

The Protection of Holy Ancient Relics in the light of Islām

Muhammad Noman

Ph.D Scholar, Department of Islamic & Religious Studies,
The University of Haripur

Muhammad Zahid

Ph.D Scholar, Department of Islamic & Religious Studies,
Hazara University, Mansehra

Abstract

There always remain some historical objects related to religion, culture, nation, and personalities, etc. which are called Relics. For the protection of these relics, there are two different viewpoints. Some scholars deny their gracefulness and consider these as the source of polytheism, on the other hand, some scholars claim their gracefulness and recognize that this conception of considering these relics as the source of polytheism is improper. This research tries to explore this issue and to find out the true Islāmīc point of view. The study has been carried in the light of the verses of the Qurān, Hadīth of Holy Prophet Muḥammad Ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallam the practices of the companion of Holy Prophet Muḥammad Ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallam and the opinions of the grand scholars of the earlier centuries of Islām. The findings suggest that protecting the Holy Relics itself is permissible. Furthermore, it also suggests that seeking grace from those relics is also permissible if restrained to limits where the basic injunctions of Islām do not get distorted.

Keywords: Holy Relics, gracefulness, polytheism, Islām.

Foreword

Allah (SWT) has given many sources of getting knowledge to human but it is human nature to accept the requirements of observation pronto. The observation is the main source of getting knowledge to human therefore Allah (SWT) when started the chain of Prophets He granted the specific miracles to every prophet because of his servants' observation and after it no way was remained to refuse Prophet Teachings.

Allah (SWT) invites the human to observe his universe numerous in the Holy Quran to find out the straight path of belief because it is accepted that observation takes place in the bottom of hearts as it is narrated in the Holy Quran:

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُنحِي السَّمُومَ ۖ قَالَ أَوْ لِمَ تُؤْمِنُ ۖ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي ۖ قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا ۚ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

(Remember) when Ibrahim said: "My Lord! Show me how you give life



to the dead." He said: "Is it that you do not believe?" He said: "Of course, I do, but it is just to make my heart at peace." He said: "Then take four birds and tame them to your call, then put on every mountain a part from them, and then give them a call, and they shall come to you rushing, and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise."

Qazi Byzawi says in the commentary of this Verse:

”واذ قال ابراهيم رب ارنى كيف تحي الموتى انما سأل ذلك ليصير علمه عيانا وقيل لما قال نمروذ انا احبي واميت قال له :إن إحياء الله تعالى برد الروح إلي بدنهما فقال نمروذ: هل عاينته فلم يقدر أن يقول نعم وانتقل إلي تقرير آخر ثم سأل ربه أن يريه ليطمئن قلبه علي الجواب إن سئل عنه مرة أخرى قال أولم تؤمن بأني قادر علي الإحياء بإعادة التركيب والحياة قال له ذلك وقد علم أنه أغرق الناس في الإيمان ليجيب بما أجب به فيعلم السامعون غرضه قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّ لِّلْطَّامِنِينَ قُلُوبًا

أي بلي آمننت ولكن سألت ذلك لأزيد بصيرة وسكون قلب بمضامة العيان إلي الوحي أو الاستدلال.“
(Remember) when Ibrahim said: "My Lord! Show me how you give life to the dead? He asked just because of converting his knowledge into observation and it is called that when Namrood said:" I give life to dead and give death to live." Ibrahim said: "indeed my Lord's giving life to dead is by returning soul back into body." Namrood said: "Have you ever observed it?" Ibrahim could not reply positively and adopted another way to debate then He asked His Lord to show him to make his heart peace if He would be asked next time, He said: "Do you not believe in my powering over giving life by returning the soul back and recreating? The Lord said while He knows very well that Ibrahim has already believed but more than every one of his creatures but the reason is to notify the purpose of His question. He said: "Of course, I do, but it is to make my heart peace." He meant, of course I have believed before but I asked this to increase my belief by making observation compatible to revelation or inference.

It enlightens the purpose of Ibrahim (As) is just observation of which he had believed in. He wanted to increase the satisfaction of heart and it was neither against the belief he had nor against the common sense, therefore Allah (SWT) accepted it instead of rejecting and declaring any kind of anger so showed him what he wanted.

