

INTRODUCTION



Funerary Traditions and the Making of Islamic Society

Perhaps the story should begin with an oral tradition set in the city of Medina in the year 632, moments before the death of Muḥammad's daughter. Sensing the end of her life, after suffering in illness for several months, Fāṭima recognized the time had come to prepare for her own death and burial. So she asked Salmā, a woman in her company, to pour water for a bath. Having purified her body in a ritual ablution, Fāṭima dressed in new clothes and instructed Salmā to place her bed in the middle of the room. Fāṭima then lay down facing in the direction of the *qibla*, the focal point of Muslim prayers, and spoke her last words: "The hour of my death has come and I have already purified myself. May no one bare my shoulder." When Fāṭima's husband returned home, Salmā informed him of his wife's wishes, and he complied, burying his wife without subjecting her body to the standard ritual of corpse washing.¹

In this book I examine oral traditions, like this one, in order to understand how in the first period of their history Muslims strove, in different cities in different ways, to fashion a new society that would respond to the tragedy of an individual's death in an Islamic way. I analyze social interactions in the face of death, while describing how Muslims wailed for the dead, prepared corpses for burial, marched in funerary processions, and prayed for the deceased. I devote special attention to the "Islamization" of death and society, that is, to the historical process at work during the formative era of Islam, by which early Muslims endeavored to shape death rituals, as well as the social relationships at play, according to an Islamic pattern.²

Though they sought to imbue persons, objects, and actions with Islamic principles, they often disagreed about just what should count as an “Islamic” form. They waged debates about how rituals should be performed, and by which social actors.³ Their nominal goal in these debates was to enact funerary laws consistent with the practices of Muḥammad, who also died in Medina in the year 632, and of venerable Muslim ancestors such as Fāṭima. But to the generations that lived a century or two later, it was far from clear how precisely their exemplars had died and what had happened to their bodies between death and burial. Memory itself was contested, and for good reason. At stake was the establishment of a world religion and its influence on social practices.

The oral tradition about Fāṭima’s death emerged, for instance, from vibrant discussions with far-reaching implications. Its concern with representing an Islamic, rather than a Jewish or Christian, death is made clear by reference to Fāṭima’s desire to die facing in the Muslim direction of prayer. This reference alerts one to the fact that the event, whether or not it happened, had become a meaningful description. Early Islamic thinkers in fact disagreed about the desirability of turning the dying person to face the Ka’ba in Mecca. Sa’īd ibn al-Musayyab (d. ca. 712), a Medinese jurist, found the practice offensive for its implication that a Muslim could die in a not-so-Islamic way. Regardless of the orientation of the body at the moment of death, he remarked, “Is not the deceased a Muslim person?”⁴ In addition to advocating an Islamic way of dying, the story of Fāṭima’s death made two more points. First, it effectively argued that the woman’s corpse was ritually pure, even though it had not been washed after death. It would become a point of debate whether or not deceased Muslims were, by definition, impure and therefore in need of ablution. Second, the story included the controversial proposition that Fāṭima’s husband was absent during his wife’s preparations for burial. A century or so after Fāṭima’s death, Muslims began to debate vigorously what role husbands could or could not play in preparing their wives for burial. Those who supported the notion that husbands were entitled to strip naked and wash their dead wives argued that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Fāṭima’s husband, had, on the contrary, undertaken the ritual washing of his wife’s corpse.

My principal concern in writing this book has been to show how, in the generations after the deaths of Muḥammad and Fāṭima, Muslims tried

to resolve the problem of handling a corpse and to sanction—or transform—everyday urban manners and modes of social interaction. Harking back to the ideal age of the Prophet, they struggled imaginatively over the course of the late seventh, eighth, and early ninth centuries to forge a new and lasting social pattern in the cities of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and the eastern Mediterranean world. The *ahl al-'ilm*, a disparate group of pietists or ideologues, played a key role in this process. Traditionists and jurists, skilled as they were in memorizing or analyzing traditions about Muḥammad, formed most of this group. But it included all men and women recognized, for one or another reason, to possess knowledge of religious matters. Oral traditions, whether of novel or archaic origin, served these pietists to shape the perfect Islamic funeral.

