Investigating the Truth of Live Burial of Girls in Arabic Jahiliyyah
Prose and Poetry

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Extended Abstract
In this article, we will consider the live burial of girls and the historical reality of this act. According to documents and evidence such as poetry and prose of pre-Islamic period (Jahiliyyah), and holy verses and sayings, it seems that the live burial of girls was a truth of that time and even of our present age. However, the missing bit of information is whether it was limited to Arabs in one time and moment in a specific tribe or it was (is still) practiced by members of other nations and races. The evidence shows that not all Arabian tribes performed this horrid act. Many Arabs held great respect for girls and women given the existence of business women and poets in Jahiliyyah period and the emergence of many outstanding figures in that period such as Al-Khansâ in literature and Khadijah in business. Quran is not just for one period, age, and place, but it addresses all other nations with different races and religions. The live burial of girls is not essentially limited to Arabs or a specific period of time in Quran. Therefore, it has a background in other races and nations. The exaggeration of ascribing this act to only Arabs in Quran has political and promotional aspects, which could be ignored. This horrifying tradition was originated before the birth of Christ and continued to exist in different non-Arab nations and communities Ali, 1970). The ironic meaning and the dictionary meaning of live burial of girls (i.e., the lack of respect for girls and women in different parts of life and not giving them credit for determining their fate and that of other members of society) suggest that the history of Arab and non-Arab nations before and after Islam (even in the present age) includes many cases of disrespect and humiliation of women. Some tribes used to kill widows and bury them close to their diseased husband. Some other buried them
alive in their husbands' graves (Maknoon & Sanapoor, n.d.). In the civilized nations prior to Islam, women had the right of ownership but no right of disposal (Tabatabaei, n.d.). Thus, Quran uses the phrase "don't kill" to prevent all men in the past and present ages, including Arabs and non-Arabs, from performing such a despicable act.

Given the poetry and prose of pre-Islamic period (Jahiliyyah), and holy verses and sayings on live burial of girls, it could be understood that a few poems have remained that describe or praise this immoral act, which are as follows:

The act was not common in all Arab tribes but only in few. Because if it had been popular, it would have been reflected in Arabic poetry. Furthermore if this had been the case, all Arabs would have been proud of it and they would have blamed those who did not kill their daughters.(Abd, 1989).

In those tribes where live burial was practiced, there were people who opposed it by different means. It should also be noted that if all members of a tribe had killed their daughters, after some time the number of girls would have dropped and the tribe would have simply died out. (Abdul Satar, 2010)

Motives for killing of siblings were different in various tribes. The most significant of those reflected in both poetry and prose were hatred, prejudices, perceiving of girls as having bad omen, fear of poverty etc. However, it may be stated that the most important reason for killing of siblings (whether girl or boy) was poverty that made the parents do such an evil act.(Fazlollah, 1984)

Quran has severely criticized this action, and Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) has expressed his hatred for this act by his own behaviors and sayings. The position taken by Quran was general, and it addressed all human beings in all times.(Tabatabai, n.d.).

Since there are few poems on this issue, it seems that the live burial of siblings was not acceptable for any tribe. It was an individual act done on the basis of different forces and obligations. It was also criticized and admonished by other people. (Al-Ghazali. n.d)

Because of the fact that this act was more often practiced by other nations and communities rather than Arabs, it may be stated that Arabs have been heavily disparaged regarding this issue (live burial of girls) mainly because of the disputes between them and other races. (Mamouri, 2010)

**Keywords:** Poetry and prose, The pre-Islamic era, The beginning of Islam, Girls’ killing.

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