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A Deluge of Tears: The Conflux of Persian Shiʿi Literature, Ritual, and Identity in Martyrdom Narratives

A dissertation presented

by

Paul Gerard Anderson

to

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A Deluge of Tears: The Conflux of Persian Shiʿi Literature, Ritual, and Identity in Martyrdom Narratives

Abstract

This dissertation presents the first English in-depth study of one of the most important *maqtal*s (martyrdom narratives) ever written in Persian, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* (Meadow of the Martyrs) by Ḥoseyn b. ʿAlī Beyhaqī Kāshefī (d. 910 A.H./1504 C.E.). Through the broader lens of the literary apotheosis of a historical figure, Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī (d. 61 A.H./680 C.E.) into an epic hero, I argue three points. Firstly, that Kāshefī's text largely changed the landscape of Iranian Twelver Shiʿism by recasting Ḥusayn's story, resulting in the rise of Persian martyrdom literature. Secondly, that Kāshefī's decision to compose the book in Persian, rather than Arabic like most previous *maqtal*s, as well as his incorporation of references from Iranian legend, especially from the *Shāhnāmeh* (Book of Kings) of Abū 'l-Qāsem Ferdowsī (d. 410-415 A.H./1020-1025 C.E.) resulted in a *maqtal* which was particularly appealing to a Persian-speaking audience. Thirdly, that after Kāshefī's death, the Twelver Shiʿi Safavid dynasty encouraged the creation of a mourning cult with the *Rowẕat* as its centerpiece. With this, the Safavids laid out their vision for the conversion of Iran to a Persianized Twelver Shiʿism.

Central to my analysis of the *Rowẕat* and its relationship to the pre-Islamic Persian literary history is my original theoretical paradigm of *memory relics*, which through a three-layered framework of form, function, and meaning, provides a fresh basis for understanding phenomena typically labelled syncretic. *Memory relics* are intended as a methodological tool in analyzing the genealogy of religious, linguistic, and socio-cultural interactions without relying on Orientalist constructs of religion.

This dissertation opens by considering the Arabic origins of the *maqtal* genre and its literary influences. From there, I provide a detailed discussion of Kāshefī's life, methodology, and an analysis of the central themes of the *Rowẕat*. This examination is complimented by an overview of pre-Islamic and Classical Persian epic and ethical literature, allowing a nuanced evaluation of Kāshefī's thematic influences. This dissertation peaks with an exposition of the *Rowẕat*'s popularity during the Safavid period, its development into *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* (chanting the *Rowẕat*), culminating with its fusion into ritual and dramatic *taʿziyeh* (commemoration).

Note on Transliteration

A variety of textual sources in several different languages have been consulted in the preparation of this dissertation, including Arabic, Persian, Middle Persian, Avestan, Ottoman Turkish, Hebrew and Syriac. The transliteration of Arabic generally follows that of the Library of Congress, with the exception that *tā' marbūṭa* <ة > is simply transliterated <a>, except in construct state or transliteration of phrases with full morphological marking (*iʿrāb*), where it is transliterated <at>. The transliteration for Ottoman Turkish follows the Library of Congress, with the exception that etymological Arabic and Persian long vowels are marked with a circumflex, i.e. <كتاب > in the context of Ottoman Turkish is transliterated <kitâb>. Special consonants borrowed from Arabic are transliterated according to the standard for Persian, below, following their usual pronunciation in Turkish. The transliteration of Middle Persian and Avestan follows that of the Titus Thesaurus Indogermanischer Text und Sprachmaterialien. The transliteration of South Asian languages including Hindi-Urdu, Gujarati, and Sanskrit follows the Library of Congress. The transliteration of Hebrew and Syriac follows the Library of Congress, except that spirantized consonants are marked with an underline.

The transliteration of Persian deserves special mention. Owing to the fact that this dissertation deals with the oral performance of written texts to a large degree, as well as the fact that it discusses the formulation of Persian sociolinguistic identity within an educated milieu which privileged Arabic literature, in the context of Persian phrases, titles, etc., both native Persian words and Arabic borrowings have not been harmonized with the Arabic system. While the basic form follows the Library of Congress, I have decided to alter the transliteration scheme in terms of short vowels and diphthongs. *Zabar* <◌َ > is transliterated <a>, *zīr* <◌ِ > is transliterated <e>, and *pīsh* <◌ُ > is transliterated <o>. *Zīr* before consonantal <y> is

transliterated <i>. The two diphthongs <وَ> and <یَ> are transliterated <ow> and <ey>. Finally, the initial consonant cluster <khv->, which in spoken Iranian Modern Persian pronunciation is simplified to <kh>, is transliterated with a superscript <v> to accommodate both the spelling and pronunciation, i.e. <خوانی > as <kh^{v}ānī>. Final *-h*, when its value is not consonantal, such as in <خانه>, is given as *-eh*. Likewise, the Persian *ezāfat*, which marks genitive constructions and adjectival phrases, is transliterated *-e* following a consonant and *-ye* following vowels and quiescent *h*. Morphological particles and clitics are joined to their governors by a dash.

Certain proper names and technical terms whose usage is well-established in English, such as Mecca, Sufi, Baghdad, and so on, are not transliterated using the above conventions, but according to their regular English spellings, except in cases where they are mentioned within the transliteration of a phrase in the original language.

All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. In cases where alternate translations from other authors exist, I have attempted to note them whenever possible, if I am aware of their existence.

This dissertation is dedicated to three people:

Barā-ye do ārezū: Arezu and Aarzu, my best friends, whose camaraderie was integral not only to the completion of this work as bulwark against my own *meḥnat-o balā*, but also contributed to its academic formation in more ways than I can count. Without you both, this scholar would be, as Kasrā'ī says, *sīneh-sūz ast hanūz.*

Last but not least, this dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother (*allāh yarḥamhā*), Mary Panek, for whom all my scholarship is but a tribute.

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There are so many people whose support, friendship, guidance, and advice have been integral parts not only of my dissertation but my life within the Ph.D. program and outside it that it seems monumental to fully express my feelings, but I will do my best to do them justice. First, to the members of my dissertation committee: my co-advisors Ali Asani and Justine Landau, and my committee members, Kimberley Patton, and William Granara. As a group, they not only displayed overwhelming patience with my frequent bouts of anxious writer's block, but also even took out time from their busy schedules to meet with me altogether and guide me through the difficult early stages of research.

While I had known Ali Asani since my first day at Harvard, it was really during my difficulties at the beginning of the dissertation process that I actually got to know him. From his rescue of me from a tight jam by agreeing to supervise my dissertation with very little notice, to the dissertation defense, he has guided me gently but firmly with endless patience and encouragement. Often while I was engrossed in a vision of the big picture, he brought me back to earth by providing practical advice and setting boundaries, as well as pushing me to justify some of my more elaborate proposals.

I especially need to thank my second advisor, Justine Landau, whose unwavering guidance and friendship got me through some of the most difficult times in this process. Words cannot express how valuable her support has been, from meeting with me nearly every week to discuss my ideas, to responding to text messages at all hours to address some wild new source or citation I had discovered. Her excitement at and encouragement of my discoveries was a continual source of renewal for my research as well as my self-esteem. I must also thank her

husband, Amr Taher Ahmed, who generously checked my translations from Azerbaijani and Gorani in particular.

As soon as took Kimberley Patton's course on Ancient Greek Sanctuaries, I knew that I needed her to be on my committee. Not only did she provide exactly the methodological expertise I was set on making a centerpiece of my project, but also the right amount of humor and down-to-earth compassion necessary to withstand it. I am particularly thankful that she volunteered to spend hours on the phone with me, guiding me through facing and rectifying perhaps the most difficult circumstances in my dissertation process.

In many ways, William Granara's guidance was one of the first pieces in formulating the approach of my dissertation—a major reason that I was so thrilled and thankful that he agreed to sit on my committee. In his course on *rithā'*—by far the most difficult class in Arabic that I had ever taken—he introduced me to some of the most important sources which informed much of Chapter One of this dissertation. His irreverent humor and urging to identify the precise elements of the Arabic poetic material was invaluable in both my initial research as well as encouraging me to not to feel too gloomy while writing about such a heavy topic.

Outside of my committee, there are several members of the faculty to whom I must express my thanks. I am indebted to Sheida Dayani in several ways. She tirelessly pushed me to stretch my Persian skills and introduced me to modern Persian literature, which at the time, I had little previous exposure to. Beyond that, in several conversations regarding my topic, she provided me with invaluable information on Persian theater, *taʿziyeh*, and the fantastic material that resulted in my discussion of *par-e siyāvashān*.

I am also grateful to Richard Delacy and Hajnalka Kovacs, not only for teaching me Hindi-Urdu, but also for taking the chance to hire a TF from outside the South Asian Studies

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I must also thank Eva Misho, the Student Coordinator at NELC, for her patience and help with all my many administrative issues.

Among my friends, I must single out Arezu Riahi and Aarzu Maknojia. There is a reason why this dissertation is dedicated to them. To Arezu, for her constant friendship, her encouragement, praise, and care—and teaching me to make the best *tahdīg*, *fesenjān*, and *qormeh-sabzī* one could ask for! Her razor-sharp wit and philosophical mind continue to be an inspiration. To Aarzu, for her perpetual excitement over this topic, endless encouragement, and countless hours of conversation on life, the universe, and everything. We have spent many hours deep in discussion on *nowḥat* and *marṣiya*, not to mention being my best knitting buddy!

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transcribed it from *shekasteh* into legible type Persian for me, after my days of struggling to make out a few words. Farhad Dokhani, who assisted me in checking some of my written Persian correspondence and provided me with invaluable Iranian digital sources. Rob Ames, who I first met as my TF for first-year Persian: in addition to many amazing times spent in conversation, he provided me with further insight on Kāshefī to a massive degree, and indeed, introduced me to the *Fotovvatnāmeh* which was an integral source for this dissertation. Joe Vignone provided me with invaluable resources to flesh out my discussion of medicinal plants. I am similarly indebted to Nicolas Roth for his further thoughts on the maidenhair fern. Khalil Andani, who has been a major ally in helping me build up my academic reputation, an animated companion in discussions of Islamic intellectual history, and a long-time friend. Amanda Propst, one of my dear friends from AUC, who generously donated her time to check my Latin translation and correct my errors. Sarah Eltantawi, whom I also met at AUC, and who has been a beacon of a balanced approach to the life/academic dualistic struggle, and whose humor, sensitivity, professional advice, lecture invitations, and guidance on my various applications have been a constant source of encouragement from before day one at Harvard. I would also like to thank my friends Saba Ahmad, Ali Asgar Hussamuddin Alibhai, Sneha Bolisetty, Alina Boyden, Belle Cheves, Janette Coffey, John Collins, Sonali Dhingra, Shireen Hamza, Emma Harrington, Dustin Klinger, Arafat A. Razzaque, Courtney Tomaselli, and Amanda Yazdani for their support and friendship throughout this long process.

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Preface

Long, long, I trust, to grasp th' immortal prize,.
For he, who lives a Hero, never dies![1]

In the back of the mini-van, Lucknow was receding farther and farther, fading into the haze surrounding the city like leftover embers in the wake of the rising sun. Even the sunlight was veiled by the smoky fog, patches of a dull glow moving across an ocean of buildings and people.

It was yet another boiling hot day, but this time, I was visiting the Shāh Kāẓim Qalandar Dargāh almost 30 km away from downtown Lucknow. The open air felt almost lighter far away from the bustle and crowds of the city. The tiling and architecture of the *dargah* (shrine) were a blazing white, and while this did nothing to cut the intense heat, it made for a truly impressive sight.

As I sat with my colleagues inside one of the halls within the complex, the air hummed with the buzzing of insects themselves looking to escape the heat. Mercifully, the hall was covered and had been outfitted with a fan, but as I would soon learn, the white stone floors of the Dargāh had totally absorbed the heat and might as well have been used as a giant skillet to cook their famous kebabs.

Kakori serves as the seat of the Qalandariyya Sufi *ṭarīqa,* and on this day, one of the *ʻālim*s, Ẕiyā Mīr, explained the history and purpose of the shrine. My colleague, Aarzu, who is a practicing Nizārī Ismāʻīlī, asked him about what connection the shrine had to Ḥusayn and the yearly commemorations of *ʻĀshūrā'* which the region is well-known for. In the midst of his

[1] William Dimond and Michael Kelly, *The Hero of the North an* [sic] *Historical Play*, (London: Barker, 1803), 86.

answer, as if to punctuate his emphasis on the importance of Ḥusayn, Ẕiyā Mīr abruptly switched from Urdu to English interposed with clipped Urdu phrasing. “Imām Ḥusayn is the symbol of Islam—of reality (*ḥaqīqat*)…Imām Ḥusayn is the hero for the entire universe.” The rest of his discussion was filled with references to righteous struggle against archetypical evil, as personified by the *ẓālim*—the tyrant. Ẕiyā Mīr is a practicing Sunni Muslim, and there was no indication that he considered his statements to be at all controversial or out of the ordinary. Despite the understated tension between Muslims communities in Lucknow, this attitude had no place at Kakori, where the line between Sunni and Shiʿi devotionalism collapsed into one continuum.

A few weeks later, I found myself in the middle of downtown Lucknow, near the one of the largest shrines for Ḥusayn in the city. I could hear the constant refrain of taxis and auto-rickshaws on the street in front of the sanctuary, trying their best to weave their way through the traffic of Lucknow in the late afternoon. My Lucknawi companion referred to the present state of affairs as *gaṛbaṛī*, Urdu for “confusion.” I could see his point. The Dargah Hazrat Abbas road was very narrow and packed to the brim with roadside shops selling food, books, and religious objects while vehicles swerved around pedestrians and the occasional unperturbed cow.

The Shāh ʿAbbās Imāmbāṛā is not the largest *imāmbāṛā* (ceremonial tomb) in Lucknow, but that did not in any way diminish its impact. We removed our shoes, made a gesture of respect to the Imāms, and entered the shrine. The weather was a blisteringly hot 41° C, and even without that empirical reminder, I could feel the heat from the hot tiles of the Dargāh’s courtyard searing into my feet. I had noticed, too late, that my water bottle was empty, and as I looked towards the pool in the center of the enclosure, my companion pointed out a memorial to Ḥusayn’s trial of

thirst. I was reminded of the Fatimid theologian al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī's (d. 1078 C.E.)[2] rendition of this theme which I had read a few months prior: "the one slain thirsty, parched" (*al-maqtūla 'aṭshāna ṣādyā*),[3] and I considered that my own mundane experience of an empty bottle on a hot day was an appropriately reflective moment for the situation. I decided not to refill it until after we left the shrine.

The inner section of the Dargāh was filled with mourners immersed in silent prayer and contemplation. The Dargāh's audience was a veritable cross-section of Lucknow's ancient and diverse character: an equal number of men, women, old, young, fervently and casually religious milled about the interior, stopping to touch their right hands to the tombs and walls in prayer. As I entered, I saw an elderly Hindu woman wearing a bright red sari and a prominent *bindī* (dot)[4] exiting one of the subsidiary shrines and putting her sandals back on.

Each building was built to allude directly to the façade of an older building in Iraq or Saudi Arabia, complete with an empty tomb and elaborate latticing (*ẓarīḥ*). As I put my hand to the lattice along with other mourners, the contrast of the empty tomb and the fullness of presentation proved thought-provoking, even more so as my companion continually reminded me that these were simply images (*shabīh*) of the original, and that everything in the shrine was designed to evoke remembrance in the faithful. The sense of anticipation hung in the air, palpable, as the gathered people whispered prayers over the martyrs, waiting for a few moments of genuine sacred clarity.

---

[2] Al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī was arguably one of the most important early systematizers of Fatimid-era *da'wa*. A prolific scholar and poet, he was appointed *dā'ī al-du'āh* (chief missionary) by the eighth Fatimid Imam, al-Mustanṣir bi-'llāh. He was also a prolific preacher; much of the details we know about his creedal positions are expounded in the hundreds of sermons which he left behind. See: Ismail Poonawala, "al-Muʾayyad Fi 'L-Dīn", in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 10 July 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5284>

[3] See: Tahera Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad Al-Shīrāzī and Fatimid Da'wa Poetry: A Case of Commitment in Classical Arabic Literature*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 5.

[4] A ceremonial mark in the shape of a circle or teardrop worn primarily by Hindu women.

An elderly woman wearing a *niqāb* (full face veil) noticed me, an obvious foreigner, reading through the *salāmāt* (salutations) to Ḥusayn and his family in Arabic, Urdu, and Hindi. She curiously engaged me in conversation, asking me why I had come there, since I was not taking pictures or acting in an obviously touristic manner. It was difficult for me to articulate my reasons in Urdu, so I simply said, "To remember Ḥusayn." Satisfied, she moved on with her circumambulation of the shrine. As I moved through the grounds, I was continually struck by the outpouring of emotion, and even more so, that it was articulated in total silence—it was a space frozen in the moment of remembrance, as separate from the rest of the Saadatganj neighborhood as it was an intrinsic part of it. Even on an ordinary day, months away from Muḥarram, "Every month is Muḥarram, every place is Karbalā', and every day is *ʿĀshūrā*'."[5]

***

When I first presented the title of my dissertation to my co-advisor, Justine Landau, she remarked, somewhat hesitantly, "Are you sure you want to focus on so…morbid a topic?" This was not an unexpected reaction; the topic of *ʿĀshūrā'* had been my intended dissertation topic since before the start of my program. Perhaps even more so, since my other academic interests in the cold elegance of philosophy and grammatical tradition could not have been more far removed from the raw emotion of *ʿĀshūrā'*.

The idea for this dissertation began while I was living in Egypt—a place where people's conception of *ʿĀshūrā'* is far more different from Iran than in India. The idea formed more than a decade ago, in the reading hall of Institut dominicain d'études orientales in Cairo, provoked by my colleague Yasmin Amin introducing me to fantastic *aḥādīth* from *Biḥār al-Anwar* (The

[5] In Modern Persian: *Hameh māh Muḥarram ast, va-hameh jā Karbalā, va-hameh rūz ʿĀshūrā.* This is a famous statement made by the Iranian intellectual ʿAlī Sharīʿatī, which he attributes to the sixth Shīʿī Imām, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq. See: ʿAlī Sharīʿatī, *Ḥoseyn: Vāreṯ-e ādam*, ed. Majmūʿeh-ye Āṯār /ʿAlī Sharīʿatī; 19 (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Qalam, 1983), 12.

Oceans of Lights). Many of these narratives seemingly reverberated with stories from the 1001 Nights rather than the drier legal *aḥādīth* I had studied previously. The stories concerning Ḥusayn were particularly thought-provoking. For me, however, *ʿĀshūrāʾ* was less alien than it was to my Egyptian friends—for whom it brought memories of rice pudding, not weeping and salvation. Growing up in a very traditional Catholic family, a large cross hung front and center in the sitting room. During Holy Week, all the mirrors, pictures, and statues in the house were covered in dark purple cloth to discourage contemplation on worldly matters and focus on spiritual grief. Throughout the years, my siblings and I listened in rapt attention to stories of martyr-saints like St. Apollonia, who had her teeth pulled out, or St. Lawrence, who was roasted over a gridiron. As I entered Arabic and Islamic Studies, discovering the Karbalāʾ narrative, I saw perhaps the single event in Islamic history which resonated with my upbringing the most. As this dissertation continually highlights, sometimes emotion has as profound an effect on history as discursive thought.

Introduction: A Brighter Shade of Red

چہلم جو کربلا میں بہتر کا ہو چکا
پیوند بےکسوں کے تن و سر کا ہو چکا
اور فاتحہ حسین کے لشکر کا ہو چکا
قبروں پہ شور آل پیمبر کا ہو چکا
ماتم میں تین روز رہے شور و شین سے
روئے لپٹ لپٹ کے مزار حسین سے
مثل چراغ گور غریبان پہ دل جلائے
پھولوں کے ساتھ قبروں پہ لخت جگر چڑھائے
پیاروں کی بود و باش کے سامان جو یاد آئے
بےساختہ پکارے کلیجے پکڑ کے ہائے

The commemoration of the fortieth day[6] for the 72 martyrs at Karbalā' was accomplished
The bodies and heads of the abandoned have been rejoined
And the prayer for Ḥusayn's army has been performed
There was wailing for the family of the Prophet over their tombs
For three days during the funeral rituals wailing went on
Ever more closely twining around Ḥusayn's tomb
Their hearts blazed like lamps upon the grave of the unfortunates
With flowers they offered their innermost selves[7] at the graves
The lovers offering up their very being, they remembered the departed
Genuinely crying out, they clutched their hearts[8] and fainted.[9]

I. Every Month is *Muḥarram*

Near the beginning of Sīmīn Dāneshvar's famous 1969 novel, *Savūshūn* (Siyāvash Rituals), her protagonist, Zahrā, nicknamed Zarī, reflects on a trip she took with her husband Yūsof to a tribal encampment. They enter the local chief's tent, and meet Malek Sohrāb, one of the tribal leaders. While admiring the beautiful furnishings of the tent, Malek Sohrāb draws her attention to a particularly vivid painting:

> At this point, Malek Sohrāb gestured towards a painting of a severed head in a blood-spattered dish. The dish was brimming with blood, with tulips growing out of it, and a

[6] *Arbaʿīn*
[7] *Lakht-e jigar*, literally, "piece of the liver."
[8] *Kaleje*, "livers."
[9] Mīrzā Salāmat ʿAlī Dabīr, *Daftar-e Mātam,* (Lucknow: Maṭbaʿ Dabdab-i Aḥmadī, 1896), 10: 206.

> black horse smelling the tulips. Malek Sohrāb said, "This is my elder brother to whom Bībī has still not given birth!" Zarī said, "You can't trick me, I'll wager that this is John the Baptist!" Malek Sohrāb laughed and said, "Ok, I'm willing to take that bet." Zarī asked, "For what?" Malek Sohrāb said, "For a Brno rifle." He called out to Yūsof and pointed at the painting, saying "Your wife says that this is John the Baptist." Yūsof smiled and said, "I'm sorry for this, my wife has just come home straight from class. Right now her head is full of stories from the Gospels which she has to read every morning at school." Zarī said, "Ok, now I get it, the severed head is Imam Ḥusayn's…that there is his horse…" Yūsof said, "Dear heart, don't embarrass me more than this; this is Siyāvash." [10]

Set against the background of the final years of World War II in and around Shiraz in Iran, the novel mixes elements of political tensions, middle-class home life, and tribal practices with mythical metaphors. The quotation above is typical of the multi-layered allusions of the book, where Zarī comes to increasingly identify her husband, Yūsof, with the Persian epic hero Siyāvash (also pronounced Siyāvosh) and the third Shiʿi Imam Ḥusayn. In another part of the book, an old village woman describes the titular *savūshūn*, rituals for mourning Siyāvash.[11] Therein, a black-clad rider on a black horse jumps over a bonfire while the crowd raises a clamor and mourns, and then fights a mock battle complete with a mock beheading. Throughout the anecdote, the rider is described as having typically "Islamic" symbols attached to him, such as carrying a Qur'ān, referencing Ḥusayn's thirst at Karbalā', and being addressed as *ḥaẓrat*

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[10] Sīmīn Dāneshvar, *Savūshūn*, (Tehran: Sherkat-e Sehāmī-e Enteshārāt-e Khʷārazmī, 1969), 44. My translation. Two other translations into English are available: Sīmīn Dāneshvar, and M.R. Ghanoonparvar, *Savushun*, (Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 1990), and: Sīmīn Dāneshvar and Roxane Zand, *A Persian Requiem*, (London: Halban, 1991).

و ملک سهراب این بار اشاره به نقش سر بریده‌ای در یک طشت پر از خون کرد. دور تا دور طشت پر از خون، لاله روییده بود و یک اسب سیاه داشت لاله‌هارا می بویید. ملک سهراب گفت: «این کاکای خودمه که بی بی هنوز نزاییده!» زری گفت «نمی توانید مرا گول بزنید، شرط می بندم این یحیای تعمید دهنده باشد .»

ملک سهراب خندید و گفت: «حاضرم شرط ببندیم .»

زری پرسید: «سر چی؟»

ملک سهراب گفت: «سر یک تفنگ بر نو .»

و یوسف را صدا کرد و نقش را نشانش داد و گفت: «خانمتان می گویند این یحیی تعمید دهنده است .»

یوسف تبسم کرد و گفت: «ببخشیدش، زن من از سر کلاس یکراست به خانهٔ شوهر آمده. هنوز سرش پر از داستانهای انجیل است که هر روز صبح در مدرسه مجبور بوده بخواند .»

زری گفت: «حالا فهمیدم، سر بریدهٔ امام حسین است...آنهم اسب ...»

یوسف گفت: «بیشتر از این خجالتم نده جانم، این سیاوش است .»

[11] Ibid, 269-271.

(excellency), a typical honorific applied to Muslim holy persons. At the same time, certain other elements do not track with the story of Ḥusayn, who rides a white horse, not a black one, never passes through a fire, and the *siyāvashān* ceremonies described here do not occur during Muḥarram.

While Dāneshvar's novel is a fictional story, it reflects some real elements of the complexity of Iranian religious history. In the Iranian collective cultural consciousness, ancient heroes do not simply fade away, forgotten, but re-emerge throughout history in new, intricately reimagined forms. The references from *Savūshūn* provide us with an image of a heroic archetype which is at once Ḥusayn and Siyāvash. Furthermore, as the novel illustrates with the later scenes of Yūsof's funeral and its resonance with both Ḥusayn and Siyāvash, the reason why these archetypes perdure is because they evoke a deep identification with the vagaries of human suffering; an identification which is often conceptualized as fundamentally Iranian.

Ḥusayn is the essentially Twelver Shiʿi conception of the heroic martyr, the *shahīd.* Siyāvash, on the other hand, evokes a similar sensibility, together with being 'essentially' Persian. But how are we to understand the idea of the *shahīd*? What does it mean to be understood as a "Persian heroic martyr?" Why is there an impetus to connect Ḥusayn with Iranian culture, let alone Siyāvash? The answer lies in how a population moves figures, tropes, and motifs from their original inherited cultural context and recontextualizes them in a manner which appeals to their own sense of identity. The hero-martyr is a tangible representation of God's authority on earth, but while the hero's authority comes from God, their appeal and their continual revival lies in the connection to the experiences of the community. In other words, the forging of these connections should be understood as the transference, or deterritorialization of a

memory relic, a cultural complex of form, function, and meaning from its original territory and its adaptation to a new home.

The desire to connect Ḥusayn with Persian heritage occurs frequently throughout Iranian history. Such an interest occurs in complex forms throughout the work of ʿAlī Sharīʿatī (d. 1977 C.E.), one of the most important pre-revolutionary Iranian religious intellectuals. For example, Sharīʿatī implicitly identifies Ḥusayn with Fereydūn[12] when discussing Ḥusayn as a paradigmatic example of the martyr's inherent struggle against tyrannical systems:[13]

> And now Ḥusayn has come with all his being to testify in the court of history, next to the Euphrates: to testify for the benefit of all the oppressed of history. To testify in favor of those condemned by this executioner who dominates history. To testify the way this executioner, this Ẓaḥḥāk, has been eating the brains of the youth throughout history. He has come with his son, ʿAlī Akbar, to testify. He has come to bear witness as to how a hero dies in a criminal regime or many criminal regimes: by giving himself in martyrdom![14]

Sharīʿatī has a complex relationship with the idea of the hero; in some cases, he seems to consider the martyr the quintessential hero, as above, while in others, it is clear that he considers the martyr far superior to the hero. Overall, he rejects both the idea that for Iranians, martyrdom is a matter of blood and horror, or that it is simply heroes sacrificing themselves in battle.[15] Martyrdom, and thus, the martyred hero, is a *habitus*, a disposition which is cultivated in terms of both how they live and die, not just in the fact of their death:

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[12] As we shall see in Chapter Three, this identification, along with the suggestion of Ḥusayn's descent from Fereydūn, is mentioned by Kāshefī, more than four hundred years before Sharīʿatī.

[13] This should not be meant to imply that Sharīʿatī was necessarily enamored of ancient Persian mythology; in his book *Fāṭemeh, Fāṭemeh ast* (Fāṭima is Fāṭima), he criticizes both Ferdowsī and through him pre-Islamic Persian traditions by citing lines from the *Shāhnāmeh* which describe women (along with dragons!) as being inherently impure and essentially promoting the practice of burying female infants which was later abolished in the Qur'ān. See: ʿAlī Sharīʿatī, *Fāṭemeh Fāṭemeh ast*, Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Ḥoseyniyyeh-ye Ershād, 1971; 114-115.

[14] 'Alī Sharī'atī, *Ḥoseyn: Vāreṯ-e Ādam*, ed. *Majmū'eh-ye Āṯār /'Alī Sharī'atī* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Qalam, 1983), 19: 248.
و اكنون حسين با همه هستي اش آمده است تا در محكمه تاريخ، در كنار فرات شهادت بدهد .شهادت بدهد به سود همه مظلومان تاريخ .شهادت بدهد به نفع محكومان اين جلاد حاكم بر تاريخ .شهادت بدهد كه چگونه اين جلاد ضحاك، مغز جوانان را در طول تاريخ مي خورده است. با علي اكبر شهادت بدهد! و شهادت بدهد كه در نظام جنايت، و در نظام های جنايت چگونه قهرمانان مي مردند. با خودش شهادت بدهد!

[15] Ibid, 204-5.

> A man has come out from Fāṭima's house. Alone, friendless, and with empty hands, by himself he faces the age of horror, darkness, and the storm of swords. Except for 'death,' he is unarmed. He, however, is the child of a family which has well-learned the 'art of the good death' (*honar-e khᵛob-e mordan*) in the school of life. In this world, there is none like him who knows 'how to die.' This is the knowledge which his powerful enemy, who has reins over the whole world, lacks. This is because the lonely hero (*qahremān-e tanhā*), is secure, resolute, and unwavering in his in his triumph over the great host of his enemy, welcoming it. Now, the great teacher of martyrdom has arisen to teach all of those who understand the struggle (*jehād*) as only one of power and triumph over the enemy as only one of conquest. Thus martyrdom (*shahādat*) is not defeat (*bākhtan*), but rather it is a choice, a choice wherein the champion (*mojāhed*) triumphs by sacrificing himself on the threshold of the temple of freedom and upon the altar of love. Ḥusayn, the scion of Adam, the one who gives life to the children of Adam, and who is the scion of the great prophets, taught humanity 'how to live,' and has now come in this age to teach the children of Adam 'how to die.'[16]

This second extract expands even more on Sharīʿatī's idea of the creation of a kind of martyrological template, one that uses Ḥusayn as its basic model. In Foucault's terms, Sharīʿatī is suggesting the implementation of a technology of the self, a return to the self which embodies triumph through sacrifice.[17] Through his emphasis on a participant in *ʿĀshūrā'* mourning imagining themselves as being present at the Battle of Karbalā and sacrificing themselves for Ḥusayn, hints of the same basic perspective were expressed by Kāshefī four centuries earlier.[18] The advocation of Ḥusayn as a model, as both an external source of salvation as well as the image from which the faithful create their own path to salvation finds a central origin in the

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[16] Ibid, 203-4.

مردی از خانه فاطمه بیرون آمده است، تنها و بی کس، با دست‌های خالی، یک تنه بر روزگار وحشت و ظلمت و آهن یورش برده است. جز «مرگ» سلاحی ندارد! اما او، فرزند خانواده‌ای است که «هنر خوب مردن» را، مکتب حیات، خوب آموخته است.

در این جهان، هیچ کس نیست که همچون او، بداند که «چگونه باید مرد»؟ دانشی که دشمن نیرومند او که بر جهان حکومت می راند از آن محروم است، و این است که قهرمان تنها، به پیروزی خویش بر انبوه سپاه خصم، این چنین مطمئن است، و این چنین مصمم و بی تردید، به استقبال آمده است.

آموزگار بزرگ «شهادت» اکنون برخاسته است، تا به همه آنها که جهاد را تنها در «توانستن» می فهمند و به همه آنها که پیروزی بر خصم را تنها در «غلبه» بیاموزد که: «شهادت»، نه یک «باختن»، که یک «انتخاب» است، انتخابی که در آن، مجاهد با قربانی کردن خویش، در آستانه معبد آزادی و محراب عشق، پیروز می شود.

و حسین، وارث آدم که به بنی آدم زیستن داد و وارث پیامبران بزرگ که به انسان «چگونه باید زیست» را آموختند اکنون آمده است تا، در این روزگار، به فرزندان آدم «چگونه باید مرد» را بیاموزد!

[17] Foucault was himself an admirer of Sharīʿatī and they drew on similar Marxist methodologies for their theories. See: Mark LeVine and Armando Salvatore, "Socio-Religious Movements and the Transformation of 'Common Sense' into a Politics of 'Common Good,'" in *Religion, Social Practice, and Contested Hegemonies*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2005), pp. 29-56; 45.

[18] See Chapter Two, Section VIII for more details.

Rowẕat ol-Shohadā', which itself draws upon even older collective memory deep within Iranian history. In the next section, I will outline how we can witness this pattern develop and articulate it as the central arguments of this dissertation.

II. Central Concerns of the Dissertation

The central concern of my dissertation is the role of collective memory as articulated in literature and ritual in transfiguring a historical person into a legendary one. Specifically, in the narrative traditions which I will examine, the geographical location of Karbalā', Iraq, in the temporal moment of the 10th of Muharram, 680 C.E., becomes the realm of the legendary deeds of Husayn (d. 680 C.E.), the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, following his death at the Battle of Karbala. In this sacralized version of events, evolving over eight centuries, it is no longer simply the historical figure Ḥusayn who suffers and dies, but the archetypal martyr whose death catalyzes the collective emotions of the Shi'i Muslim community. My dissertation explores one famous text in Persian literature, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* ("Meadow of the Martyrs") by Ḥoseyn Kāshefī (d. 1504 C.E.). I argue that the *Rowẕat* was a turning point that transported the genre of narratives of Husayn's death (*maqtal*) from the realm of lived, contingent history into memorialized, sacred history.

This dissertation has both a general thesis and a specific thesis statement. Generally, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that a historical person can be gradually elevated out of the realm of extraordinary, though still natural history to the heights of a supernatural legend, transformed from human to quasi-divine. I intend to show how my theoretical construct of *memory relics* can be employed to understand how this occurs. In religious or ideological systems where divinity is

limited solely to a singular divinity or cosmic law, the application of supernatural characteristics to a human person is complex and circumscribed by explicit and implicit constraints. Most forms of Christianity get around this by positioning Christ as simultaneously human and divine natures bound together in a hypostatic union. The common interpretation of Islam makes this more difficult by insisting that God is totally transcendent (*tanzīh*) and singular (*tawḥīd*). Still, the nature of a revelatory religion requires that human intermediaries exist between God and human in order to make communication possible, otherwise God could only be known as a theoretical principle. In Twelver Shiʿism, the prophets (*anbiyā'*), particularly Muḥammad stand as the initial intermediaries who transmit the 'raw' message, while the Imams function as codebreakers, imbued with special powers enabling them to perform this task. Their status as (marginally) flawed humans, as well as their divinely appointed status and powers enable them to be simultaneously relatable and yet still distant paragons. While many of the Twelver Imams suffered and died due to persecution, the narrative of Ḥusayn is perhaps the source of greatest fascination and admiration due to dual themes of the sacrifice of an innocent together with a fierce defiance against a tyrannical force.[19]

Thus, Ḥusayn is the hero-martyr par excellence, and a template for Shiʿi identity. However, the construction of this hero-martyr complex in the person of Ḥusayn requires the investment of specific modes of popular sentiment; it is not enough to say that Ḥusayn is a hero and martyr; he must be shown to evoke archetypes which enable the community to believe this is true not merely abstractly, but for them in their everyday lives. To say that the narrative of

[19] "Husayn represents atonement, his redemptive martyrdom gives to all the possibility of salvation…[W]hile the ulama look to the image of 'Ali, the image of the intellectual, esoteric yet legalistic attitude towards religion, it is undoubtedly Husayn and his representation of redemption through sacrifice and martyrdom that has caught the imagination and devotion of the Shi'i masses." See: Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism*, (Oxford [Oxfordshire]: G. Ronald, 1985), 236.

Ḥusayn makes use of *memory relics* means that the community collectively remembers their legacy of investments of form, function, and meaning and identifies them in Ḥusayn.

Specifically, this dissertation argues three central points. Firstly, that Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥoseyn Kāshefī's landmark Persian martyrdom text (*maqtal*), the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, while hardly the only text to attribute a supernatural status to Ḥusayn, specifically transforms Ḥusayn into an epic, martyred hero, and in doing so, is one of the most important texts in Shiʿi history for understanding modern Twelver Shiʿi belief, particularly Iranian Twelver belief. Secondly, that the *Rowẕat* makes use of the basic Arabic origins of its genre, while infusing it with Persian linguistic markers, literary themes, imagery, and archetypes which translate or 'deterritorialize' the Ḥusayn-Karbalā' narrative from that Arabic origin to one suitable for Persian speakers. Thirdly, that the *Rowẕat* did not simply remain a popular book but was actually instrumentalized and officially promoted by the Safavid dynasty into a ritual complex, eventually evolving into *taʿziyeh*,[20] which served to both bolster their legitimacy as well as create consensus of the Safavid Empire as a simultaneously Twelver Shiʿi and Persian state. While whether Kāshefī intended to 'Persianize' Shiʿism or merely Persianize the Karbalā' narrative is debatable—which I will engage in at length in Chapter Two—I will show that it is undeniable that the Safavids used it to Persianize Shiʿism. In the next section, I will provide the methodological outlines for how these arguments can be articulated, and the basic principles of the concept of *memory relics* through which I will interpret the historical sources.