Allah(SWT) implemented this rule on his universe and prepared the way of motivation and intimidation for preserving the belief which is the central condition of trust and fear and He gave the teachings consist of motivating and intimidating to the Messengers and spread motivating and intimidating signs all over the world.

Definition of Ancient Relics

So there are many heritages in our world which represent these two specific ways to lead the servants toward Deism. These signs are called Ancient Relics. But the term "آثار قديمه" mixture of two words and these both words are derived from Arabic Language. Arabic lexicographers define them as follow:

- The remains of something.¹
- The remains of something.²
- Something to the rest.³
- Ancient is antonym of new.⁴

In the light of these definitions, meaning of “Ancient Relics” is derived that the rest of anything but it is necessary to explain that Ancient Relics does not represent just destructed cities and dilapidated buildings, it also represents individual heritage which relates to a person.

This article is to reveal Islamic Teachings about Holy Ancient Relics.

Significance of this topic

There is a concept in our age which requires destructing Holy Ancient Relics and getting acceptance in different corners of the world moreover it counts Holy (Religious) Ancient Relics as collided things with Islam. Therefore pure Muslims are being dishearten by this narration and getting spiritually frustrated because of destructing them due to have deep relation by the bottom of heart as well as the world is losing countless historical heritage by and by just because of this nascent concept. So it has got obligatory to reveal Islamic teachings about Holy Ancient Relics and inspect this concept in the light of Islamic Theory.

The study of the Quran shows that the Shari'ah has kept preserved the Holy ancient relics, and there is also a mention in Quran, as follows:

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥﴾

“Their prophet said to them: “The sign of his kingship is that the ark shall come to you, carried by the angels, having therein tranquility from your Lord, and the remains of what the House of Musa and the House of Harun (Aaron) had left. Surely, in it there is sign for you, if you are believers.”

When the children of Israel refused to obey “Taloot” as the king and asked for a sign when the king was appointed, Allah said to “Samuel” that it would be a sign of Allah that the people of the tribe “Ushdody” had taken the ark, the God's angels will bring the ark to you in the time of “Samuel”. It would be sign that “Samuel” kingship is by God.

It was an ark that all the interpreters agree on its being a Holy Ark. The question is blowing that What did the children of Israel take from him? And what was its situation between them?

Ibn-e-Jareer says:

“وهو التابوت الذي كانت بنو إسرائيل إذا لقوا عدوا لهم قدموه أمامهم، وزحفوا معه، فلا يقوم لهم معه عدو، ولا

يظهر عليهم أحد ناوأهم، حتى ضيعوا أمر الله“

“It was an ark that when the Children of Israel fought against any of their enemies, they kept it ahead and used to carry it together, no enemy could stand in front of them nor could anyone dominate it until they lost

the command of Allah."

Ibn-e-Jowzy says:

”قال ابن عباس... وكان يكون مع الأنبياء إذا حضروا قتالاً قدموه بين أيديهم يستنصرون به وفيه السكينة.“⁷

“Ibn-e-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: It was with Holy prophets, when they fought, they used to keep it ahead, and through it they sought help from Allah and it has tranquility.”

Even so, the two things are clear from the point of view, one is that it was sent by Allah (SWT) and secondly the children of Israel used to receive blessings from him and count it as a curious and holy ancient Relic.

The question is that what was in the ark? For the answer, the following commentators are given in the description of the Quran.

Qurtaby says:

”والصحيح أن التابوت كانت فيه أشياء فاضلة من بقايا الأنبياء وآثارهم فكانت النفوس تسكن إلى ذلك وتأنس

به وتقوى.“⁸

“The right thing is that the ark contained more items and signs of Holy prophets, people used to get peace from them, love them and used to take spiritual power.”

The detailed mention of the narrative proves that the rest of the Prophets were protected in every period by the children of Israel and Allah (SWT) mentioned it in the Qur'an without regard to any rejection and has counted it in its blessings, so it is also permissible in our Shariah to preserve and protect the rest of Holy Prophets and get the blessings from them.

Many other examples can be given to the Qur'an as the signs of Ibrahim's feet on the stone and the shirt of Yousaf (AS), but an example is sufficient.

