kgs 17.8 and Num 5.15.

It would be interesting to see in this short reconstruction of the passage a summary of the events following upon a death. The Ten witnesses were present, just as in Mohammedan the relatives gather at the Deathbed to assist the dying man with their prayers. This explains why it is that men are mentioned, for they alone could, both in the belief of Jew and Moslem, pray.

The nearest Kinsman would naturally be present and would assist. The person of the Purifier is interesting, for he would seem to be a man set aside to make purification for the dead, and possibly even impersonate the deceased. It would seem that here we have trace of a Mortuary Priest. A kind of liturgy seems to have been recited between the Kinsman and the Purifier, and when the necessary question and answers have been asked, then all are bidden keep silence the reference to accusation might well have corresponded with the Moslem practice at the Mosque of asking the bystanders if any wished to make any accusation against the deceased before the burial took place..

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