This funeral, as well as the forms of socialization it brought into operation, came to differ significantly from the funerals and social norms of the Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians who inhabited the world of Islam. Through idealized memories of Muḥammad, Fāṭima, and other early converts to Islam, pietists sought to distinguish Islamic from non-Islamic rituals. At the same time, they made a concerted effort to change the way men and women interacted with each other in public and in private. They directed their most innovative laws to those dangerous zones where the male and female spheres of action overlapped.

To study death rites and related beliefs about the afterlife is, in some sense, to study religion at its core. As such, my humanistic, historical labor risks being misinterpreted in the current climate as a polemical or an apologetic work. It is neither. What I offer here are secular, historical interpretations of religious acts and thoughts. Sometimes I dwell on matters, such as the washing of the prophet Muḥammad's corpse, at which delicate readers may blush. Often I turn to controversial issues: for example, the forging of oral traditions and their effect on women's lives. I do so not to call into question Muslim belief in the soundness of any oral tradition, but to show how pietists worked to alter the behavior of women and men. Having grown up in a secular Jewish household in the Catholic city of Puebla, Mexico, I have been fascinated since childhood with the role that religion plays in the formation of social identity. In order to gain an understanding of this role, it seemed to me essential to study death rituals, for they require social action and relate to beliefs about the survival of aspects of the body and

soul beyond the moment of death. Death rites have, of course, an ancient origin. We humans have been disposing of the dead with care since Cain murdered his brother, according to the Qurʾān—or for over thirty thousand years, according to paleontologists. This practice, inhumation, precedes the foundation of cities and the origins of agriculture. It stands as one of the oldest activities by which human beings have, at a very basic level, differentiated themselves from other animals. At another level, by caring for the dead in divergent ways, religious communities have over the ages elaborated distinctive cultural and social identities. In light of my personal background, it is easy to explain the motivation driving my research: a desire to understand how and indeed why an emerging monotheistic community developed culturally distinct rituals of death. Muslims knew that the practice of burial in the earth, which they shared with Jews and Christians, originated before the rise of Islam. But the pressing question for them was how to transform this and other common rituals into unique Islamic forms.

Islam, according to one of its great twentieth-century interpreters, “tended to call forth a total social pattern in the name of religion itself.” Muslims interested in the implementation of the *Shariʿa*, the sacred law of Islam, promoted an exceedingly ambitious program of social reform to guide “the practical policies of a cosmopolitan world.”⁵ I see my work as delving into the early Islamic endeavor to reform multiple, yet far from all, aspects of social life at a time when the *Shariʿa* was still rather fluid, though gradually freezing. *Shariʿa*-minded pietists had a vested interest not only in upholding the ideal customs of the venerable ancestors (*sunna*), but also in influencing religious observances (*ʿibādāt*), the everyday practices of Muslims (*ʿamal*), their communal relations (*muʿāmalāt*), and their manners of urbane behavior (*adab*). All of these fields were of pressing concern to the ideologues who developed the sacred law of Islam as they set out to craft funerary practices. Yet Islam emerged in a sectarian milieu. In this environment, where Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians had already established distinctive confessional rituals, it became an essential task for Muslim ideologues to enact a funerary form that would signal the divergence of Islamic society from non-Muslim societies. Hence, their funerary laws were driven, in part, by an all-too-human drive to reach social and religious distinction.

Remarkably little scholarship exists on early Islamic death rites. This lack of work is surprising because death has drawn a number of the finest

historians of the past few decades, in particular medieval Europeanists practicing social history and *l'histoire des mentalités*, often in dialogue with archaeology and anthropology.⁶ Scholars specializing in the study of Islam have written mainly about funerary architecture, inheritance laws, elegiac poetry, the cult of the saints, and eschatological beliefs about Paradise or Hell. Only a handful of articles exist on funerals.⁷ As the first social history of death rituals in the early Islamic period, this book seeks to contribute to the history of death, the history of Muslim rituals, and, perhaps most important, to the emerging field of Islamic social history.⁸