III. Methodology

[20] *Taʿziyeh* in origin is the Persian pronunciation of the Arabic word *taʿziya*, the verbal noun of the Form II (*faʿʿala*) of the root *ʿaziya*, *yaʿzá*, originally meaning "to be patient, endure;" the *faʿʿala* form is a causative, hence, *ʿazzá* "he made patient" > "he consoled." This verb is related to the Syriac verb *ʿazzē*, *neʿazzê* "to withstand with fortitude."

My dissertation fundamentally draws on a variety of methodologies to develop its arguments. As previously mentioned above, the concept of collective memory is integral to my arguments. In order to articulate this concept within the context of the creation of a 'legendary Husayn,' I have drawn on theories from sociology, postmodern philosophy, and comparative religion. The most important of these theories for the purposes of my dissertation are those of Halbwachs' *la mémoire collective* (collective memory) from sociology, Deleuze and Guattari's notions of deterritorialization and minor literature from postmodern literary philosophy, Nora's *lieu de mémoire* (site of memory) from history, and from the realm of comparative religion, theories of sacrifice from Burkert, Lincoln, and Girard.

The general methodology of the dissertation draws essentially on a combination of close reading and the historical method; at its core, the general methodology is philological in nature. The specific methodology of this dissertation can generally be divided into three typological categories. Firstly, I have drawn on linguistic principles, such as those expressed by Weinreich, especially those of diachronic linguistics and lexical borrowing, both in terms of analysis as well as adapting theoretical paradigms as an organizing principle.[21] Secondly, I make use of theories adapted from sociology and philosophy such as Collective Memory from Halbwachs,[22] *lieux de mémoire* from Nora,[23] and deterritorialization from Deleuze and Guattari,[24] in order to analyze how the conceptual frameworks manifested both in literary texts and ritual practices were propagated. Thirdly, I implement and problematize concepts from the history of religion,

[21] Uriel Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1979),
[22] Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), and *The Collective Memory*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).
[23] Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France = Les Lieux De Mémoire*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xvii.
[24] Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

especially comparison, syncretism, and theories of sacrifice from Burkert,[25] Lincoln,[26] and Girard.[27]

Finally, my original concept of *memory relics* is intended as a theoretical construct which integrates all of these methodological perspectives. Therein, the ritual, literary, and historical evidence presented in this dissertation can be properly analyzed as a comprehensive whole. This section is divided into three subsections which address specifically how theories from these three disciplinary divisions inform both the concept of *memory relics* and the dissertation as a whole.

A *memory relic* is a theoretical construct which supposes that a given cultural artifact is composed of three layers of operation which continuously interact during the ongoing process of meaning-making. These levels are not to be understood as hierarchical or chronological; all three are operating at the same time in order for a *memory relic* to form. Whenever we, as a collective cultural group, use a cultural artifact (tangible or abstract) and invest some value in it beyond its purely functional aspects, we are drawing on a memory relic. However, a memory relic needs to draw on inherited artifacts, they must have extension in time. A personal memory, for example, cannot be spontaneously created, if they are, then they are false memories; however personal memories are continually reinterpreted and reconstructed, so they do not remain static. These three layers are, in order of external presentation: form/mode, which is the schematic, tangible manifestation of a given artifact; the function/mission: the way in which the artifact operates within the social, political, and religious milieu, i.e. how it works practically or what its use is;

[25] Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: the Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press,1983).
[26] Bruce Lincoln, *Myth, Cosmos, and Society: Indo-European Themes of Creation and Destruction*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), and: *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).
[27] René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

and the meaning/force: what values the artifact encapsulates, what its purpose is, and the 'why' of its usage.

For the purposes of illustration, let us take the Arabic greeting, *al-salāmu ʿalaykum* "peace be upon you." If we insert this greet into the memory relic paradigm, then the form is the articulation of sounds, the vibration of air currents, the grammatical and syntactic rules which render it a proper phrase in the Arabic language, etc. In Saussurean terms, broadly, this is the *significant*, the signifier. The function of the phrase is its use as a greeting; thus in pragmatic terms, we would understand it as part of a linguistic script which introduces certain basic processes of communication and politeness-language. The meaning is the internally produced value of the phrase. The meaning is not necessarily the literal translation or intention of a given artifact, unless the literal meaning is itself culturally significant. Thus, the phrase *al-salāmu ʿalaykum* carries a specific internal impression which communicates a value set. The meaning is far more multivalent, by definition, than any of the other layers; in this case, it could be communicating the idea of participation in a collective worldview called *Islam*; it could also be said to unconsciously draw upon an ancient tradition of Semitic greetings which indicate certain shared views (i.e. Hebrew *šalom ʿalēkem*, Aramaic *šlāmā ʿalekem*, etc.) In Saussurean terms, this is close to the *signifié* or signified, though it is the interaction of all three elements that proper context is realized.

In order for *memory relics* to operate, there needs to be a *memory contact*, occurring through a *person* or *point of contact*, a *place of contact*, and a *substratum for contact*. These three *contacts* are how I have formulated that *memory relic* emerges from collective memory into actual practice. The *point of contact* is whatever concept or entity is being introduced into a community's conceptual vocabulary, which is the *place of contact*. The *substratum* is essentially

where the *memory relics* reside, in the collective memory of the community. Thus we can take the concept of a loan word as an example, say the Arabic word *insān* (human being), which is an extremely common borrowing in many Iranian and South Asian languages. The word *insān* is the *point of contact,* the entity being introduced. A community, such as [Middle] Persian speakers beginning in the Arab conquest of the 7th century, is the *place of contact*. When the word is introduced, the community must first access native stock and match its meaning approximately, such as to Middle Persian Persian *mardōm-zādag* (human). Like linguistic borrowing, the process of *memory relics* emerging through *memory contact* is horizontal, not vertical; the different values that may be assigned to these concepts, again like loanwords, is a vertical function.[28] While the paradigm above is presented statically, in actuality, *memory contact* occurs countlessly in a community, over a long space of time.

While I underline the fact that the concept of *memory relics* draws from linguistic principles to explain its construction, perdurance, and propagation, it is also important to highlight the literal sense of the term. A *memory relic* is intended as an archeology of memory, thought, and language. However, in a very real sense, particularly in its employment to study religious interaction, it is also intended to reference actual relics. The term "relic" comes from Latin *relinquō* "I leave behind" (hence English "relinquish"). In the religious context, a relic thus means some object left behind after a holy person's death, whether an actual body part, an object they owned in life, or something which has made contact with the latter. The equivalent terms in several important languages of Muslim-majority cultures are even more evocative: Arabic *dhakhīra*, something which has been preserved or treasured; Persian *yādegār,* something which

[28] Tunzhi (Sonam Lhundrop), Hiroyuki Suzuki, and Gerald Roche; "Language Contact and the Politics of Recognition amongst Tibetans in the People's Republic of ChinaThe rTa'u-Speaking 'Horpa' of Khams," *The Politics of Language Contact in the Himalaya*, (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2019), pp. 17-48; 17-18.

evokes remembrance (cf. *yād* "memory"); and Urdu *tabarruk*, something which has been blessed or retains sacred power (cf. Arabic *baraka* "holiness, numinous blessing"). The Persian term perhaps most perfectly encompasses the polyvalent sense of my use of *memory relics*: something which is integral in propagating memories of a vanished entity. Like a physical relic, a *memory relic* is inherently intended to be portable. The major point I am contending with *memory relics* is how language and narrative in effect are transformed into tangible moments which function like physical relics do: the embodiment of the formerly physical in language. They reconstitute an entity lodged in collective memory in the form of narrative: the hero literally becomes "made of stories."[29] In that way, they come to function as a replication of the memory of the revered entity within the context of a ritual space. As we will see, the martyrdom narrative of the long dead effectively tries to reconstitute the sensory input associated with the funeral of the recently dead by replacing tangible sights, sounds, smells, and tactile sensations with visualization techniques.

Linguistic Methodology

As I have mentioned, *memory relics* derive many of their explanations for movement from the methodology of diachronic and synchronic linguistics, in particular, the theoretical motivations for lexical borrowing. At the outset, it must be understood that in the context of linguistics, 'borrowing' does not have the same sort of problematic associations as it does in religious studies. Borrowed words do not imply a lack of creativity or that they can be 'returned;' in fact, borrowing can be a manifestation of linguistic creativity and flexibility, which often

[29] Cf. the famous quotation from poet Muriel Rukeyser: "The universe is made of stories, not atoms." See: Muriel Rukeyser, *The Speed of Darkness*, (New York: Random House, 1968), 111.

involves shifts in phonological structure and semantic shades of meaning.[30] In other pragmatic terms, borrowing can be necessitated by complex socio-linguistic issues which make creating *ad hoc* words out of native vocabulary impractical:

> The motivations for and extent of lexical borrowing depend on a range of social factors that vary from one contact situation to another. Two factors that have been frequently mentioned are "need" and "prestige." Most of the borrowing associated with "distant" contact seems to be motivated by "the need to designate new things, persons, places and concepts." This is especially true in cases where a community is exposed to new areas of cultural knowledge and experience through contact with others.[31]

Weinreich considers the above to be essentially external factors for lexical borrowing. However, he also notes three major internal factors which can motivate borrowings. These are 1) low frequency; 2) homonymy; and 3) need for synonyms.[32] Low frequency means that less commonly used words in the recipient language are more likely to fall out of style and be replaced. Homonymy refers to the borrowing of terms to displace one or more words which have become homonymous with another lexical item usually due to the vagaries of sound change. Finally, the need for synonyms means that speech communities search for new lexical items either when a given term in the recipient language acquires a large semantic range, losing their expressive force, or when there is a perceived need to specify in a manner that the available lexical items in the recipient language cannot provide. Not all of these internal motivations need be operant at the same time for a given lexical item.

To transfer these theoretical motivations to the context of religion, the external motivations of need and prestige are rather clear. When a new religion is imported from a foreign culture and comes to occupy a central place in the halls of power, there is clear external

[30] Johannes Fabian, "Scratching the Surface: Observations on the Poetics of Lexical Borrowing in Shaba Swahili," *Anthropological Linguistics* 24, no. 1 (1982): 14–50; 39.
[31] Donald Winford, *An Introduction to Contact Linguistics*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 37.
[32] Uriel Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1979), 57-8.

motivation to both adopt the structural elements of that religion both in terms of the need and prestige. In terms of the internal motivations, we can translate "low frequency" as being the tendency for displaced or withering religious practices to be replaced, "homonymy" as the collapse of traditions formerly sanctioned by authorities into local versions which may incorporate several practices which were originally distinguished, and the "need for synonyms" as the 'matching' of imported religious concepts to native ones.

While the use of linguistic concepts as a baseline for a theoretical paradigm—outside of a simple philological perspective—for a project in religious, intellectual, and social history is relatively uncommon, it is not unheard of. Stewart makes use of Translation Theory as his method of understanding Muslim-Hindu religious interactions in early modern Bengal:

> It becomes clear that no unambiguously Islamic idiom existed in Bengali during the time, or at least it was only beginning to emerge by the end of the period. Such specific Islamic technical vocabulary would not prevail until sometime later, largely with the development of institutional infrastructures, and even that language—in spite of attempts by certain factions to identify a "Musalmani" Bengali—has never been, nor could it be, completely "pure" in ideational terms. The reason it cannot be pure in exclusively Islamic terms is because the Bengali language itself has its roots in Sanskrit, which has been the bearer of a traditional culture that operates according to assumptions that are common to the religious traditions of the Hindus, and of Jains, Sikhs, early Buddhists, and other. It has been well documented that religions and languages share many features as formal, albeit now widely understood to be open-ended, semiotic systems, regardless of how that structural similitude is construed…one of the most relevant points of convergence is in the ability of both language and religion to capture, preserve, and reify basic cultural values, to structure experience according to shared conceptual elements.[33]

As per this conception, consider the Persian word *namāz* "prayer." In New Persian, this word is typically taken to refer to the five daily Islamic prayer rituals, i.e. Arabic *ṣalāh*. However, the word is not actually a borrowed word, but is cognate to Sanskrit *namas* "homage,"[34] and was

[33] Tony K. Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim-Hindu Encounter through Translation Theory," *History of Religions* 40, no. 3 (2001): 260–87; 268.
[34] Typically used in opening obeisances to various deities, i.e. *auṃ namaḥ śivāya* "homage to Śiva."

used in a similar manner in Middle Persian: to signal reverence to the addressed person via a bow.[35] As such, can we consider the modern Islamic usage of the term *namāz* as really 'Zoroastrian,' even when the term is not only used in Iran to refer to Islamic rituals, but has also been borrowed again to render the concept of *ṣalāh* in South Asian languages? Rather, I suggest that in keeping with linguistic notions of lexical borrowing, where borrowed words are no less 'authentically' part of a given language, that *memory relics* which are polythetic, or originating from an earlier proximate Persian source in conjunction with those that emerge as a later Persian source via an introduced religion are both authentically Persian.[36]

One objection to this formulation could be that a religious practice is a complex of ideas, whereas a loanword is a singular item. However, this objection assumes that loanwords both actually are singular and not a complex of cultural concepts, as well as assuming they are adopted in a void always as a single item. It is more appropriate to understand loanwords as being motivated by intricate sociocultural and economical interactions which form their own complexes; the fact that a single given loanword presents itself as evidence does not imply that its causes are equally singular. Linguistically, this is evidenced by the fact that content words (especially nouns) are far more commonly borrowed than function words (i.e. prepositions, pronouns, etc.) and that lexical borrowing may occur with syntactic borrowing as well.[37]

Overall, I believe this is an especially apt paradigm to use for explanatory power, since religion and language are already intimately intertwined; for example, it is no accident that the

[35] Almut Hintze, "Zarathustra's Time and Homeland," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism*, (Chichester: Wiley, 2015.), 31-38; 37.
[36] Ernst understands a polythetic approach to religious origins as meaning "…that multiple various and even conflicting authoritative positions can be included under the rubric of a single religious category; definitions of religions based on unvarying sets of characteristics are no longer acceptable, since they implicitly entail endorsement of one authoritative position rather than another." See: Carl W. Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15, no. 1 (2005): 15–43; 19.
[37] Roeland Van Hout and Pieter Muysken, "Modeling Lexical Borrowability," *Language Variation and Change* 6, no. 1 (1994): 39-62; 40, 51-2.

number of Arabic loanwords in Persian dramatically increased after the Arab conquest and the introduction of Islam. Language is itself a carrier of religious knowledge, and religion is an important motivating factor for the spread of a particular language. Now that I have addressed the aspects of my methodology derived from linguistics, let us turn to methodological considerations adapted from sociology, critical theory, and philosophy.

Sociological Methodology

When dealing with collective memory and sites of memory, I show that within the literary articulation of the *Rowẕat,* the character of Ḥusayn was 'set' in sacred time as a tragic hero. The text of the *Rowẕat* becomes a repository of collective memory which at once draws on Persian mythic history, as well as creating a new site of memory located in the heroic character of Husayn. Out of the *Rowẕat* a new tradition of chanting the text and concurrently mourning took shape; a potent new ritual culture emerged, one that endures to the present. This new articulation of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals allowed the Safavid Empire starting in 16th century Iran to advance its political vision and to shape a particularly Persian consensus about the meaning of Shiʿi identity.

The articulation of sociological and critical theory ideas which inform the concept of *memory relics* largely draws from the collective memory as conceived by Halbwachs,[38] *lieux de*

[38] In this context, which that Halbwachs terms "*la mémoire collective*" is the emergence and methodological analysis of the community identity by evaluating how ideas deemed valuable to a community are transmitted through time and retained by the group. Halbwachs is of course the foundational figure in this sociological field, though one of the most famous contemporary voices is the Egyptologist Jan Assmann. Halbwachs inspires the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and while their project is primarily literary would say that one of the main ways that collective memory is expressed in all of these works is through literature as well as oral narrative. See: Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), and *The Collective Memory*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).

mémoire from Nora,[39] and deterritorialization from Deleuze and Guattari.[40] However, all of these theories were originally conceptualized for contexts quite different from the establishment of the Safavid state; for example, Nora uses *lieux de mémoire* to interpret the creation of the French Third Republic. As a result, while I have adapted these theories to suit my purposes, the material in this dissertation has necessitated the construction of a new theoretical interpretative lens. This is my original concept of *memory relics*, which draws on the three previously stated theories, but significantly expands on them, details how transference takes place, and is specifically intended to analyze my current subject matter.

Halbwachs inspires the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and while their project is primarily literary would say that one of the main ways that collective memory is expressed in all these works is through literature as well as oral narrative. This research will be useful for the methodology of my dissertation not only for its direct connection to the topic, but also because it exemplifies the utility of a comparative approach. The comparative approach has proved invaluable for analyzing the incorporation of Iranian mythological paradigms into Kāshefī's work and the ritual practices which were inspired by him.

In terms of the concepts of deterritorialization and minor literature as applied to martyrdom literature, I have not used Deleuze and Guattari's concepts in their original form, but have adapted them for the purposes of this dissertation. By treating the Shi'i martyrdom texts as

[39] This means "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community." See: Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France = Les Lieux De Mémoire*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xvii.
[40] Deterritorialization is the removal of social, cultural and political practices, whether people, objects, languages, or traditions from a location. It is usually accompanied by reterritorialization, which is the replacing of the removed elements with substituted forms while (mostly) preserving the framework. This is not a literal application of these ideas—by treating the transfer of the *maqtal* to a Persian environment and the removal of some of the Arabic elements, I am presenting an interpretation of the process by which the Arabic genre was adapted for Persian audiences. See: Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 174.

'minor literature,' I mean that they emerge out of community which has been marginalized using the very literary tools of their dominators. Essentially, this is the reclaiming of religious and literary heritage by using the language of the majority as a tool of legitimizing their production It is the conjunction of the Persian and Shi'i identities with which I propose to apply a more metaphorical version of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts. Before the advent of the *Shāhnāmeh* —and even for a while after it—Persian was often understood as a language of the subjugated population; elite literature was primarily written in Arabic. For example, when Persian scholars composed their 'serious' texts, such as Ibn Sīnā, they wrote in Arabic, and composed only minor treatises in Persian.

In my view, this martyrdom literature must attempt to self-define as 'minor literature,' in other words, the literature of the oppressed, in order to retain the central theme of the tragic struggle against evil. These martyrdom texts are deterritorialized, or separated from the original location of the genre in the cultural, social, and linguistics contexts of Arabic literature, then adapted for use by Kāshefī and others into a Persian context:

> Deterritorialization must be thought of as a perfectly positive power that has degrees and thresholds (epistrata), is always relative, and has reterritorialization as its flipside or complement. An organism that is deterritorialized in relation to the exterior necessarily reterritorializes on its interior milieus. A given presumed fragment of embryo is deterritorialized when it changes thresholds or gradients, but is assigned a new role by the new surroundings.[41]

Thus, a *memory relic* encodes deterritorialization in terms of the movement of its form and the adaptation of its function from one milieu to another, whereupon its meaning reterritorializes the previous two layers into the *substratum of contact*. *Memory relics* are, by their nature, entities which are continually deterritorialized and then reterritorialized.

[41] Ibid, 54.

Deleuze and Guattari significantly note that, "Memories always have a reterritorialization function."[42] In other words, in my use of the concept, collective memory serves to connect a deterritorialized entity back into a cultural *substratum of contact.*

History of Religions Methodology

In this subsection, we are essentially concerned with two methodological themes which guide the implementation of *memory relics* in the context of the *Rowẕat*: that of ritual sacrifice as specific kind of *memory relic*, and how syncretic phenomena which link the mythic, literary, and historical manifestations of sacrificial ritual are better understood through the lens of *memory relics.* Running through both is the link of a kind of sensory archeology, the record of feelings elicited in sacrifice, and transferred in different forms while preserving meaning to suit changing functional contexts.

Sacrifice has mythic, socio-economic, and personal meaning. Lincoln argues that ritual sacrifice was a creative act, that in addition to rehearsing mythic narratives, also had a social function of simultaneously uniting subgroups in a cohesive community while reinforcing hierarchical functions.[43] If we take the actual sacrificial victim as a tangible representation of the archetypical victim (i.e. Ḥusayn or Siyāvash),[44] then another duality expresses itself. By extending intangible benefits in the form of grace, salvation, consolation, etc., as well as material benefits if the sacrificial victim is consumed, the archetypical victim extends benefits which

[42] Ibid, 294.
[43] Bruce Lincoln, *Myth, Cosmos, and Society: Indo-European Themes of Creation and Destruction*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 41, 45.
[44] Lincoln calls this "transformative negation," whereby some entity lower on the cosmo-social hierarchy is offered up for the benefit (or arguably, in place of) of another entity perceived as higher up in the hierarchy. See: Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 204.

transcend death, and is thus in that moment "brought back to life and immortalized."[45] The act of violence, whether literal in the animal sacrifice or symbolic in the rehearsal of the mythic sacrifice creates a zone of sacralized violence surrounded by a desacralized violent world. Where these bounds would normal constitute overstepping the boundaries of the social compact, in the sacrifice, the removal of inhibition becomes a sacred event. Therein, the participants become bound together by the act and the feelings of fear, guilt, and the desire for reparation that the act signifies.[46]

Kāshefī is clear that the performance of mourning for Ḥusayn is a ritual rehearsal of an event which essentially dwells in sacred time, and is rendered implicitly sacrificial through martyrdom:

> Every year, when the month of Muḥarram comes around, those who love the *Ahl al-Bayt* will re-enact (*tāzeh sāzand*) the tragedy of the martyrs and will devote themselves to the commemoration (*be ta'ziyat-e awlād-e ḥaẕrat-e resālat pardāzand*) of the descendants of the Prophet. Their hearts, inflamed with fiery zeal, will weep for all [of the martyrs].[47]

The key term here is the Persian verb *tāzeh sākhtan*, which literally means "to make something fresh." So then, what exactly is being rehearsed? I would argue that this "re-enactment" is that of a ritual sacrifice.

The theme of sacrifice is a powerful dynamic in Twelver Shiʿism. To this day in Iran, a common colloquial expression is *qorbānat/qorbūnet*, used to mean "thank you," but literally

[45] René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 44.
[46] Burkert notes, "Feelings of fear and guilt are the necessary consequences of overstepping one's inhibitions; yet human tradition, in the form of religion, clearly does not aim at removing or settling these tensions. On the contrary, they are purposefully heightened. Peace must reign with the group, for what is called for outside, offends within. Order has to be observed inside, the extraordinary finds release without. Outside, something utterly different, beyond the norm, frightening but fascinating, confronts the ordinary citizen living within the limits of the everyday world. It is surrounded by barriers to be broken down in a complicated, set way, corresponding to the ambivalence of the event: sacralization and desacralization around a central point where weapons, blood, and death establish a sense of human community." See: Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: the Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth,* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press,1983), 21.
[47] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 111.

meaning "[may I be] your sacrifice."[48] It is hard to say for certain if this expression derives from Iranian *ʿĀshūrā'* culture, but the *Rowẓat* is certainly filled with expressions of sacrifice; both the theme of Ḥusayn's companions literally offering to sacrifice their lives for him, or his own overarching sacrifice permeate the pages of the text. Certainly, this is how subsequent interpretations of *ʿĀshūrā'* proceeded; this is obvious both thematically from statements like Sharīʿatī's,[49] above, and literally from the animal sacrifices performed during the rituals.[50] Now, in the discussion above, I have mentioned Ḥusayn and Siyāvash as sacrificial victims; this dissertation examines the thematic and textual connections between them as coming to embody ideas about Iranian identity. But how are we to negotiate this connection?

A central methodological concern of this dissertation is the issue of syncretism. This is a term whose usage in the scholarship of the history of religion is notoriously complex. Ernst notes:

> If religions are treated either as homogeneous substances or autonomous individuals, this vastly oversimplifies the question. Any one-sided characterisation of the 'essence' of such a religion makes historical change, complexity, or diversity into a deviation from the norm. Syncretism, by proposing that religions can be mixed, also assumes that religions exist in a pure unadulterated state. Where shall we find this historically untouched religion? Is there any religious tradition untouched by other religious cultures?[51]

The idea of any religion at all having a common essence which can be identified within any sectarian manifestation is itself still a controversial topic in the history of religion and anthropology; though many scholars like Ahmed reject el-Zein's infamous statement that in the

[48] It is worth noting that the term *qorbān*, derived through Arabic ultimately either from Aramaic *qūrbānā* or Hebrew *qorbān*, literally denoted the victim sacrificed in the Temple in Jerusalem. The word derives from the root *q-r-b*, i.e. literally something that goes or brings one closer [to God]. See: A.J. Wensinck, "Ḳurbān", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 28 January 2021 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4536>
[49] Sharīʿatī 1983, 203-4.
[50] Jean Calmard, "Shi'i Rituals and Power II: The Consolidation of Safavid Shi'ism: Folklore and Popular Religion," in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, (London: New York: I.B. Tauris; Distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1996), pp. 139-190; 178-9.
[51] Carl W. Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15, no. 1 (2005): 15-43; 17.

face of multiplicity, "Islam dissolves" as an analytical category.[52] Obviously, if no religion has an essence or a meaningful core which can be analyzed, this makes syncretism an even more difficult issue to evaluate; can we truly speak of accidents without an essence, or elements imported from one religion to another if those elements are not really definitional? These are questions which I cannot fully answer here, though like Ahmed, I maintain that these categories are to some degree established in the mind of the native, who does insist that Islam is not a meaningless concept in of itself.[53] Furthermore, in order to meaningfully discuss religion at all, without conflating it entirely with culture—which merely substitutes a difficulty in definition with an even vaguer amorphous entity—we must be able to discuss religion conventionally as an analytic category, which has attributional extensions in time. Insofar as practitioners of a religion consider a practice or belief Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian, etc., it must have some sort of mobility, not on its own, but through the vectors of its observers.

My argument for the use of *memory relics* as an alternate to syncretism is threefold. Firstly, it allows us to dispense with the unpleasant historical baggage of the term itself, which has been used in the service of imperialist discourses on 'other people's religions,' usually from a (Protestant) European Christian perspective.[54] Secondly, the concept of syncretism suggests a static state applied as a qualifier for a given religion, religious practice, belief, ritual, and so on. I would argue that fundamentally, syncretic phenomena are not static states at all, they are continual processes which must be active to be syncretic. They are also not singular but vary

[52] Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam?: The Importance of Being Islamic*, (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 136.
[53] Ibid, 136-7.
[54] Anita Maria Leopold and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, "General Introduction," *Syncretism in Religion: A Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 2-12; 8. Lincoln furthermore considers that syncretism in its usual sense does not imply cooperation, but dominance of one power over another, in a kind of narrative conflict; he terms it a negotiation "…marked by dissemblance and bad faith on both sides." See: Bruce Lincoln, "Retiring Syncretism," *Historical Reflections* 27, no. 3 (2001): 453-59; 457.

wildly in effect and scope depending on time, place, popularity, and a number of other variables. There are no 'mixed religions;'[55] instead, I propose that instead of using the language of syncretism, we understand the performance of religious or cultural acts as moments when originally imported religious traditions are manifested in the symbolic language of the host culture they are imported into, subconsciously drawn from collective memory, in terms of the 'need for synonyms' as mentioned above. This is particularly important, because in terms of this dissertation, both ritual complexes like the *siyāvashān* and *taʿziyeh* are not mixed; both are native Persian developments, the difference between them being one of proximate origin. In other words, this is similar to how both *jahān* and *donyā* both mean "world" in Persian, and are Persian words; however, the latter originates as a loanword from Arabic while the former derives from Indo-Iranian stock.

Finally, the use of *memory relics* rather than syncretism provides an avenue to explain transmission, which syncretism fails to do satisfactorily. *Memory relics* demonstrate the evolution of syncretic processes as distinct though interconnected levels (i.e. form, function, and meaning). As such, as Lincoln suggests, I do think that we should "retire syncretism;" though not as an overarching principle, but as an analytical category, which I argue can be better explained by my concept of *memory relics*.[56]

Lastly, it should be noted the important place sensation and feeling occupy in the creation and perpetuation of *memory relics*. In the context of this study, this is even more the case given

[55] Steward notably critiques this conception of religious "mixing" by suggesting, "The more common alchemical model of syncretism, however, is the 'mixture,' a colloidal suspension of two ultimately irreconcilable liquids that will inevitably separate, or the admixture of solids that with little effort will disintegrate. In both versions of this more commonly conceived mixture of religious beliefs and practices, the parts retain their unique identities, implying that their essences are unchanged and their concoction is little more than a momentary juxtaposition." See: Stewart 2001, 272.
[56] Lincoln 2001, 459.

that *ʿĀshūrā', Siyāvashān*, and mourning rituals in general are so fundamentally rooted in sensory experience and the expression of those sensations. Stutz notes that,

> The engagement of other senses than the visual appears to be more studied in the realm of grief and mourning where sensory experiences have been shown to be used as mnemonic devices. Subtle and privately experienced impressions like traces of touch and smell in the home maintain the bond with the dead loved one (Richardson, 2014) whose personhood this extends 'beyond the body boundary' (Gell, 1998, p. 104). Richardson uses this as a point of departure to argue that 'the residual belongings or trace of someone who has died can carry a particular charge and generate associated reactions' (Richardson, 2014, p. 67)…[57]

In the case of the *Rowẕat*, narrative mourning materials like it, and the religious rituals which evolve out of them, the experience is complicated by several factors. Most importantly, the supporting sensory inputs mentioned by Stutz, such as the physical body, smells, belongings of the deceased, and so on, these are all absent. Thus, the input must be replaced either by substitutions, or audio-visual materials which actively evoke the memory of the deceased. Physical artifacts such as relics or reliquaries may also not be available, in which case they may be replaced by cenotaph, an empty tomb constructed to evoke the original or desired burial site.[58] As we shall see particularly in Chapters Two and Four, in the case of *ʿĀshūrā'* mourning, this input is achieved through the creation of a mental landscape evoked by the recitation of the *Rowẕat* (i.e. *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*), and the substitution of mock corpses, funeral processions, and even flagellation rituals, whose purpose is to transport the mourners into a temporal space where they experience the death of Ḥusayn as though it were happening in front of them. Thus, the *memory relic* is also a set of processes whereby these sensations are crystallized into narrative and ritual

[57] Liv Nilsson Stutz, "Sensing Death and Experiencing Mortuary Ritual," in *The Routledge Handbook of Sensory Archaeology*, (Milton: Routledge, 2020), pp. 148-163; 150.
[58] In Shiʿism, these are usually called *shabīh*, *rawḍa/rowẕeh*, *ḥusayniyya*, *imāmbāṛā*, and several other terms which often overlap with the terms for the rituals practiced therein.

forms, which may be invoked to create a sensory landscape that is perpetually revived in each performance.

In this sense, the more literal sense of the term *memory relic* is fully explicated: in the absence of the tangible sensory input of a funeral usually available for the recently dead, as well as the absence of physical relics, it is the narrative itself which becomes the relic. The recitation of the narrative in ritual format is thus akin to practices of relic veneration or display. As a physical relic is transportable, able to be reterritorialized, and reconstitutes the physical and spiritual reality of the holy person, so does a narrative relic—and thus a *memory relic*—enable the reconstitution of the holy person as a network of stories. Indeed, if memory is fundamentally understood as the narrative function of the mind which enables the continuity of identity, likewise the recitation of their narrative propagates their memory. Now that I have presented the methodological framework for this dissertation, in the following section, I will consider some problematic issues inherent in the terminology and clarify how they are addressed in the context of the overall arguments.

IV. Issues for Consideration

Before moving on, it is imperative to consider some questions of identity, definition, and comparison. Some concepts require unpacking otherwise they become too generalized and anachronistic to be useful for analysis Both here and throughout this dissertation, I have used terms such as “Arab,” “Iranian,” “Muslim,” “Zoroastrian,” and to a lesser extent, “martyr,” “rebellion of the oppressed,” and “salvation;” these should not be taken as though they designate concrete, uncomplicated categories. In this section, I will address these issues in three

subsections, dealing firstly with labels of identity and definitions, secondly with the complex relationship between rituals of supposed rebellion which are still sponsored by the ruling state, and finally, the issue of comparison between Christian themes of salvation and Twelver ones.

Identity and Definition

The attitude that certain labels of identity transcend time and space, taken uncritically, is problematic. Particularly in the case of ethnic and religious identities, the historical reality is too complex to assume that these identities were static entities that populations adhered to without question until at least the Early Modern Era—and even in the present day. In this case, these labels should be taken as conventional identity descriptors which are intended to highlight a perceived connection to a socio-lingustic heritage or religious tradition. In other words, when I say "Persian identity" prior to the Safavid period (c. 16th century), what I mean is the perceived connection to a particular region, i.e. the historical Persian Empire(s), and the identification of groups as primarily speakers of [a form of] Persian.

At the outset of this dissertation, it is important to note the nature of comparison and connection in this dissertation. The discussion of comparison and connection between narratives of Ḥusayn and in particular, Siyāvash, is a central theme. However, I must emphasize that in the context of this comparison, the issue of direct connection must be clearly articulated. The idea of Iranian practices of *ʿĀshūrā'* being a direct continuation or reformation of the *Siyāvashān* is problematic for a variety of reasons, the primary issues being formal and historical. Formally, as I have previously stated above, before the crystallization of religious and ethnic identities into distinct categories beginning in the Safavid era, it is difficult to isolate a core concept of "Iranian religion" which one can propose 'mixed' with "Twelver Shiʿi Islamic religion." Furthermore, as

I have previously noted, the idea of "religious mixing" is itself problematic. This is a major reason why, as was previously elaborated in the Methodology section above, I have proposed *memory relics* as a replacement for syncretism. *Memory relics* allow us to analyze these moments individually as they unfold into a continuum, rather than as a continuous timeless state. This being said, I will show that it is clear that mourning for Ḥusayn came to be considered a part of Twelver Shiʿi identity, and when considered in the context of earlier mourning rituals for Siyāvash, in some form connected with Iranian identity.

For the Safavids, Ḥusayn was not merely a convenient element of popular Shiʿi belief to be invoked as a symbolic gesture. Rather, they were simultaneously invoking Ḥusayn as their direct ancestor as well as a Shiʿi religious figure. Virtually every Safavid royal chronicle—beginning with the two earliest in Ghiyāṣ-al-Dīn Khᵛāndmīr's *Ḥabīb al-Siyar* (The Beloved among Biographies) in 1524 C.E. and Ebrāhīm Amīnī's *Fotūḥāt-e Shāhī* (The Royal Conquest) in 1531 C.E.—traces Shāh Esmāʿīl's genealogy to the seventh Twelver Imam, Mūsá al-Kāẓim (d. 799 C.E.).[59] This genealogy legitimizes the Safavids as both the religious and temporal rulers of the empire by giving them a direct line of descent from Ḥusayn and his family. As such, it is not too farfetched to consider Safavid-era *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals as essentially a form of ancestor veneration. At the very least, this is how the 18th century German explorer Engelbert Kaempfer regarded the *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals he witnessed, explicitly describing them as Persian "*parentalia.*"[60] As such, for the Safavids, Ḥusayn can be understood as not only emblematic of Shiʿi identity, but as the personification or patron of the Safavid state. It is important to understand the context

[59] Sholeh A. Quinn, *Persian Historiography across Empires: The Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 54-5.
[60] Engelbert Kaempfer, *Amoenitatum Exoticarum Politico-physico-medicarum Fasciculi V: quibus Continentur Variae Relationes, Observationes & Descriptiones Rerum Persicarum & Ulterioris Asiae: Multâ Attentione, in Peregrinationibus per Universum Orientem*. (Lemgo, Germany: Typis & Impensis Henrici Wilhelmi Meyeri, 1712), 158-9. See Chapter Four, Section V for further details on Kaempfer's experience of Muḥarram in Iran.

of Ḥusayn's charisma as disseminated by the Safavids. Part of the Safavid's authority resided in the personality cults of their own rulers, in particular, Shāh Esmāʿīl, who cultivated the most elaborate cult of personality out of all the Safavids. Thus, it was in their interest to fuse veneration of Ḥusayn with the emerging concept of an Iranian identity and connect it with the national past. The second part of their authority rested in their instrumentalizing of public sentiment for Ḥusayn. Thus, the *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals became an insignia of royal authority.

In consideration of the historical method, a central concern of this dissertation is to establish provenance and conclusive links for theories articulated elsewhere in academic studies of *ʿĀshūrā'* and *taʿziyeh*. For example, scholars such as Yarshater have suggested that Iranian *taʿziyeh* are influenced by pre-Islamic Iranian-Mesopotamian cults for Siyāvash and Tammūz. However, while Yarshater offers several tantalizing instances of thematic similarity, he does not prove any tangible connection between them. This dissertation aims to prove a modified form of this idea through subjecting the claim to the historical method and painstakingly demonstrating the connections between these two entities using textual, tangible evidence—at least insofar as textual influence can be shown.

Historically, it is also difficult to establish the exact amount of overlap in time and space between the *Siyāvashān* and *ʿĀshūrā'*. As we shall see in Chapter Three, practices I have conventionally described as *Siyāvashān* existed in Central Asia at least until the 11th century C.E. Even though these practices appear again in the 20th century, we have no way of knowing whether thesy continued in unbroken form until the present day, or whether they were simply periodically revived, or confined to certain regions, died out, or totally absorbed by *ʿĀshūrā'*. As such, this dissertation is interested more in narrative and literary continuity as the primary

connection, which I argue influenced texts such as the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, which then passed into a ritual context.