Examples of Hadith on the Protect of Holy Ancient Relics

Before mentioning this example, it is important to understand that the life of the Prophet is ideal before presenting the prophecy as well, if the prophet's prophecy should be argued with a specific incident of life and supported him after the Prophecy, it would be the source of argument. The background of the example coming after it is mentioned so that the interpretation is clearly understood.

The rebuilding “Ka'bah” incident took place when the Prophet (PBUH) was thirty-five years old. Ibn-e-Hisham says:⁹

“Quraish” started construction work together. The Prophet (PBUH) also joined the building with the chiefs of the Quraish, taking the dusty stone Different tribes divided different parts for construction. When the building reached "Hajar Asad", there was a strong fight in the tribes. Each tribe wanted him to raise the "Hajr-e-Aswad" and install it in the wall. So that it becomes a pride for his tribe. The situation occurred after four days in the conflicts that the sword came out and the tribes of the “Bano Abd-al-dar” and “Bano-al-Ady” decided to sacrifice lives to it,

and according to their tradition, the blood was filled into a bowl, fingers were drowned and licked. On the fifth day, all the tribes gathered in the "Bait-Allah", and a large old man suggested that the first person who would enter the "Haram-e-Ka'bah" in the morning, should decide among us. Everyone has to accept it. So everyone has accepted this. The person who has entered the "Ka'bah" in the morning, was the Messenger of Allah (PBUH). When they see Him, all of them call that the He is "Amin" so we all agree on His decision.

The Prophet (PBUH) resolved this dispute in such a manner that He ordered that one person should be elected from each tribe which wants to keep the "Hajr-e-Aswad" at its place. So every tribe chose their own leader. Then the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) shed his shepherd, keeping the "Hajr-e-Aswad" on it, and ordered the rulers that all the people stir up this shepherd and raise the holy stone. So all the chiefs took the shepherd and when the "Hajr-e-Aswad" reached his place, the Prophet (PBUH) lifted this holy stone with His fascinating hands and placed it in its place. Such a bleeding battle was torn.

In this incident, where an unusual decision of the Prophet (PBUH) mentioned, one thing is worth considering in this story and it is the importance of "Hajr-e-Aswad". The "Hajr-e-Aswad" is a holy stone, which is considered holy during every period. It was a sacred stone, it is from the archaeological, among the signs of Allah, people used to protect it before Islam. And it is proven to protect it from the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

It is clear that the Prophet (PBUH) did not forbid the protection of the Holy ancient relics. If a cursory look took place, it would be clear that Safa and Ma'raah are also counted in the holy places of Muslims. People before Islam also protected them, which shows that in every era people have come to protect sacred things. Otherwise, their position would not have been more than ordinary hills.

Sahaba's Sunnah is followed in Islam

The group of companions of the Prophet (PBUH) is a group in which the faith is standard for other Muslims. The Prophet (PBUH) ordered his obedience, as well as to obey his "Khulafa-e-Rashideen" as it is narrated in Hadith:

«عن العرابض بن سارية، قال: وعظنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يوما بعد صلاة الغداة موعظة بليغة ذرفت منها العيون ووجلّت منها القلوب، فقال رجل: إن هذه موعظة مودع فماذا تعهد إلينا يا رسول الله؟ قال: «أوصيكم بتقوى الله والسمع والطاعة، وإن عبد حبشي، فإنه من يعش منكم يرى اختلافا كثيرا، وإياكم ومحدثات الأمور فإنها ضلالة فمن أدرك ذلك

منكم فعليه بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين، عضوا عليها بالنواجذ» : «هذا حديث حسن صحيح»¹⁰

"Irbaz bin Sariyyah narrates that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) one day after the morning prayer, exhorted us to the extent that the eyes wept and the hearts shuddered with fear. A man said: Indeed this is a farewell exhortation. (So what) do you order us O Messenger of Allah? The

Prophet (PBUH) said: I order you to have Taqwa of Allah, and to listen and obey, even in the case of an Ethiopian slave. Indeed, whomever among you lives, he will see much difference. Beware of the newly invented matters, for indeed they are astray. Whoever among you sees that, then he must stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly guided Khulafa', cling to it with the molars."