Early Islamic traditions concerning the funerals and everyday practices of Muḥammad and his companions promise to provide the building blocks for a new social history. Traditionists, who collected and promoted these traditions, were socially concerned with death rituals, for three reasons. Death appeared to them as a key moment of transition in social life, making it necessary to enact a number of rituals designed ultimately to separate the deceased individual from the community of the living. In addition, funerals often attracted large crowds, and the potential in this context for unruly behavior and emotional outbursts called for the imposition of an Islamic social order. Finally, the rituals ranging from the washing of the corpse in a dark chamber to the interment in the cemetery at the edge of the city required different kinds of social actors to work in public grounds or domestic settings. Such diverse situations provoked fascinating discussions on a wide array of social issues. Traditionists and jurists addressed the right of a caliph to lead the congregation in a funerary prayer, the use of candles in the funerals of the rich, the disposal of non-Muslim corpses, and the precise nature of the relationship between husband and wife at the moment of death. On the basis of such discussions, this history addresses economic and political factors at work in the making of Islamic society, as well as religious and sexual divisions.

Tradition, Law, and Practice

To write this history, I researched various kinds of evidence, ranging from archaeological reports on pre-Islamic burials to theological tracts about the afterlife, and from early Arabic poems of lament to obituaries of famous

women and men. I analyzed objects of material culture, shrouds and tombstones in particular, that communicate a very different idea of Islam than do legal sources.⁹ I turned to Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian sources, so as to present the rise of Islam in a comparative context. *Vendīdād*, a book of the *Zend-Avesta* that concerns the matter of purity and pollution in relation to human corpses; *Semaḥot*, a minor Talmudic tractate devoted to mourning; and various Eastern Christian canons serve to establish non-Muslim funerary laws and practices. Yet this study relies especially on oral traditions and legal rulings about death rituals.

Collections of sacred law in the genres of *Ḥadīth*, or Oral Tradition, and *Fiqh*, or Jurisprudence, generally include a chapter or book entitled “The Book on Funerary Practice” (*Kitāb al-Janā'iz*). These chapters or books differ from each other in content, focus, and style, although they tend to cover similar topics. Thus, most of these books include a section on burial attire in which they relate a story about the shrouds of Muḥammad. The story itself varies from book to book, as no agreement existed about what garments Muḥammad had worn to the grave. What also tends to vary—sometimes slightly, sometimes significantly—are the conclusions drawn on the basis of an anecdote. In early Islamic sources, differences of opinion often reflected either individual proclivities or local agendas. In funerary traditions, we find evidence mostly for the positions of traditionists from two Arabian cities, Mecca and Medina, and two Mesopotamian cities, Kūfa and Baṣra. Other important cities of the early Islamic world, such as Ṣan‘ā’, Damascus, Ḥimṣ (Homs), and Fuṣṭāṭ, are not as well represented. In postclassical sources, differences of opinion tend to follow institutionalized divisions based on the teachings of a school of law or a sect. Islam became divided into three major branches—the Sunni, the Shī‘ite, and the Khārijite—with each branch undergoing further division. Thus, we have four major Sunni schools of law (Mālikites, Ḥanafites, Shāfi‘ites, and Ḥanbalites), three main Shī‘ite sects (Zaydis, Ismā‘īlis, and Twelvers), and three main Khārijite sects (though only the Ibāḍīs matter for our purposes).

The two genres of *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh* were closely interrelated, particularly in the earliest writings. Technically speaking, a work in the first genre should be simply a repository of oral traditions, whereas a work in the second genre should consist of disciplined judgments issued in relation to oral traditions,

Qur'ānic dicta, and local practices. It is not entirely clear, however, how to categorize the *Muwatta'* of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795). It contains traditions and legal rulings, but should not count as an interdisciplinary work, for it was dictated before the lines between the two genres were clearly drawn. The lines would remain blurry even in the ninth century. Collectors of traditions tended to select sayings with a prescriptive eye, often grouping them under subheadings that reflected their own legal interpretations. Jurists, for their part, frequently issued laws that derived directly from traditions, without bothering to explain the hermeneutics in play.