The case of the term "martyr" is less problematic and more a question of historical terminological associations which may imply conflation with the Christian notion of the martyr. One may argue that the use of the term "martyr" is inappropriate to translate *shahīd* since it smuggles Christian assumptions into a different context. To some extent, however, the traditional translation of *shahīd* into English is historically warranted; *shahīd*, is a near-direct and cognate rendering of the equivalent Syriac term, *sāhḏā*,[61] which is itself calqued on the original Greek *mártys*, all of which share the exact same semantic field of "witnessing," and all of which originally referred to witnessing in the sense of a legal or economic transaction.[62] The English word also derives from the Greek through Latin. However, etymology can sometimes hide more subtle details of context and synchronic usage. We cannot properly conclude that since *shahīd*, *sāhḏā*, and *mártys* share a historical connection that they always shared the same meaning.[63] Moss cautions, for example, that even in the Christian tradition, declaring that martyr has a single stable meaning which can be "pinned down" is a presupposition.[64] Given the fact that this

[61] Technically, *sāhḏā* is the active participle; *shahīd* is more precisely cognate to the Syriac passive participle from the same root, *sʾhīḏ*.
[62] Jeffrey briefly comments on this in his book on Qur'anic loanwords*:* Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān,* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 187. Cook also agrees that the Syriac word exerted influence on the later post-Qur'ānic evolution of the word. See: David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 16. See also: Candida R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), 2-3.
[63] This is true of the Qur'ān, for example, where a translation of "martyr" in several verses is inappropriate; for example, in 2:143, sections such as *wa yakūnu l-rusūlu ʿalaykum shahīdan* "and the Messenger is a witness over you all" or in 2:282, which has a clear legal context, a rendering of "martyr" is simply incorrect. In fact, many verses apply the term *shahīd* to God, as the one who observes all things. Verses such as 3:169-70, which describe the state and reward of persons who die in the service of God (*fī sabīl allāh*) do not actually use the word *shahīd* at all. Here I strongly concur with Afsaruddin, who also considers the translation of martyr in the Qur'an to be anachronistic, and prefers the more neutral rendering of "witness," which belies the older sense of "witness to a financial or judicial transaction." See: Asma Afsaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God: Jihad and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 109-110.
[64] Moss, 1-2.

dissertation accepts the idea of cultural traditions, religious terms, and mythic ideas as able to be deterritorialized and moved to a different cultural environment, I do take the notion of martyrdom concepts as inheritable. This being said, we cannot fall into the trap of assuming that Christian and Muslim—or even Sunni and Shiʿi—concepts of martyrdom are interchangeable.

Controlled Rebellions

Another concern which is quite muted in the first three chapters of the dissertation is the contrast between *ʿĀshūrā'* as a ritual of rebellion and *ʿĀshūrā'* as a ritual of the state. This issue comes into its own in Chapter Four, when I discuss the 'mainstreaming' of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals. With the emphasis on the oppression of Ḥusayn's family, the suppression of Shiʿism as a minority religion, and the persecution of its adherents throughout historically Muslim majority societies even to this day, it can be easy to forget that *ʿĀshūrā'* still suggests an idea of absolute obedience to religious authorities.[65] However, the paradoxical theme of control within the rebellion of the oppressed is still baked into the substance of the rituals.

When considered in the context of other similar religious rituals which present themselves as a rebellion against tyranny or a subversion of rigid social order, this theme becomes more obvious. For example, the *Dionysia* of Ancient Greece and the attendant Dionysian Mysteries are typically imagined as a wild, total abandoning of any pretense of civilization in an orgy of sex and violence. In actuality, however, the 'wild' maenad handmaidens of Dionysus were often professional priestesses, with official civically appointed

[65] Janet Afary, "Shiʿite Narratives of Karbala and Christian Rites of Penance: Michel Foucault and the Culture of the Iranian Revolution 1978-79," *Eternal Performance: Ta'ziyeh and Other Shiite Rituals*, (London ; New York: Seagull, 2010), pp. 192-236; 212.

positions,[66] and the *Dionysia* was essentially a temporary relaxation of the Greek social order in order to ultimately reinforce it.[67]

In earlier periods, *ʿĀshūrā'* was associated with either active or quietist resistance against Sunni authorities, but under the Safavids, it became a tool of legitimizing the state.[68] Indeed, later Safavid rulers may have encouraged temporary hostility in the form of mock battles and martial dances. In the present day, this carnivalesque dissolution of all other worldly matters in the reenactment of a conflict which casts its characters in absolute terms of good and evil, is perceived by some Iranians as a glorification of the state.[69] Afary argues that the *taʿziyeh* in the modern period, specifically in revolutionary-era Iran (1970s onwards) can be interpreted as having some readings which were hijacked by political interests to demonize the 'other.'[70] The template of encouraging a single national, ethnic, or group identity has some uncomfortable parallels in many other parts of the world, and Afary points to European employments of Christian passion plays in the service of fascist movements as one such parallel.[71] Such a development may be possible when the theme of revolution is no longer an actual struggle against a real and far more powerful oppressor but instead is sublimated into devotion to a totemic representation of the state as the persecuted become the rulers.

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[66] Barbara E. Goff, *Citizen Bacchae: Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece,* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2004), 215.
[67] Seaford, for example, describes Dionysus as a "…god of communality draws women out of the household, inspiring them in a temporary, controlled resistance to public gender division." See: Richard Seaford, "Dionysus as Destroyer of the Household: Homer, Tragedy, and the Polis," in *Masks of Dionysus,* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 115-146; 137.
[68] See: Augustus Richard Norton, "Musa Al-Sadr," in *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, (London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books, 1994), 184-207; 190; and: Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East*, (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 61.
[69] Kimia Ramezani in discussion with the author, January 2021.
[70] Afary 2010, 213-4.
[71] Ibid, 214. However, as a counterpoint, is also important to note that pre-Islamic conceptions of Persian/Zoroastrian culture have also been employed to glorify a purist conception of Persian ethno-national identity, particularly starting with the Pahlavi dynasty (1925 until 1979).

However, we must simultaneously be careful of projecting these concerns too far in the past. While we can acknowledge the darker aspects of *ʿĀshūrā'*, we cannot take the extreme position of believing that under the Safavids, it simply became a form of social control, and application of fascist motivations to them is anachronistic. Indeed, we must also be aware that the Safavid empire far preceded modern conceptions of the nation-state, and likewise particularly essentialist concepts of ethnic purity, as I have discussed previously in the subsection on identity and definition, above. It is also important to note that even under Safavid official sponsorship, Shiʿi rituals even before the Safavids had been conducted within a vast network of local sponsorship from guilds, artisans, and fraternal organizations.[72] The localization of *ʿĀshūrā'* also encourages its personalization. As such, it is overly cynical to imagine that these rituals at their core were entirely about propping up the state. Rather, *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals walked a narrow line between normative and transgressive spaces. The state cannot manufacture sentiment, though it can of course encourage it. Fundamentally, rituals like the mourning of *ʿĀshūrā'* are about feeling; there must be some human core which resonates with the public in Ḥusayn's story that enables it not only to become useful as a vehicle for state propaganda, but also to endure as an emblem of the human condition.

Holy Week and ʿĀshūrā': A Caveat

For many Twelvers, the martyrdom of Ḥusayn is considered the definitional moment of their religious history. In a similar way, the crucifixion of Jesus is usually considered by Christians to be the definitional moment in Christianity. It is hard to overlook the similarities: a claim by a man of divine authority superseding the religious and temporal authorities of his time,

[72] Babak Rahimi, *Theater State and the Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 15.

a betrayal by trusted allies, a bloody and gruesome death, the mourning of female relatives over this death, miracles alleged to occur after that death, and the overarching theme of the triumph over tyranny through the willing sacrifice of that same man. All of these ideas are applicable to both the case of Ḥusayn and Jesus, a connection which has hardly gone unnoticed.

Discussions of the similarities between commemorations for the death of Ḥusayn and the crucifixion of Jesus have appeared in almost every Western academic publication on the topic of *ʿĀshūrā'* for as long as it has been researched. [73] Even Foucault, as well as much earlier European travelers noticed the similarities.[74] Ayoub's 1978 book, *Redemptive Suffering In Islām* in particular highlights the similarities.[75] Partially in order to rectify overzealous applications of these similarities which risk presenting *ʿĀshūrā'* as simply the Catholic Holy Week in Muslim guise, Fischer suggests the word "paradigm" as opposed to "passion" in so that "…it focuses attention upon the story as a rhetorical device rather than on either the (albeit important) emotional component or the theological motifs common to Islam and Christianity."[76] In literature following Fischer, this concept is usually referred to as the Karbala Paradigm. While this dissertation dispenses with the omission of the emotional component, since I argue it is integral to understanding the psychological motivations underlying identification with Ḥusayn, the point regarding theological components is well-founded, as I detail below.

[73] Indeed, it is worth considering what influence Syriac martyrologies exerted over the *maqtal* genre, though this is beyond the scope of this dissertation. As I have already noted, the later conception of the Arabic word *shahīd* as "martyr" was probably influenced by the cognate Syriac term *sāhḏā*. I plan to address this connection in a later publication.
[74] Afary 2010, 216.
[75] Ayoub does note that, "Redemption is used here in its broadest sense to mean the healing of existence or the fulfillment of human life. Thus the meaning of redemption in this instance must be distinguished from redemption as a theological concept, and especially from its technical use in Christian theology." See: Mahmoud Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islām: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of 'Āshūrāʾ in Twelver Shīʿism*, (The Hague, Netherlands: Mouton, 1978); 23, 199.
[76] Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980), 21.

While this dissertation takes the position that the modern practice of *taʿziyeh*—especially in Iran which also strongly influenced *ʿĀshūrāʾ* commemorations in South Asia—is indeed a nexus of cross-cultural exchange, I must also point out the differences in focuses and themes. In terms of the influence on South Asian observances of *ʿĀshūrāʾ*, and in keeping with the socio-linguistic baseline of *memory relics* as discussed in Section III, it is worth noting that *taʿziyeh* means something quite different in South Asia. There, despite being a loanword from Persian, *taʿziya* in Urdu and other South Asian languages refers to a kind of parade float, a small reproduction of Ḥusayn's tomb usually constructed out paper and cardboard (for temporary creations) or metal and wood (for permanent versions).[77] Highlighting this regional difference within the same tradition itself is a useful point of reference to critically evaluate comparative approaches between different traditions, which must be handled carefully and with ample concern for the very real differences between them.

The first and most important are the differences in themes of salvation and redemption. Shiʿism most certainly holds the Imams up as of central importance for humanity in achieving salvation. The Imams are the interpreters of God's authority on earth and have cosmological importance as well. The universe literally could not exist without an Imam present somewhere in the world.[78] Likewise, the Imams are considered to intercede (*shafāʿa*) on the behalf of their loyal followers in the next life.[79] This theme pops up early on in the *Rowẕat* as well, where

[77] See: Jaffri, Syed Husain Ali, "Muharram Ceremonies in India," In *Ta'ziyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran*, (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 222–27; 222-223. During my time in Lucknow, India, during Summer 2018, I saw both versions of these *taʿziya,* both ready-made and in the process of construction for *ʿĀshūrāʾ* of that year.

[78] Several *aḥādīth* in *Kitāb al-kāfī* (The Book of the Sufficient), one of the four most important Twelver Shiʿi *ḥadīth* books (*al-kutub al-arbaʿa*), state that, "the earth will not perdure without an Imam" (*lā tabqá l-arḍu bi-ghayri ʾimāmin*) and that "If the earth existed without an Imam, then it would collapse" (*law baqiyat al-arḍu bi-ghayri ʾimāmin la-sākhat*). See: Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī, *Kitāb al-Kāfī*, (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Fajr, 2007), 1:103-4.

[79] The issue of *shafāʿa* is quite complex; in some places, the Qur'ān appears to almost unilaterally condemn it; see for example 74:48: "The intercession of the intercessors will not avail them," (*fa-mā tanfaʿuhum shafāʿatu l-*

Kāshefī cites a *ḥadīth* stating that anyone who weeps over Ḥusayn will obtain the rewards of paradise.[80] These ideas share a certain resemblance to the concept of salvation through Christ in Christianity; indeed Ayoub argues that it is through the Shiʿi interpretation of *shafāʿa* that redemption is articulated.[81]

However, there are some basic cosmological and soteriological differences from Christianity inherent in Islam in general. The most important of these is the fact that most Christian sects, Catholicism in particular, accept the idea of original sin, ancestral sin, or total depravity of some kind; i.e. the belief that human beings are inherently flawed in some manner and intrinsically require salvation through Christ. The Catholic Catechism defines original sin as something,

> […]proper to each individual, original sin does not have the character of a personal fault in any of Adam's descendants. It is a deprivation of original holiness and justice, but human nature has not been totally corrupted: it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin—an inclination to evil that is called concupiscence.[82]

In other words, original sin is a fundamental inclination in human beings towards evil, though their nature itself is not evil.[83] In Catholic soteriology, Christ's sacrifice enables human beings to transcend their sin-stained natures and return to the state of original holiness.

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shāfiʿīn). However, there are also verses like 19:87: "None possesses intercession except those who have taken it up as a covenant with the Merciful One" (*lā yamlikūna l-shafāʿata ʾillā mana ʾttakhadha ʿinda l-raḥmāni ʿahdan*). While it is possible that abrogation (*naskh*) is at work here, it seems more likely that the Qur'ān is putting forth a complex view of intercession which allows it only in cases where God has already consented to it long before the Day of Judgement. See: A.J. Wensinck, D. Gimaret, and Annemarie Schimmel, "Shafāʿa", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Consulted online on 01 December 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1019> In the Shiʿi view, it of course follows that the Imams, as a party who have had the greatest covenant with God since before creation, would thus fall into the category of those permitted to intercede. Kāshefī for one, is quite explicit that anyone who sheds a tear for Ḥusayn will have him intercede for them at the Day of Judgement. See: Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 146-7.

[80] Ibid, 110.

[81] Ayoub 1978, 197.

[82] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Westminster: Crown Publishing Group, 2012),114.

[83] Indeed, according to Catholic theology, human nature cannot be evil, otherwise the incarnation would be impossible, because it would mean God either is or becomes partially evil.

In contrast, original sin is not a doctrine of any form of Islam of which I am aware. The Qur'ān puts a strong emphasis on personal responsibility; nowhere is any primordial sin considered to be the source of a tendency to do evil.[84] Since original sin is a kind of collective guilt shared by all human beings, and the Qur'ān rejects collective guilt, there can be no collective salvation for all human beings since there is no sin they all share.[85] From this very basic premise, we can see that mourning for Ḥusayn can never have the same kind of shared universal quality that repentance in Catholicism does. While the fact of sorrow over Ḥusayn's death is repeatedly emphasized as a universal concern, its effect is solidly individual. Ḥusayn cannot redeem all human beings, and in fact, his intercession is reserved for "the lovers of the *ahl al-bayt*" (*moḥibbān-e ahl-e beyt*).[86] This being said, he provides a powerful means for them to redeem themselves through him.

Another difference between the Twelver view of Ḥusayn's martyrdom is one of emphasis and repentance. The idea of repentance is central to commemoration over Ḥusayn's death, however, this repentance is for an action performed in temporal history, namely the betrayal of the people who would become the *tawwābūn* (repenters). As such, the collective guilt of the Shiʿi community over Ḥusayn's death is largely a symbolic one, rather than a metaphysical one. In Catholicism, the sin of Adam and Eve is an axiomatic truth reflecting a primordial act of

[84] Emran Iqbal El-Badawi, *The Qur'ān and the Aramaic Gospel Traditions*, (New York: Routledge, 2014), 79.
[85] According to Sachedina, "Although the similarity of Islamic messianism to Judeo-Christian ideas of the Messiah has been noted, the idea of the Mahdi as held by Muslims has distinctive Islamic coloring. The Islamic doctrine of salvation does not conceive of man as a sinner who must be saved through spiritual regeneration. Rather it holds that man is not dead in sin, so he needs no spiritual rebirth. Nor does the doctrine conceive of its people's salvation in nationalistic terms, with the assurance of the realization of the kingdom of God in a promised land by a unique, autonomous community. The basis emphasis of Islamic salvation lies instead in the historical responsibility of its followers, namely, the establishment of the ideal religio-political community, the *umma*, with a worldwide membership of all those who believe in God and his revelation through Muhammad." See: Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *Islamic Messianism: The Idea of Mahdī in Twelver Shīʿism*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 2.
[86] Kāshefī, *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*, 111.

disobedience against God; the crucifixion of Christ is a recapitulation of this fault as well as the means by which this fault is expiated. The crucifixion is moored in history, but original sin is not. Thus, repentance in Catholicism is actual and metaphysically salient; in Shiʿism it is a ritual act of solidarity with Ḥusayn's suffering, or at best a symbolic plea for forgiveness that present Shiʿa could not fight on Ḥusayn's behalf.[87] Likewise, this repentance is not a central theme of *ʿĀshūrā'* but an ancillary one. Instead, the theme is of righteous vengeance, whether actual or metaphorical, and the struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor.

Thus, while it is correct and useful to point out resemblances between the commemorations of *ʿĀshūrā'* and Holy Week, we must be careful not to conflate them or imagine that the former is simply the Muslim incarnation of the latter. In general, this dissertation is concerned with intercultural exchanges which would have been more germane and significant to a native Iranian population, which was more influenced by Iranian legendary epics than Christianity. Now that I have covered methodological issues, I will turn to more formal concerns. The next section discusses the current scholarship on the *maqtal* genre, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, *taʿziyeh*, and Iranian epic heroes. Therein, I will demonstrate the current gaps in the academic literature and how I intend to fill them.

V. The State of the Scholarship

Given that the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, the main subject of this dissertation is a *maqtal*, a martyrdom narrative, it is appropriate to consider the state of academic treatment of this genre at

[87] I discussed the topic of repentance in Shiʿism with a contact of mine, a professional *marṯiya-khᵛān* in Lucknow, India. He was quite forceful in saying, "We don't perform repentance (*tauba*); repentance is done for a sin (*gunāh*). We didn't kill Ḥusayn, so we won't repent." Qazi Asad, personal conversation with the author (in Urdu), April 18 2020.

the outset. Currently, the scholarship on the *maqtal* literature in English is quite limited and does not attempt any discussion of its evolution or relationship to Arabic *ḥadīth/akhbār* and *marthiya* with *maqtal* themes, or the later Persian forms of the *maqtal*. Those works that exist are typically either partial treatments or address a very limited facet of the hagiographical genres juxtaposed with the events of Karbalā'. There is not even currently an *Encyclopedia of Islam* article on the topic, but the topic of the *maqtal* is only referenced within the context of other articles such as the entry on *marthiya.*[88] One of the central purposes of this dissertation is help to fill this void.

Perhaps the most useful historical overview is Günther's 1994 article, "Maqâtil Literature in Medieval Islam;" however, the article focuses almost entirely on the earlier Arabic literature, while the later Persian tradition gets a mostly perfunctory mention in two paragraphs. [89] Two other articles by Khalid Sindawi (2002-2003, 2002) discuss some important themes in the genres: in this case, the attributes of Ḥusayn, physical and otherwise, are presented, and in the other, the theme of dreams in connection to the *maqātil* is given a full treatment.[90] Chelkowski's 1986 article, "From Maqātil Literature to Drama,"[91] does address the *maqtal* genre, but as the basis for the *ta'ziyeh* which is one of the most visible popular manifestations of the genre, primarily in modern Iran. I will address this particular evolution in much greater detail in Chapter Four.

The only published book-length treatment that I am aware of detailing narrative traditions on the martyrdom of Ḥusayn is Ayoub's 1978 *Redemptive Suffering in Islam*. The book focuses

[88] Ch. Pellat, W. L. Hanaway, B. Flemming, J. A. Haywood, and J. Knappert, "Marthiya." *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition,* April 24, 2012. https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/marthiya-COM_0691?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=marthiya.
[89] Günther 1994, 208.
[90] Khalid Sindawi, "The Image of Husayn Ibn 'Ali in Maqatil Literature," *Quaderni Di Studi Arabi* 20-21 (2002): 79-104, and Khalid Sindawi, "The Dreams of Husayn Ibn 'Alī and His Family in Shī'ite Maqātil Literature," *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 39, no. 0 (2002): 182-200.
[91] Peter Chelkowski, "From Maqātil Literature to Drama," *Al-Ṣerāt* 12 (London: Muhammadi Trust, 1986), 227-64.

almost exclusively on the pietistic aspects of the literary tradition. While these aspects are important, the work ends up being less historical and more thematic in its focus and neglects sociological, philological, and cross-cultural interchange within its analysis.[92] There is little attempt to describe the evolution of the *maqtal* genre, its relationship to other forms of hagiographical or panegyric literature, or the place of such literature as a tool in creating an imperial, distinctly Persian narrative for the Safavid state. Again, this work also focuses almost entirely on the Arabic literary tradition. Ayoub's book has been criticized for its implicit or explicit importation of a Christian framework (i.e. the titular "redemptive suffering") to discuss the genre, as well as inaccuracies in dating of sources.[93] Thus in my usage of this text as a secondary resource, I will be conscious of these criticisms.

Calmard's unpublished 1975 dissertation, "Le culte de l'Imām Husayn,"[94] is the only work that addresses the rise of commemorative practices for Ḥusayn at least partially in a Persian context. Calmard's work and this present dissertation share some commonalities, including an analysis of Kāshefī's *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* in Part II, Chapter III. However, in addition to the fact that Calmard's work is difficult to physically access, my methodology, literary analysis, and historical evaluation of the *Rowẕat* is quite different. Calmard's text works from a basically historical perspective, and literary concerns are secondary. This present dissertation is of course interested in the historical record, which is addressed in detail in Chapter Four, but the central concern is the connection between evolving literary genres and popular rituals. The supernatural themes of the *Rowẕat* are much less central to Calmard's discussion. Likewise, the bulk of

[92] "It is with the meaning of the suffering and martyrdom of *Imām* Ḥusayn, grandson of the Prophet and spiritual head of the *Shīʿī* community, that this study will be concerned." Ayoub 1978, 15.
[93] See for example: M.S. Stern. *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 15, no. 1 (1981), 54-55, and Etan Kohlberg. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11, no. 4 (1980), 543-44.
[94] Jean Calmard, "Le culte de l'Imām Husayn: étude sur la commémoration du drame de Karbalā dans l'Iran pré-safavide," PhD diss., Ecole pratique des hautes études, 1975.

Calmard's dissertation discusses pre-Kāshefī literature, and only considers early Safavid doctrines. On the other hand, I have focused not only on demonstrating the connections between the *Rowẕat* and the Persian literary tradition, but also how we can document via legal and historical sources, that the *Rowẕat* became a central fixture of Safavid propagandistic efforts vis-à-vis *ʿĀshūrā'* commemorations. In addition, I believe it necessary to analyze these subjects through the lenses of theoretical frameworks adapted from sociology and the history of religion, as well as philology and comparative literature, whereas Calmard's dissertation is less interested in these perspectives. Finally, this dissertation expands on several of Calmard's theories using evidence either not available to Calmard or glossed over by him. In some cases, I have been able to prove Calmard's tentative arguments suggested either in his dissertation or later articles, or revise them.

In addition to Ayoub and Calmard's texts, another unpublished 2007 dissertation from Ahmed, "Al-Husayn Ibn ʿAlī: A Study of His Uprising and Death Based on Classical Arabic Sources," presents the sources from a historical perspective; but yet again, the sources are limited to Arabic texts.[95] That being said, the above research provides a strong starting point for my study—the chronological overview of Günther and the emphasis on the emotional impact of the *maqtal* genre in Ayoub are particularly useful contributions.

As presented above, there is some scholarly literature present, but it mostly consists of a few focused articles, Ahmad's dissertation, and Ayoub's single published book on the subject. None of these are as synthetic as is the intention of this dissertation but are rather narrowly focused. Finally, the literature on the second "renaissance" of the *maqtal*, i.e., the Persian contribution to the genre, appears to have near to no published scholarly sources devoted to it,

[95] Riadh Ahmad. "Al-Husayn Ibn `Alī: A Study of His Uprising and Death Based on Classical Arabic Sources (3rd and 4th Century A.H./9th and 10th Century A.D.)," PhD diss., (McGill University, 2007).

save a 2003 book chapter by Amanat or incidental treatments when scholars consider Kāshefī, Herat, or the Safavids.[96] There is no book-length treatment of the *Rowẓat* itself in Western languages. Calmard's dissertation comes closest, but it arguably not the central topic of the dissertation, though significant. In Persian, the most comprehensive overview is Jaʿfariyān's 1995 article, "Mollā Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī-o Ketāb-e *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*" (Mollā Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī and the Book, *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*). This piece provides useful discussions of Kāshefī's life, confessional status, the sources of his book, and a short consideration of its later impact.[97] However, the full range of the *Rowẓat*'s effect on later Persian *ʿĀshūrā'* is considerably abbreviated in the article; a lacuna which this dissertation will fill.

For the broader category of martyrdom, the work on the significance of this topic in Islam as a "pre-modern" or even "early modern" phenomenon is decidedly lacking, outside of Cook's 2007 book. [98] Afsaruddin has recently written a book dealing with the topic, but martyrdom is more tangential to the overall focus of the text, which is *jihād.*[99] One of the most significant contributions I plan to make to the scholarly literature is not only by considering the neglected Persian texts, but also by analyzing them through the lenses of comparative literature, comparative religion, and sociology. This is a methodology which has not been previously applied to this topic.

As a corollary to the *maqtal*, there is the subject of the *taʿziya/taʿziyeh* (literally, "[funerary] condolence," or "passion play") which has come to be understood as dramatized reenactments of the death of al-Ḥusayn or his companions. However, in contrast to the *maqtal*,

[96] Abbas Amanat, "Meadow of the Martyrs: Kāshifī's Persianization of the Shiʻi Martyrdom Narrative in the Late Tīmūrid Herat," in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam*, (London: Tauris, 2003), 250-75.
[97] Rasūl Jaʿfariyān, "Mollā Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī-o Ketāb-e *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*," *Āyneh-ye Pazhūhesh*, no. 33 (Mordād and Shahrīvar 1995): 20–38.
[98] David Cook. *Martyrdom in Islam.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[99] Asma Afsaruddin. *Striving in the Path of God: Jihad and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

the *ta'ziyeh* is far more recent and well-researched.[100] Of this research, Chelkowski is probably one of the most prolific contributors; he has edited two books collecting articles on *ta'ziyeh*, as well as written numerous articles on the subject.[101] Aghaie has two books which deal more broadly with *'Āshūrā'* rituals,[102] as does Hyder, though here in a South Asian context.[103] Fischer's book has generally been recognized as important in contributing the model of the Karbala Paradigm in order to analyze the narrative through a comparative lens,[104] which later scholars have modified to focus on political interpretations, especially quietist versus revolutionary.[105] I believe these contributions will be of importance to translating the abstract literary material of the *maqtal* into its tangible ritual manifestations. The performative dramatic elements and historical connection of *ta'ziyeh* to the *maqtal* is relevant as much as are the *rithā'* and *ḥadīth*. *Ta'ziyeh* is closely linked to the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, "chanting or reciting the Meadow [of the Martyrs]," the highly ritualized oral performance of Persian *maqtal* texts. Together they form some of the most notable rituals of *'Āshūrā'*. As such, much of the scholarly work on the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* has significant overlap with research on the *ta'ziyeh*. Chelkowski's work is again relevant here, particularly his 1986 article on the topic, as are Aghaie's aforementioned books.[106] Rahimi's 2011 book, *Theater State and the Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran*, provides not only a wealth of important information on Safavid-era *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals, but also is

[100] Indeed, the late famous Iranian film-maker, Abbas Kiarostami, even made a film on the subject.
[101] See: Peter J. Chelkowski, *Ta'ziyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran*. (New York: New York University Press, 1979), and: *Eternal Performance: Ta'ziyeh and Other Shiite Rituals*. (London; New York: Seagull, 2010).
[102] See: Kamran Scot Aghaie, *The Martyrs of Karbala: Shīʿī Symbols and Rituals in Modern Iran*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), and: *The Women of Karbala: Ritual Performance and Symbolic Discourses in Modern Shīʿī Islam*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).
[103] Syed Akbar Hyder, *Reliving Karbala: Martyrdom in South Asian Memory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.)
[104] Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).
[105] Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East*, (London ; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1990).
[106] Peter J. Chelkowski, "Popular Shīʿī Mourning Rituals," *Al-Serāt* 12.1 (London: Muhammadi Trust , 1986), 209–226.

invaluable for his detailed discussion of the various theoretical frameworks applied by different scholars to ritual performance.[107]

Unlike the Western academic material on *taʿziyeh*, the Persian academic material dealing with the topic is massive; a quick search on Noormags, an online database founded and administered by the Computer Research Center of Islamic Sciences (CRCIS) results in over 6000 articles on the subject. While I do not have the space to fully address this abundance of research, I have relied on several articles as well as what is perhaps the most complete Persian academic source on the topic, Shahīdī's 1979 book *Pezhūheshī dar ta'zīyeh-o ta'zīyeh-khᵛānī* (Research on Commemoration Plays and Rituals).[108]

To briefly touch on the scholarship of the genres which are subsidiary to my discussion of the *maqtal*, the Western academic studies of *rithā'* are similarly limited; there is no systematic overview of the genre.[109] The field is largely dominated by Stetkevych,[110] who has several articles which deal with specific instances of *rithā'*, only one of which centers on the martyrdom of Ḥusayn.[111] There is also a 2008 *gedenkschrift* that includes several chapters on *rithā'*.[112] The

[107] Babak Rahimi, *Theater State and the Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011). I have also benefited greatly from my electronic correspondence with Rahimi on these topics.
[108] 'Enāyat Allāh Shahīdī, and ʿAlī Bolūkbāshī, *Pezhūheshī dar ta'zīyeh-o ta'zīyeh-khᵛānī: az āghāz tā pāyān-e dawreh-ye qājār dar tehrān*, Tehran: Daftar-e Pezhūheshhā-ye Farhangī: Komīsiyūn- e Millī-e Yūniskū dar Īrān, 1979.
[109] An unpublished 1987 M.A. thesis by Lynda Clarke discusses the evolution of the genre between the 6th and 7th centuries C.E., particularly in the cultural shift of Pre-Islamic religion to Islam. See: Lynda Clarke, "Arabic Elegy between the Jāhilīyah and Islam Developments in the Marthiyah from the Sixth to the Seventh Centuries A.D.," PhD diss., (McGill University, 1988).
[110] However, it would be indecent not to mention in this context the contributions made by Heinrichs to the study of Arabic philology in general and Arabic poetics specifically. See for example: Wolfhart Heinrichs. "Authority in Arabic Poetry," *La notion d'autorité au Moyen Âge – Islam, Byzance, Occident*, Colloques Internationaux de La Napoule, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984), 263-72.
[111] Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "Al-Sharīf Al-Radī and the Poetics of 'Alid Legitimacy: Elegy for Al-Husayn Ibn 'Alī on 'Āshūrā', 391 A. H." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 38, no. 3 (2007), 293–323.
[112] Marlé Hammond, Dana Sajdi, and Magda M. Al-Nowaihi, *Transforming Loss into Beauty: Essays on Arabic Literature and Culture in Honor of Magda Al-Nowaihi*, (Cairo; New York: American University In Cairo Press, 2008).

majority of any other information is found in articles about specific poets who happened to write a few elegies or Arabic secondary sources.[113]

Chapter Four in particular deals with the ascendence of the Safavids and their patronization of the *Rowẕat* and *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals. In terms of a general overview of the origins of the Safavids, Mazzaoui's 1972 book *The Origins of the Ṣafawids; Šīʿism, Ṣūfism, and the Ġulāt* is of particular importance. The intellectual and religious climate of the region, especially in what would become the Safavid heartlands as well as throughout Central Asia is examined in great detail in Babayan's 2002 book, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*.[114] This book in particular proved to be an invaluable source of information, focusing especially on the intersections of Safavid politics, sanctioned Muslim scholarship, *ghuluww* (esoteric sectarianism),[115] and Persian heritage.

Academic material on the post-Kāshefī *Rowẕat* reception in Western languages is decidedly limited. As a result, this section draws from a variety of Iranian, Turkish, and Azerbaijani academic sources. None of these sources deal with the *Rowẕat* itself in great detail, but rather only mention it—in the case of Iranian materials like Shāhmarasī's *Tārīkh-e Zabān-e Torkī dar Āz̲arbāyjān* (The History of the Turkish Language in Azerbaijan).[116] Otherwise, they deal with Kāshefī's text in an introductory fashion, such as Güngör's *Hadikatü's-süʿeda* (The Garden of the Happy Ones), an analysis and rendering into Modern Turkish of Füẕûlî's

[113] There is a related sub-genre, which is more accurately a kind of *madḥ*, or panegyrics, which are poems in praise of the *ahl al-bayt*.
[114] Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002).
[115] To be distinguished from another meaning of *ghuluww*, "rhetorical exaggeration," which is a topic of discussion in Arabic and Persian literary theory. I note the difference between these two senses of the word because this dissertation deals with both meanings at different points throughout.
[116] Parvīz Zāreʿ Shāhmarasī, *Tārīkh-e Zabān-e Torkī dar Āz̲arbāyjān*, (Tabriz: Nashr-e Akhtar-o Enteshārāt-e Hāshemī-ye Sūdmand, 2006).

interpretative translation of the *Rowẕat.*[117] Likewise, the only academic material discussing the other early translation of the *Rowẕat,* the *Şühədanamə* (Book of the Martyrs) of Nişâtî is in Azerbaijani; here, the most comprehensive source on this translation is Nağısoylu's 2003 book, *XVI əsr Azärbaycan Tərcümə Abidəsi "Şühədanamə"* (The 17th Century Azerbaijani Translation Landmark of the Book of the Martyrs).[118]

Turning to the comparative material on Iranian epic literature, scholars have written many books on the *Shāhnāmeh* and the Iranian epic heroes described therein. However, not a great deal has been written specifically on Siyāvash, at least in Western languages. In Iran however, much ink has been spilled over this topic. Shāfeʿī, Khālandī, and Qādernezhād's article in Persian, *Bāzkhᵛānī-ye Āyīn-e Sūg-e Siyavāsh-o Taʿziyeh-ye Emām Ḥoseyn* (Reanalysis of the Rites of Mourning for Siyāvash and the Commemoration of Imam Ḥusayn) provides a good overview of the academic material in Persian on Siyāvash.[119] Of these, the most important resources for this dissertation has been Meskūb's landmark study, *Sūg-e Siyāvash: dar Marg-o Rastākhīz* (Mourning Siyāvash: Death and Resurrection), [120] Ḥoṣūrī's 1999 book *Siyāvashān* (Siyāvash Rituals),[121] and Bahār's 1996 compendium on Iranian mythology, *Pazhūheshī dar Asāṭīr-e Īrān* (Research on the Legends of Iran).[122] In writing this dissertation, I have endeavored as much as possible to engage with the Iranian academic literature on this topic. Now that we have seen an overview of the relevant academic literature, let us turn to an overview of the primary sources analyzed in this dissertation.

[117] Şeyma Güngör, *Hadikatü's-sü'eda*, (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1987).
[118] Möhsün Nağısoylu, *XVI əsr Azärbaycan Tərcümə Abidəsi "Şühədanamə": Paleoqrafiya, Orfoqrafiya və Tərcümə Məsələləri,* (Baku: Nurlan, 2003)
[119] Keyvān Shāfeʿī, Anvar Khālandī, and Mahdī Qādernezhād, "Bāzkhᵛānī-ye Āyīn-e Sūg-e Siyavāsh-o Taʿziyeh-ye Emām Hoseyn," *Faṣlnāmeh-ye ʿElmī: Pazhūhesh-e Zabān-o Adabiyyāt-e Fārsī,* no. 49 (Summer 2018), 293–323.
[120] Shāhrokh Meskūb, *Sūg-e Siyāvash: dar Marg-o Rastākhīz*, (Tehran: Khvārazmī, 1972).
[121] ʿAlī Ḥoṣūrī, *Siyāvashān,* (Tehran: Nashr-e Chashmeh, 1999).
[122] Mehrdād Bahār, *Pazhūheshī dar Asātīr-e Īrān*, (Tehran: Āgah, 1996).

VI. Sources

As per the research thesis statements given in Section II, the primary source used in this dissertation is the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* of Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī. In analyzing this text, I have primarily used the 2011 Tehran edition edited by Zū 'l-Feqārī.[123] This edition was chosen since it includes a complete critical apparatus and uses five different manuscript copies, including the oldest known dated to 917 A.H./1511-12 C.E. This edition also includes an extensive introduction furnished with details on Kāshefī's life, possible confessional status, and relationship to later ritual developments. I have occasionally used the 1970 Tehran edition,[124] the 1911 Kanpur lithograph,[125] and the 2009 Arabic translation by Muḥammad Shu'ā' Fākhir[126] for comparative purposes.

In addition to the *Rowẕat*, I have also analyzed original sources from other *maqātil* when appropriate. In Chapter One, for example, I have consulted several well-known Arabic *maqātil* such as *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn li-Abī Mikhnāf* (The Martyrdom Narrative of Ḥusayn According to Abū Mikhnaf)[127] and *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyin* (The Martyrdom Narratives of the ʿAlids),[128] and *al-Luhūf fī Qatlá al-Ṭufūf* ((Lamenting over Those Killed on the Fields of Karbalā').[129] In Chapter

[123] Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Mo'īn : Markaz-e Taḥqīqāt-e Zabān va Adabīyāt-e Fārsī, 2011).
[124] Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* (Tehran: Ketābforūshī-ye eslāmīyeh, 1970).
[125] Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* (Kanpur: Navil Kishore, 1911).
[126] Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī, *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā'*, ([Iran]: Intishārāt al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 2009).
[127] This text will be referenced only with full understanding that it does not actually represent its actual original form but is largely assembled from references in al-Ṭabarī's history. Due to this, taking the text purely at face value would be very problematic. Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd Abū Mikhnaf al-Kūfī. *Maqtal al-Imām al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī.* (Beirut: Manshūrāt Dār al-Jamal, 2009).
[128] Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī. *Maqātil aṭ-Ṭālibiyyin,* (Qom: Montashārāt al-Sharīf al-Raẓī, 1995).
[129] 'Alī b. Mūsá b. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn 'alayhi al-salām al-Musammá bil-Luhūf fī Qatlá al-Ṭufūf,* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī lil-Maṭbū'āt, 1993).