In this Hadith, Prophet (PBUH) ordered to hold the sunnah of his "Khulafa-e-Rashideen" firmly. In another Hadith, He ordered to follow his common companions.

”عن ابن عباس , قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم : «إنما أصحابي كالنجوم , فأبهم اقتديتم اهتديتم»¹¹

“Ibn-e-Abbas narrates that the prophets (PBUH) said: My companions are like stars, whoever you follow, will find the guidance of God.”

It is clear from these Hadiths that the act of the companions of Prophet (PBUH) is also a sign of religion.

Examples from the lives of Muhammad’s (PBUH) Companions (Sahaba)

The following narrations will be mentioned here, which indicate that Sahaba get the blessings and peace from something related to the Prophet (PBUH), the essential result of these hadiths is that these Holy ancient relics were also protected.

Ring of Prophet (PBUH)

The Prophet (PBUH) had a ring on which seal prophesied. When a letter was sent to any king, it was stamped with this ring. This ring has been with three caliphs of Muslims after the Prophet (PBUH). Imam Bukhari says:

عن ابن عمر، رضي الله عنهما قال: " اتخذ رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خاتماً من ورق، وكان في يده، ثم كان

بعد في يد أبي بكر، ثم كان بعد في يد عمر، ثم كان بعد في يد عثمان، حتى وقع بعد في بئر أريس، نقشه: محمد رسول الله¹²"

Abdullah bin Umar (RA) narrates that the ring of silver was made for Prophet(PBUH). He wore on his finger. It remained with Abu Bakar (RA) after the Prophet (PBUH). After that it remained with Umar (RA). After that it remained with Uthman (RA), and had fallen in the well of "Arees" in his period. It was stamped with "محمد رسول الله".

A Thobe (ankle length garment) of Prophet (PBUH)

Asma (RA) had possessed a thobe of Holy Prophet (PBUH), which was previously in the custody of Aysha (RA). When she passed away, it came under the custody of Asma (RA). They have been asking Allah by it for their patients’ curing. Imam Muslim narrates:

فقال: هذه جبة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فأخرجت إلي جبة طيالة كسروانية لها لبنة ديباج، وفرجها مكفوفين بالديباج، فقالت: هذه كانت عند عائشة حتى قبضت، فلما قبضت قبضتها، وكان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يلبسها،

فنحن نغسلها للمرضى يستشفى بها¹³

“Asma (RA) said: this is the Thobe of Prophet (PBUH) and she brought

out to me that thobe made of Persian cloth with a hem of brocade, and its sleeves bordered with brocade. She said: this was in the possession of Aisha (RA) until her demise. When she died, I got it. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) used to wear it. And now we wash it for our patients to seek health thereby."

It is clear from these two hadiths that the companions used to protect and preserve the things which relate to the Prophet (PBUH). They used to receive blessings. It is very clear argument for not having Holy ancient relics as collided thing with Islam.

The Prophets' relics may be protected and grace be obtained from them but obtaining grace from the relics of other righteous men cannot be inferred from this. This can also be apprehended as this grace was the distinction of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), so correlation of other righteous men with it is unacceptable, also the obtaining grace from the relic of any other pious man. The justification to this mystery is that Islam defines some specific rules for any matter and the details are derived from these rules. So, all those narrations serve as a principle in this matter, which indicates the protection of the relics of righteous men. So, in the explanation of the Muslim sharif's hadith which describe the peoples' utilization of the residual water of ablution of the Prophet (PBUH), Imam Nawavi says;

"And in another hadith, it is clearly narrated that (Hadhrat Bilal (RA) says) I saw the peoples contending for taking the residual water of ablution of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), this is the proof for obtaining grace from the relics, residual water of ablution, wear and food leftovers of other righteous men"

Imam Nawavi has inferred permissibility from the utilization of the residual water of ablution of the Prophet (PBUH) for obtaining grace from the relics, residual water of ablution, wear and food leftovers of other righteous men, which is a clear evidence that all the hadiths mentioned previously, that describe the companions' obtaining grace from leftovers of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), are not specified with the Prophet personally, but also include the leftovers of other righteous men.