To interpret oral traditions for the purposes of historical reconstruction presents a special and exciting challenge. The sources are prescriptive in nature, making it difficult to measure the distance between religious ideal and mundane reality; they tend, furthermore, to defy the historicist goal of determining time and place of origin. Only in rare cases can historians agree on the dating of an oral tradition: apocalyptic traditions "predicting" events with a high degree of specificity obviously originated at some point after the actual events. Most often, however, it is impossible to localize traditions with precision in time and space.¹⁰

Most traditions about Muḥammad's works and sayings emerged at some point between the early seventh century, during the Prophet's lifetime, and the late ninth century. Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855), al-Bukhārī (d. 870), Muslim (d. 875), Ibn Māja (d. 887), Abū Dā'ūd (d. 889), and al-Tirmidhī (d. 892) transcribed thousands of oral traditions in standard, eventually canonized, collections. There exist also earlier works that contain oral traditions. Attributed to Zayd ibn 'Alī (d. 740), Ibn Ishāq (d. 767), al-Rabī' ibn Ḥabīb (d. ca. 790), Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795), Abū Ghānim Bishr (d. ca. 815), and 'Abd al-Razzāq (d. 827), these works are of great importance to historians of the making of Islam. The bulk of traditions in these collections circulated orally before they were written down. Focusing on early collections and researching in a technical way the formal processes by which oral traditions were transmitted from one or a few to several authorities, source critics have recently been favoring the late seventh and early eighth centuries as the most significant period in the movement toward memorialization. They have tried to establish that in many cases Muslims genuinely transmitted traditions dating from this period, if not from an earlier time, while acknowledging

that over the course of the eighth century Muslims sometimes invented or embellished oral traditions.¹¹ Still, we continue to face a gap of several generations between the lifetime of Muḥammad and the period when the formal transmission of oral traditions began. It is one thing to offer a plausible history of the transmission of an anecdote from the late seventh to the early ninth century, and quite another thing to establish its historicity. Frequently, we cannot know with certainty whether an oral tradition reflects a real event from early seventh-century Medina, for example, or a forgery originating in eighth-century Baṣra. Historians dealing with the *ḥadīth* must always be aware of the possibility of deliberate ascription and purposeful misrepresentation. In fairly obvious cases, we can ascertain bias in a tradition and discount it as spurious. In other cases, we have no grounds on which to consider a tradition as genuine simply because we find no reason to suspect it. Traditions were forged for reasons unknown.¹²

Due to the time gap between alleged event and written commemoration, and due to the fact that oral traditions often contradict one another, historians of early Islam have questioned the reliability of these sources and their worth in historical inquiry. Scholars have approached the Oral Tradition with markedly different attitudes, ranging from apologetic defensiveness to secular irreverence. They have developed distinct methodological approaches, sharpened by debates held during the past three decades.¹³ Instead of summarizing the contributions of individual scholars from various camps, I should like to highlight the tendencies that help to clarify my own perspective. An empirically minded skeptical revisionist has argued that “the components of the Islamic tradition are secondary constructions, the history of which we are not invited to pursue: they simply have to be discarded.” History should be based not on traditions of uncertain historicity but on harder facts: coins and monumental inscriptions that offer material and datable evidence, external documents that attest to the formation of Islam without the kind of bias inherent in internal Muslim accounts, and forged traditions that originated outside of Arabia. On this basis, skeptical revisionists have written histories that bear little resemblance to early Muslim narratives of the origins of Islam and diverge deliberately from mildly skeptical accounts.¹⁴ I have benefited from many of their methodological insights, yet I differ from them by my efforts to relate oral traditions of indeterminable historicity to a historical process that unfolded in both Arabia and Mesopotamia.

Another alternative to the approach of skeptical empiricists presents history not as a discipline based exclusively on verifiable events but as a “gamble on probabilities,” the object of which is to select judiciously “those reports that seemed most reliable” due to their apparent lack of political or theological bias. The historian interpreting sources from this perspective tends to dismiss legendary stories and to recast polemical material. By no means does he simply reproduce the traditional narrative of the rise of an Islamic polity. Instead, he reassesses disputes and grievances over succession to the caliphate. He rehabilitates certain leaders and illustrates with colorful anecdotes their appeal and their power. A work of history written from this angle often seems persuasive.¹⁵ But it fails to heed the lessons of skeptical empiricism by constructing a narrative of “events” that might never have occurred on the basis of traditions that may contain undetected biases.