Four, I will also consider *Jalā' ol-'Oyūn* (The Adornment of the Eyes) as an example of important later Persian *maqātil*.[130]

The primary types of texts I plan to work with are available in printed or lithographed editions. These texts have been chosen because they represent some of the most well-known and referenced *maqātil*. For example, Ibn Ṭāwūs' *al-Luhūf* is one of the best-known Arabic *maqātil*, while *Rowẕat al-Shohadā'* is the origin of the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* ritual: indeed, revival of the genre essentially begins with *Rowẕat*, which comes into popular focus with the rise of the Safavids. It eventually spawned a variety of performance-based interpretations of the genre such as the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, which is itself a synecdoche referring back to the *Rowẕat.* The importance of this literature in constructing Shī'ī identity or a "culture of soteriological martyrdom" is also a serious desideratum. The connection between the Safavids and the growing popularity of Persianate interpretations of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn will be a particularly important subject in this dissertation's argument of how Persianate Shī'ī identity was constructed. Likewise, *Jalā' ol-'Oyūn* enjoys the importance of being written by the second Moḥammad Bāqer al-Majlesī (d. 1110/1698 C.E.), a cleric so powerful and influential in the Safavid court that it has been suggested he was the shadow ruler of the empire.[131]

While the main focus of the dissertation is on the *maqtal* genre, the contextualization of both the historical background of the texts as well as their thematic tropes requires more than just the texts themselves. Thus, I will also investigate primary sources which may have either informed or been informed by the genre. In Chapter Four in particular, I will examine several different *vaqfnāmeh*s (endowment deeds) which detail the implementation of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, the

[130] Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesī, *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn: Tārīkh Chahārdah Maʿṣūm*, (Qom: Enteshārāt-e Sorūr, 2006-2007).
[131] Ali Rahnema, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics: From Majlesi to Ahmadinejad*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 180, 192-4.

evolution of *taʿziyeh*, and other important *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals. Many of these *vaqfnāmeh*s have been drawn from an important but until now almost entirely overlooked source, *Tārīkhcheh-e Owqāf-e Eṣfahān* (Annals of the Endowments of Esfahan),[132] which to my knowledge, other academic work on *taʿziyeh* has not consulted. Some of these *vaqfnāmeh*s have also been taken from manuscript sources as well.

Finally, another set of important original sources consist of the Persian epic literature and earlier Middle Persian as well as Avestan texts which serve to illuminate their background. Therein, the most important source on the Persian epic heroes—and the source which Kāshefī would have consulted—is of course the *Shāhnāmeh* (The Book of Kings), the national epic of Iran. I have consulted the Khaleghi-Motlagh edition for this purpose.[133] The Middle Persian texts have been drawn from a variety of sources, but the most important mentioned are taken from the *Mēnōg-ī xrad* (The Spirit of Wisdom), an *andarz* (advice) text,[134] the *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* (Commemoration of Zarēr),[135] and the Greater *Bundahišn* (Creation Narrative).[136] The Avestan material is general taken from Geldner's edition of the Avesta,[137] and the *Revāyat*s, archaic New Persian translations of Zoroastrian liturgical questions and ritual formulas side-by-side the original Avestan.[138] In the next section, I will demonstrate how the themes and text of these

[132] ʿAbd al-Ḥoseyn Sepantā, *Tārīkhcheh-ye Owqāf-e Esfahān*, (Esfahan: Enteshārāt-e Edāreh-e Koll-e Owqāf, Mentaqeh-ye Esfahān, 1967).
[133] Abū al-Qāsem Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*. Ed. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, Persian text series: New series; no. 1. (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988).
[134] Friedrich Carl Andreas, *The Book of the Mainyo-i-khard: Also, an Old Fragment of the Bundehesh, Both in the Original Pahlavi; Being a Facsimile of a Manuscript Brought from Persia by Westergaard and Now Preserved in the University-library of Copenhagen*, (Kiel: Lipsius and Tischer, 1882).
[135] Jāmāspjī Mīnocheherjī Jamāsp-Āsānā and Behramgore Tehmuras Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Texts*, (Fort Printing Press, 1897).
[136] G. Messina, "Mito, Leggenda e Storia Nella Tradizione Iranica," *Orientalia*, vol. 4, 1935, pp. 257–290, and Harold Walter Bailey, *The Greater Bundahisn*, (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1933).
[137] Karl F. Geldner, *Avesta, the Sacred Books of the Parsis*, (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1886).
[138] Rustamji Maneckji Unvala, and Jivanji Jamshedji Modi. *Dârâb Hormazyâr's Rivâyat*. Zoroastrian Collection. Bombay: British India Press, 1922.

sources will be implemented by providing a detailed description of the chapters of this dissertation.

VII. Summary of Chapters

This dissertation is composed of four chapters, along with this introduction and a conclusion. Each of these chapters contain several sections which address different points. However, all of the sections are united by central themes and questions.

Chapter One deals primarily with the origin of the *maqtal* as a distinct genre within the context of Arabic literature, introducing Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī and his central place in this genre. In this chapter, I consider what a *maqtal* is and where it comes from, the philological details of the Arabic term for 'hero,' how this hero manifests in early Arabic poetry, and then the connection of pre-Islamic Arab hero to the *maqtal*. Finally, the chapter discusses how poetry and oral performance forms a bedrock of early *ʿĀshūrā'* practices. Essentially then, this chapter has four main themes: the *maqtal*; poetry, especially mourning or elegiac poetry (*rithā'*), the pre-Islamic hero, and the relevance of all these concepts to *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals. In examining these themes, the central question of Chapter One is: how does Arabic literature and culture interact with the historical event of the Karbalā' narrative to create an evolving tradition of ritualized mourning? This question prepares the ground for the emergence of the Persian *maqtal*, specifically in its most influential form: Kāshefī's *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'.*

Chapter Two introduces us to the author of the *Rowẓat*, Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥoseyn b. ʿAlī Beyhaqī, commonly called Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī. In this chapter, we first transition from the Arabic elegy which was a central concern of the previous chapter, to a consideration of the

Persian elegy, and what differences it has from the Arabic form. After this, the rest of the chapter deals firstly with Kāshefī himself, with a focus on his life, his literary style, and his academic interests. Lastly, but most importantly, the final third of the chapter provides an analysis of the *Rowẕat* itself: its style, its central thesis, its organization, and how Kāshefī's previously discussed literary interests combine in a text that is both accessible and emotionally evocative, as well as occult and mystical. Thus, the central questions of this chapter are: what are Kāshefī's goals in the creation of this text, and what is his methodology in constructing it? Ultimately, this chapter, especially through its analysis of the *Rowẕat*, will allow us to uncover the very ancient thematic resonances which suffuse the book in the next chapter.

Chapter Three is in some ways intended as a mirror of Chapter One, except now dealing with the Persian inheritance rather than the Arabic one. While the previous chapters outlined how the *Rowẕat*, as a work in the *maqtal* genre, built upon the technical and stylistic conventions of Arabic literature, this chapter examines the sources of Kāshefī's allusions by analyzing the original Avestan, Middle Persian, and New Persian sources on Iranian epic heroes as well as Mesopotamian Arabic sources on Tammūz. Here, I will demonstrate how Kāshefī subtly weaves Perso-Mesopotamian allusions and references into the text. We shall see in this chapter how Kāshefī thematically invokes the Persian cultural memory of legendary heroes, in particular Siyāvash and secondarily Zarīr, as well as explicitly referencing others, in order to produce a *maqtal* that is not simply linguistically Persian, but culturally Persian as well. In other words, this chapter primarily deals with the early Persian substrate of *memory relics* which Kāshefī manifests in the *Rowẕat* by appealing to Persian literary tradition. Thus, the ritual memory of the *Siyāvashān* or *Siyāvashān*-like ceremonies which Muslim historians documented are channeled through the literary repository of the *Shāhnāmeh* into the *Rowẕat* thematically and textually. The

meaning of the *memory relic* remains, transposed into the person of Ḥusayn as a new Persian innocent hero-martyr, as well as the form of narrativized, ritualized weeping, but the function shifts to adapt to the needs of the time. This chapter will highlight a theme alluded to first in Chapter One, that the archetypical characteristics of the Persian epic hero are quite different from the Arab hero. In sum, the central question of this chapter is: how do the themes and textual references analyzed in the previous chapter connect specifically with Persian cultural collective memory, creating a new repository for *memory relics*, and effectively Persianizing the Karbalā' narrative? This question will also lead us into the themes of the next chapter, laying the groundwork for how this Persianized Karbalā' narrative became a tool of imperial propaganda.

Chapter Four presents a shift from the textual background of the previous chapters, which focused primarily on the analysis of literary evolution, style, and thematic content. This chapter is intended to take the more abstract concepts present in the previous chapters and bring them into the realm of tangible, archival history. While the *maqtal* and poetry are still concerns of this chapter, here I will show how the *Rowẕat* develops from a text into the centerpiece of a new ritual form for *ʿĀshūrā'*, and even an important component of dramatic performance. This chapter begins with a discussion of the first Safavid emperor Shāh Esmāʿīl's employment of a mélange of esoteric Perso-Shiʿi messianic mysticism to build a cult of personality around himself and establish his rule. After setting the temporal stage of the Safavid Empire with this discussion, through a discussion of 16th century manuscript circulation, early translation efforts, the emergence of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* (chanting of the *Rowẕat*), and then the development of *taʿziyeh*, I will show how the *Rowẕat* came to inhabit the Persian collective consciousness, and how this process was encouraged by the Safavids. This chapter makes use of archival research into legal *vaqfnāmeh*s or endowment deeds to demonstrate that *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and pre-dramatic *taʿziyeh*

were officially sanctioned by Safavid authorities, and then through the analysis of European travelogues, show the performative details of these rituals. Thus, the central questions of this chapter are: how was the ***Rowẕat*** received and propagated by Safavid authorities; how did it become an important tool of the Safavids in legitimizing their rule, creating consensus, and making a space for social catharsis; and finally, how did the rituals based on the ***Rowẕat*** come to form an essential basis for Iranian Shiʿi *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals?

These four chapters will be followed by a general conclusion, which recaps the central questions and evidence presented throughout the dissertation and ties them all together. Here, I will show how my concept of *memory relics* is integral for understanding how the evolution from text to ritual performance to a marker of group identity took place.

Chapter One: To Fight the Unbeatable Foe

لبيك على الاسلام من كان باكيا — فقد ضيعت أحكامه و استحلت
غداة حسين للرماح دريئة — وقد نهلت منه السيوف وعلت
وغودرت في الصحراء لحما مبددا — عليه عناف الطير بانت وظلت
ما نصرته أمة السوء إذا دعا — لقد طاشت الأحلام منها وظلت

The one who weeps for Ḥusayn weeps for the sake of Islam
Its laws have been lost and usurped
On the morning when Ḥusayn was the target of spears
When swords entertained themselves with drinking his blood
While bodies laid scattered in the desert like meat
Above rough birds stayed night and day
This wicked nation did not aid him when he called
Loosing all reason and so it has remained[139]

I. Introduction: With His Banners All Bravely Unfurled

In his Encyclopedia of Islam article on Ḥusayn, Henri Lammens presents a short, unflattering description of Ḥusayn, criticizing his intellect and supposed indecision.[140] Lammens' evaluation, also seen in his highly deprecative book on Fāṭima, *Fatima et les Filles de Mahomet*,[141] reflects the usual early Orientalist attitudes towards Shiʿism as an illegitimate curiosity at best, and an arguably rather uncritical acceptance of pro-Umayyad sources as authoritative.[142] Vaglieri's assessment is far more balanced, but she makes an important point about our potential ability to know the "real" character of Ḥusayn: the essential problem of the

[139] Hibat al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī Shahrastānī, *Nahḍat Al-Ḥusayn*, (Karbala: Rābiṭat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1969), 154.
[140] Henri Lammens, "Al-Ḥusain." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam, First Edition (1913-1936)*, Brill, April 24, 2012. https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-1/al-husain-SIM_2887?s.num=4&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-1&s.q=husain.
[141] Henri Lammens, *Fatima et les filles de Mahomet. Notes critiques pour l'étude de la Sira,* (Rome: sumptibus Ponificii instituti biblici, 1912).
[142] Madelung in particular criticizes errors that Lammens makes, willful or otherwise, which suggest a highly pro-Umayyad bias to his work. See: Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5, 331 n. 49, 351 n. 108.

historian is that any historical description of a person is inevitably constructed out of sources with their own agenda, their own 'vision' of the person.[143]

Can we ever know Ḥusayn as he really was? Such clarity seems unlikely. However, I would argue that a more important point is to be found in understanding what a historical person meant to those influenced by them. The drivers of history are not so simply found in pure fact, but also in the emotional reaction to a person's life and legacy. The *maqtal* genre is one which arises to no small degree as an attempt to chronicle Ḥusayn's life. At the same time, even in its earliest itineration, the genre is hagiographical to its core. Our interest in the development of this genre should thus be what distinguishes one type of hagiography from another: how does Ḥusayn the pious revolutionary become Ḥusayn, a manifestation of divine will in later times?

II. The Concerns of This Chapter

In this chapter, I will focus on the emergence of the *maqtal* as a distinct literary genre and how it becomes an integral part of ritualized mourning for Ḥusayn. In order to properly situate Kāshefī's massive Persian *maqtal*, *Rawẕat ol-Shohadā'* (The Meadow of the Martyrs), an overview of the literary history and tropes integral to the conceptualization of Ḥusayn's narrative is necessary. [144] While the *maqtal* genre has thematic similarities to earlier non-Arabic hagiographic literature, the Persian tradition inaugurated by Kāshefī has its structural roots in Arabic literature. In order to set the stage for the book—which later gives rise to a very literal

[143] L. Veccia Vaglieri, "(Al-)Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Brill, April 24, 2012. https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-husayn-b-ali-b-abi-talib-COM_0304?s.num=6&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.cluster.Encyclopaedia+of+Islam&s.q=al-husayn+b.+ali.

[144] A general overview of *Rawẕat ol-Shohadā'* may be found in Chapter Two, Section VIII in particular, along with the detailed analysis of the text and discussion of the author in the same chapter.

and ritualized stage—the basic concerns of these types of 'martyrdom narrative' need to be put forth. However, there are pre-existing Arabic literary and historical elements that shaped the *maqtal* genre long before *Rawẕat ol-Shohadā'*. Thus, the central thematic question I will answer in this chapter is, how did the Arabic literary and cultural background interact with the historical phenomenon of Ḥusayn's death in order to produce a poeticization and ritualization of mourning?

After presenting the concept of the *maqtal* broadly, I will discuss some terms germane to properly framing the roots of the genre, primarily the Arabic word for 'hero,' *baṭal*. The introduction of this term will also enable us to compare it with the Persian terms in Chapter 2. After this, I will introduce the pre-Islamic and Early Islamic poetic conception of this hero as described in the genres of *rithā'*, *madḥ*, and the heroic reflexes of *sīra*. After this, this chapter will consider the emergence of the *maqtal* as a specific genre and evaluate whether there is a significant thematic inheritance from the pre-Islamic materials — or if we are dealing with a genre which is a complete break from the past. This will provide the mortar which will enable us to consider how much the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* owes to the Arabic origins of the *maqtal* genre, leading up to Chapter Two, which considers how much influence the Persian literary heritage exerted in transforming that genre. Finally, we will note some of these previously discussed tropes in connection with the development of a 'poetic' ritualization of mourning for Ḥusayn. The connection between mourning, the *maqtal*, and the Arabic poetic heritage may seem oblique at first, but as Hámori tells us, "…mortality is the nourishment of art, and facing death head-on the first task of the *qasīda*."[145]

[145] András Hámori, *On the Art of Medieval Arabic Literature*, Princeton Essays in Literature, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 8.

III. Meeting the *Maqtal*

The subject of this dissertation is mourning. Mourning for the fallen hero, mourning over *le beau mort* (the beautiful corpse), mourning over hopeless causes, lost dreams, and old tragedies. I have already spoken in the introduction about some theoretical aspects of ritual mourning, but here I will concentrate on discrete literary manifestations of it. As I will argue, the *maqtal* is essentially a template for mourning ritual in literary form. This is not mourning simply as a ritual act, but also its crystallizations, as part of a cultural archetype in the concept of the tragic hero, and then expressed in the literary medium of the *maqtal.* Within this broad template lies the story of *'Āshūrā'*, ultimately derived from a Hebrew word, *'aśor*, through Aramaic as evidence by the *–ā[']]* definite marker, meaning 'a period of ten days.'[146] Here, in this narrative, we find all three elements bound together. Mourning, even within the context of a specific event like *'Āshūrā'*, is a vast topic. As I have mentioned in the introduction to this dissertation,[147] the specific lens with which I will examine *'Āshūrā'* ritualism and its written manifestation, the *maqtal*, is Kāshefī's own *maqtal*, *Rawẕat ol-Shohadā'*. However, in order to proper analyze this text, it is necessary to situate it within the conventions, inherited literary tropes, genres, and vocabulary of the larger *maqtal* genre.

In fact, as shall be seen below, I will argue that the fundamental concern of the *maqtal* genre as a whole, and perhaps all martyrdom literature, is the attempt to crystallize sacred

[146] See: S. R. Driver, Charles A. Briggs, James Strong, and Wilhelm Gesenius, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon: With an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 797, and Ph. Marçais, "'Āshūrā'", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 09 December 2018 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0068>

[147] [This footnote will point to the general introduction of the dissertation]

moments and sites of collective and culture memory.[148] Etymologically, *maqtal* is actually a place noun from the root *qatala* 'to kill.' The earliest sense of the meaning is 'a vital spot on the body the piercing of which causes death.'[149] This meaning seems to have later gone through a semantic shift to a place (*ism al-makān*) or time (*ism al-zamān*) where someone is killed, and then further abstracted into a narrative about these places and conditions. The *maqtal* is thus not merely a literary genre, a physical book, nor its recitation, but in fact transposes the site of collective memory from its original, concrete location in the body and shrine of the martyr into a shared network of the faithful.[150] The faithful then become the mediums for the embodiment, transmission, and replication of the body of the martyr.

However, the *maqtal* did not simply arise fully-formed out of thin air. The genre is the product of the convergence of several other types of literary styles—the *qaṣīda* (ode) in its forms of *madḥ* (panegyric poetry), *rithā'* (elegy), and arguably, *hijā'* (satire or deprecatory poetry), as well as the non-poetic mediums of *ḥadīth* (prophetic tradition), *sīra* (biography), *maghāzī*

[148] Nora discusses the creation of French collective memory and national identity in reference to the establishment of the French Third Republic. This, he says, was done through the creation and instrumentalization of narrative history, "In sum, there is a collective national history on the one hand, private memories on the other. It was sacred history because it was just like the religious catechism it was supposed to combat; holy because it was that of the *patrie* which might mean giving one's life; a legend-but one that acted as a driving force for social integration, cohesion, and promotion. And then there were the memories (or memoirs) of particular groups, or rather minorities…" See: Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France = Les Lieux De Mémoire*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xiv.
[149] Ibn Manẓūr tells us: "*maqtalun wa maqātilu l-insāni: al-mawāḍi' allatī idhā uṣībat minhu qatalathu, wāḥiduhā maqtal*;" (the vital spot and vital spots of the human being: [meaning] the places which, if struck, death results; this is a *maqtal*.) See: Muḥammad b. Mukarram b. Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1955), 3530.
[150] Consider the concept of embodiment that Ware puts forth in the context of Qur'anic education in West Africa. He firstly lists vectors of embodiment as "memorization and recitation, mimesis and service, personification and practical example." All of these performative elements are also integral to the embodiment of martyrdom texts, which provide intuitive knowledge connected with emotion and mystical realities rather than discursive, formal religious education. In a particularly evocative practice, some scholars are known to have actually imbibed the dregs of edible ink from a text of the Qur'ān (i.e. "Drinking the Qur'ān") written on wooden tablet tablets because the water-ink mixture from the erased verses were believed to have sacred power. However, in contrast to Ware's contention that "…ink was clearly far more important than blood to the spread of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa," in the Persianate lands, as I will argue later, that with the ascendance of the Safavids, the blood of the martyrs is transformed into the ink of the scholars. See: Rudolph T. Ware, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa*, Islamic Civilization & Muslim Networks, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 57, 78.

(conquest narratives), *manāqib* (hagiography), and others.[151] Of these, there is a notable contrast between genres which are typically considered *belles-lettres*, such as the poetic genres, as opposed to those which deal with history or religious discourse. Assigning the *maqtal* to one super-grouping of genres or another is difficult, because the purpose of the genre evolves over time. Arguably, it develops from *ḥadīth*, as the other historical and biographical genres did, which is certainly not considered an artistic genre. However, with the increasing incorporation of poetry, the line between these genre groupings blurs.

Since space does not allow me to give all of these genres their fair exposition, the coming discussion will focus primarily on *madḥ* and *rithā'*, texts which related to them such as biographies. As I will argue, it is the poetic genres which imbue the *maqātil* with their greatest emotional impact, and thus contribute to later popular appeal. Some of the other Arabic genres, notably *ḥadīth*, while mentioned, shall be considered in more detail at a later point since they are strictly speaking, not *belles-lettres.*

A major thematic concern is that I contend that there is a complex relationship between the *maqtal* and the tropes of the pre-Islamic Arab (and in the next chapter, Persian) hero, showing both thematic influence on the genre as well as divergences rejecting these tropes. I have previously considered the concept of the hero from a theoretical perspective in the introduction, but this discussion will be more specific.[152] This archetype is integral for properly contextualizing the massive mourning rituals that compose *'Āshūrā'* and its specific textual

[151] This is not even considering the impact of the Syriac literary heritage, which had an undeniable influence on early Arabic imperial style and language. In the case of the *maqtal*, this is apparent due to the sophisticated development of hagiographical and martyrdom literature in Syriac. This influence will not be discussed in this chapter, but we shall return to it at later point when discussing specific thematic elements of the Persian *maqtal*.
[152] [This footnote will point to the general introduction of the dissertation]

manifestation in *Rawẕat ol-Shohadā'*. Essentially, the hero literally presents the ideal subject for mourning to commemorate.

IV. Living with and Mourning the Hero

It has been said that death is what makes kings and commoners equal, what lies beyond it is known to none, but through mourning, catharsis is achieved. There is a certain implicit fascination, an energy which drives us towards death, sometimes termed *destrudo,*[153] which can perhaps be mollified by a collective participation—and given meaning. In this way, the self-destructive drive of one's own life is projected outwards, controlled, and instead becomes a power of self-definition and community cohesion.

Discussing extremely emotional content in the context of academic study is a tremendously complex task. Particularly when we speak of historical figures and events, there is a natural tendency to abstract them into mere matrices of data. With the subject of mourning, this tendency is even more pronounced. The modern instinct, born out of a perfectly reasonable discomfort, is to hide death away and try to ignore it until there is no choice but to face it. However, for those who consider the subject of my research, Ḥusayn and the socio-religious complexes which surround his commemoration, not simply an object of academic curiosity but

[153] In his 1935 piece "Todestrieb und Masochismus" ("Death-Instinct and Masochism"), the psychoanalyst Edoardo Weiss defined his concept of the equal and opposite to the Freudian notion of *libido*. *Destrudo* is the energy resulting from the death drive. He says, "So Freud realized that aggression is outward destruction. I also extended the extremely enlightening conception of Federn about medial narcissism to the death instinct and spoke of a medial death instinct: By that, I understood the destructive energy by which we age and die - as opposed to the reflexive energy. So in the case of the libido as well as the *destrudo* we can speak of a medial, outward, and reflexive impulse energy. Secondary narcissism and suicidal tendencies are reflexively directed libido, or *destrudo*." See: Edoardo Weiss, "Todestrieb und Masochismus," *Imago* 21 (1935): 397.

intensely connected to their daily lives, it is not an abstract subject.[154] They are neither theoretical nor hidden away. The blood is real and is continually embodied and renewed in the suffering of all innocent victims. *'Āshūrā'* is profoundly expressive, and it is an event which the mourners understand through the lens of their own experience.

For these reasons, I have chosen to discuss this topic from a perspective that considers both the textual and formal ritualized aspects as well as the emotional and experiential aspects of *'Āshūrā'* which characterize its continued observance. I believe to do otherwise would be a disservice to the topic. *'Āshūrā'* is fundamentally based on emotion, which synthesizes historical rage with present-day suffering. There is no one without the other.

In gauging the importance of mourning, one must consider why people would mourn for someone they did not know personally, several hundred years later.[155] To do this, I believe it is useful to consider what the sign 'hero' means in a literary environment, and then specify that environment. On a general literary level, the hero is an embodied manifestation of a particular kind of impulse, one which associates the linguistic expression of deeply rooted social and

[154] Consider, for example, the very concrete way that Ruffle describes the Khan family's connection with Ḥusayn's family: "It is not difficult to perceive why Khan instinctively spoke about Fatimah Kubra in the *majlis* on that June day. Khan is the loving father of six daughters, and he always thinks of them when he recounts the stories of Sakinah and Fatimah Kubra, who were young girls at the Battle of Karbala. Imam Husain's daughters are like Khan's daughters." Here, the context is South Asian, but as we will see, the sentiment is broadly applicable. See: Karen G. Ruffle, *Gender, Sainthood, & Everyday Practice in South Asian Shi'ism*, Islamic Civilization & Muslim Networks, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 25.

[155] As I shall discuss later in this dissertation, this specific kind of ritualized mourning has been constantly associated with hero cults, whether in ancient Iran, Greece, or Pre-Islamic Arabia.

psychological patterns with a specific character as a function of expressing these patterns in an organized narrative form.[156] Most importantly, the hero must be mortal.[157]

This impulse is not bound to the Arabs, but it is important to emphasize the Arab model of the hero as containing linguistic and psychological codes which signal specific perspective within a wider archetype called 'the hero.' These patterns are not random but provide a low-level kind of legitimization for certain community attitudes.[158] Later in this chapter and throughout this dissertation, we will see what these attitudes are and what their concrete implications are.[159]

The narratives of the hero, whether in poetry or prose, are linguistic codes and scripts, which trigger the participation of the individual receiving them in the wider world of morals and values of a community. This is also why one person's hero is another's villain: the linguistic scripts do not always match what social participation in another given community has deemed moral. This clash of values can be observed in that some of the pre-Islamic heroic archetypes might be considered bandits in another cultural context—and occasionally were, as we shall see. It is important not to view the past as static; the heroic qualities important to one of the *tawwābūn,* or repentant ones, eulogizing Ḥusayn not long after his death in the 7th century were not the same as those emphasized by Kāshefī in the 16th century. Between these periods, there

[156] Bartelmus, for example says: "If they are not debased local deities, heroes are prehistoric figures whose extraordinary deeds or abilities (heroes as "originators" of cultural achievements) give them definitive, quasi-divine significance for a particular city or group." See: Rüdiger Bartelmus, "Hero", in: *Religion Past and Present*. Consulted online on 19 May 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1877-5888_rpp_SIM_09700>

[157] Nagy in particular notes the importance of the hero being mortal as essential to the resolution of their narrative as well as their cultic veneration. See: Gregory Nagy, *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 9-10.

[158] I say "low-level," because this form of legitimization of actions and attitudes by its nature replicates itself within the unconscious of the mind. This is as opposed to, say, the high-level legitimization of actions and attitudes provided by laws and taboos.

[159] [This footnote will point to the general introduction of the dissertation, specifically, the sections dealing with the Safavid propaganda efforts and the creation of *ta'ziyeh* rituals]

were dramatic changes in the socio-cultural and linguistic make-up of the region. Thus, the particular archetypes of the medieval Arab poetic hero also need to be distinguished.

In order to usefully discuss heroic literary archetypes Arabic context, and later, in the Persian context, the common terms should be identified and defined. As I have stated above, these words encode certain cultural, literary, and popular concepts at a deep level. As such, an important part of this discussion is a vocabulary of heroics. Here, I would like to note that etymology is a tool, not a reason, and does not offer proof, but rather useful evidence to support conclusions drawn from the more tangible conclusions of texts and material traces. The discussion offered below will help ground the texts in philological context. While we shall look at the specific context and examples of the Persian hero in the next chapter, here we shall consider the early Arabic concept of the hero in relation to poetry and mourning in order to set the tone to evaluate the comparison of the two.

The common Arabic term for hero, *baṭal*, is rather complex to outline. It is generally derived from the root *baṭala*, "to be in vain, false." One of the earliest extant Arabic dictionaries, the grammarian al-Farāhīdī's (d. 786 C.E.) *Kitāb al-'Ayn* (Sourcebook, or Book of the Letter *'Ayn*) states: "Hero: the brave person whose wounds are meaningless and does not pay them any heed, nor does he avail himself of any assistance, for indeed he is a hero of obvious bravery (*wa-l-baṭal: al-shujā'u alladhī yubṭilu jurāḥatahu wa-lā yaktarithu lahā, wa-lā takuffuhu 'an najdatihi, wa-innahu la-baṭalun bayyinu al-buṭūla*)."[160] In this definition, the hero is defined as such for essentially considering the wounds and trials of battle as meaningless (*bāṭil*), fighting totally under his own power regardless of the circumstances.

[160] Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī, *Kitāb al-'ayn*, Silsilat al-ma'ājim wa-l-fahāris, (Baghdād: Wizārat al-thaqāfah wa-l-i'lām, Dār al-rashīd, 1980), 7:431.

A later definition from the Maghribī lexicographer Ibn Manẓūr's (d. 1312 C.E.) famous dictionary *Lisān al-ʿArab* notes that "a hero is a man who lies between vain pursuits and heroism, for he is termed 'hero' because he strikes down mighty enemies with his sword and it is adorned [with their blood]" (*rajulun baṭalun bayna l-bitālati wa-l-buṭūlati innama summiya baṭalan liʾannahu yubṭilu l-ʿaẓāʾim bi-sayfihi fa-yubahrijuhā*)[161] The Arabic word emphasizes the character's physical battle prowess and ability to subdue enemies. Even the use of the root is curious; *baṭala* means 'to strive in vain, be false, or of no account,' and to say something is *bāṭil* means it is invalid or untrue. This root usually has a purely negative sense, though both al-Farāhīdī and Ibn Manẓūr seem to equivocate when producing quotations supporting this odd etymology. Either way, a semantic shift either took place where the word acquired a contextually specific positive (or mostly positive) meaning, or the ambiguity and internal paradox of the word in relationship to its root was intentionally predicated of it from the beginning.[162]

The etymologies provided offer a small glimpse at the differences involved in early Arabic conceptions of the hero. While I will offer general conclusions later on after introducing the relevant textual material, I shall provide a few comments here. The Arabic term *baṭal* presents a very specific set of cultural values; rather than aristocracy or authority, the word suggests a sense of recklessness, the flawed yet noble character implicit in the pre-Islamic hero. In order to test these preliminary inferences, it is necessary to examine the texts to see how well the words 'fit.' The best place to start is with a discussion of one of the most important elements

[161] Ibn Manẓūr, 302.

[162] A third possibility is that the verbs *baṭala* "be wrong, invalid," and *baṭula* "to be a hero" are a conflation of two originally distinct roots, perhaps with *baṭula* originating as a borrowing. However, typically it is the noun that is borrowed, and then transformed into a denominative verb. Denominative verbs in Arabic are formed in the *faʿʿala* pattern, not via insertion of *ḍamma*, which usually marks stative verbs. It also seems likely that *baṭala* is the older verb; both Hebrew *bāṭal* "be invalid, idle" and Syriac Aramaic *bṭel*, also "be invalid, idle" share the same semantic field. Neither language uses the root *b-ṭ-l* to form a word resembling "hero," instead employing the root *g-b-r*, cf. Hebrew *gibbor* and Syriac Aramaic *gaḇrānā*, both "hero."

which provide the building blocks of the concept of the hero as well as laying the ground for the *maqtal*: poetry.

V. Heroic Inheritances: The Hero in Arabic Poetry

The dominant type of literature of pre-Islamic Arabia was poetry. Given the fact that pre-Islamic Arabia was a primarily oral culture, and that the Arabic script itself was not disambiguated and standardized until after the compilation of the Qur'ān, this fact should not be surprising.[163] Even in literate ancient cultures, poetry was far and away the most common literary format.[164] This situation is probably related to the fact that the oral performance and transmission of poetry, even when they were actually composed in written form, was deeply intertwined with formal and thematic conventions; in other words, memorization was expected, and the poetic form itself reinforced ease of memorization.[165]

Scholars like Ṭaha Ḥusayn, D.S. Margoliouth, and others have argued that pre-Islamic poetry is a whole-scale forgery and that the poetry references in the Qur'ān are merely references to the rhymed prose, or *saj'*, of the pagan *kāhin* (soothsayer). However, the abundance of evidence detailed by Arberry, both internally and externally, points to the existence of pre-Islamic poetry even if there are issues with the redaction of individual poems.[166] This dissertation

[163] Jonathan Owens, "The Arabic Grammatical Tradition," *The Semitic Languages*, Routledge Language Family Descriptions, (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 46-58; 46.
[164] The Parry-Lord Theory has essentially demonstrated how this occurs and how oral poetry is distinguished from written poetry: repetition and formula. Even the concept of meter comes down to creating a fixed, repetitive structure which enables easier memorization or even improvisation within the context of the format. James T. Monroe, "Oral Composition in Pre-Islamic Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 3 (1972): 1-53; 7-8.
[165] Julie Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Lyric Poetry: Orient Pearls*, Culture and Civilization in the Middle East, (Taylor and Francis, 2003), 13.
[166] "[…] even if our present body of pre-Islamic poetry was all or partially forged, it must reflect, in all probability, the style and ideals of an earlier and authentic model. Supposedly false poems must therefore express the spirit of the Jāhiliyya in general, even though they may have been composed in later time." See: Monroe 1972, 4, 6.

takes the position that even if this poetry is partially or wholly forged—which seems to stretch credulity—it still not only reflects the values of the pre-Islamic Arabs, but also and more importantly, the later sentimental and nostalgic notions of what the literati of the Arabs thought these values were.

The most common form of early Arabic poetry is the *qaṣīda* or "ode." The word is formed from *qaṣīd* "aimed at or without defects," with an abstractivizing *tā' marbūṭa* suffix, ultimately derived from the verb root *qāf-ṣād-dāl*, meaning "to proceed forward or seek."[167] From a technical standpoint, the *qaṣīda* is a poem of variable length, which employs a single meter (*baḥr*) and a single rhyme (*qāfiya*), with an internal rhyme in the opening verse.[168] Both the metrical structure and the rhyme must be strictly adhered to, though poets did try to find ways around them. Thematically, the narrative structure of the poem also has a particular conventional format: it is typically divided into three thematic sections: *nasīb*, the so-called "amorous, nostalgic" introduction, where the poet typically ruminates over the remnants of a campsite (*dāris*, *aṭlāl, āthār*); the *rahīl*, or 'departure,' where the poet leaves the campsite and comments on the natural landscape, slowly transitioning into the main intention (*qaṣd*) of the poem. This final part of the poem varies depending on the desired subject of the poet; it can be praise (*madḥ*) or boasting (*fakhr*) for a particular person or the poet's tribe, lampooning and satire (*hijā'*), elegy (*rithā'*), or providing moral advice (*ḥikma*).

The first two sections, the most conventional of the poetic style, are often grouped together as the introduction, while the third theme makes up the entire rest of the poem. This

[167] For an overview of the *qaṣīda*, see: F. Krenkow, G. Lecomte, C.H. De Fouchécour, Abdülkadir Karahan, and R. Russell, "Ḳaṣīda", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 1 May 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0461>

[168] Ibid.

form was considered part of poetic convention at least by the ʿAbbasid period. However, while the thematic portions pre-dated this period, due to an environment now far-removed from the wild desert of the Bedouins, the *nasīb* and *raḥīl* had become so conventional that many audiences didn't understand the point of them beyond 'this is just how *qasīda*s are composed.'[169]

Often, while a particular theme is strongly dominant, the other possible themes often appear as well. This mixing of genres is fully integrated in many of the later examples of *rithā'*, especially those dealing with the death of Ḥusayn.[170] This, as we shall see, sets the stage for the development of complex *maqātil* which mix multiple genres. As time goes on and the *qaṣīda* becomes a dominant literary medium, the introduction is claimed to become so rigid[171] that later poets will openly lampoon them as clichés.[172]

The *qaṣīda* typically incorporates heroic content as part of its overall structure. Hamori notes that, "The second part of the *qasīda* gets to the point: the virtues and memorable exploits of the poet, his tribe, or his patron are vaunted; or else a base lineage and contemptible deeds are

[169] Huda J. Fakhreddine, *Metapoesis in the Arabic Tradition : From Modernists to Muḥdathūn*, Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures; v. 36. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2015), 57.
[170] Stetkevych states this explicitly in her discussion of a famous elegy by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (d. 1015 C.E.): "It is no wonder then that the classical genre categories, too, are collapsed into one another: *madḥ* (praise) is equally *rithāʾ* (elegy) and *fakhr* (boast, self-praise)." Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, and M. Al-Musawi, "Al-Sharīf Al-Raḍī and the Poetics of ʿAlid Legitimacy Elegy for Al-Ḥusayn Ibn ʿAlī on ʿĀshūrāʾ, 391 A.H.," in: *Arabic Literary Thresholds: Sites of Rhetorical Turn in Contemporary Scholarship*, 53-51, (2010), 57.
[171] Hámori 1974, 7.
[172] Stetkevych has argued against the supposedly rigid nature of the *qaṣīda* in: Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy: Myth, Gender, and Ceremony in the Classical Arabic Ode*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002). This being said, there was enough perceived cliché to the introduction of the *qaṣīda* that other poets would enjoy satirizing the genre. The opening lines of a famous poem by the equally infamous 8th century poet Abū Nuwās al-Ḥasan b. Hānī al-Ḥakamī reads:

عاج الشقي على دار يسائلها　　وعجت أسأل عن خمارة البلد
لا يرقىء الله عيني من بكى حجراً　　ولا شفى وجد من يصبو إلى وتد

"The rogue made a stopover to examine a campsite/while I stopped to 'examine' the local tavern/may God never dry the tears of anyone who weeps over rocks/or may he heal the love-pangs of anyone who yearns for tent-pegs." See: Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān Abī Nuwās: Khamrīyāt Abī Nuwās al-Ḥasan b. Hāniʾ ; qaddama lahu wa-sharaḥahu ʿAlī Najīb ʿAṭwī,* (Beirut: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl, 1986), 123.

thrown in the face of an antagonist."[173] This pattern creates the major variations of template for the tribal archetype of the hero within the Arabic literary tradition.