Some quotations of honorable Imams are narrated in following, who has argued absolute permissibility for obtaining grace from the leftovers of other righteous men, while explaining the hadiths which describe obtaining grace from the leftovers of the Prophet (PBUH). It is not intended here to mention those hadiths under which the scholars have inferred generally rather to explain that they have proved generality of the inference from these hadiths, therefore, only those quotations will be mentioned which are quite for the inferred meaning.

Hafiz Ibne Abdel Barr says under a similar hadith:

الحديث دليل على التبرك بمواضع الأنبياء والصالحين ومقاماتهم ومسكنهم¹⁴

"This hadith is an argument for obtaining grace from the graves, tombs and holy places of the Prophets and other righteous men."

In another similar hadith, Hafiz Ibne Abdel Barr says:

وفيه التبرك بإيمان الصالحين قياساً على ما صنعت عائشة بيد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم¹⁵

"In this hadith (there is proof for) obtaining grace from the (right) hand of the righteous men, justifying from what Hadhrat Aisha (RA) did with the hand of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)."

Imam Nawawi says under a similar hadith:

ففيه التبرك بآثار الصالحين وفيه زيارة العلماء والفضلاء والكبراء أتباعهم وتبريكهم إياهم¹⁶

"It proves the obtaining grace from the relics of righteous men, and proof for the Ulema, scholars and elders to direct their followers to visit them and get blessed."

Hafiz Ibne Hajar says under a similar hadith:

وقد تقدم حديث عتبان وسؤاله النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن يصلي في بيته ليتخذ مصلًى وإجابة النبي صلى

الله عليه وسلم إلى ذلك فهو حجة في التبرك بآثار الصالحين¹⁷

"And Hadith of Utban has passed and his request to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to pray at his house so that he could make it mosque and the Prophet's acceptance is a proof for obtaining grace from the relics of the righteous men."

Allama Aini says under a similar hadith:

وهو أصل في التبرك بآثار الصالحين¹⁸

"This hadith is the base for obtaining grace from the relics of the righteous men."

Under another hadith says:

الثاني: فيه الدلالة على جواز التبرك بآثار الصالحين¹⁹

"the second thing is that this hadith proves the permissibility for obtaining grace from the relics of righteous men."

Allama Sindhi says under a similar hadith:

وفيه دلالة على أن التبرك بآثار أهل الصلاح مشروع²⁰

"And in this hadith, there is evidence that obtaining grace from the relics of righteous men is permissible."

At another point says:

وفيه من التبرك بآثار الصالحين ما لا يخفى²¹

"And in this hadith, there is evidence for obtaining grace from the relics of righteous men, which is not hidden from anyone."

Imam Zarqani says under a similar hadith:

وهو أصل في التبرك بآثار الصالحين²²

"This hadith is the base for obtaining grace from the relics of the righteous men."

These are some quotations of honorable Imams of Hadith which are enough to prove that obtaining grace from the leftovers of the Prophet (PBUH) by the companions is not specified with them. Similarly, it also indicates that as the obtaining grace is not specified with the Prophet (PBUH), resultantly the protection of the relic would also not be specified, rather these

hadiths, in the matter of protection of the relics, would include the permissibility of protection of other righteous men's relics as well. Therefore, safeguarding the other holy places is necessary, just as the leftovers of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) are required to be.

Conclusions:

Now here, only the basic principles are mentioned in the light of these regulations, which are as follows:

- Obtaining grace from the holy ancient relics is permissible.
- In obtaining the grace, to believe the relics are beneficial in their selves, is against the Islam.
- It is essential in belief about the relics that they are blessed by Allah, otherwise they can neither benefit nor harm themselves.
- The holy relics are not worshipped, so just obtaining grace cannot be declared as polytheism.
- Muslims are familiar with the artifacts, so they will not be restrained from visiting them.
- If disbelief of polytheism arises in obtaining grace from the relics, it will be cleared keeping them safe, as much as possible.
- If there is no way to prevent the polytheism, in which their protection is possible, then there is the space for destroying them, but this is the last option not the first. The efforts will be made to eliminate the polytheism by keeping them safe.
- The safety of the holy ancient relics will be maintained.
- If these relics need reparation, they will be repaired well.
- Their safety and maintenance is not in conflict with Islam, so they will be protected.



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