Moving beyond this approach, with its relatively straightforward dichotomy between fact and fiction, literary-minded scholars have written about the idealization of the life of Muḥammad and of his wife ‘Ā’isha, and about the fictionalization of certain events, such as the plague pandemic of 541 to 749. There is in this scholarship, loosely affiliated with the critical aims of new historicism or cultural poetics, no elusive search for that kernel of historical truth supposedly hidden in legendary texts. The aim is to read texts, including oral traditions, as literary products of early Islamic culture. With this perspective comes a shift away from the questions, so beloved by source critics, about the origins and authenticity of the Muslim tradition.¹⁶ Adopting this perspective, historians can begin to focus not on the obscure origins of an oral tradition but on its destination. This can be determined because an oral tradition consists of two parts: a report on an ancient event normally accompanied by a saying of Muḥammad’s (*matn*) and a chain of authorities lending support to the oral transmission from generation to generation (*isnād*). On the basis of this account of oral transmission, researchers can establish with fair confidence the local context where a cluster of traditions about a specific topic circulated.¹⁷ In this way, one can sometimes discover that it was principally traditionists from one particular region who related a certain story about an act of Muḥammad’s. Such a discovery will shed light neither on the purported event nor on the first instance when the story was told. But it will show where, eventually, a

group of individuals commemorated the story, and thus give insight into the geography of social practice.

While building on this scholarship, this book takes a new path, by concentrating on the ideological agenda of the transmitters who advocated oral traditions and on the relevance of their remembrances within a particular environment. It rarely matters, from the perspective of a historian of culture and society, whether a collective memory of Muḥammad's age was sound or contrived. What is important, I would argue, is to reach an understanding of the social function of this memory within a society experiencing rapid change. Accordingly, the title of this work, *Muhammad's Grave*, refers not literally to the Prophet's sepulcher in Medina, but metaphorically to the very concrete ways by which the remembrance of Muḥammad affected the practices of Muslims after his death. Oral traditions about his death and burial played a special role in Muslim societies long after 632. These traditions, which represented rituals mimetically and with a high degree of realism, corresponded to the ritual actions that Muslims, who had an affinity for memories of Muḥammad, repeatedly performed. They served either to reinforce practices that resembled closely an ideal ritual form or to criticize those that did not.¹⁸ One way or the other, these traditions formed part of an ideological discourse on everyday life. As such, they reflect the *mentalité* of traditionists and reveal, though imperfectly, their social and cultural milieu.

This position does not imply any simple correspondence between the actual rituals of the traditionist milieu and the rituals depicted in the Oral Tradition. The rituals traditionists observed or participated in had an influence on the oral traditions they transmitted. They tended to select, and frequently to relate, traditions that had some bearing on their local practices, and surely in certain cases some of them succumbed to the temptation to remember—really, to imagine—a ritual from the age of Muḥammad that resonated with their present concerns. At the same time, we should be aware of the force of these traditions once they became accepted as authoritative. Insofar as pietists managed to persuade Muslims to follow their directives, these traditions had a certain social effect and cultural impact. That said, it is in most cases impossible to measure when, where, and precisely how an oral tradition affected ritual practice.¹⁹

The relationship between ideal and practice was thus complex. Yet several historians of gender and of Islamic law have portrayed it in rather narrow terms. Positing too extensive a separation between discourse and practice, they have called into question, by implication if not deliberately, the very possibility of writing on the basis of legal literature a social history in which gender figures as a key category of analysis. “Islamic law did not grow out of practice,” argued an expert on the origins of Islamic jurisprudence, “it came into being as the expression of a religious ideal in opposition to it.”²⁰ Perhaps under the influence of this formulation, a historian of gender warned against the use of the sacred law of Islam for the purposes of social history: “Islamic literature” does not offer “a descriptive account of how things happened.” “Essentially prescriptive in nature,” it reflects “the normative gender system that existed in the minds of an urban male educated elite, not the lived experiences of men as men and women as women.” Historians ought to handle these sources “as a form of discourse about gender that reveals vested interest rather than records actual practice.” “Most historians now agree,” she concluded, “that the study of these texts should not be confused with the study of historical society.”²¹

Early Islamic funerary law was, of course, prescriptive, and it includes many rules against practices that traditionists despised, such as wailing for the dead and inscribing tombstones. Laws of this kind did not come into being in a mental vacuum—they arose in opposition to underlying practices. Jurists alongside traditionists decried novel practices and celebrated ancestral ones, revealing in the process much about the usages of Muslims. Jurists also worked to accommodate local customs that emerged outside of Arabia and became issues of legal concern after Muḥammad’s death. Frequently, their aim was to describe in elaborate and chilling detail how to conduct a certain ritual, whether of Arabian origin or not: how to squeeze a corpse’s bowels, for example, or how to braid a corpse’s hair. By and large, laws of this kind were intended as practical instructions for actual use. Thus we should describe Islamic funerary law as partly “adaptive” and partly “reactive.” Adaptive and reactive laws that derived from close observation of ritual practices must count as socially descriptive despite their legally prescriptive quality.