Despite the omnipresence of poetry in the pre-Islamic Arabian milieu, epic poetry as a specific subgenre of poetry is not really a salient category particularly in the pre-Islamic periods, and only emerges much later on. Generally speaking, narrative verse was not popular, and when such poetry was found, it was typically embedded in biographies or 'pseudo-historical texts.'[174] By this I mean that we have very few examples from these periods that are extant in manuscript form. There are examples of epic prose, which likely originate in the pre-Islamic period and are later committed to writing, as we shall see in the following discussion.

Still, we can draw many conclusions from the heroic elements in early poetry, especially in conjunction with such 'epic' biographies. One such early heroic character worth examining was the pre-Islamic warrior-poet, 'Antara or 'Antar b. Shaddād al-ʿAbsī (d. 608 C.E.). Perhaps one of the most famous of early Arab folk heroes, 'Antara was a historical figure whose life was also transformed into legend. It is also worth noting that 'Antara was known for his physical appearance and his lineage: while his father, Shaddād al-'Absī, was a respected warrior, his mother was an Ethiopian slave named Zabība, and her son shared her complexion. [175] As such, he was already marked by his fellows as an outsider of low status from birth and had to struggle against these harmful biases.

[173] Hámori 1974, 8.
[174] Peter Heath, "Some Functions of Poetry in Premodern Historical and Pseudo-Historical Texts: Comparing *Ayyām al-'Arab, al-Ṭabarī's History,* and *Sīrat 'Antar*," *Poetry and History: The Value of Poetry in Reconstructing Arab History*, (Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut Press, 2011), pp. 39-59; 39.
[175] Sometimes said to be a former princess of Axum before being abducted. Alan Jones, "ʿAntara", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 17 December 2018 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_26347>

‘Antara’s elevation to near-mythical status was helped not just by the tales of his exploits, but also by the fact that his poetry was so legendary that one *qaṣīdah* attributed to him was included among the famous *mu‘allaqāt* (‘Suspended Odes’) which were said to be once attached to the Ka‘ba itself. ‘Antara provides us with some first-hand opinions on the heroic context several times in his *qaṣīda*:

إِنْ تُغْدِفِي دُونِي القِنَاعَ فإِنَّنِي طِبٌّ بأخذِ الفَـارسِ الْمُسْتَلْئِـمِ
أُثْنِي عَلَيَّ بِمَا عَلِمْتِ فَإِنَّنِـي سَمْحٌ مُخَالَقَتِي إِذَا لَمْ أُظْلَـمِ
فَإِذَا ظُلِمْتُ فَإِنَّ ظُلْمِي بَاسِـلٌ مُـرٌّ مَذَاقَتُـهُ كَطَعْمِ العَلْقَـمِ
وَلَقَدْ شَرِبْتُ مِنَ المُدَامَةِ بَعْدَمَـا رَكَدَ الهَوَاجِرُ بِالمَشُوفِ المُعْلَـمِ
بِزُجَاجَةٍ صَفْرَاءَ ذَاتِ أَسِـرَّةٍ قُرِنَتْ بِأَزْهَرَ فِي الشِّمَالِ مُفَـدَّمِ
فَإِذَا شَرِبْتُ فإِنَّنِـي مُسْتَهْلِـكٌ مَالِي وَعِرْضِـي وَافِرٌ لَمْ يُكْلَمِ
وَإِذَا صَحَوْتُ فَمَا أُقَصِّرُ عَنْ نَدَىً وَكَمَا عَلِمْتِ شَمَائِلِي وَتَكَرُّمِـي

Even if you drop your veil over your face in front of me, indeed still
I am one quite skilled at engaging the armored knight
Laud me for what you know to be true, for I
Am magnanimous in comporting my character, if I am not treated unjustly
If I am wronged, then I am without remorse in my oppression
The taste of my oppression is bitter, like the flavor of the colocynth
When I have drank wine after
The midday heat spells have grown calm, with polished coin
In a yellow glass, with lines on the edges
Together with a bright white stoppered bottle on the left side
Then when drunk, I consume all
My wealth, but my honor is abundant and has not been diminished
And when I grow sober, then still I am not stingy in my liberality
As you well know, such are my good qualities and nobility[176]

Some of the elements here may seem surprising and unexpected for a ‘heroic’ character. ‘Antara is fierce warrior, and merciless on the battlefield; he even boasts about how many women’s husbands he has killed in combat. He is given to drink and frankly spends a lot of

[176] Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Zawarnī, *Sharḥ al-Mu‘allaqāt al-Saba‘*, (Beirut: al-Dār al-‘Ālamiyya, 1993), 137.

money on alcohol. But at the same time, he reminds the listener of his noble character — he shows mercy if treated fairly, doesn't let distractions overrule his mission, and strongly implies that he isn't spending all that drinking money just on himself. It is also worth noting that this poem is addressed to ʻAntara's archetypical lover, a typical format that is found in many *qaṣīda*s. The "fair treatment" he mentions above could thus also have another meaning, in reference to this woman, asking her to treat him fairly. Both interpretations still are appropriate to the concept of the Arab hero as investing huge importance in fairness.

The surprise triggered by his forthrightness is merely the reflection of the present-day values which have been invested in the term 'hero.' In this context, ʻAntara is simply displaying the values considered paramount to the noble warrior in his time and place. In fact, when compared with the flaws of other heroes from the ancient world, as shall be seen later, ʻAntara's characterization of the fundamental humanity of the hero is far less surprising.

The embellished stories of his life, *Sīrat ʻAntara b. al-Shaddād* (The Biography of ʻAntara b. al-Shaddād), provide even more context. These tales of ʻAntara's exploits are massive; one version of the biography takes up fifty-seven volumes. The majority of these stories are probably legendary expansions or interpolations on his life; the ʻAntara of the biography is a larger-than-life figure, who regularly shames kings, deals with jinn, and fights with superhuman ability in battles. Here, however, we can find a straightforward prose précis of ʻAntara's—or the back-projection thereof—estimation of heroic values in those pages.

During one of his many adventures, ʻAntara meets al-Mundhir IV, the penultimate Lakhmid king of al-Ḥīra (d. 580 C.E.). Al-Mundhir is taken aback by the dark-skinned ʻAntara's appearance and questions his lineage. In response, ʻAntara provides a withering short monologue which humbles the king who had so quickly sought to judge his character purely on appearance:

> Al-Mundhir was astonished by his actions and amazed by the fierceness of his visage and the grandeur of his disposition, saying to him: 'What sort of Arab are you?' He said, 'O lord, I am of the Banū 'Abs.' al-Mundhir replied, 'From among their lords or their slaves?' 'Antar said, 'O lord, know well that noble descent (*nasab*) amongst gallant men (*karām al-rijāl*) is in the thrust of long spears, the slash of the burnished sword, and forbearance on the field of furious battle (*maydān al-ḥarb wa'l-qitāl*); I am the Banū 'Abs' physician (*ṭabīb*) when they sicken, their champion (*ḥāmin*) when they are brought low, the protector (*ḥāfiẓ*) of their women when they are threatened, their knight (*fāris*) when they glory in their deeds, and their sword when they ready themselves for battle.'[177]

This is an incredibly rich excerpt because in many ways, it neatly encapsulates the tribal Arab concepts of chivalry and heroic action, while at same time critiquing sedentary urban values which strictly locate heroism within the landed—and fair-skinned—gentry. 'Antara is special not because of noble birth, but because he exemplifies the tribal values of bravery. This extract is also notable because of its explicit rejection of elitism or the traditional understanding of 'noble birth.' 'Antara is profoundly not a member of tribal nobility and has to continue to prove himself as worthy of the status he pursues. Instead, he turns the concept of noble lineage (*nasab*) on its head and instead defines it in terms of the chivalry of men of noble character (*karām al-rijāl*).

The concept of *karām al-rijāl* in this excerpt also introduces us, partially subtextually, to one of the most important behavioral ideals originating in pre-Islamic society: *ḥasab wa nasab* (esteem and descent).[178] While *nasab* is essentially genealogical descent and the prestige it confers, *ḥasab* is the acquisition of honor for oneself, the tribe, and ancestors through the

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[177] *Extraits du roman d'Antar; texte arabe, à l'usage des élèves de l'École royale et spéciale des langues orientales vivantes*, (Paris: Typographie de Firmin Didot Frères, 1841), 32.
فتعجب المنذر من فعاله واندهش من هول صورته وعظم خلقته وقال له ويلك من أي العرب أنت فقال يا مولاي أنا من بني عبس قال من ساداتهم او من عبيدهم فقال عنتر يا مولاي اعلم أن النسب عند كرام الرجال الطعن بالرماح الطوال والضرب بالسيف الصقال والصبر في ميدان الحرب والقتال وأنا طبيب بني عبس اذا مرضت وحاميها اذا ذلت وحافظ حريمها اذا ولت وفارسها اذا افتخرت وسيفها اذا بدرت.

[178] P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, "Ḥasab wa-Nasab", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 19 November 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2751>

performance of noble deeds, "…which provided for all a model to imitate, an ideal moral standard to attain and a patrimony to safeguard; it was in fact a sort of tribal *sunna*."[179] Like many ancient societies, pre-Islamic Arabs highly valued noble descent. In cases like ʿAntara's, who possesses no noble descent, his reputation must be determined based purely on his actions and temperament. Some of the most important of the qualities one had to possess where mildness (*ḥilm*),[180] munificence (*karāma*), and bravery (*shajāʿa*) individually, as well as *ʿadl* (equitableness), *ḍiyāfa* (hospitality) and *ījāra* (protection, especially offered to enemies) to the larger community. All of these concepts made up *murūwa* (valor), "…a concept which comprised everything that the ancient Bedouin thought redounded to his honour."[181]

While the ideal combination of qualities for a person—particularly a hero—to possess was both *ḥasab* and *nasab*, theoretically, as with ʿAntara, one could be a hero purely on the basis of *ḥasab*.[182] *Ḥasab* has a dual advantage in that it is both personal and collective; that is to say it can also draw on the good deeds and merit of one's ancestors.[183] But it is still something that can be personally obtained, with the added advantage that the *ḥasab* of relatives can add to one's own.

The purpose of *fakhr*—and thus its subcategories in *rithā'*, *madḥ*, and *hijā'*—is thus the utilization (or in the case of *hijā'*, weaponization) of *ḥasab* in poetic form. A competitiveness permeates this type of poetry, since it is not only the acts of the poet which generate *ḥasab*, but the poem itself attempts to replicate the glory of the acts through the internal complexity of

[179] Ibid.
[180] Or patience, especially with those of lesser rank.
[181] James Montgomery, "Dichotomy in "Jahili" Poetry," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 17 (1986): 1.2. Note that the basic meaning of this term is derived from the words *imru'* "man" and *marī'* "manly;" thus another sense of the word *murūwa* is "manliness."
[182] Farrin attributes a similar claim made in regard to al-Shanfará, who is discussed in more detail below. Raymond Farrin, *Abundance from the Desert*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 39.
[183] William Granara, *Narrating Muslim Sicily: War and Peace in the Medieval Mediterranean World*, Early and Medieval Islamic World, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2019), 155.

meter, word choice, rhyme, etc. Competition is often expressed within the action of the poem through diptych-like poetic images which encapsulate two parallel concepts (*muzāwaja*) like *ḥasab wa nasab*. In the case of *ījāra* and *ḍiyāfa*, the competition is in proving the superiority of the poet in his generosity to enemy and friend alike.[184]

In many cases, this poetry glorifies the tribe through the person of the poet, even if the *ḥasab* refers to the poet's own actions.[185] This concept is particularly pertinent later on when we consider the early evolution of the importance of Ḥusayn. However, in his case, the focus is rarely tribal, but rather on the *ahl al-bayt* and competitiveness essentially becomes the display of religious piety during mourning.

While the genres of *madḥ* and the related *sīra* provide explicit articulations of hero concepts, perhaps some of the most explicit discussions of the relationship between heroics, death, and mourning can be found within the *marthiya* form, plural *marāthī*, which is a specific instance of *rithā'*, i.e. an elegy. *Rithā'* is already an explicit subgenre by the coming of Islam. The *marthiya* is an excellent source for defining hero archetypes for two very good reasons. Firstly, since the eulogizing of the dead must clearly relate to *madḥ*—i.e. eulogies typically consist of descriptions of the praiseworthy characteristics of the deceased, as *madḥ* is for the living—*marāthī* are naturally given to listing the laudable qualities of their subjects. Secondly, as death poetry, they also necessarily contain the climax of the hero's tale and thus allow the character to be locked into a heroic archetype. Tumāḍir bint ʿAmr, usually known by her *laqab* al-Khansā' (d. circa 646 C.E.), is perhaps one of the best early exponents of hero creation in *rithā'* poetry. In one of her many poems elegizing her brother Ṣakhr, she says:

[184] Ibid 149.
[185] Montgomery 6.

فاذهب فلا يبعدنك الله من رجل مناع ضيم وطلاب بأوتار
قد كنت تحمل قلبا غير مهتضم مركبا في نصاب غير خوار
مثل السنان تضيء الليل صورته جلد المريرة حر وابن أحرار
أبكي فتى الحي نالته منيته وكل نفس إلى وقت ومقدار

Go, and may God not alienate you from such a man,
Who gives no quarter to injustice, and sought after blood-vengeance
You had a heart which did not tolerate oppression,
One whose constitution was in its very origin strong
Like the spearhead whose form lights the night
He was an unyielding man, a freeman, the son of freemen.
I mourn the youth of the tribe whose fate has caught up with him,
Indeed, for every soul, there is an appointed time and measure for life[186]

The picture al-Khansā' paints in her elegy is this: her concept of a heroic soul is one who is essentially the product and the pinnacle of tribal mores of *murūwa* (manliness). Reading through an old Arabic *marthiya* on the death of a loved one, one cannot but be struck by the dual themes which characterize the poetic hero: his nature as brash, arrogant warrior, and the inevitability of death. The theme of fate is especially prominent in the last line, where *waqt* (time) really means *dahr*, time in the sense of fate. This is a theme that we will see again in the *maqātil*, but its context is more complicated there. Most of these themes are readily available in the previously mentioned tale of 'Antara and continue in other poems.

A curious example of mourning incorporated into a very different kind of hero narrative can be found in the poetry of the pre-Islamic 'brigand' poet al-Shanfará al-Azdī (c. 6th century C.E.?). While the heroic motifs in the poems of 'Antara are quite obvious, despite some modern values dissonance, that of al-Shanfará is even more complex. His poetry forms a subtype of the *qaṣīda* often termed a *shi'r ṣu'luk*—i.e. 'brigand poetry.'[187] Recall that previously, I have

[186] 'Abbās Ibrāhīm, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Khansā'*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1994), 45.
[187] Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "Archetype and Attribution in Early Arabic Poetry: Al-Shanfarā and the Lāmiyyat 'Al-Arab," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18, no. 3 (1986): pp. 361-90; 361.

mentioned that externally, some of these tribal heroes may have been equated to brigands. This trope is fully and openly active in al-Shanfará's poetry.

This returns us to the earlier point made about the stark differences in heroic articulation present in some Arabic poetry, particularly as shall be seen in contrast with Persian poetry. Stetkevych is quite clear in her contention that, "The traditional definition of the word '*ṣu'luk*' poor, needy, having no property, no reliance on anything; a thief, robber—lends support to the further definition of the *ṣu'luk* as a liminal, antisocial character."[188] This is essentially the reckless, hot-blooded archetype of the tribal hero taken to its farthest extreme—the loner, powerful, but divested of real (i.e. tribal) human ties. While the *ṣu'luk* demonstrates the bravery and warrior prowess of an 'Antara-type character, he lies in a liminal space outside the bounds of tribal life. In one poem, al-Shanfará provides some extremely evocative images:

وفي الأرض مَنْأىً للكريم عن الأذى ... وفيها، لمن خاف القِلى، مُتعزَّلُ
لَعَمْرُكَ ما بالأرض ضيقٌ على أمرئٍ ... سَرَى راغباً أو راهباً، وهو يعقلُ
ولي، دونكم، أهلونَ: سِيْدٌ عَمَلّسٌ ... وأرقطُ زُهلول وَعَرفاءُ جيألُ
هم الأهلُ لا مستودعُ السرّ ذائعٌ ... لديهم، ولا الجاني بما جَرَّ، يُخْذَلُ
وكلٌّ أبيٌّ، باسلٌ غير أنني ... إذا عرضت أولى الطرائدِ أبسلُ

There is a remote place in the land for the noble person, far from suffering
And in it a place, for the one who fears hatred, to withdraw
By your life, this land does not restrict such a man
Who travels at night, as he desires, or out of fear, and is rational about it
I have kinsfolk besides you all, a wolf of the trenches, chief of the pack
A spotted leopard with a smooth back, the hyena with long fur
They are kin, who do not spread secrets once they are entrusted with them
Nor do they desert the criminal because of what he has done
Each one is proud, fearless, I however
Am more fearless when the first of the prey has appeared[189]

[188] Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, "The Ṣuʿlūk and His Poem: A Paradigm of Passage Manqué," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104, no. 4 (1984): pp. 661-78; 662.
[189] From the *Lāmiyya* of Shanfará ("the Poem whose Rhymes end in Lām"), verses 32-34, c. mid-6th century C.E., given in: ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Ḥifnī and Shanfará, *Lāmiyyat al-ʿArab lil-Shanfará*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb wa-Maṭbaʿatuhā, 1981), 11-14.

While several of the attributes listed — noble or generous (*karīm*), fearless (*bāsil*), and proud (*abiyy*) — are common to some of the other works considered here, the overall thematic content of the poem is far more antinomian. All of the animals the speaker compares his companions to have unpleasant reputations, as either vicious, voracious, or carrion-eaters. There is a strong sense of community amongst these outlaws, but also constant competition, and that they are banished (*muta'azzil*) from tribal connections into the shadows. There is also a sense of stoicism and fatalism, represented as mourning their disconnection, in these lines:

فَضَجَّ، وضَجَّتْ، بِالبَرَاحِ، كأنَّها وإياهُ، نوْحٌ فوقَ علياء، ثُكَّلُ
وأغضى وأغضتْ، واتسى واتَّستْ بهِ مَرَامِيلُ عَزَّاها، وعَزَّتهُ مُرْمِلُ
شَكا وشَكَتْ، ثم ارعوى بعدُ وارعوت ولَلصَّبرُ، إن لم ينفع الشكوُ أجملُ

So he raised a clamor and they clamored in the desolate waste as if
They were bereaved women, mourning with him on the heights above
He closed his eyes and they closed their eyes, he mimicked them and they him;
In the depths of deprivation, he consoled them and they consoled him, likewise deprived
He moaned and they moaned, then he abstained and they abstained;
For when complaint is of no use, forbearance is more favorable[190]

Here, al-Shanfará takes the metaphor of the wolf pack (*'amallas*) and runs with it, constructing a scene of wandering creatures shut off from all civilization. In addition, we have a clear picture of mourning — here though, the mourning seems to concern the death of the group to outside human contact. Their only personality exists amongst themselves and in their questionable activities. It is hard to characterize any of these images as those of heroes, yet the values posited have a connection with the previously mentioned heroic images of pre-Islamic poetry. As such, they need to be considered. Given the previously mentioned concepts of the brash and powerful

[190] Ibid, 29-30.

warrior, in a nomadic society it is not hard to imagine how the concept of a noble outlaw could be considered heroic.[191]

With the above cited texts, we can see some general patterns. One is the attitude of the heroic figures, which could best be characterized as exemplifying *fakhr*. This pride can be in extolling one's deeds (*madḥ*), in satirizing those who fall short of those deeds and thus magnifying one' own (*hijā'*), or mourning the dead who epitomized those deeds (*rithā'*). The heroic characters are proud warriors who cannot resist battle and define their nobility at least partially in relationship to their prowess. Another is the constant fatalism and predatory character of fate (*dahr*); Irwin characterizes them as resembling the warrior of Norse myth in how much this theme permeates their poetry.[192] Considering this, the fact that these characters seem to clash so strongly with the later concept of the heroism of Ḥusayn begs the question of how this gulf widened and what themes present in these poems still manage to hang on—even in a subtextual manner—in the later narratives. In the next section, we will consider the historical treatment of Ḥusayn and his portrayal in pre-Kāshefī Arabic *maqātil*. This presentation will allow us to understand the broad development of the *maqtal* genre and see whether their thematic content displays continuity with the pre-Islamic material discussed above.

Overall, the heroes surveyed previously certainly embody traits with widespread resonance, such as bravery, generosity, patience, and equanimity. [193] This being said, these heroes are part of the early Arab *weltanschauung* and are highly localized. While all heroic figures will manifest the values important to the cultures that produced them, heroes such as

[191] Indeed, consider the story of Robin Hood, an obvious outlaw from English medieval lore, who was considered an example of an outlaw hero, and more so, his name has become so synonymous with the concept that the term "Robin Hood" has entered the vernacular to reference just this sort of archetype even in the modern day.
[192] Robert Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature*, (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 2000), 18.
[193] However, we must be careful not to stretch these traits too far—many Greek heroes present significant aversions!

ʿAntara or al-Shanfará heavily invoke tribal values at their core; they are not universal heroes, and there is no attempt to present them as such. As we will see in the next chapter, Persian epic heroes, while embodying Persian culture as well, are very much intended to manifest universal virtues. A key question, both in the next section and the dissertation as a whole is, if Ḥusayn is a heroic character, where on this spectrum is he located?

VI. Ḥusayn in History and in *Maqātil*: A New Genre?

In order to better understand whether there is a connection between the character of Ḥusayn in the *maqātil* and the archetypical Arab hero, it is necessary to investigate what the *maqātil* have to say. While necessarily simplified here, the general outline of the events of Karbalā' that may be extracted from the early historical works are as follows. Upon the death of the founder of the Umayyad dynasty, Muʿāwiya, in 680 C.E., his son Yazīd (d. 683 C.E.) declared himself caliph and set about extracting pledges of allegiance (*bayʿa*) from holdouts in the Muslim community. He identified Ḥusayn and ʿAbdullāh b. al-Zubayr (d. 692 C.E.) as particular threats to his claim to the throne. Since Ḥusayn was currently living in Medina, Yazīd ordered the governor of Medina, al-Walīd b. ʿUtba b. Abī Sufyān (d. 684 C.E.), to summon them both to the governor's palace and obtain the *bayʿa*, by force if necessary. Ibn al-Zubayr fled to Mecca, while Ḥusayn went to the palace. Ḥusayn stalled for time, claiming the *bayʿa* should be announced in public, and then escaped to Mecca in the intervening two days. Al-Walīd was then temporarily deposed by Yazīd for his failure and suspected sympathies toward Ḥusayn. Ḥusayn was then invited to Kufa, a stronghold of those sympathetic to 'Alī's family and with a strong dislike of the Umayyads. Besides eventually replying to the invitation and then sending his

cousin Muslim b. ʿAqīl (d. 680 C.E.) as an ambassador, he was rather reticent to directly interact with the Kufans; they sent him multiple letters before he responded. He delayed leaving Mecca until he felt certain of the Kufans' backing.

While Ḥusayn gathered support in Kufa and announced his belief that Yazīd was not the legitimate caliph via letters and Muslim b. ʿAqīl, Yazīd became aware of the situation. He deposed the current governor of Kūfa, al-Nuʿmān b. Bashīr (d. 684 C.E.), who had not attempted to check Muslim b. ʿAqīl's efforts in the city. Yazīd appointed the governor of Basra, ʻUbaydullāh b. Ziyād (d. 686 C.E.), to the post instead to strengthen his control of the city. Ibn Ziyād then captured Muslim b. ʿAqīl and had him executed. By this time, Ḥusayn had already set out for Kufa, and while several followers advised him to turn back, he continued to make his way towards the city.

On the way, he learned that his Muslim had been killed in Kufa, and convinced of the city's treachery, he eventually made camp at Karbalā' on the 2nd of Muḥarram. Ibn Ziyād had instructed his forces to prevent Ḥusayn from approaching the Euphrates or any other nearby water sources. In the desert heat of Karbalā', the party suffered from terrible thirst, only succeeding in obtaining a small amount of water in a strike led by Ḥusayn's brother al-ʻAbbās. Ibn Ziyād instructed the leader of his forces, Ibn Saʻd, to provide Ḥusayn with the option of either near-exile as a soldier on the frontier, offering the *bayʻa* to Yazīd, or returning home.

The negotiations failed, and on the 9th of Muḥarram, Ibn Saʻd's forces began to advance. Again they blocked the party from access to water, determined to defeat Ḥusayn through thirst. The battle was joined on the next morning, and Ḥusayn's forces were massacred. Following the murder of his infant son ʻAlī Aṣghar by an arrow while cradled in his arms, Ḥusayn fought on furiously. He was finally wounded and then beheaded during a fight with a group of soldiers led

by Shimr b. Dhī l-Jawshan. His camp was sacked, and the women of his family were led back to Damascus as slaves.[194]

Visits to Ḥusayn's tomb, erected on the site of battle at Karbalā', began almost immediately afterwards, when a group calling themselves the *tawwābūn* (repenters) took form, primarily out of the Kūfans who sincerely regretted not coming to Ḥusayn's aid.[195] The reports from these groups likely formed the bedrock of what would become the *maqtal* genre.

However, despite the emergence of ritual at early date, which we will discuss in the following section, written narratives are sparse. While later in the Arabic literary tradition, *maqtal* constitutes a specific and distinct genre, the earlier one moves backward in history, the less distinct it becomes. In the *maqtal*'s earliest forms, we can barely distinguish it from biographical or historical writing. The earliest notices discussing Ḥusayn's death are found embedded in larger historical texts, such as the account of Abū Mikhnaf, which is embedded in the massive *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, or as biographical entries in *ṭabaqāt* (biographical dictionaries), like the *tarjuma* (biographical entry) on Ḥusayn found in Ibn Sa'd's *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrá* (The Book on the Classes of Important Persons).[196] While a discussion of the evolution of the genre is far beyond the scope of this dissertation, illuminating trends in the genre in order to fruitfully discuss the derivation of the Persian manifestation is definitely necessary.

While we have the names of several *maqātil* listed in indexes like the *Fihrist* of Ibn Nadīm (d. 995 or 998 C.E.), the vast majority of works until the 10th century are not extent. It is

[194] A synthetic overview compiling the accounts of these sources and giving a more detailed description of these events can be found in: Riadh Ahmad, "Al -Husayn Ibn `Alī: A Study of His Uprising and Death Based on Classical Arabic Sources (3rd and 4th Century A.H./9th and 10th Century A.D.)," PhD diss., (McGill University, 2007).
[195] Khalid Sindawi, "Visit to the Tomb of Al-Husayn B. 'Ali in Shiite Poetry: First to Fifth Centuries AH (8th-11th Centuries CE)," *Journal Of Arabic Literature* 37, no. 2 (2006): 230-58; 235.
[196] H.A.R. Gibb, "Abū Mikhnaf", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 5 May 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0232>

possible that these works only enjoyed a limited circulation due to their very narrow subject matter. Given that the earliest reference to *'Āshūrā'* rituals occurs in 963 C.E., it is also likely that truly organized traditions of commemoration were only beginning to emerge and thus the *maqtal* was essentially a fringe genre.[197] Even more so, since the name *maqtal al-Ḥusayn* generally occurs as a generic title of these early works, and that historical works such as the *Futūḥ* (Conquests) of Ibn A'tham (d. 926 C.E.) use the term *maqtal* to mean the event of someone's death, rather than as the name of genre, it is likely that the *maqtal* was not recognized as a genre distinct from biography at this point.[198] Possibly the earliest notice is that of al-Aṣbagh b. Nubāta (c. late 7th century C.E.?); however, it is not extent and only references to its existence in other sources remain.[199] The previously mentioned *maqtal* of Lūṭ b. Yaḥyá al-Azdī, better known as Abū Mikhnaf (d. 775 C.E.), while commonly circulated to this day as the earliest extant *maqtal*, is suspect because it does not exist independently, but rather is part of Ṭabarī's historical work in the form of a long citation. Abū Mikhnaf was a prolific writer of *maqātil*, with at 13 texts titled *maqtal* of so-and-so being attributed to him, though even his most famous work, his *maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, had to be reconstructed from Ṭabarī.[200] Other than the famous biographical notices recorded in the *Futūḥ*, the *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrá*, the *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* (The Lineages of the Nobles) of al-Balādhurī (d. 892 C.E.), we have no major extant *maqātil* — and especially specifically extant *maqātil* written by Shi'a — until the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyin* (The

[197] Sindawi 2006, 235.
[198] See for example, the chapter title in the *Futūḥ*, *dhikru mā kāna ba'da maqtali l-Ḥusayn bin 'Alī raḍī Allāhu 'anhumā* (Notice of what happened after the death of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, may God be pleased with them both). See: Aḥmad b. A'tham al-Kūfī, *Al-Futūḥ*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1992), 2:188.
[199] Hossein Modarressi Tabataba'i, *Tradition and Survival: A Bibliographical Survey of Early Shī'ite Literature*, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), 60-1.
[200] Sebastian Günther, "Maqātil Literature in Medieval Islam," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 25, no. 3 (1994): 192-212.

Martyrdoms of the ʿAlids) of Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 967 or 972-73 C.E.).[201] I shall discuss this *maqtal* in more detail in the following section.

This does not mean that there were no *maqātil* written; indeed, several books are attributed to Shiʿi scholars such as Muḥammad al-Wāqidī (d. 822 C.E.), Hishām al-Kalbī (d. 819 C.E.), and many others.[202] The amount of *maqātil* increased in number particularly starting in the latter part of the 9th century, which Günther attributes to scholarly interest shifting from Iraq to Persian Shiʿi cities like Qom and Esfahan.[203] Despite the amount of Persians writing *maqātil*, these texts were evidently composed under heavy influence from Arabic literary conventions for historical works. There is no evidence for any *maqātil* composed in anything but Arabic at this time.

Overall, Günther identifies 32 authorities from the first four centuries of Islam whose works are believed to have fallen within the realm of the *maqtal* genre.[204] Most of these texts are lost, and so this conclusion rests on the fact that the vast majority of them are titled *Kitāb Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* (Book of the Death of Ḥusayn). Of the above 32 authorities, 19 wrote a text with this name or a variation thereof, with the rest being dedicated to the death of another important personages such as ʿAlī.[205] Thus, it appears from a very early period, the majority of *maqtal* texts were dedicated to Ḥusayn.

There is a complicated and somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the archetype of the *baṭal* in the *maqātil*. Several of the earliest ones do not even use the term at all. The reason for this is an attempt to distance the character of Ḥusayn from the characters of the hero-poets which

[201] Ibid, 205.
[202] Ibid, 203.
[203] Ibid, 204.
[204] Ibid, 199.
[205] Ibid.

we have previously discussed.[206] There is a sense that that poetry of the Arab hero displays an attitude which is vulgar and not appropriate for the commemoration of Ḥusayn. Still, it would be a mistake to claim that this long-standing tradition exerted absolutely no influence on the emergence of this genre, particularly given that it is one which focuses on battle.

We can find an example of this complicated attitude towards pre-Islamic tropes of the hero in the poetry of al-Ḥārith b. Abī al-ʻAlā' Saʻīd b. Ḥamdān al-Taghlibī, usually known by his *kunya*, Abū Firās or al-Ḥamdānī (d. 968 C.E.). He was a noted Iraqī poet at the court of Sayf al-Dawla, and the chief rival of the arguably even more famous poet al-Mutanabbī (d. 965 C.E.). He was also known for his Shīʻī sympathies and love of satirizing the ʻAbbasids.[207] In one of his poems preserved in *Adab al-Ṭaff* (Literature of the Battle at al-Ṭaff), an encyclopedia of poetry dealing with ʻAshūrā', he states that:

يكرون والابطال نكصاً تقاعست من الخوف والآساد شيمتها الكر

> They turn and attack, and the heroes (*abṭāl*), recoiling, hesitate
> From fear, while the lions are characterized by their attack.[208]

This is interesting both philologically and thematically. It is clear there are some shifts in literary attitude going on, but they are not complete. The characterization of Ḥusayn's forces to a certain extent has features typically associated with the trope of the "brash warrior leaping into

[206] This attitude must be a natural outcome of the emerging criticism of certain poetic conventions among the early Muslim community. Badawi argues, "The famous Koranic condemnation of poets in Sura XXVI obviously related to a particular type of poetry that celebrated tribal and partisan virtues which ran counter to the universal Islamic ideal." M.M. Badawi. "From Primary To Secondary Qasidas," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 11, no. 1 (1980): 1-31, 3.

[207] H.A.R. Gibb. "Abū Firās", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 5 May 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0183>

[208] Jawād al-Shubbar, *Adab al-Ṭaff aw Shuʻarā' al-Ḥusayn min al-Qarn al-Awwal al-Hijrī Ḥattā al-Qarn al-Rābiʻ ʻashr*, (Beirut: Muʼassasat al-Aʻlami lil-Maṭbūʻāt, 1969), 2: 74.

battle," which is typical of the pre-Islamic Arab hero, as seen above. Indeed, the poet says Ḥusayn's forces are "characterized by attack (*shīmatuhā l-karr*)," literally, their defining mark is turning around and repeatedly attacking. However, at the same time, the poet makes a point of referring to the opposing side as "heroes" (*abṭāl*). This use is obviously sarcastic, but the choice could also signal a criticism of the traditional tribal values associated with that hero, and it is the lions who are the real heroes.[209] What we see here is arguably transitional, from a pure glorification of Bedouin virtues to a more subdued retention which is wrapped in a criticism of those values.

Another example of the ambivalent attitude towards pre-Islamic poetic tropes can be found in Ḥillī's (d. circa 1281 C.E.) much later *maqtal*, *Muthīr al-Aḥzān* (The Provoker of Sorrows). Unlike Abū Firās, who was an actual professional poet, Najm al-Dīn Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Hibat Allāh b. Namā al-Ḥillī was an important Shiʿi *muḥaddith* and scholar.[210] Notably, he was also the teacher of Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Ḥillī, a prominent theologian from the same city of al-Ḥilla in Iraq. A recognized *mujtahid* (expert in the interpretation of jurisprudence), Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥillī is particularly important in the history of Twelver Shi'ism because of how influential his works have been; works like his *Kashf al-Murād* (The Discovery of the Goal) and *al-Bāb al-Ḥādī-'ashar* (The Eleventh Chapter) were instrumental in defining the theological direction that Twelver Shi'ism took.[211] This makes the following excerpt from his teacher's *maqtal* all the more curious:

[209] This is a common simile used to reference 'Alī especially, who is also called Ḥaydar, which also means "lion." The simile would clearly be understood as referring to the inheritors of 'Alī's party.
[210] Etan Kohlberg, "Ḥelli, Najm-al-Din Abu'l-Qāsem Jaʿfar," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, XII/2, pp. 169-170.; available online at https://iranicaonline.org/articles/helli-najm-al-din-abul-qasem-jafar (accessed on 20 January 2020).
[211] S.H.M. Jafri, "al-Ḥillī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 15 May 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2867>

يا دهر أفّ لك من خليل كم لك بالإشراق والأصيل
من طالب وصاحب قتيل والدهر لا يقنع بالبديل
وكل حيّ فإلى سبيل ما أقرب الوعد من الرحيل
وإنما الأمر إلى الجليل

To hell with you, O Time, from a friend
How much of sunrise and sunset remains to you?
Which seeker[212] and companion will die?
And Time won't be satisfied with a substitute
Every living thing is on that path
How close is death to departure!
Or rather, how close is it to God, most glorious?[213]

This is an example of a particular trope especially common in early Arabic poetry called "the censure of time" (*dhamm al-dahr*). Goodman considers it the poetic reflex of "an ancient and natural expression of grief."[214] I have previously mentioned this theme in reference to the Arab hero; I will consider the contrast between the Arabic and Persian concepts of fate and the censure of time in the next chapter as important elements in the construction of specific kinds of heroic archetypes.[215]

However, at the same time, due to the Qur'ānic rejection of *dahr* as the arbiter of one's fate, several *aḥādīth* either condemn poetry which censures *dahr*, or either claim *dahr* as a name of God, in both cases explicitly marking this trope as a remnant of the pre-Islamic literary milieu.[216] As such, despite the effort to separate pre-Islamic concepts of the inevitability of fate

[212] This is almost certainly meant as a pun, referring to members of Ḥusayn's family as a *ṭālib,* literally "seeker," but also referencing ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.
[213] Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Hibat Allāh b. Namā al-Ḥillī, *Muthīr al-aḥzān wa munīr subul al-ashjān*, (Qom: Manshūrāt al-maktaba al-ḥaydariyya, 2013), 76.
[214] L.E. Goodman. "Time in Islam," *Religion and Time*, Studies in the History of Religions; 54. Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1993, pp. 138-162; 138.
[215] [This footnote will point to a specific section of Chapter 2]
[216] Ahmad Pakatchi and Janis Esots, "Dahr (in the Qurʾān)", in: *Encyclopaedia Islamica*, Editors-in-Chief: Wilferd Madelung and, Farhad Daftary. Consulted online on 15 May 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1875-9831_isla_SIM_05000105>

as an omnipresent force from Arabic literature, this is an explicit example of how the *maqātil* do still draw on them.