The Oral Tradition, for the most part transcribed and censored by men, does contain sayings demeaning women.²² This fact has influenced historians

of gender in their evaluation of the genre. In this discourse, they have argued, women tend to appear as distant reflections of historical personages because male authors reconstructed women's lives and sayings in multiple, often contradictory representations.²³ There is, however, little justification for viewing the Oral Tradition as a male discourse far removed from the experiences of women. Men compiled the books of Oral Tradition, to be sure, yet many of the transmitters of oral traditions were actually women.²⁴ In addition, men indirectly reported women's words and their works, even if in a negative light. We must learn to read against the grain, so that the early Islamic world will not appear as if populated exclusively by legal-minded men. Impoverished widows, wailers for the dead, shroud weavers, gravediggers, and corpse washers all participated in the making of early Islamic society, though they obviously did less than traditionists and jurists to shape the discourse. The funerary traditions examined in this book will reveal, more than the imaginary world of lawmakers, quotidian realities.

The legal sources reflect the viewpoint of townsmen—not of nomads, holy warriors, or rural people who died outside of the Islamic *oecumene*. This concentration on urban life offers an advantage. It helps highlight how the process of Islamic socialization unfolded differently in different cities. A focus on cities enables this book to convey how the civilization of Islam changed as its center of gravity shifted away from Mecca and Medina, the Prophet's cities in Arabia, to the booming garrison cities established by the Arab conquerors in Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean world.

In the early Islamic world, as elsewhere, different facets of human existence succumbed to change at different times and according to different rhythms. Transformations in public and in private rituals did not coincide. Some things changed not at all or imperceptibly. Though traditionists were surprisingly realistic in their goals, they sometimes failed to achieve them, as will become clear once we turn to their attempt to convert the emotions of women to an Islamic standard. Still, this book shows that significant changes in the process of Islamicizing death occurred during the long eighth century, with the period between the last decade of the seventh century and the third decade of the eighth century forming a great watershed.

But the turning points in this process varied geographically. Arguing against jurists who supported the practices of their own cities, the jurist Mālik apparently advocated the current practice of his city, Medina, as if it

preserved the ideal tradition revealed by God's Messenger to the first community of Muslims.²⁵ We cannot be sure of this presumption of continuity. Medina, like Mecca, experienced social and economic upheaval as a result of the Arab conquests and the triumph of Islam. But it is easy to understand why pietists from the cities of Mesopotamia and the eastern Mediterranean world often visited the cities of Muḥammad in Arabia, where they hoped to discover the true Islamic form. Yet they might have paid closer attention to exciting developments back home. For it was in the new garrison cities, particularly in Baṣra and Kūfa, that profound ritual—and consequently social—transformation first occurred. These cities gathered a mixed population of Arabian immigrants, including retired conquerors with their mothers and wives, new converts, and Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians seeking opportunity in the new centers of power. Here one could sense the vigor and exuberance, even a certain nervous agitation, that accompanied the mingling of populations in an era of religious change. Islam was then but a young religion. Its civilizing mission still unfinished, the pietists from Baṣra and Kūfa were most anxious for its realization.²⁶

Each chapter of this history explores a different layer of human interaction, ranging from family relations around the deathbed to imaginary relationships between dreamers and the dead. The generous reader who will exercise his or her imagination may come to see a society in motion—first in domestic settings and on public grounds, ultimately in imaginary spaces. The pungent smell of camphor rising from the corpse of a Medinese wife; the vengeful, piercing sound of women lamenting a warrior's death; the sight of wild-haired angels prying a man's soul out of his toenails—all of these are glimpses of the distant world I have endeavored to resurrect. May it come to life now.