The relationship between pre-Islamic poetic tropes and the poetry and prose of the *maqātil* is quite complex. We cannot truly say that the Arabic *maqātil* represent a total thematic break from the pre-Islamic concept of the Arab hero. Rather, the relationship is more subtle. There are critiques of pre-Islamic ideas which run through the *maqātil*, which is unsurprising, since they are arguably trying to set up a new paradigm of the "Virtuous Person." At the same time, however, the *maqātil* cannot fully divorce themselves from the literary environment which they arose from. In the next section, we will see how poetry and the *maqtal* became some of the central elements of 'Āshūrā' rituals and whether this ambivalence continues in this context as well.

VII. A Poetic Karbalā': Ritualization and Conclusions

After surveying a few of these tropes and archetypes in pre-Islamic poetry, the question must be asked as to how the themes discussed above could have transitioned into an Islamic context, or more specifically, into a Shi'i one. In early periods of Islam, and even continuing far beyond that, poetry had a complicated relationship with religion – though it was never explicitly prohibited.[217] The Prophet Muḥammad had been accused of composing the Qur'ān under possession by the jinn (*majnūn*). His opponents also suggested that he was a *kāhin*, a soothsayer

[217] For example, Badawi notes that, "The view once widely held that Muḥammad and Islam discouraged poetry and the poets is now generally discredited." Badawi, 3.

who was in communication with spirits; they pointed to the presence of *saj'* (rhymed prose) and other types of poetic devices in the Qur'ān as evidence.[218]

This attitude was mollified by the appearance of a new genre of poetry within the traditional milieu: hagiographic or devotional praise poetry (*na't*). One of the earliest examples of this subgenre is the famous *qaṣīdat al-burda*, the "poem of the cloak," attributed to Ka'b b. Zuhayr (d. c. 662 C.E.).[219] When Muḥammad's attitude towards poetry was still rather negative, Zuhayr, still a pagan, approached him to beg for the Prophet's protection (*ijāra*). This he grants, and in gratitude, Zuhayr composes the *qaṣīda*; the Prophet replies by placing his cloak (*burda*) over Zuhayr in appreciation and as a further sign of his protection.[220]

While the poem is notable for its role as an emblem of Islam's tacit acceptance of poetry, Zuhayr's *qaṣīda* is also notable for the fact that it re-introduces the concept of the hero – but this time in a positive sense:

إنَّ الرَّسُولَ لَنورٌ يُسْتَضاءُ بِهِ مُهَنَّدٌ مِنْ سُيوفِ اللهِ مَسْلُولُ
في عُصْبةٍ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ قالَ قائِلُهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ لَمَّا أسْلَمُوا زُولُوا
زالُوا فمَا زالَ أنْكاسٌ ولا كُشُفٌ عِنْدَ الِّلقاءِ ولا مِيلٌ مَعازيلُ
شُمُّ العَرانِينِ أبْطالٌ لُبوسُهُمْ مِنْ نَسْجِ دَاوُدَ في الهَيْجَا سَرابيلُ

The Messenger is a light (*nūr*) [221] through which one is enlightened
Drawn from amongst God's swords like a blade of Indian steel
Among the bands of the Quraysh, saying:
Flee! When they left[222] the deepest interior of Mecca

[218] D.S. Margoliouth, "The Origins of Arabic Poetry," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 57, no. 3 (1925): 417-449; 417-8.
[219] Also known by its first line, *bānat Su'ād* (Su'ād left). For more information on Zuhayr, see: R. Basset, "Kaʿb b. Zuhayr", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 July 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3733>
[220] Michael A. Sells, ""Bānat Suʿād": Translation and Introduction," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 21, no. 2 (1990): 140-54; 141.
[221] Note the common variant *la-sayfun* "…is a sword." See: Sells 153.
[222] This is a pun, since *aslamū* also means, "they became Muslims," in other words, the poem describes both the fact of leaving as well as the reason for leaving.

So they fled, but not as those with bowed heads nor in defeat
From the battle, not retreating and reeling from it
But as unbowed lions, clothed like heroes (*abṭālun lubūsuhum*)
In mail made of David's weaving during the fight[223]

The structure of the poem is also not radically different from *jāhilī qaṣīda*s; it has a traditional three-part narrative form, and each part reproduces typical *jāhilī* tropes – including the proud warrior-hero.[224] However, this time, there is an explicit moral quality which colors these traditional notes differently. The Prophet is not merely any warrior, but the "sword and light of God."

Despite the popularity of the *qaṣīdat al-burda*, which gave rise to countless examples of praise poetry, the ambivalence of religious scholars towards poetry survived. For example, Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064 C.E.), an Andalusian jurist and reputed polymath, claims that the Prophet prohibited poetry because of its relationship to untruthfulness.[225] Regardless of the uncertain sinful status of poetry or not, it is a fully developed part of the Arabic literary tradition from the earliest period, and this shows no sign of abating even to this day. Furthermore, the *qaṣīdat al-burda* sets a new tone for poetry, in that it doesn't have to serve a purely egotistical purpose, but rather can be a vehicle for the inculcation of religious values. Poetry could now be set to explicitly religious ends – such as within the context of mourning rituals and texts which encapsulate them.

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[223] ʻAlī Ḥusayn al-Bawwāb, *Sharḥ Qaṣīdat Kaʻb Ibn Zuhayr "Bānat Sūʻad" Fī Madḥ Rasūl Allāh*, (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Maʻārif, 1985), 60-2.
[224] Sells 142.
[225] Mansour Ajami, *The Alchemy of Glory: The Dialectic of Truthfulness and Untruthfulness in Medieval Arabic Literary Criticism*, (Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1988), 49. It is also possible that Ibn Ḥazm could be putting his own ambivalence towards "untruthful poetry" into the mouth of the Prophet, given his own well-known cynicism and appreciation of sincerity. See: R. Arnaldez, "Ibn Ḥazm", *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 July 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0325>

Despite this supposed doubt about poetry among some religious circles, there is evidence to suggest that the recitation of poems commemorating Ḥusayn was a common practice in conjunction with pilgrimages to his tomb in Karbalā'. Firstly, within the *maqātil* themselves, we find the incorporation of poetry at a very early point. The format of these early works owes a lot to *ḥadīth* literature in their construction, and the *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyin* (The Martyrdoms of the Alids) is no exception. This is one of the earliest examples *maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, and is notable for the mixing of genres that essentially becomes a trademark of the *maqtal* literature. In it, Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 967 or 972-73 C.E.), an 'Abbasid-era Baghdad-based scholar primarily known for his encyclopedic *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (The Book of Songs), uses an abbreviated form of *isnād* (chained narrative) quotation in assembling his material. This form is taken from the study of the *ḥadith* corpus, but the abbreviated form resembles historical writing. In addition, the text is filled with short quotations of poetry. In one example, al-Iṣfahānī quotes an unnamed poet elegizing Ḥusayn's half-brother 'Abbās, saying:

أحق الناس أن يبكى عليه إذا بكّى الحسين بكربلاء
أخوه وابن والده علي أبو الفضل المضرج بالدماء
ومن واساه لا يثنيه شيء وجادله على عطش بماء

The truest of all people are those who weep for him
As Ḥusayn wept most bitterly at Karbalā'
For his brother, and son of his father 'Alī
'Abbās b. 'Alī, the one stained red with blood
He who imitated him, without any divergence
And competed with him even in his thirst[226]

Even this short poem is notable in that it mixes several genres; the first verse combines *rithā'* and *ḥikma*, while the second two contain examples of *madḥ*. However, another important

[226] Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyin,* (Qom: Montashārāt al-Sharīf al-Raẓī, 1995), 89.

ritual example which is nested below the surface of the text is setting up the prototype for a ritual substitute, a central theme of *ʻĀshūrāʼ*.[227] In this poem, we are given a picture of the slain half-brother of Ḥusayn, ʻAbbās. The mimetic relationship between the two is established both by ʻAbbās' status as his half-brother, thus providing blood-relation as an explanatory tie as well as becoming a stand-in for Ḥusayn's full brother, Ḥasan, who died years before. Secondly, the poem's text reaffirms this resemblance by underlining Ḥusayn and ʻAbbās' extreme likeness, i.e. a general example *wāsāhu* "he emulated him," and a specific, *jādiluhu ʻalá ʻaṭshin bi-māʼ,* 'vied with him over thirst for water.' The competition we saw earlier in the pre-Islamic material is referred to, but almost inverted, since ʿAbbās becomes a mirror for Ḥusayn's own spiritual significance. These things allow ʻAbbās to serve as a sacrifice for Ḥusayn, prefiguring the latter's own eventual martyrdom, as well as providing a template for his own ritual mourning by the *tawwābūn* and then, the Shiʻi faithful.[228] This, I believe, is meant to serve as textual grounding for the ritual action of mourning Ḥusayn.

The above account is a bit oblique, however. While we can detect implicit directives towards ritual action, how does this fully transition from mythic speech to ritual action? Of course, this consideration depends on the conclusion that mythic speech precedes ritual action. This concept has been the subject of massive discussion in ritual theory, comparative mythology,

[227] The idea of the ritual substitute is intensely important to the entire idea of sacrifice as a ritual practice. One of the best-known examples occurs in the ancient Greek epic poem, the *Iliad*, where Achilles' friend and attendant Patroklos dons Achilles' armor and Hector kills him thinking he is Achilles. Regarding this event, Nagy says, "When a warrior is killed in war, he becomes a *therapōn* or 'ritual substitute' who dies for Arēs by becoming identical to the war god at the moment of death; then, after death, the warrior is eligible to become a cult hero who serves as a sacralized 'attendant' of the war god." Furthermore, there is more layering going on, since Patroklos is actually the ritual substitute for Achilles, who is the ritual substitute for Arēs; i.e. he is an intermediate ritual substitute who links Achilles and Arēs. See: Nagy 2013, 158.

[228] This calls to mind Patton's notion of divine reflexivity, i.e. the Greek gods performing libations in worship, which reflects and recapitulates human worship, but not because the god themselves need to perform sacrifices: "Hence the image of worship by God or the gods must inexorably represent the human activity of worship, and it must do so for human ends." Kimberley C. Patton, *Religion of the Gods: Ritual, Paradox, and Reflexivity*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 10.

the history of religion, and anthropology, and we will revisit it in more detail later. However, the evidence for the ritual action is also present in the texts.

Both the Umayyads (661-750 C.E.) and the ʻAbbasids (750-1258 C.E.) banned visiting the tomb at multiple points in time, demonstrating that such pilgrimages were common from the earliest period.[229] Furthermore, public commemoration ceremonies complete with lamentations and mourning are known to have taken place under the Fatimids; one such commemoration is noted to have occurred in 1005 C.E. in the vicinity of al-Azhar in Cairo during the reign of the sixth Fatimid caliph, al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh (d. 1021 C.E.).[230] Thus also near what would eventually be the site of the al-Ḥusayn mosque in Islamic Cairo. The mosque was constructed just under a century later, around the time when the Fatimids supposedly finally obtained Ḥusayn's head from Ashqelon. Sindawi and Lapidus both opine that this was done to make Cairo into a *ziyāra* destination and perhaps to compete with Karbalā' in the Shiʻi collective consciousness.[231]

The earliest reference to a commemoration of *ʻĀshūrā'* appears to take place forty-two years before the Cairo commemoration, in 963 C.E., and is described in Ibn Kathīr's (d. 1373 C.E.) *al-Bidāya wa'l-Nihāya* (The Beginning and the End). Ibn Kathīr, a noted Syrian Shāfiʻī

[229] Sindawi 2006, 235.
[230] Paula Sanders, *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo*, SUNY Series in Medieval Middle East History, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 125. I have also previously mentioned the poetry of al-Mu'ayyad fī'l-Dīn al-Shīrāzī in the preface and a specific phrase from it. Qutbuddin mentions this poem in which he briefly alludes to al-Ḥusayn, but this is not the focus of his poetic corpus. However, his homilies do serve as the template for the Ṭayyibī Bohra Ismāʻīlīs' *waʻẓ* (sermon) during ʻĀshūrā', which concludes with a recounting of al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom. Evidence like this suggests that some form of ritualized martyrdom narrative may have been practiced during the Fatimid period. See: Tahera Qutbuddin, *Al-Mu'ayyad Al-Shīrāzī and Fatimid Daʻwa Poetry: A Case of Commitment in Classical Arabic Literature*, Islamic History and Civilization; v. 57 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2005), 53, and 307, n. 26.
[231] Khalid Sindawi, "The Head of Husayn Ibn Ali: Its Various Places of Burial and the Miracles that it Performed," in *Holy Places in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Confrontation and Co-existence*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 264-273; 267-8.

jurist and *ḥadīth* expert, does not even bother to conceal the depths of his loathing when descripting the event:

> On the tenth of Muḥarram in this year, Mu'izz al-Dawlah b. Būyah, may God denounce him, ordered the closure of the markets and that the women should wear hair sackcloth, and that they should go out into the market, unveiled, put their hair in disarray while beating at their faces in mourning for Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. The Sunnis were unable to stop them from doing this, due to the great number of Shi'a, their open display of power, and the fact that the Sulṭān supported them.[232]

While there is no reason to doubt Ibn Kathīr's account, it is worth trying to corroborate it with other accounts of what rituals may have been practiced. If we go back further, to right around the same time period that Ibn Kathīr was describing, we can also find material which is not historical per se, meaning it does not describe a dated event. Through this, we can also see the emergence of ritualized mourning from poems and the records of their performance. Ibn Qūlawayh (d. 978 or 979 C.E.) was writing in Baghdad around the same time as the above mentioned event, and it is possible he may have even seen or participated in it. His *ḥadīth* book, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* (The Complete Guide to Pilgrimages), is a veritable textbook of the rituals surrounding the commemoration of Ḥusayn which were taking place at his time. The 33rd chapter of his book is even titled, *al-bābu man qāla fī al-Ḥusayni 'alayhi al-salāmu shi'ran fa-bakā wa-'abkā* (the chapter regarding the one who recites poetry for Ḥusayn, then weeps and causes others to weep). One *ḥadīth* states:

> O Abū 'Imāra, recite something for me about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him. He said: so I recited it, and he wept, then I recited again, and he wept again, then I recited yet again,

[232] Abū al-Fidā' al-Muḥāfiẓ b. Kathīr. *Al-Bidāyah wa-l-Nihāyah,* (Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma'ārif, 1991), 11: 243
في عاشر المحرم من هذه السنة أمر معز الدولة بن بويه قبحه الله تغلق الأسواق وأن يلبس النساء المسوح من الشعر وأن يخرجن في الأسواق حاسرات عن وجوههن، ناشرات شعورهن يلطمن وجوههن ينحن على الحسين بن علي بن أبي طالب، ولم يمكن أهل السنة منع ذلك لكثرة الشيعة وظهورهم، وكون السلطان معهم.

> and he wept yet again. He said, by God, I shall continue reciting, and he wept until the weeping was heard from afar, and he said to me, O Abū ʻImāra, whoever recites poetry about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, and then makes fifty people weep, he will reach heaven, and whoever recites poetry about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, and then makes forty people weep, he will reach heaven, and whoever recites poetry about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, and then makes thirty people weep, he will reach heaven, and whoever recites poetry about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, and then makes twenty people weep, he will reach heaven, and whoever recites poetry about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, and then makes ten people weep, he will reach heaven, and whoever recites poetry about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, and then makes one person weep, he will reach heaven, and whoever recites poetry about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, and he himself weeps, he will reach heaven, and whoever recites poetry about Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, and then even attempts to weep, then he will reach heaven.[233]

This is an extremely detailed example of ritual action being performed at the tomb of Ḥusayn, and explicitly notes the immense merit that will result from it. The communal rather than individual performance of these ritual actions is also continually underscored by the *ḥadīth* enjoining the reciter of poetry to actively involve others in ritual action by getting them to weep as well. Another *hadīth* just below it also explicitly uses the term *marthiya* to describe the type of poetry it is recommended to recite at Ḥusayn's tomb.[234] It is worth noting that this practice was not simply recommended by scholars, but some *aḥādīth* and texts explicitly state that a particular Imam encouraged pilgrims to recite such poetry. Sindawi summarizes the basic content of most of these poems as:

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[233] Abū al-Qāsim Jaʻfar b. Muḥammad b. Qūlawayh al-Qummī, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, (Qom: Mu'assasat Nashr al-Fiqāha, 1996), 208-9.

حدثني ابو العباس، عن محمد بن الحسين، عن الحسن بن علي بن ابي عثمان، عن الحسن بن علي بن ابي المغيرة، عن ابي عمارة المنشد، عن ابي عبد الله عليه السلام، قال: قال لي: يا ابا عمارة انشدني في الحسين عليه السلام، قال: فأنشدته، فبكى، ثم أنشدته فبكى، ثم أنشدته فبكى، قال: فوالله ما زلت انشده ويبكي حتى سمعت البكاء من الدار، فقال لي: يا ابا عمارة من انشد في الحسين عليه السلام شعرا فأبكى خمسين فله الجنة، ومن انشد في الحسين شعرا فأبكى أربعين فله الجنة، ومن انشد في الحسين شعرا فأبكى ثلاثين فله الجنة، ومن انشد في الحسين شعرا فأبكى عشرين فله الجنة، ومن انشد في الحسين شعرا فأبكى عشرة فله الجنة، ومن انشد في الحسين عليه السلام شعرا فأبكى واحدا فله الجنة، ومن انشد في الحسين عليه السلام شعرا فبكى فله الجنة، ومن انشد في الحسين شعرا فتباكى فله الجنة.

[234] Ibid, 209-10.

A. Invoking God's name, uttering His praises, and declaring His Sovereignty, His Greatness and His power.

B. Praising Ḥusayn and the Prophet's family, as representatives of Divine law and the true path which it marks.

C. Evoking the events of the death of Ḥusayn and the others who were killed with him, and praising Ḥusayn for having struggled for justice.

D. Expressing hope for victory in the future and a refusal to give in to despair.

E. Declaring the bond between the Shiite person and Ḥusayn, promising to follow in the latter's footsteps, and absolutely disavowing any link to the powers whose course differed from that of Ḥusayn.[235]

If we are to accept, as I am contending, that the poetic inheritance provides the basic blueprint for the *maqātil*, especially later texts, then this set gives us a sense of what that blueprint will look like. Finally, it also definitively demonstrates the beginnings of the ritualization of oral poetry as a major part of *'Āshūrā'* observances.

Now that we have seen how poetry was from an early period incorporated into mourning for Ḥusayn, beginning the development of complex rituals, we should ask: where are the heroic themes from the earlier poetic tradition? Or are they already dissipating? First, consider the pre-Islamic hero concepts, such as those given for 'Antara, transposed in the context of Ḥusayn. Ḥusayn's 'noble status' is not actually one of formal nobility, in the sense that he doesn't descend from literal nobles. He is the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the son of 'Alī, two men who were known in the early Muslim community for their simple lifestyles and

[235] Sindawi 2006, 239.

willingness to deal openly with all levels of society. This is later contrasted with Ḥusayn's opponents, the Umayyad dynasty, who are noted as having assumed the trappings of imperial status taken from the Persians and Byzantines:

> And when Muʿāwiya met with ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in Syria in imperial splendor, apparent from the number of his retinue and devices, and ʿUmar rejected that, saying, 'O Muʿāwiya, are these the royal customs of Persia (*kisrawiyya*)?' Muʿāwiya replied, 'O Commander of the Faithful, we are currently in the frontier confronting the enemy, and it is necessary for us to compete with them in the accoutrements of war.[236]

The early concept of the nobility of Ḥusayn thus is rooted in two different concepts. Firstly, his relationship to the Prophet grants him a kind of spiritual nobility—however, it is difficult to determine how much of this is retrospectively determined as a way of legitimizing the membership in the Quraysh as a marker of authority.[237] Secondly, Ḥusayn's nobility is determined by his actual character, in a similar way as what we see with ʿAntara as being from among 'gallant men' (*karām al-rijāl*) —his chivalry marks him as noble.

Previously in Section V, I noted the dual concept of *ḥasab wa nasab*, and its importance to the foundational character of the pre-Islamic hero. This concept also has reverberations in *maqātil* literature. At least initially, the attribution of a traditional noble *nasab* of Ḥusayn was complicated; this much is obvious from the fact that the Umayyads refused to recognize his claim to the caliphate. Farrin has argued that Muḥammad's message critiques the concern of pre-

[236]Walī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Khaldūn. Muqaddamat Ibn Khaldūn. Damascus: Dār Yaʿrab, 2004. 383.
ولما لقي معاوية عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنهما عند قدومه إلى الشام في أبهة الملك، وزيه من العديد والعدة استنكر ذلك، وقال: أكسروية يا معاوية؟ فقال: يا أمير المؤمنين إنا في ثغر تجاه العدو، وبنا إلى مباهاتهم بزينة الحرب والجهاد حاجة.

[237] Montgomery W. Watt, "Ḳuraysh," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 16 December 2018 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4533>

Islamic Arabian society with *nasab*—which cannot be personally acquired—as opposed to focusing on personal spiritual attainment.[238]

Ḥusayn was not a literal prince from a royal lineage. His *nasab*, while hardly unimportant, was in his relationship to Muḥammad. His grandfather did not come from a noble lineage either—though one was later constructed for him—so the creation of Ḥusayn's *nasab* only obtains the level of a supernatural nobility over the centuries. The early Muslim community was not characterized by claims of temporal royalty since the closest thing to a 'nobility' was formulated in religious terms, such as companionship (i.e. being one of the *ṣaḥāba*).[239] We can see the difference articulated above in ʿUmar's implicit criticism of Muʿāwiya and the latter's response. In the earliest texts, however, the major quality which defines Ḥusayn as heroic is not his *nasab*, but his *ḥasab*. At best, his *nasab* serves as a foregrounding of his heroism, but when compared to his brother Ḥasan, for example, it is clearly his *ḥasab* which defines Ḥusayn's character.[240] I would contend that the initial elevation of *ḥasab* is rooted in tribal valorizations of the hero versus noble birth, the latter of which becomes operative later on with the elaboration of the concept of descent from the Prophet as marking legitimacy—or even divine kingship.[241]

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[238] Farrin 39.

[239] Madelung summarizes some of these difficulties in his *Succession to Muhammad*, and generally his argument is that the case can be made for hereditary succession and inheritance of Muḥammad's leadership over the community. Here, my argument is in terms of scope. I will not say that hereditary inheritance of special status or leadership did not exist or was unimportant. Rather, I argue that it was articulated in a manner appropriate to a Muslim audience, which emphasized religious values of righteousness, faith, and so on, rather than arguing for the creation of a new bureaucratic noble class based purely on birth. See: Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate*, (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 5-8. See also: S.A.A. Rizvi. "Kingship in Islam: A Historical Analysis," In *Kingship In Asia and Early America: XXX. International Congress of Human Sciences In Asia and North Africa*, 29, (Mexico City: El Colegio De México, 1981), 31. Rizvi notes that, "he [Muḥammad] approved of royal authority which was based on rank gained through truth…their [the Rāshidūn] world-view of leadership synthesized the Arab tribal customs with those of the Meccan trading oligarchy, rejecting Iranian monarchical traditions."

[240] Consider additionally that some Shiʿi groups such as the Nizārī Ismāʿīlīs essentially omit Ḥasan from the line of official Imams (i.e. he is a *mustawdaʿ* or "trustee" imam who cannot transmit the status of Imam to his own offspring), and he typically receives the least focus out of all the five members of the *ahl al-bayt*. See: Shafique N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, a Search for Salvation*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 84-5.

[241] We will return to the importance of a "constructed nobility" in the next chapter.

Not that long after the events referenced by Ibn Kathīr and Ibn Qūlawayh, there are already some strong suggestions that they may be. I briefly mentioned al-Sharīf al-Raḍī in an earlier footnote, but now it is time to introduce him in more detail. Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad al-ʿAlawī (d. 1016 C.E.), commonly known as al-Sharīf al-Raḍī (a title bestowed by the Buyid *amīr* Bahāʾ al-Dawla), was a noted poet and theologian who was born in Baghdad.[242] He lived during the Buyid control of the ʻAbbasid dynasty, which due to their Shiʻi beliefs, allowed greater tolerance for open display of one's sympathies on the public stage. Al-Sharīf al-Raḍī composed around four or five elegies for Ḥusayn, and in one of them, he states quite sharply:

زعمت بأن الدين سوّغ قتلها، أو ليس هذا الدين عن أجدادها
طلبت تراث الجاهلية عندها، وشفت قديم الغل من أحقادها

> [The Umayyads] claimed that religion allowed them to kill [the ʿAlids].
> Isn't this the religion they got from their forefathers?
> Invoking their Jāhilī legacy [they slew them]
> And slaked [with blood] the burning thirst of ancient rancor.[243]

This is a stark contrast to the glorification of tribal values mentioned in Stetkevych (1979). Instead of invoking tribal tropes of heroics to describe Ḥusayn, al-Sharīf al-Raḍī does the exact opposite: he attributes these values to the Umayyads (*turāth al-jāhiliyya*) and uses this as an explicit denunciation. The previous line strengthens the claim, by questioning the Umayyad's religious commitments. All of this serves to suggest a rejection of tribal morality, whose bloodlust is equated with ignorance and paganism.

Other later treatments are more complex to evaluate, suggesting further evolution in the genre. For example, Raḍī al-Dīn ʻAlī b. Ṭāwūs, one of the most famous Baghdadi Shiʻi scholars

[242] Stetkevych 2010, 53-4.
[243] Here I follow Stetkevych's translation. Ibid, 68, 70.

of his time, also wrote one of the most famous Arabic *maqātil, al-Luhūf fī Qatlá al-Ṭufūf* (Lamenting over Those Killed on the Fields of Karbalā'). While the book borrows extensively from earlier material, such as the previously mentioned *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyin*, there is also much new material. In one line of poetry, Ḥusayn is quoted as saying:

القتل أولى من ركوب العار والعار أولى من دخول النار

Killing is the first step towards dishonor
And dishonor is the first step towards going to hell[244]

In the very next few lines, as Ḥusayn is depicted running into battle, the author mentions a quotation praising Ḥusayn for his fearless composure (*arbaṭ ja'shan*) even after seeing all his family and friends killed.[245] While there remains a traditional concern over dishonor (*ʻār*), there seems to be some shift in values. The book depicts Ḥusayn as even-tempered, not reckless, and given the boasting we have seen earlier over how many men ʻAntara could kill, the concern over killing problematizes the glorification of battle for battle's sake. We can see the emerging changes to the concept of *ḥasab wa nasab* in how the traditional virtues of *ḥilm* and *shajāʿa* are being reframed to suit a new value system. Ḥusayn's *ḥasab* is articulated in terms of not merely a chivalrous view of battle, but also novel spiritual aspects which reshape the entire meaning of battle.

While we shall have to wait to see the outcome of these changes in the next chapter, we can draw some conclusions from the discussions above. Since *rithā'* and *madḥ* deal with the attribution of larger-than-life, heroic characteristics to their subjects, and the *maqtal* owes a great deal to these genres, it is logical to define what those characteristics are. There are some serious

[244] ʻAlī b. Mūsá b. Jaʻfar b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn 'alayhi al-salām al-Musammá bil-Luhūf fī Qatlá al-Ṭufūf,* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Aʻlamī lil-Maṭbūʻāt, 1993), 70.
[245] Ibid.

fundamental differences between the articulation of heroic values in the pre-Islamic Arabic as opposed to the later Islamic literary traditions.

Very broadly speaking, the pre-Islamic Arab heroic characters are typically depicted as brash, reckless, down-to-earth, fond of battle, but generous, and constantly hounded by a malicious conception of fate. As a literary figure, however, the character of Ḥusayn in the *maqātil* comes out of milieu wherein the heroic tropes are becoming thoroughly ethicized to reflect religious virtues, rather than tribal values. We saw the ethnicization of Arabic poetic literature in its inception with Zuhayr's *burda* earlier. The pre-Islamic ideals of the reckless poet-warrior are de-emphasized or even explicitly rejected, such as in the poetry of Abū Firās, Ibn Ṭāwūs, or al-Sharīf al-Raḍī. This being said, this poetry and thus the bedrock of the *maqtal* genre still arises out of a tribal environment, and even in rejection, the poets do not totally let go of the traditional concept of the *baṭal*. As part of the progressive ritualization process of mourning Ḥusayn, these elements are incorporated in shifting ways, which reflect an emphasis on poeticizing Karbalā', but there is some equivocation when choosing how to do this. Instead, they reinterpret it, and utilize the tropes they find useful, such as the concept of the struggle with fate. As we shall see beginning in Chapter Two, this latter trope will become particularly important.

Here, at the close of this chapter, I think it is appropriate to properly situate these themes. Most importantly, the categories of 'Arab' heroes whether in pre-Islamic or Islamic poetic literature are not static, nor are they extremes in dualistic opposition. They are parts of a continuum, and as we shall see in the next chapter, the Persian *Rawẕat ol-Shohadā'* will take place at many points throughout that continuum.

Chapter Two: To Bear with Unbearable Sorrow

آن روز که آب و خاک بر هم زده‌اند
خالی نبود آدمی از درد و بلا
خاک آدم را به‌خاک غم مخمر ساختند

بر طینت آدم، رقم غم زده‌اند
این ضربت اولین، بر آدم زده‌اند
پس در او درد وبلا را جا مقرر ساختند

On that day when water and earth stirred together
They impressed the mark of sorrow on Adam's nature[246]
No human being was free of pain or torment
This blow was the first they struck Adam with…
They brewed Adam's dust with sorrow
Then they fixed pain and torment within him.[247]

I. Introduction: On the Battlefield of Love

When we speak of a historical person, we necessarily create a representation of who they were. Their identity is a shared quality that exists archetypically for a specific community. In the nexus of this web is a given individual whose identity is continually being created. This historical figure participates in the creation of their identity, but not entirely; all those who have constructed a facet of that person in their own mind create this identity as well. Identity is a group effort, a bundle of stories. Even more so is the identity of the dead, who only exist as narratives within a group. What then, is Kāshefī's representation of Ḥusayn?

II. The Concerns of This Chapter

[246] These lines are filled with several well-known puns; *ṭīnat* means both clay as well as fundamental character, which is well paired with Adam, which originally means "red clay" In addition, while the text suggests the biblical character Adam as its subject, *ādam* can also generically mean human being, as a shorting of Arabic *ibn/banū Ādam*, "son of Adam."
[247] See: Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Mo'īn: Markaz-e Taḥqīqāt-e Zabān va Adabīyāt-e Fārsī, 2011), 115.

In the previous chapter, I presented three basic points. Firstly, an overview of the *maqtal* as a genre; secondly, the concept of the hero as mediated through the Arabic poetic tradition and its connection and distinction from Ḥusayn as depicted in the *maqtal* genre; and finally, the gradual incorporation of *maqtal* materials into the performance of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals.

This chapter will proceed forward and consider the development of these themes in the first important Persian *maqtal*, Kāshefī's famous *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*. After considering Kāshefī's life, times, intellectual output, style, and his various 'hats' of preacher, literary critic, and occultist, I will argue that, while Kāshefī is undoubtably working from the traditional blueprint of the Arabic *maqtal*, he makes some very specific and dramatic breaks from that format. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a great many of the composers of early Arabic *maqātil* were Persian Shiʿi scholars.[248] With this being said, a central point of this chapter is not the idea of Persians composing *maqātil*, but a Persian choosing to compose his *maqtal* specifically in the Persian language with elements drawn from Persian culture and literature.

There is a structural change, in terms of Kāshefī's departure from a historical and chronological narrative progression as well as a fusion of *manāqib* genre. Thematically, the development is even more dramatic: not only does Kāshefī recast the character of Ḥusayn using tropes from his background in Ṣufi ethics and *adab* literature; he goes so far as to incorporate elements from Persian epic literature. I consider the former two elements in detail in the present chapter, while the latter will be addressed in Chapter Three.

This chapter consists of six sections and a conclusion. Following the introductory sections, I will first consider what is the elegiac genealogy of the *marthiya/maqtal* genre in Persian. After this, the second section will present an overview of Kāshefī's life and the milieu of

[248] See Chapter One, Section VI for more details.

Herat, where he spent most of his time. In the third section, I will provide an extensive discussion of Kāshefī's style, including what effect his status as a preacher had on the *Rowẕat* when juxtaposed with his rhetorical and formal writing. Then, I will provide two related sections which expand on some previous themes of Sufism and occultism, both of which are relevant to the thematic background of the *Rowẕat*. Section IV then, will deal with Kāshefī's Sufi themes, particularly as expressed in connection with the concepts of *fotovvat* (chivalry) and *javānmardī* (gallantry), both of which are the primary vehicles of the Sufi themes of the *Rowẕat.* Section V deals briefly with Kāshefī's career as an occultist, particular as expressed in his theurgical textbook, *Asrār-e Qāsemī* (The Secrets of Qāsem). The connection to the *Rowẕat* may seem oblique at first, but since the *Rowẕat* appears to contain one of the first mentions of a particular king of the Jinn, along with several other miraculous events, the *Asrār* will serve as a useful reference for concepts that Kāshefī would never openly discuss in the *Rowẕat* but are still implied. Finally, the sixth section will provide a detailed analysis of the structure and text of the *Rowẕat* itself. This will be followed by a general conclusion which summarizes some central points as well as introduces how they tie into the next chapter.

III. The Garden of Mourning: Pre-Kāshefī Elegy and the Genealogy of the Persian *Maqtal*

Prior to the arrival of the Arabs, who brought with them their own literary traditions of poetry, a formal category of elegy (*sorūd-e sūg*, *kīn*) does not seem to have existed in Persia. The term *kīn* actually means "vengeance," but it is the term that Narshakhī (d. circa 959 C.E.) attributes to the songs of the minstrels (*muṭribān*) of Bukhara, who claimed to have been singing

elegies for Siyāvash for three thousand years.[249] In pre-Islamic times, the *gōsān* (minstrel) seems to have begun as a Parthian tradition before the Sassanid period.[250] The tradition was imported to Armenia, where the minstrel became associated with theatre and was notably condemned by the Church for singing elegies during funerals.[251]

This should not be taken to imply that no mourning poetic tradition existed in pre-Islamic Iran, but rather that it does not appear to have occupied a formal category of literature with defined genre conventions as it did in pre-Islamic Arabia. One of the very few examples of an elegy we have from Middle Persian literature is embedded in the epic *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* (The Memorial of Zarēr), which dates from the 5th or 6th century C.E.[252] It is also the closest to a *maqtal* in pre-Islamic Iran. We shall consider this text in more detail in the next chapter.

The tradition of *marthiya* and *maqtal* only appears to emerge on the scene of Early New Persian literature after the Arab invasion. Like we have seen in the Arabic context, *marthiya* emerges first, with the beginning of the Persian *maqtal* genre only beginning much later on. Perhaps the earliest elegist was the famous "father of Persian poetry," Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad Rūdakī (d. 940/1 C.E.). It is impossible to overestimate the importance of Rūdakī; His poem, *Bū-ye jūye mūliyān āyad hamī* (The Scent of the Jayḥun River Returns), supposedly composed to entice the Samanid prince Nasr II to leave Herat and return to Bukhara, is still tremendously popular in Iran today.[253] Rūdakī also composed some of the earliest extant New Persian elegies.

[249] Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Jaʻfar Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-e Bokhārā*, (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Bonyād-e Farhang-i Īrān, 1972), 24.
[250] The word occurs twice in a Middle Persian version of the famous epic *Vīs-o Rāmīn*, later presented in Early New Persian by Gorgānī (d. circa 1058). Note that the importance of the *gōsān* and their influence in elite circles has been sharply questioned by Khaleghi-Motlagh and Omidsalar. See: Mary Boyce, "The Parthian "Gōsān" and Iranian Minstrel Tradition," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 1/2 (1957): 10-45. 10.
[251] Ibid 14.
[252] Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, Textual Sources for the Study of Religion, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 77.
[253] Sassan Tabatabai, *Father of Persian Verse: Rudaki and His Poetry*, Iranian Studies Series, (Baltimore, Maryland: Project Muse; Leiden University Press, 2016), 1.

The thematic content of these elegies varies considerably. In an elegy written about Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad, Nasr II's grandfather, Rūdakī says:

ای آن آه غمگنی و سزاواری — وندر نهان سرشك همی باری
از بهر آن آجا ببرم نامش — ترسم ز سخت انده و دشواری
رفت آن آه رفت و آمد آنك آمد — بود آن آه بود، خیره چه غم داری

You who are sad, who suffer,
Who hide your eyes that flow with tears
For him, whose name I don't mention
For fear of more sorrow and hardship:
Went what went and came what came,
Was what was, why grieve in vain?[254]

The tone of this elegy is extremely fatalistic, and as opposed to indulging of praise for the deceased—whose name he declines to even mention in the text—Rūdakī instead focuses totally on the reaction of the bereaved. The poem emphasizes the uncaring nature of the world and the torment (*balā*) which suffuses it. At one point, he even tells the listener to stop lamenting, since the world doesn't listen to his laments (*zārī makon keh nashenavad ū zārī*). Indeed, the elegy reads more like advice (*andarz*) than a traditional lament.

Another of Rūdakī's elegies is significantly more conventional:

مرد مرادی، نه همانا آه مرد — مرگ چنان خواجه نه آاریست خرد
جان گرامی به پدر باز داد — آالبد تیره به مادر سپرد
آن ملك با ملکی رفت باز — زنده آنون شد آه تو گویی: بمرد

Morādi has died, but is not really dead.
Such a great man's death is not trivial.
His precious life he returned to his father,
His dark body entrusted to his mother.
What belonged to the angels has gone with them.

[254] Translation from Sassan Tabatabai. See: Tabatabai 2016, 28-9.

The man you say has died has just begun to live.[255]

The tone of this elegy is far more positive and the style is far more in keeping with the conventions of elegy. That being said, unlike the previous poem, it avoids discussion of weeping or mourning. Indeed, it reads like an exhortation to encourage cheer in Rūdakī's audience.

Another of the earliest examples of New Persian elegies are fragments composed around 943 C.E. by Abū al-ʿAbbās Rabanjānī (d. circa late 10th century C.E.?) after the death of the Samanid *amīr* Naṣr II:[256]

پادشاهی گذشت خوب نژاد　　پادشاهی نشست فرخ زاد
ز آن گذشته زمانیان غمگین　　زین نشسته جهانیان دل شاد

An emperor, one of noble lineage, has passed away
An emperor, one of prosperity, has ascended the throne
All those of the present age sorrow for the one who has passed
For the one who ascends the throne, all the peoples of the world rejoice[257]

Obviously, the tone of this text is quite different from the Arabic elegies or what we will see in the later New Persian literature. Outside the brief mention of the people's sadness (*zamāniyān-e ghamgīn*), the text lacks much in the way of the descriptions or exhortations to weep found in later texts.

The above examples demonstrate that elegies did exist from an early period, though they differ thematically from the elegies we have seen in Arabic. Al-Khansā', for example, devotes equal time to both praising her brother as well as attempting to incite a strong emotional reaction

[255] Translation from Tabatabai. See: Tabatabai 2016, 30-1.
[256] Domenico Ingenito, ""A Marvelous Painting": The Erotic Dimension of Saʿdi's Praise Poetry," *Journal of Persianate Studies* 12, no. 1 (2019): 103-66; 131.
[257] Gilbert Lazard, *Les premiers poètes persans (IXᵉ -Xᵉ siècles): Fragments rassemblés, édités et traduits,* (Paris: Librairie d'amerique et d'orient, 1964). 2: 67. See also Ingenito, Ibid, for another translation.

in her audience. These Persian elegies tend to do one or the other, or have a notably complex relationship with weeping. Rūdakī's first elegy suggests that it is useless for example, and his second, as well as Rabanjānī's elegy, de-emphasize it. So then, is the weeping promoted by the *Rowẕat* reflecting some other elegiac patterns, whether incorporating aspects from the Arabic traditions or perhaps, as I shall suggest in the next chapter, an addition from even older material like the lamenting for Zarēr and Siyāvash?

Now that we have taken a look at the genealogy of early New Persian elegy, I will now turn back to the *maqtal.* Unlike the *rithā'* genre, there are very few surviving Persian *maqātil* before the *Rowẕat*.[258] There is thus a break between the *Rowẕat* and earlier Arabic *maqātil.* The *Rowẕat* appears to be the earliest *maqtal* still extant originally composed in Persian, and certainly the most popular early Persian *maqtal*.[259] However, it was not the very first Persian *maqtal*;[260] Āghā Bozorg (d. 1970 C.E.), an important Tehrani *marjaʿ* (religious authority) mentions books called *Maqtal al-Shahīd* (The Death of the Martyr) and *Maqtal al-Shohadā* (The Death of the Martyrs) as earlier Persian works (*al-fārsī al-muqaddam ʿalá Rawḍat al-Shuhadā'*).[261] Regardless, very few surviving Arabic *maqātil* exist between the 14th-15th centuries, let alone Persian ones.

[258] I have been unable to locate any manuscripts for the following texts mentioned by Āghā Bozorg, thus they will not be considered beyond this in the rest of this dissertation.
[259] A text composed in Persian by Jamāl Ḥusaynī (d. 1521 C.E.) a preacher in Herat, a contemporary of Kāshefī, was an important influence on him and is quoted through the *Rowẕat*. However, this book, *Rowẕat ol-Aḥbāb fī Sīrat el-Nabī va 'l-Āl-o Aṣḥāb* (The Meadow of the Beloved Ones from the Biography of the Prophet and His Family and Companions) is not a *maqtal* but a *manāqib*, since it does not focus on the events of Karbalā' or the deaths of important persons related to the Prophet's family, but on virtues and biographies. See: Abbas Amanat, "*Meadow of the Martyrs*: Kāshifī's Persianization of the Shiʿi Martyrdom Narrative in the Late Timurid Herat," *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris; Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2003), 250-275; 259.
[260] Rasūl Jaʿfariyān, "Mollā Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī-o Ketāb-e *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*," *Āyneh-ye Pazhūhesh*, no. 33 (Mordād and Shahrīvar 1995): 20–38; 36-37.
[261] Āghā Buzurg al-Ṭihrānī, *Dharīʿa ilá Taṣānīf al-Shīʿa*, (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Gharrá, 1936), 11: 295.

Overall, the material present before Kāshefī's time suggests how much he drew from a multitude of different sources. Of course, his text is filled with poetry excerpts from important Persian poets, and it is doubtless that he was influenced by early Persian elegy, however, none of Rūdakī's poetry, let alone Rabanjānī's poetry, occurs in the *Rowẓat*. While Kāshefī would probably agree with Rūdakī's assessment of the persistence of torment in life, their underlying understanding of its purpose is completely different. For Rūdakī, it is simply a part of the way the world works and is relatively banal; for Kāshefī, *balā* is a metaphysical reality which has specific implications on ethics, religion, and the supernatural. It is arguably a supernatural principle of Kāshefī's universe, one which manifests itself most importantly in the tragedy of Ḥusayn at Karbalā'.

IV. The Life and Times of Kāshefī: The Historical Landscape of Herat and Khorāsān

Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī Beyhaqī, known as *vāʿeẓ* "preacher" and *kāshefī* "unveiler of mystic secrets," was born in 1426 C.E., in Sabzavār, a city in historical Khorāsān.[262] After leaving Sabzavār, he spent time in Nishapur and Mashhad, before deciding to move to Herat in 1456 after receiving a dream of the Naqshbandī Ṣufi Kāshgharī (d. 1456 C.E.). In Herat, he associated with many local Ṣufis, especially the famous ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492 C.E.). Jāmī was a well-known mystical poet and theologian, the author of many works specifically dealing with these subjects. He was also the former student of Kāshgharī, which Kāshefī may

[262] Maria E. Subtelny, "Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ Kāshifī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 26 August 2019 http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30585; see also: Maria E. Subtelny, "Kāšefi, Kamāl-al-Din Ḥosayn Wāʿeẓ," *Encyclopædia Iranica.* XV/6, pp. 658-661; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kasefi_kamal (accessed online on 20 January 2020).

have interpreted as significant during their first meeting. Regardless, he evidently became quite enamored with Jāmī, to the point that he not only quotes him liberally throughout his works, but he even married Jāmī's daughter.[263] In Herat, he officially entered the Naqshabandiyya Ṣufi order and was probably initiated by Jāmī; these Ṣufi sympathies color most of his works, even when the subject's connection to Sufism is more ancillary.

Kāshefī briefly moved back to Sabzavār to serve as chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāh*) for the current Timurid sultan, but returned to Herat in 1470, where he continued preaching and writing. He lived in Herat for forty years until his death in 1504 or 1505.

Kāshefī's confessional status is not entirely clear. It has been usual to consider him to have been Sunni, owing to his close connections with other well-known Sunni scholars of Herat like Jāmī, his affiliation with the Naqshabandī order, and certain remarks scattered throughout his works. Several of his peers were keen to try and disassociate him from Shiʿism, which in of itself suggests that he had often been accused of being crypto-Shiʿi.[264] Several later scholars, particularly in the Safavid period and beyond described him as Shiʿi. While remarking that most of his compositions were composed with a Sunni sensibility, the Safavid scholar and assistant to Majlesī, Mīrzā ʿAbdollāh Afandī (d. 1718 C.E.) still remarked, "In my opinion, his Shiʿism is obvious (*tashayyoʿ-e ū nazd-e man vāẓeḥ ast*)."[265] Given Kāshefī's importance to Safavid ritualism, as we shall see, it is of course possible that this comment is self-serving.

[263] Amanat 2003, 253.
[264] "But he is free of their heresy and innocent of their corrupt religion, however, he has been accused of it (*va leykan az rafẓīshān ʿārī ast va az maẕhab-e bātelīshān barī, va leykan az tohmat barī nīst.*)" Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navā'ī, *Taẕkireh-ye Majāles al-Nafāyes,* (Tehran: 1984), 268.
[265] Jaʿfariyān 1995, 24.

A key piece of evidence for his supposed Shiʿism has always been the *Rowẕat*, which is obviously very unambiguous in its barely hidden crypto-Shiʿi outlook.[266] The *Rowẕat* contains around five to nine mentions of the phrase [*az*] *a'emmeh-ye eṣnāʿashar/a'emmeh-ye eṣneyʿashar* (from among the Twelve Imams) in reference to members of the *ahl al-bayt* or their descendants.[267] He also consistently refers to ʿAlī and his eleven male descendants—the same group of twelve recognized by the Twelvers—as Imams, though when talking about Ḥusayn, he will sometimes substitute *shāhzādeh* "prince." Some of his texts also glorify the Imams in no uncertain terms, which Amanat has taken as proof of his crypto-Shiʿi beliefs, though Ridgeon is more cautious in his assessment.[268]

The best and most complete evaluation of all the evidence for Kāshefī's confessional status is outlined by Zū 'l-Feqārī in his introduction to the 2011 Tehran edition of the *Rowẕat*. He divides the possibilities into three categories: Kāshefī was Shiʿi, Sunni, or that he was "a Sunni of the Twelve Imams" (*sonnī-ye davāzdah emāmī*).[269] He presents the evidence for the first two positions like so:

Shiʿi:

1. His name (Ḥusayn), the names of his father and son (ʿAlī), and the fact that the family had permission (*ejāzeh*) to transmit Shiʿi *aḥādīth* as well as their family name being included in the chain of transmission for the early important Shiʿi collection, *Ṣaḥīfat al-*

[266] Jaʿfariyān asserts that, "Among the works of Mollā Ḥoseyn Kāshefī, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* most of all has the tinge of Shiʿism," (*Dar miyān āṣār-e mollā Ḥoseyn Kāshefī, Rowẕat ol-Shohadā' pīsh az hameh rang-e tashayyoʿ dārad*). Ibid, 26.
[267] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā,* 319, 361, 714, 715, 729. Four mentions of the phrase do not occur in all manuscripts, but in different variants. See: Ibid, 387, n. 1, 714, n. 12, 721, n. 8, 726, n. 9.
[268] See: Amanat 2003, 254. 256, and Lloyd V.J. Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism: A History of Sufi-futuwwat in Iran*, Routledge Sufi Series; 10, (New York: Routledge, 2010), 94, 96.
[269] Zū 'l-Feqārī attributes the origin of this position to Rasūl Jaʿfariyān. See: Ḥasan Zū 'l-Feqārī, "*Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'-o Mo'allef-e Ān,"* in *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Moʿīn : Markaz-e Taḥqīqāt-e Zabān va Adabīyāt-e Fārsī, 2011), 15. See also: Jaʿfariyān 1995.

Riḍā (Riḍā's Document, i.e. the *Akhbār ʿUyūn al-Riḍā*) suggest Shiʿi affiliation in his family.

2. His city of birth, Sabzavār, was a Shiʿi-leaning city during this period.
3. He has a clear attachment to Shiʿism and the *ahl al-bayt* which is evident in his works (especially the *Fotuvvatnāmeh*, the *Rowẕat*, and *Resāleh-ye al-ʿAliyyeh*).
4. The famous jurist and "third martyr" (*al-shahīd al-thālith*) Nūrallāh al-Shūshtarī (d. 1610/11 C.E.) attested that Kāshefī's poetry evidenced his Shiʿi beliefs and gave two lines of one of Kāshefī's poems read in conjunction with Kāshefī's own *tafsīr* of verse 2:124 as an example.
5. An anecdote from Kāshefī's *Resāleh-ye ʿAliyyeh* relates that he was asked by an old man in Sabzavār how many times the angel Gabriel descended (i.e. revealed divine knowledge) to ʿAlī. Kāshefī reasons that he cannot give a direct answer and say that it was twenty-four thousand times like the Prophet, because that isn't true, but he cannot say it was none, because it would be assumed that he held no love for ʿAlī. So he uses the famous *ḥadīth* of ʿAlī being the "gate of knowledge" (*bāb al-ʿilm*) to get around the problem, saying that every time Gabriel descended to the Prophet, he had to first pass through the gate of knowledge, so in effect, he had descended to ʿAlī twenty-four thousand times as well.
6. The Safavid-era chronicle *Javāher al-Akhbār* (The Jewels of Historical Narrations) by Monshī Bodāq Qazvīnī—whose compilation was ordered by Shāh Esmāʿīl and completed in 1577 C.E.—briefly mentions Kāshefī and describes him as Shiʿi.

Sunni:

1. Kāshefī associated with well-known Sunnis in Herat, especially Jāmī and ʿAlī Shī Navā'ī, who were staunchly Sunni members of the Naqshabandī Sufi order.
2. Fakhr al-Dīn ʿAlī, Kāshefī's son, attests that his father joined the Naqshabandī order.
3. At least two of Kāshefī's texts, the *Javāher al-Tafsīr* and the *Mavāheb ʿAliyyeh,* are written from a Ḥanafī perspective.
4. Two of Kāshefī's students, Zeyn al-Dīn Vāṣefī and ʿAbd al-Vāseʿ Bākhrazī, were hostile to the Shiʿa, but praised Kāshefī.
5. Kāshefī shows respect for the first three caliphs, the companions of the Prophet, and Sunni scholars, and prominently mentions narrations from Sunni sources throughout his works.
6. His style of homage (*ṣalawāt*) throughout the *Rowẕat* and the *Mavāheb ʿAliyyeh* is given in the Sunni manner.
7. Some elements in the *Rowẕat* are not typically Shiʿi, including the replacement of the typical honorific *emām* (Imam) preceding Ḥasan or Ḥusayn's names with *shāhzādeh* (prince),[270] descriptions of ʿAlī, and some other details.[271]

The third option, a "Twelver Sunni," more or less allows all of this evidence to be read together, albeit in a very complicated way. Zū 'l-Feqārī seems to favor this third option. My position is essentially the same; Kāshefī was at least externally Sunni; his publicly articulated creed, manner of prayer, and school of *fiqh* were presented as Sunni-Ḥanafī, and he was a Naqshabandī Sufi mystic. His sympathies, however, and possibly his internal beliefs, were

[270] I disagree with the interpretation of this honorific, since I argue that the use of *shāhzādeh* is a tactical phrase designed to signal to a Persian audience that Ḥusayn is one of them. See Chapter Three of this dissertation for more details.
[271] Zū 'l-Feqārī 2011, 11-15.

basically Twelver. The details, such as his style of *ṣalawāt*, deference for Sunnī authorities, and incidentally non-Shiʿi elements in some of his works can be understood as this external expression. His association with obvious Sunni scholars is more difficult, but there is no reason that Kāshefī simply could not have been a relatively open-minded person who interpreted the Shiʿi concept of disassociation (*tabarrá*) much more loosely.[272] This does not mean that I am arguing he was practicing *taqiyya* (dissimulation of religious status), but rather that his actual confessional identity was a position somewhere in between the two sects, interacting in a complex manner and manifesting in his works in an equally complex way.

On my part, I take Kāshefī to be emblematic of the porous nature of confessional status in the pre-Safavid Iranian milieu. It is of course possible that he was observing *taqiyya*, but this is questionable considering his marriage to Jāmī's daughter. Regardless, it is quite clear that even if he did not secretly identify as Shiʿi, he was extremely sympathetic towards this perspective to the point that his work was instrumental in the creation of decidedly Shiʿi ritual practices.

While his reputation in his own day was as a popular public preacher, his work also stands out for the wide array of subjects he wrote on, including ethics, literary theory, mirrors for princes, occult grimoires, and of course, the *maqtal* of the present study. Kāshefī was most well-known and popular in Herat, so it is to that city that we now turn.

In his entry in the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* (The Delight of Hearts) on the city of Herat, Qazvīnī (d. 1344 C.E.) quotes a poet's opinion of the city, saying:

> To he who seeks to find the most pleasant town,
> The only truthful answer is Herat;
> Consider this world an ocean, Khūrāsān a shell within,
> And the city of Herat the pearl in its midst.[273]

[272] Z̲ū 'l-Feqārī approvingly quotes Shaybī's famous book *al-Ṣila bayna al-Taṣawwuf wa al-Tashayyuʿ* (The Connection between Sufism and Shiʿism) exactly to this effect. See: Ibid, 18.
[273] Christine Nölle-Karimi, *The Pearl in its Midst : Herat and the Mapping of Khurasan (15th-19th Centuries)*, (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), 1.

It is no overstatement to say that this city, now in modern-day Afghanistan, was an extremely important site of political and intellectual activity. Under the Sassanids, it was a military stronghold, but it reached its true height during the Timurid period, when it was ruled by Sultan Ḥoseyn Bāyqarā of Herat (d. 1506 C.E.). Despite the fact that Bāyqarā had seized power in 1470, under his rule Herat became an extremely prosperous city, a center of culture, science, and the arts.[274] The fortunes of the city rose and fell over time; when Kāshefī was eight in 1436 C.E., a devasting plague struck the city and wiped out a huge portion of the city's population.[275] While the city eventually rebounded, the changing prerogatives and religious orientation of Safavids gradually turned attention away from Herat as an economic center as well as waypoint to Karbalā' and Najaf, and increasingly toward Mashhad.[276]

Under such prosperity, one must wonder who Kāshefī was invoking as the symbolic Umayyads, calling for vengeance. It is possible that the position of this enemy would have been filled by the Sunni Uzbek Turks, and Turkic groups in general, who menaced Herat many times and conquered the city in 1507, very shortly after Kāshefī and Bāyqarā's deaths.[277] Certainly they, and the Turks in general, became the mortal enemies of the Safavids. In the following periods of the Safavid patronage of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals, the processions included men carrying the heads of Uzbeks mounted on pikes.[278] As we shall see, Kāshefī's intended symbolic enemy was

[274] Maria Szuppe, "Herat III. History, Medieval Period," *Encyclopædia Iranica.* Vol. XII/2, pp. 206-211; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/herat-iii (accessed on 15 August 2019)., and Karimi 2014.
[275] Karimi, Ibid.
[276] Ibid 11.
[277] Szuppe, Ibid. The conflict between Persians and Turkic people has an even older genealogy, situating the latter as *anīrān* (Not-Iran, i.e. the Other) in many forms of epic literature. The *Shāhnāmeh* is one such work that deals with this trope extensively, as we will see in the next chapter.
[278] Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran*, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs; 35, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 224.

more complex than this and not entirely literal—though the Uzbeks were almost certainly still intended.

Note also that at least since the time of the *Shāhnāmeh*, "Turkestān" and "Tūrān" had become strongly associated with each other, with the latter often appropriated as an epic, legendary name for the former. Greater Persian culture had long since absorbed the original Iranian Turanians, so they no longer could be said to exist as an ethnic reality—but remained a force laden with strong allegorical menace.[279] As such, the identification of the Uzbeks as a symbolic enemy was established not only by current events, but also the literary inheritance of Persia. The Qızılbaş, Turkic tribes from Central Asia who had sworn loyalty to the *pīr* (elder) of the Safavid order as either an incarnation of God, or more charitably, a manifestation of God's light, seem to have at least initially escaped this identification.[280]

Herat was known for its relationship to divergent religious sympathies. Churches and fire temples were noted to be still present in the 10th century.[281] In the 8th century, Khorāsān[282] was the birthplace of a heterodox Shiʿi messianic movement which saw the Abbasid Persian general Abū Muslim (d. 755 C.E.) as the physical locus of God's spirit (*ḥulūl*).[283] This particular belief became strongly linked with a very heterogenous set of beliefs falling under the umbrella term *ghuluww*, "exaggeration."[284] Supposedly, the term was applied because these *ghulat* groups

[279] Igor M. Diakonoff, *The Paths of History*, (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 100.
[280] Babayan 2002, xvi.
[281] Szuppe. Ibid.
[282] A historical region encompassing parts of northern-western Afghanistan, north-eastern Iran, southern Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
[283] Patricia Crone, *The Nativist Prophets of Early Islamic Iran: Rural Revolt and Local Zoroastrianism*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 42-3.
[284] This usage of the word *ghuluww* as a technical term of religion should be distinguished from its use as a technical term in rhetoric, which will also become important in the next section. In the religious sense, Bayhom-Daou argues that rather that being an explicit singular entity, *ghuluww* was a term invented by Imāmī theologians as part of a process of canonization of an 'orthodox' Shiʿism. See: Tamima Bayhom-Daou, "The Second-Century Šīʿite Ġulāt: Were They Really Gnostic?" *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 5, (2003): 13-61; 16.

shared the common trait of divinizing the Imām, i.e. 'exaggerating his power up unto being a divine entity.'[285] *Ghuluww* was long associated with the earlier *shuʿūbiyya*, or nativist Iranian movement(s) opposing the ʿAbbasid, and the movement had been particularly strong in this region. The story of Abū Muslim was often an integral part of these movements. The fact that he was of Iranian extraction was not lost on them, and the movement seized on Abū Muslim as symbolic of their resistance. However, while both the *shuʿūbiyya* movements and the emergence of the Safavids as an imperial power share similar traits, they were separated by centuries, and so cannot be said to have a direct link. Still, both were characterized as being messianic rebellions against Sunni rulers with strong Persian elements.[286]

One of the earliest versions of the Abū Muslim romance, the *Abū Muslimnāmeh,* was composed by Abū Ṭāhir Ṭarsūsī (d. circa 11th/12th century), who was not only said to have been a member of the court of Maḥmūd of Ghaznī—the same ruler Ferdowsī dedicated the *Shāhnāmeh* to—but was also the composer of the previously mentioned *Qahremānnāmeh*.[287] During the time of Kāshefī, Safavid rebel-missionaries were circulating the *Abū Muslimnāmeh* as part of their propaganda efforts through Khorāsān and greater Iran;[288] I shall return to this particular point in far greater detail in Chapter Four. Herat was one of the cities were this impulse was strong. The literary appeal of the tragic story of Abū Muslim and his failed revolt also emerged, to an extent

[285] Along with this, "[t]he doctrines ascribed to them include the existence of a transcendent God, metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls (*tanāsuḫ*), and the denial of the Resurrection. Belief in *tanāsuḫ*, cycles (*dawr/adwār*) of spiritual transformation, and the primordial world of shadows (*aẓilla*) is sometimes mentioned as the hallmark of *ġuluww*." Bayhom-Daou 17. See also: Babayan 2002, xvi.
[286] I will consider the potential connections between the Safavids and *shuʿūbiyya* as well as *ghuluww* further in Chapter Four.
[287] Jean Calmard, "Popular Literature under the Safavids," *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period,* Islamic History and Civilization. v. 46, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 315-340; 318, and: Marina Gaillard, "Abū Ṭāhir Ṭarsūsī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE,* Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 20 August 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_SIM_0034>
[288] Babayan 2002, 246, 279.

as a complement to the Karbalā narrative. This appeal was apparently strong enough that the Safavid rulers Ṭahmāsp (d. 1576 C.E.) and later ʿAbbās (d. 1629 C.E.) attempted to suppress the Abū Muslim romance, partially as an effort to rid themselves of the Qızılbaş-*ghuluww* strains in their original doctrine.[289] It would thus seem appropriate that Abū Muslim romances, which display Zoroastrian, Christian, and Jewish elements, would enjoy popularity in Herat.[290]

Remnants of *ghuluww*, in the old sense of the Safavid leader being divine, continued to persist and were very much a part of the intellectual milieu – particularly in certain Ṣufi circles. This is not particularly surprising, since many Ṣufis who were creative in their understanding of Islamic doctrines (*ʿaqīda*) had been accused of heresy (*zandaqa*) for centuries. The Safavids began as a Ṣufi order themselves, and it is no understatement to say that their alliance with the Qızılbaş was heavily colored by a resurgence of ideas typically classified as *ghuluww*.[291] Not that long after Kāshefī's death, Shāh Esmāʿīl was especially given to this tendency, claiming not only a messianic status, but even to be the most recent incarnation of Jamshīd and Rostam.[292] He also claimed to be the incarnation of ʿAlī, thereby invoking both the present Islamic religious environment and the mythical Persian past. It is highly unlikely that Esmāʿīl would have been summoning the memory of the epic kings and heroes unless their narratives had so strongly permeated the cultural consciousness of the public. An earlier messianic character, Budayl, had also claimed a similar status, as well as explicitly connecting the Imamate with the mythic Persian kings.[293] As such, Kāshefī's milieu was one permeated with the remnants of *shuʿūbiyya*,

[289] Ibid, 356.
[290] Ibid, 136.
[291] Ibid, xvi.
[292] Ibid, 279. The term 'incarnation' when it suggests *ḥulūl* (God literally inhabiting a human body) is problematic, so I use it here more in the sense of one who possesses a portion of divine light. We will return to this issue in Chapter Four.
[293] Ibid, 277-8.

epic Persian literature, and messianic feeling. It was in this environment, Kāshefī composed his texts, which reflect these diverse influences.

V. Preaching to the Crowd: Kāshefī's Style as a Preacher and Writer

Throughout his scholastic career, Kāshefī wore a huge assortment of positional 'hats.' From his most common sobriquet, *vāʿeẓ*, from the Arabic *wāʿiẓ* 'admonisher,' it is easily guessed that the hat he was most known for was that of a preacher. However, this was hardly his only talent. In addition to being one of 15-16th century Herat's most famous preachers, he was also a skilled rhetorician, a jurist, trained in Qur'ānic interpretation, a literary theorist, Sufi, and occultist. The content of his oeuvre covers all of these fields, including two Qur'ānic commentaries, the unfinished *Javāher al-Tafsīr le-Toḥfat al-Amīr* (The Jewels of Exegesis for the Magnificent Prince) and *Mavāheb-e ʿĀleyyeh* (Gifts of the Sublime One); the *maqtal Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*; *Anvār-e Sohaylī* (The Lights of Canopus), a rendition of the famous *Kalīla wa Dimna* fables; *Badāyeʿ al-Afkār fī Ṣanāyeʿ al-Ashʿār* (Innovative Ideas in the Poetic Art), a text on the literary theory and composition of poetry; *Akhlāq-e Moḥsenī* (Moḥsen's Ethics), a mirror for princes; *Fotovvatnāmeh-ye Solṭānī* (The Book of the Sultan's Chivalry), a text on deeply Sufi-influenced chivalric values; *Resāleh-ye Ḥātemiyyeh* (The Epistle of Ḥātim al-Ṭā'iyy), a moralistic treatise on the pre-Islamic poet Ḥātim al-Ṭā'iyy (d. 578 C.E.), and *Asrār-e Qāsemī* (The Secrets of Qāsem), a synthetic occult text on talismans, *sīmyā'* or *ʿilm al-ḥurūf* (gematria), and prestidigitation (*shaʿwadha*); among many others.[294] The scope and breadth of his work

[294] For an extensive overview of Kāshefī's output, see: Maria E. Subtelny, "The Works of Ḥusayn Vāʿiẓ Kāshifī as a Source for the Study of Sufism in Late 15th- and Early 16th-Century Central Asia," *Sufism in Central Asia New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions, 15th–21st Centuries*, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2018), 98-118.

demonstrates how versatile an author he was and gives us a sense of how many different styles, genres, and narrative elements he could easily incorporate into his public life as a preacher. In this section, I will explore some of the themes in Kāshefī's non-*Rowẕat* works, particularly in reference to style and techniques, for evidence to draw some conclusions about what sorts of considerations may be already implicit in the *Rowẕat.* The topics of Sufi chivalry and occult material are more specific to thematic background and will be addressed in sections following this one.

It would be no exaggeration to say that Kāshefī's narrative style is quite ornate. He has long been derided by various orientalists for excessive verbiage. For example, while commenting on one of Kāshefī's most famous works, the *Anvār-e Sohaylī* (The Lights of Canopus), [295] Arnold quite uncharitably remarks, "…it is written in a very artificial style, overladen with rhetorical ornament, and has on this account been much admired in the East."[296] In her study of the *Anvār-e Sohaylī,* van Ruymbeke presents a sample from his preface:

> [This insignificant person Kāshefi] should clothe the said book in a new dress, and bestow fresh adornment on the beauty of its meaningful tales, which were veiled and concealed by the curtain of obscure words and the wimple of difficult expressions. He presents them on the stages of luminous style and the upper chambers of sweet metaphors.[297]

[295] This is a book with a long and complex history, which stretches all the way back to the circa 2nd century C.E. Sanskrit text, *Pañcatantra* (The Five Treatises). See: Edward Backhouse Eastwick and Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *The Anvár-i Suhailí; Or, The Lights of Canopus*, (Hertford: S. Austin, 1854), vii-xviii.

[296] T. W. Arnold. "Kāshifī", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, First Edition (1913-1936)*, Edited by M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann. Consulted online on 10 August 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_3971>

[297] Christine Van Ruymbeke, and Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, "Kāshifī's Powerful Metaphor: The Energising Trope," *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry*, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 67-79; 78.
کتاب مذکوررا لباس نو پوشانید و زیبا روایات معانی آنرا که تتق الفاظ مغلقه و حجب کلمات مشکله محجوب و مستور بود مناظر عبارات روشن و غرفات استعارات لطیف جلوه دهد.

While they are hardly uncommon literary sentiments, and verge on the cliché, the statements of "clothing the book in new dress" (*lebās-e now pūshānīd*) and "bestowing fresh adornment on the beauty of its meaningful tales (*zībā-ye revāyāt-e maʿānī*)" in particular speak of Kāshefī's attitude towards the construction of poetic as well as prose literature. In comparison to the earlier Arabic *maqātil*, Kāshefī's style is far less straightforward. At the same time, he makes a distinction between his idea of adornment (*zībā'ī, ārāstan*) and exaggeration (*eṭnāb*), hyperbole (*mobālagheh*), and verbiage (*eṭālat*).[298] In the *Anvār-e Sohaylī*, he criticizes the earlier authors for these latter traits, especially in the profusion of Arabic borrowings (*maḥāsen-e ʿarabiyyāt*) while still littering his text with nested metaphors.

If Kāshefī was as infamous for his ornate style as he has been deprecated by orientalists, then how are we to understand the popularity of the *Rowẕat*? It does not seem that his peers thought that his style was particularly obtuse, and the work has certainly been imitated enough times by later writers as to call into question the charge of 'inaccessible writing.'[299] If we are to accept that the *Rowẕat*'s survival and indeed influence is due only to the 'refined' tastes of Safavid elites or its usefulness as a propaganda tool, then it is difficult to believe that the book would have so deeply influenced popular and vernacular *ʿĀshūrā'* commemorations. Rather, the text would have become a relic of scholarly elites. As it happens, however, Kāshefī's audience was quite broad, and as such, his work was designed to appeal to many sorts of literary tastes.

Thus, his ornate style occupies a dual status; while it emerges out of the education of an elite scholar, it shows strong traces of influence from oral storytellers, particularly in the *Rowẕat.*

[298] Ḥosayn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī, *Ketāb-e Anvār-e Sohaylī*, (Kanpur: Maṭbaʿ-e Neẓāmī, 1880), 7, and see also the translation: Eastwick 1854, 8.

[299] For example, one of his biographers, Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shūshtarī (d. 1610-11), a famous Mughal scholar popularly known posthumously as *shahīd-e ṣāles* (the third martyr), said of him: "In the realm of rhetoric, he was a testament to eloquence and like Christ in his manger; the Saḥbān and Ḥassān of the age (*dar balāghat faṣīḥ-e ʿahd-o masīḥ-e mahd, va saḥbān-e zaman-o ḥassān būd*)." See: Nūr Allāh Shoshtarī, *Ketāb-e Mostaṭāb-e Majāles ol-Mo'menīn*, (Tehran: Ketābforūshī-ye Eslāmiyyeh, 1955), 1:547.

This is not to say that his style was the same as oral storytellers, but there are commonalities. In particular, we know that Kāshefī at least claimed to have contacts among oral storytellers. In chapter six, section two, which deals with *ahl-e sokhan* "eloquent speakers," his *Fotovvatnāmeh-ye Soltānī* has an interesting subsection entitled, *dar bayan-e qeṣṣeh-khᵛānān-o afsāneh-gūyān*, "description of storytellers and rhapsodes."[300] He divides their activity into two broad types: *ḥekāyat-gū'ī* (storytelling) and *naẓm-khᵛānī* (rhapsodizing).[301] Rostamī interprets these categories as being roughly equivalent to the categories of *naqqālī* (which is a later institution) for the former and *ḥamāseh-khᵛānī* (recitation of epic literature) and *shāhnāmeh-khᵛānī* (recitation of the *Shāhnāmeh*) for the latter.[302] While these are both oral storytelling modes, it is important to note that they are not the same; Afsharī states that *shāhnāmeh-khᵛān*s reciters sit in an assembly with the book in front of them, telling the stories and reading poetry out-loud; they do not move much but need to have a good voice and good skills in relating the stories. The presence of the book does not imply that they are not extremely well-acquainted with the text; indeed they have probably memorized it and the book is largely a prop. *Naqqāl*s on the other hand, move around and act out the stories they tell.[303]

Rather than denigrate the purveyors of vernacular narratives or more 'high-brow' storytelling as vulgar or inappropriate for a virtuous person, he opens the subsection by saying that reciting and listening to stories is extremely beneficial (*fāydeh-ye besyār dārad*). He then proceeds to list these benefits, such as serving as reporters for historical events, relating strange

[300] Both terms emphasize the oral nature of their storytelling, given that *khᵛāndan* means "to read [out loud] or recite," and *goftan* means "to say." See: Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Fotovvatnāmeh-ye Solṭānī*, (Tehran: Bonyād-e Farhang-e Īrān, 1971); 302.
[301] Ibid, 304.
[302] Moḥsan Rostamī, "Jostārī bar Shāhnāmeh-khvānī, Naqqālī-o Qeṣṣeh-pardāzī dar Īrān," *Tārīkh-e Now*, no. 12 (Fall 2015): 109 to 132; 119.
[303] Mehrān Afshārī and Mahdī Madāyenī, *Haft Lashkar: (Ṭomār-e Jāme'-e Naqqālān) az Kayūmarṯ tā Bahman*, (Tehran: Pezhūheshgāh-e 'Olūm-e Ensānī va Moṭāla'āt-e Farhangī, 1998), 27-28.

and wondrous things done through the power of God, that kings and wealth pass away, and most importantly for us, explaining that hardship (*meḥnat*) befalls every person without exception (*hīch kas az band-e meḥnat āzād nabūdeh ast*).[304] While the term *meḥnat*, literally, "trial," is weaker in scope than other terms Kāshefī uses, it subtly hints at the all-consuming power of torment (*balā*) which will become a central theme of the *Rowẕat.*

At the outset of this dissertation, I mentioned the fact that the enduring popularity of the *Rowẕat* is strongly connected to the development of an oral tradition of performance, i.e. the concept of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* "recitation of the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*." In a similar way, the public performance of the *Shāhnāmeh* also helped establish its authority as an emblem of Persian identity—though Kāshefī would classify the latter as *naẓm-khᵛānī*, which is not the same as preaching. Both are, however, designed to provoke an emotional response in the audience, as we have previously seen mentioned in the *Fotovvatnāmeh.* Indeed, the role of a such a performer became so common that, like *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* when it fully transitions into a popular rather than clerical endeavor, a special term was coined for it: *shāhnāmeh-khᵛānī* (reciting the *Shāhnāmeh*).[305] However, while I hold that both the performance techniques of *Rowẕat* and the *Shāhnāmeh* take inspiration from oral sources, I am not arguing that either are wholly oral or textual pieces of literature in terms of their practical usage (not their composition), but that they contain a mixture of both, particularly since they were both meant to be performed out loud.[306]

Kāshefī was very much a public speaker. He was noted for his nice voice;[307] indeed his sermons and eulogies attracted a diverse audience, from local Ṣufis to craftsmen to the ruler

[304] Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Fotovvatnāmeh-ye Solṭānī*, 302.
[305] Kumiko Yamamoto, *The Oral Background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and Poetry*, Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures; v. 26. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 58.
[306] Olga M. Davidson, "Yamamoto, Kumiko: The Oral Background of Persian Epics," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 103, no. 3 (2008): 305-16; 306.
[307] ʿKāshefī's contemporary, Alī Shīr Navā'ī (d. 1501 C.E.) a Turkic poet and politician known for writing in the Chagatai language, praises him in very clear terms: "A huge crowd of people attended his sermons, because the

Ḥoseyn Bāyqarā.[308] He even used to give sermons in the bazaar of Herat itself. In terms of the performance of the *Rowẕat*, he does not specify the exact typology in the *Rowẕat* itself, but there are hints in other places; in the *Fotovvatnāmeh*, when speaking of how reciters of oral poetry (*naẓm-khᵛānī*) should perform, he gives six very specific suggestions: first, the recitation should be melodic (*beh āhang*); two, the words should reverberate emotionally (*dar del-e mardom beneshānad*); three, if some verses are difficult, an explanation should be given to the audience; four, listeners should not get fatigued; five, the reciter should not make too many oaths (i.e. swear by God something is the case) or exaggerate too much; six, the reciter should remember to recite *Allahu akbar* and *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* at the beginning and the end.[309] It's not entirely clear that Kāshefī would have applied these rules to his own recitation, but there is really no reason to see why he shouldn't have followed his own recommendations.[310]

Note that several things imply that Kāshefī viewed *naẓm-khᵛānī* as an implicitly more sophisticated form of oral recitation than *ḥekāyat-gū'ī*. Kāshefī gives eight guidelines for the *ḥekāyat-gū'ī*;[311] recommendations two (don't be crude and lazy in recitation) and five (not to exaggerate) are roughly similar to recommendation five for *naẓm-khᵛānī*, but otherwise the recommendations suggest behavior for someone stereotypically 'lower-class,' i.e. to know the story well and make sure it is memorized (recommendation one), not to speak with too many ponderous metaphors or ambiguities (recommendation six) and not to beg excessively (recommendation seven) suggest a reciter who is not a professional in the classically trained

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Shaykh's voice and composition were at the very heights of elegance and delicateness; truly, the spirit of Lord David, peace be upon him seemed to manifest within him. (*va kosrat-e ezdeḥām īshān jehat-e īn ast keh āvāz-o enshā-ye mowlānā dar ghāyat-e ḥosn-o laṭāfat būdeh, va beh ḥaqīqat maʿna ḥaẓrat-e dāvod ʿaleyhi al-salām dar ū tajallī namūdeh*)." Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navā'ī, *Tazkireh-ye Majāles al-Nafāyes*, (Tehran: 1984), 268.

[308] Babayan 2002, 166.

[309] Kāshefī, *Fotovvatnāmeh,* 305.

[310] Amanat for one, agrees that Kāshefī employed a melodic and theatrical method of recitation. See: Amanat 2003, 264.

[311] Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Fotovvatnāmeh-ye Solṭānī,* 304-5.

sense. Likewise, the lack of a mention for needing the reciter to have a good voice or recite in a manner that is emotionally moving implies that *ḥekāyat-gū'ī* is not intended as 'high art.'Finally, Kāshefī doesn't tell the reciter of *ḥekāyat-gū'ī* to say *Allāhu Akbar* and the *Fātiḥa* at the beginning of the performance, which suggests that *naẓm-khᵛānī* was perceived as less secular or more worthy at least of observing ritual formalities. It seems likely, that if we accept Rostomī's theory of the Kāshefī's intended equivalences between *ḥekāyat-gū'ī* and modern *naqqālī*, and *naẓm-khᵛānī* with *ḥamāseh-khᵛānī*/*shāhnāmeh-khᵛānī*, it seems likely that Kāshefī would have placed his recitation of the *Rowẕat* at least closer to the latter category.

There is also simply the practical issue of conversion.[312] While the majority of the population would have been Muslim at the time, conversion here does not need to necessarily mean conversion from non-Muslim to Muslim, but also a mental conversion to a more arguably orthodox understanding of Islam. The presentation of themes from popular oral literature or storytelling techniques which referenced it would have had immediate resonance to the Persian-speaking population; placing it in a more formal Muslim dress was a clear way to show those populations that they did not need to give up their local cultures when they converted.[313]

Regardless, this suggests that Kāshefī was not averse to incorporating techniques from popular storytelling when he felt it was appropriate. Otherwise the whole chapter on *ahl-e sokhan* becomes difficult to contextualize.[314] Kreyenbroek considers the boundaries between elite and popular literature to have been much more porous than first thought: "In simple terms one might say that, on the one hand, Persian authors exploited themes and motifs prevalent in

[312] Babayan notes, "A combined Mazdean-Alid genealogy not only opens the possibility for peaceful conversion but allows for durability through a consciousness of this other past." See: Babayan 2002, 209.
[313] We will return to this topic in more detail, particularly in regard to the legend of Siyāvash in the next chapter.
[314] Subtelny concurs with this point: "A skilled orator, Kāshifī knew how to gauge his audience and he was not above employing some of the story-telling techniques of the professional story-teller (*qiṣṣa-khvān*)." See Subtelny 2018, 101.

oral tradition; on the other hand, their literary products—including their artistic adaptations of popular themes—might at times earn such fame as to become integral parts of popular tradition in their own right."[315]

The *Rowẓat* is not a book of literary theory; however, Kāshefī was indeed a poet and literary theorist. His treatise on poetic figures (*ṣanāʿī-ye sheʿrī*), titled *Badāyeʿ al-Afkār fī Ṣanāyeʿ al-Ashʿār* (Innovative Ideas in the Poetic Art) suggests that the basis of good literature is essentially artistry within the conventions of the genre. In his chapter on poetic construction, Kāshefī provides a discussion of literary hyperbole (*mobālaghat*).[316] He defines it as "to speak excessively or hyperbolically," (*dar lughat gholūw kardan bāshad*), and divides it into three subtypes: promotion (*tablīgh*), which is expressing the idea in a manner which goes right up to the border of possibility, but is still possible mentally or conventionally; qualitative overstatement (*eghrāq ol-ṣefeh*), which goes beyond the previous category, but is still mentally conceivable, if not conventionally; and exaggeration (*gholūw*), which is going beyond the limits both of sense and reason.[317]

These are all considered acceptable poetic devices and are not criticized. This, of course, does not mean he accepts them as always being a part of good style, but rather that poetic exaggeration in of itself is not a bad thing if it serves a literary purpose. Exaggeration is thus a useful device for this purpose, though let us remember Kāshefī's dictum in the *Fotovvatnāmeh* that one should not exaggerate too much in storytelling—at the same time, he is clear that storytellers should include supernatural elements when they illustrate divine power. His attitudes

[315] Philip G. Kreyenbroek, "The Study of Popular Literature in the Persian Context," *Oral Literature of Iranian Languages: Kurdish, Pashto, Balochi, Ossetic, Persian and Tajik,* History of Persian Literature v.18, (London; New York: IB Tauris & Co, 2010), xxxv-xlvi; xlii.
[316] Ḥosayn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī, *Badāʾeʿ al-Afkār fī Ṣanāʾeʿ al-Ashʿār*, (Tehran: Nashr-e Markaz, 1990); 113-14.
[317] Ibid.

towards his texts reflect that he even insisted on the need to entertain the audience, which might otherwise seem surprising coming from a trained scholar—but this is not unusual for a *vāʿeẓ*, who works within a space where rhetoric, poetry, and sophisticated language are freely mixed with the fantastic.[318]

As such, perhaps it is best to qualify Kāshefī's attitude towards exaggeration, which is bivalent: it is permissible as a poetic device, but not as a narrative one, unless it fills a very specific purpose. In the case of the *Rowẓat*, this purpose is essentially to make his audience cry. The hyperbolic expressions of thousands of angels weeping over Ḥusayn, or the extreme terms *balā* is presented in can be seen as fulfilling the storytelling dictum of the *Fotovvatnāmeh* that storytellers should remind their audience that no one is free of tribulation.

In terms of a specific description of inciting mourning as a rhetorical device, the *Badāyeʿ* is rather lacking. Kāshefī does not spend much time discussing elegiac material at all in the *Badāyeʿ*, though he implies that the purpose of *marāthī* is to produce tears for the deceased. He devotes only two short lines, with no sample verses, to *marthiya*, which is uncharacteristically terse: "Linguistically, *marthiya* is the praising of a dead person (*sotūdan-e mordeh*); technically, poets term it as a poem which contains the open declaration of grief (*taḥassor*) and lamentation (*ta'assof*) in relation to the deceased."[319]

When considering Kāshefī's style, it is important to consider the practical considerations of audience in a given text. For example, the *Asrār-e Qāsemī* contains very little poetry, and the *Badāyeʿ* is filled with technical poetic terminology derived from Arabic which would be complex even for an Arabic-speaking audience. Neither of these works were intended for the

[318] Babayan 2002, 239 n. 43.
[319] Kāshefī, *Badā'eʿ al-Afkār,* 82.
مرثیه، در لغت، ستودن مرده باشد؛ و در اصطلاح، شعری را گویند که مشتمل باشد بر اظهار تحسر و تأسف، به نسبت با موتی.

general public, especially the former. This brings us to the final important point of this section: linguistic considerations in Kāshefī's style.

I argue that the *Rowẕat* was intended to be accessible to a general audience while still being written in an ornate style. Kāshefī gives some hints about his thoughts towards his prospective audience in his introduction:

> The verses of Arabic poetry which should be necessarily mentioned are provided with a translation. Regarding the Persian poetry, it is well-suited to the notions of today's audience in its method of providing explanation:
>
> در آیین سخنرانی بکوشد سخنرا کسوتی از نو بپوشد
> ز سکه نو کند نقد کهنرا به زیور بیاراید سخنرا
>
> It should be explained in an eloquent way
> One should wear words as garment anew
> Making old coin from new
> Words should be adorned with ornaments[320]

This is a signal to a process that was already in progress, which is his methodology of eloquence and poetic exaggeration as rhetorical tools to provoke an emotional reaction. He further clarifies in the final lines of the introduction, saying: "Through chanting and writing down this book, [God] will grant the common folk among the Muslims and all the faithful countless rewards."[321] In other words, while Kāshefī is quite open about his stylistic flair, he obviously does not intend his text as some kind of obscure treatise, designed to read by the literati. His audience is the general public, and in the context of his time, even the Sufi substratum is also directed at them.

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[320] Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā*', (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Mo'īn: Markaz-e Taḥqīqāt-e Zabān va Adabīyāt-e Fārsī, 2011), 112.
و از ابیات عربی آن چه ضروری الذکر باشد با ترجمه ایراد کند و از منظومات فارسی آن چه مناسب اذهان اهل زمان بود در رشته بیان کشد.
در آیین سخنرانی بکوشد سخنرا کسوتی از نو بپوشد
ز سکه نو کند نقد کهنرا به زیور بیاراید سخنرا

[321] Ibid, 113-114.
و عامه مسلمانان و کافه اهل ایمان را از خواندن و نوشتن این کتاب مثوبات بی حساب کرامت کند.

The linguistic element is supremely important—and with it, the allegories, tropes, and idioms that make up the bedrock of any language. Note again Kāshefī's reference to Arabic verses (*abyāt-e ʿarabī*) as only to be used when needed and then must provided with a Persian translation (*tarjomeh-ye fārsī*). This methodology is everywhere throughout the *Rowẕat.* For example, when he provides the Qur'ānic verses of 2: 155 as the exegetical basis of his methodology at the very beginning of the introduction, he says: "'…*and we indeed will test you all…*' and [in Persian]: 'in every customary way, we will test you,' meaning we will act with you as testers act; indeed, none of your circumstances are concealed from us."[322] Here, he first provides the Arabic original, *wa la-nablūnnakum*, followed by a Persian translation, *va har āyineh mī-āzmāyīm shomā-rā*, and then an exegesis in Persian! This three-layered pattern is repeated over and over again. If the *Rowẕat* was intended solely for an elite audience, this pattern strains credulity. Most of the elite had an education in Arabic, at the very least in a selection of Qur'ānic verses; the *ʿulamā'* would absolutely have no need of both a Persian translation and exegesis of Qur'ānic verses. Furthermore, Kāshefī is even more adamant later in the *Rowẕat*; in an aside, he says, "When first composing these pages, it was decided that Arabic verses (*abyāt-e ʿarabī*) would not be included unless mentioning them was necessary, because listening to those during other reports would be a cause of distraction for Persian speakers (*pārsī-zabānān*).[323]

It is also critical to note that the *Rowẕat* contains two direct quotations from the *Shāhnāmeh*;[324] not only does this prove that he was quite familiar with its contents and that his reference to Persian heroes in the introduction are not simply throw-away appeals to the Persian

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[322] Ibid, 105.

«وَ لَنَبْلُوَكُمْ...» و هر آینه، می آزماییم شما را؛ یعنی با شما معاملهی آزمایندگان می کنیم؛ چه هیچ حالِ شما بر ما پوشیده نیست،

[323]Ibid, 483.

و چون در مبدأ تألیف این اوراق مقرر شده که متصدی ابیات عربی نگردد، مگر آنچه ذکر آن ضرورت بود؛ چه استماع آن در اثنای اخبار پارسی زبانان را سبب توزّع ضمیر می باشد؛

[324] Ibid 522-3.

literary tradition, it also shows that he was willing to defy some more staunch scholars who characterized Persian epics as "books of sin" (*gonāh-nāmeh*).[325] Babayan argues that the *Shāhnāmeh* is an example of a *lieu de mémoire* which crystallizes Iranian collective memory of the shared history—both literal and mythic—of Persian identity.[326] If so, I would propose that by quoting the *Shāhnāmeh*, Kāshefī is invoking the same sites of memory established by epic Persian literature and at the same time, establishing a new memory site which invariably fixes Ḥusayn in the collective linguistic and literary consciousness of Iran.

Thus, the *Rowẕat* contains *memory relics* which Kāshefī derives from this background. Their form is in both the use of Persian language for a traditionally Arabic genre as well as specific references to Persian literature. Their function is to provide allusions understandable to a Persian audience and increase the ornamentation of the narrative. Their meaning is to connect the narrative of Ḥusayn to Persian identity, thus remaking the story into one which is essentially Persian. In this way, as we will see in Chapter Four, the *Rowẕat* eventually becomes its own *memory relic* encapsulating the deterritorialization of the Karbalā' narrative from its Arabic literary origins into a Persian one.

As such, this text represents a specific kind of linguistic change-over where Kāshefī and others rebelled against the usefulness of Arabic as a core linguistic code for general religious edification. Kāshefī's language in the *Rowẕat* deliberately dispenses with the heavily Arabicized Persian of his peer among the *'ulamā'*; instead he opts for a form of Persian which is far closer—though still ornate and hardly vulgar—to the spoken Persian of the time.[327] The language of

[325] Babayan 2002, 181.
[326] Ibid 22.
[327] A useful comparison is with contemporary words for "now;" the everyday Persian *ḥālā* (from Arabic *ḥālan* "currently") or even more Arabicized *alān* (Arabic: *al-ān* "this very moment") as compared with native Persian *aknūn*, which while of Indo-European stock, sounds very formal to the native ear. See: Amanat 2003, 261.

those mourning Ḥusayn in Herat and the wider Persian-speaking world was simply not Arabic nor were their cultural lexicons foregrounded in Arab culture. Amanat proposes that the *Rowẕat* "…'Persianized' the Shiʿi myth as much as it prepared the ground for 'Shiʿitizing' the Persian world of the Safawid and post-Safawid times."[328] Rahimi concurs, and argues that, "…the *Rowẕat* represents the type of textualization of oral vernacular in which the everyday folkloric literary tradition is expressed in complex poetic rhetorical devices."[329]

In this section, I have explored elements of Kāshefī's style: ornateness, incorporation of popular storytelling techniques and orality, rhetorical devices including poetic exaggeration as method of evoking tears, and accessibility of language. All of these come together when centering the fact that Kāshefī was fundamentally a preacher, with a strong preference for vivid narratives, which is clear from many of his works. However, while his texts present narratives that became part of the popular landscape and were presented in a form accessible to the general, Persian-speaking populace, this does not mean that we can consider Kāshefī to be the equivalent of a *naqqāl* nor was his oral presentation of the *Rowẕat* the same as the performance of the *shāhnāmeh-khᵛān*s. However, as we have seen from the *Fotovvatnāmeh-ye Solṭānī*, his attitude towards these *qeṣṣeh-khᵛānān* is relatively positive. The *vāʿeẓ* occupies a particular kind of liminal space between the elite and the masses which is distinct from the *qeṣṣeh-khᵛānān*. While he is a man of letters, a highly educated and well-spoken member of the elite, the majority of the people who his words reach are members of the lower classes. His output as a writer of 'popular narratives' has to be carefully qualified, in the sense that these narratives operate within a top-down paradigm. Within this paradigm, he incorporates popular themes in an elite syntax, all of

[328] Ibid 269.
[329] Babak Rahimi, *Theater State and the Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran: Studies on Safavid Muharram Rituals, 1590-1641 CE*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 309.

which is designed to fulfill a central purpose: provoke a deep emotional feeling from the audience. To invoke the *Fotovvatnāmeh* again, those tears he wrings out should rest deep in the heart of the audience (*dar del-e mardom beneshānad*).[330]

VI. The Unquestioned Champion: Kāshefī's Sufi Chivalry

The previous section discussed Kāshefī's style as a preacher and writer, but in it, I mentioned that several of his works incorporate Sufi themes, which is also a huge part of the *Rowẕat.* This section will center this discussion and discuss what sorts of Sufi values Kāshefī is employing in his works, particularly the *Fotovvatnāmeh*. The point of this is that, as we have previously seen when discussing Kāshefī's style and rhetorical techniques, the *Fotovvatnāmeh* serves as a useful point of reference for the exposition of material which is only implicitly suggested in the *Rowẕat.* While it is not clear that the *Fotovvatnāmeh* was composed before the *Rowẕat*, the *Rowẕat* was probably one of Kāshefī's final works, since it was finished in 1502 C.E., just two years before his death.[331] Thus, the *Fotovvatnāmeh* probably was composed before the *Rowẕat.* Overall, the *Fotovvatnāmeh* offers a useful précis of Kāshefī's perspective on the Sufi ethics which underlay the *Rowẕat.*

The Sufi orientation of the *Rowẕat* is not explicitly stated in the introduction or throughout the text. However, the text is littered with quotations from famous Sufis. As was previously mentioned, Kāshefī had a particularly close relationship with Jāmī, one of the most famous Sufi writers of the 15th century. In addition to the fact that we know he was initiated into the Naqshbandī order, his background as an interpreter of Sufi poet is quite well-known. He

[330] Kāshefī, *Fotovvatnāmeh*, 305.
[331] Amanat 2003, 256.

composed at least two works on Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Balkhī's (d. 1273 C.E.) poetry, the immensely popular 13th century Afghani mystical poet commonly known as Rūmī. These are the *Lobb-e Lobāb-e Masnavī* (The Innermost Core of the *Maṯnavī*), an abridgement of Rūmī's most famous work, the *Maṯnavī-ye Maʿnavī* (Spiritual Couplets), and the *Sharḥ-e Maṯnavī*, a commentary on the same work. The *Rowẕat* contains 35 separate references to Jāmī and 9 quotations from the *Maṯnavī-ye Maʿnavī*. In addition to quotations from other Sufi authors, these underscore the influence Sufi ideas exerted on Kāshefī's composition of the *Rowẕat*

The Ṣufi substratum of the text is also indicated by Kāshefī's highlighting of the notion of *fotovvat* (chivalry). Like its western equivalent, *fotovvat* and the closely related term *javānmardī* have connotations of a particular code of noble behavior, of an elevated ethical standard. Both terms also share similar semantic spheres in their linguistic derivation. *Fotovvat* is the Persian pronunciation of *futuwwa*, an Arabic abstract noun coming from the verbal root *fā'-tā'-wāw*, i.e. to be a youth (*fatá*); *futuwwa* is thus literally "youthfulness."[332] While *futuwwa* does not occur in the Qur'ān, and thus must be assigned as a later development, the term *fatá* and its various plurals (*fitya, fityān*) do. In one case, it is used in reference to the prophet Ibrāhīm while casting down the idols of Ur (21:60), while in another, the plural form *fitya* is applied to the the Ephesian Sleepers of the Cave (18: 11, 13).[333]

Javānmardī, on the other hand, is from Indo-European stock, and is a compound of the descriptive noun *javān* "youth," or adjectivally, "young," with *mard* "man," with the abstracting nominal suffix *-ī*. The word thus literally means, "young-man-ness," very similar to *futuwwa*. Both *fatá* and *javānmard* also imply, by semantic extension, the idea of "hero," i.e. meaning a

[332] Parallel to a word with a similar meaning and morphological pattern, *muruwwa*, which is literally "manliness."
[333] Chadly Fitouri, "Childhood and Youth," in *The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture: The Individual and Society in Islam*, (Paris: Unesco Pub., 1998), 203-228; 223.

person who follows the codes of *futuwwa* or *javānmardī*, and for this reason, are considered to exemplify these ethical standards.[334]

The exact origin of the concept of *fotovvat* is unclear, however, it has been suggested that while it does draw initially from early Arabic tribal values of the *ḥasab* type,[335] scholars like Zakeri have argued that its manifestation in urban societies of the post-Arab invasions owe much to values inherited from the Zoroastrian ethics of the *asbārān* (horsemen).[336] Ridgeon expresses some concern though, as to how much of these values can be reconstructed in a social, rather than military context based on the limited corpus of pre-Islamic material on the matter.

There is a long tradition of associating the *ahl al-bayt* with *fotovvat* and *javānmardī.* An often quoted *ḥadīth* popular in the *zūrkhāneh*s (gymnasium) of Iran is *lā fatá illā ʿalī wa lā sayf illā dhū al-fiqār* (There is no youth but ʿAlī and no sword but *dhū al-fiqār*).[337]The *ḥadīth* is a play on the foundational Muslim profession of faith (*shahāda*), and its use in the *zūrkhāneh* may date as far back as the Safavid period.[338] Indeed, the institution of the *zūrkhāneh* is where the traditional athletics of Iran were practiced, including that of the *pahlavān*, a word which had the meaning of "hero" in the medieval world, but later became associated with wrestling.[339] This connection with the *javānmardī* of the *pahlavān* of the epic past was seen to have clear parallels in medieval Iran. In the 12th-13th centuries, poets began conflating the *javānmardī* of ʿAlī with

[334] John Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image: Themes in Literature and the Visual Arts*, Studies in Comparative Religion, (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 10-11.
[335] See Chapter One for more information on the concept of *ḥasab wa nasab* in pre-Islamic Arabia.
[336] Ridgeon, 2010, 11.
[337] See: Moḥammad Jaʿfar Maḥjūb, "Moqaddemeh," in *Fotovvatnāmeh-ye Solṭānī*, (Tehran: Bonyād-e Farhang-e Īrān, 1971); ix.
[338] Lloyd V. J. Ridgeon, "The Felon, the Faithful and the Fighter: The Protean Face of the Chivalric Man (Javanmard) in the Medieval Persianate and Modern Iranian Worlds," in *Javanmardi: The Ethics and Practice of Persianate Perfection*, British Institute of Persian Studies Series, (London: Gingko Library, 2018), 1-27; 14.
[339] I will consider the layers of meaning associated with the term *pahlavān* in the next chapter.

Rostam in particular.[340] Thus, by Kāshefī's time, the notion of the *fatá-javānmard* was explicitly linked with ʿAlī and the *ahl al-bayt* both via religious allusion in *ḥadīth,* but also due to the association of the *ahl al-bayt* with the archetypical *fatá-javānmard* promoted as a desirable model in the *zūrkhāneh*s. This is an unambiguous nexus of religious and popular cultural practice.

However, what is the connection with Sufism? To begin with, ʿAlī has been included in the golden chains of most important Sufi orders for centuries (with the notable exception of the Naqshabandiyya!). *Fotovvat* is also a moral code, which is seen as having two aspects: a worldly one, which consists of following the ordinances of society in a manner which is honorable, and a spiritual one, where it is regarded as a path of purity and spiritual devotion.[341]

If the *Rowẕat* is read with an eye to Kāshefī's other popular texts, the implied relationship between Sufism, *fotovvat*, and the suffering of the *ahl al-bayt* becomes obvious. At the beginning of his introduction to the *Fotovvatnāmeh,* he explicitly connects *fotūvvat* with learning (*ʿelm*) and Sufism (*taṣavvof*).[342] While Ḥusayn is not the central topic of the *Fotovvatnāmeh*, Kāshefī absolutely considers him to be a paragon of the concept. He makes the connection between *fotovvat* and the spiritual (essentially, Sufi) discipline of the Imams explicit through the medium of Ḥusayn. The Imam gives it an overtly mystical meaning which is tied to the religious loyalty to the Imams (*tavallā*) incumbent on the believer: "Ḥusayn said that chivalry is the fulfillment of

[340] Ridgeon 2018, 6. Ridgeon also observes that Kāshefī seems to have had no problem with these sorts of identifications, since he calls Geyūmart, the first king of the world in the *Shāhnāmeh*, the "son of Adam" (*keyūmarṣ keh pesar-e ādam ṣafī būd*) in the *Fotovvatnāmeh*. See: Ridgeon, 2010, 95-6., and Kāshefi, *Fotovvatnāmeh,* 354.
[341] Rigdeon has written extensively on the connection between Sufism and *fotovvat.* For details, see: Lloyd V.J. Ridgeon, *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism: A History of Sufi-futuwwat in Iran,* Routledge Sufi Series; 10, (New York: Routledge, 2010).
[342] Kāshefī, *Fotovvatnāmeh*, 5.

an eternal vow (*ʿahd-e azal*), standing steadfast on the road of right faith, which means the straight path."[343]

Kāshefī presents several examples of *fotovvat* throughout the *Rowẕat*, which underscore it as a major underlying value informing his conception of *balā*. The highlighting of *fotovvat* explicitly or implicitly is a part of Kāshefī poetic evocation of tragedy. This is to say that he juxtaposes the inherent tragedy of the *balā* visited upon the *ahl al-bayt* with the idea that their reaction to it encapsulates *fotovvat.* One particularly clear example is given during a discussion between ʿAlī and Fāṭima in Fāṭima's biography, Fāṭima specifically identifies the qualities of civility (*mardomī*), liberality (*morovvat*), gallantry (*javānmardī*), eloquent speech (*ḥosn-e maqāl*) and refined manners (*loṭf-e faʿāl*) as synonymous with *fotovvat*.[344] This quality is also essentially quietism (*va sokhanī nashenīdeh-am keh mūjeb-e shekāyat bāshad*), an attitude long associated both with the Imāms and mystics.

But why is chivalry even connected with Sufism or the Imams to begin with? The answer is that the quietism that the *ahl al-bayt* and the Imams display is closely linked with the correct behavior of the oppressed, and more generally, a spiritual technique widely applicable to all those who seek enlightenment. While it is not the central concept in the *Fotovvatnāmeh* as it is in the *Rowẕat*, Kāshefī consistently insists that the suffering of the Imams is intimately tied to *fotovvat*. Both in the *Rowẕat* as well as Kāshefī's other works, these qualities are especially associated with ʿAlī and Ḥusayn:

[343] Ibid, 11.
وامیر المؤمنین حسین علیه السلام فرموده است که فتوت به عهد ازل وفا کردن است و برجادهٔ دین قویم که صراط مستقیم عبارت از آن است ثابت قدم بودن.

[344] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 313.
فاطمه فرمود: حقا که در این مدت مواصلت از تو چیزی ندیده ام و سخنی نشنیده ام که موجب شکایت باشد بلکه همه مردمی و مروت و جوانمردی و فتوت و حسن مقال و لطف فعال مشاهده کرده ام.

> Imām Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, found that no friend nor helper would appear at his side nor would there arrive any sympathetic or supportive words, while the chaste and pure woman of his family cried out and began lamenting, his lordship said: "O you who are veiled as the sanctuary of the prophet, O you who were raised to observe modest and chivalrous behavior, be silent so that our enemies may not rejoice at our misfortune; make your endurance and patience your own so that your patience will deprive them of reward, but the reward for the patient ones will bring you nearness to God beyond all measure."[345]

From Kāshefī's close interweaving of the themes of chivalry with that of spiritual discipline, it is clear that *fotovvat* and Sufi values underscore much of his worldview. Of course, given his Naqshabandī pedigree and close association with Jāmī, this is not particularly surprising. What is important, however, is how this concept underlies much of his discussion of Ḥusayn's attitude towards injustice, the struggle which ends in the tragic affair of Karbalā'.

VII. The Magician's Nephew: Occultism in Kāshefī's Works

While occultism is not a major surface-level topic in the *Rowẕat*, it implicitly underlies several themes and anecdotes that Kāshefī discusses throughout the work. One of the most important of these is his description of spiritual powers as being deeply involved in the Karbalā' narrative. The most notable occurrences of these powers are in scenes such as the weeping of the angels over Ḥusayn and the attempted intervention of the jinn or fairies (*parī*) in the battle. While I will consider these events later in the analysis of the *Rowẕat*, here I will briefly discuss Kāshefī's background in the occult, and what sorts of very ancient implicit influences this background introduces into the text.

[345] Kāshefī. *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 612-13.
چون حسین علیه السلام دید که از هیچ طرف یاری و مددکاری روی نمنماید و از هیچ جانب آواز غمگساری و هواداری نمی آید و مخدرات حجرات عصمت و طهارت خروش برآوردند و فغان و شیون آغاز کردند آن حضرت فرمود: که ای پردگیان حرم نبوت و ای پرورشیافتگان در تتق عفت و فتوت خاموش باشید تا دشمنان شماتت نکنند و صبر و شکیبایی را شعار و دثار خود سازید که در بلا جزع کردن موجب محرومی از ثوابست و ثواب صابران نزدیک حق سبحانه و تعالی بیرون از سرحد حساب.

Kāshefī's most important text on occultism is the *Asrār-e Qāsemī*, a veritable handbook of talismans, letter magic (*sīmyā*), invoking powers such as the seven planets (*kavākeb*), jinn, spirits (*rūḥāniyyāt*), and prestidigitation (*shaʿwadha*).[346] The *Asrār-e Qāsemī* is an obscure and difficult text; beyond its plethora of esoteric sigils and charts, many lines of the text are ciphered, and even lines which are not ciphered are often written in an style which intends to hide its true meaning from the uninitiated.

While the overt connections to *Rowẕat* are complex, even here, there are clear connections to Kāshefī's other interests. Of particular note is that he mentions the use of a talisman whose text comes down from ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib and invokes the power of the sun through the name of God.[347] Unsurprising, the knowledge in this text involves initiation in order to be able to transmit its secrets. Moreso, however, the text requires a knowledge of *jafr*, a catch-all for a set of precognitive and esoteric powers which are deeply connected to both letter magic and the *ahl al-bayt*, to whom the institution of *jafr* is attributed.[348] The various powers of Ḥusayn, such as his ability to communicate with jinn, have correspondences in the ability to interpret the true nature of the world which *jafr* embodies. *Jafr* requires specific authorization to learn or teach, typically transmitted through a line of *shaykh*s genetically related to the *ahl al-bayt*. In order to be authorized to transmit this knowledge, Kāshefī had to be confirmed by a *shaykh* as essentially a spiritual descendent of ʿAlī and Ḥusayn.[349]

[346] I.e., Slight of hand or the tricks of a stage magician. For a fuller discussion of the *Asrār*, see in particular: Pierre Lory, "Kashifi's Asrār-i Qāsimī and Timurid Magic," *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 4 (2003): 531-41.
[347] Lory 2003, 537.
[348] Toufic Fahd, "D̲jafr," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van D̲onzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 20 January 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1924>
[349] Maria Subtelny, conversation with the author during the lecture: Maria Subtelny, "Iranian Elements in the Pseudo-Aristotelian Sirr al-asrār (Secretum secretorum)," (lecture, the Mahindra Humanities Center & the Aga Khan Fund for Iranian Studies, Harvard University, MA November 15, 2019).

Besides the connections to the *ahl al-bayt*, Kāshefī's text contains other influences which are even more obscure, but will also feature prominently in analyzing certain mythic elements of the *Rowẕat*. One of the most surprising of these deals with Kāshefī's connection to Ibn Waḥshiyya (fl. 9th-10th century C.E.), a famous expert on Iraqi and Nabataean folklore, agriculture, and astrology. In the introduction of his list of sources in the *Asrār-e Qāsemī*, Kāshefī names one Abū Bakr b. Waḥshiyya's *Tamāthīl* (Figures) as one of the works he has drawn upon for his discussion of talismanic arts.[350] According to Lory, *Tamāthīl* is probably an alternate name for Ibn Waḥshiyya's famous *al-Shawq al Mustahām fī Ma'rifat Rumūz al-Aqlām* (The Enchanting Pleasure of the Knowledge of Hieroglyphics), one of the earliest Arabic texts attempting to decode Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic writing.[351] Ibn Waḥshiyya was a well-known cataloguer of local occultism, agriculture, and cultic practices in 10th century Iraq. His most famous book was a compendium of pharmacology, agronomy, magic, and Mesopotamian legend named *al-Filāḥa al-Nabaṭiyya* (Nabataean Agriculture). Ibn Waḥshiyya claimed that he translated the root text of the book from Nabataean Aramaic.[352]

Beyond the obvious occult connection, what is particularly interesting about this fact is that it demonstrates that Kāshefī was aware of Ibn Waḥshiyya's work and may have read *al-Filāḥa al-Nabaṭiyya*. In addition, in the line preceding, Kāshefī also cites a text called *Muṣḥaf Hirmis al-Harāmisa* (The Book of Hermes Trismegistus), attributed to the eponymous alchemist-philosopher of antiquity who figures prominently throughout the history of Arabo-Persian occultism.[353] While I will discuss this in more detail in the following chapter, here it suffices to

[350] Ḥosayn Vā'eẓ Kāshefī, *Asrār-e Qāsemī*, (lithograph edition of the Muhammad Hasan ʿAlami Press, nd), 3.
[351] Lory, 537.
[352] Nabataean is closely related to Syriac Aramaic, and whose letters served as the source of the earliest Arabic scripts.
[353] Kāshefī, *Asrār-e Qāsemī,* 3. For more information on Hermes Trismegistus, see: Kevin Thomas Van Bladel, *The Arabic Hermes: From Pagan Sage to Prophet of Science*, Oxford Studies in Late Antiquit, (Oxford [England] ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

mention that both Hermes Trismegistus and Ibn Waḥshiyya have notable connections to the pre-Islamic Pan-Levantine-Mesopotamian cult of Tammuz: Ibn Waḥshiyya through his transmission of a long and very detailed version of Tammuz' martyrdom,[354] and Hermes by virtue of being identified with Tammuz—which is noted by Ibn Waḥshiyya in his *Asrār al-Falak* (Secrets of the Celestial Spheres).[355] While Kāshefī unsurprisingly never mentions Tammuz by name in the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, there is good reason to suspect that thematically, the legend could have exerted some influence on the mythic structure of Kāshefī's narrative.[356]

We know from looking at Kāshefī's previously cited works that he is willing to cite Iranian folk material, mention epic heroes, or use local storytelling techniques when it suits him to do so. Likewise, as Lory points out, Kāshefī is not particularly concerned about the pagan influences or origins of the works of Ibn Waḥshiyya or Hermes Trismegistus which he so easily cites.[357] The difference between this material in the *Asrār* and the Iranian material throughout his other works is that Kāshefī is more willing to make the connection more explicit in reference to Ḥusayn. However, as we shall see when we return to this topic in more detail in the next section and in Chapter Three, the references still continue to operate on several different levels.

VIII. The Purest Lily Allah Ever Grew: Analyzing the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*

[354] Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Waḥshiyya, *Kitāb al-Filāḥa al-Nabaṭiyya*, (Damascus*:* al-Maʿhad al-ʿIlmī al-Faransī lil-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabiyya bi-Dimashq, 1995), 296-298.
[355] "Just as the Levantines used to weep for Tammuz, by which they mean Hermes [Trismegistus] (*Kamā kāna yabkī ahlu l-shāmi ʿalá tammūzī yaʿnūna hirmis*). See: Ibn Waḥshiyya, *Kitāb Asrār al-Falak fī Aḥkām al-Nujūm*, MS (Tehran, Majlis 6415); 87b.
[356] Yarshater briefly suggests a connection between mourning rites for Ḥusayn and Tammuz, but to my knowledge, no explicit tangible connection between the two has been made previously. See: Ehsan Yarshater. "Taʿziyeh and Pre-Islamic Mourning Rites in Iran," *Ta'ziyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran*, New York University Studies in Near Eastern Civilization ; No. 7, (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 88-94; 93.
[357] Lory states, "Throughout the centuries, certain practitioners took great pains to progressively Islamize these concepts and practices …This is not, however, the concern of Kashifi. The references to ancient writings do not seem to present a problem for him." See: Lory 540.

In the previous sections, I considered Kāshefī's style, audience, and his affinity for Sufism and occultism in order to be better able to contextualize the *Rowẕat*. This overview is important so that the sorts of symbols and narrative structures he presents will make sense. Now I will discuss the structure of his *maqtal* itself. As we have seen, since Kāshefī has assumed the mantle of a preacher—while incorporating storytelling techniques when appropriate as discussed previously—we are already aware that his *maqtal* must address different needs than the more explicitly historical writing of earlier Arabic *maqātil*. Here I will also return to some theoretical models I mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, such as a paradigm of valor derived from the cultural memory of Iranian heroes, which were an intimate part of the public consciousness in the Persian-speaking world at this time. This is Kāshefī's evocation of the idea of *memory relics* embedded in his text. In addition, Kāshefī invokes a particular paradigm of suffering as spiritual discipline, based on *fotovvat-javānmardī,* which foregrounds itself in the ethical example of the Imams. This paradigm arguably prefigures elements of Sharīʿatī's "art of the good death" (*honar-e khᵛob-e mordan*) as mentioned in the Introduction to this dissertation.[358]

To show these elements, I provide an overview of the structure of his *maqtal* and how it differs from prior *maqātil*. Following this, I argue that Kāshefī's style consciously evokes that of an epic, translated into the context of Ḥusayn's passion. This style is designed to elicit the greatest emotional reaction from his audience, which frames sorrow, remembrance, along with their fusion in mourning as virtues and the key to the previously mentioned idea of spiritual chivalrous discipline.

[358] See Introduction, Section I for more details.

Owing to the length of this section, it will be divided into five subsections. The first subsection will discuss the layout and structure of the *Rowẕat*, considering how Kāshefī has chosen to divide the book and what his main thesis is. The next three subsections will be devoted to thematic analysis of the *Rowẕat*, using the introduction of the text as a guide for analyzing these themes. The second subsection will deal with the supernatural elements of the *Rowẕat*. As a major marker of Kāshefī's transition from the more historical focus of the earlier Arabic *maqātil* to his reinvention of the genre in Persian, the profusion of supernatural elements help mark the text as breaking from this older, *isnad*-based model. The third section will deal with heroic elements which serve to highlight Kāshefī's implementation of both *fotovvat* as an ethical paradigm for emulation as well as appealing to the earlier Persian literary heritage. The fourth section will tie these themes all together by demonstrating how they all illustrate *balā* and the power of divinely ordained destiny as the dominant force in Kāshefī's mythic universe. All the prior themes emphasize the inherent tragedy of the story, and thus, attempt to fulfill the meritorious injunction to make the audience weep. Finally, the last section will consider how the structure and themes of the *Rowẕat* tie together in suggesting an outline for ritual. Kāshefī's recommendations for tangible ritual acts and the internal state of mind of participants will prove integral to understanding how the *Rowẕat* evolved from a written text with a likely oral component into a central factor in the development of later Iranian *ʿĀshūrā'* commemorations.

Structure of the Rowẕat

The *Rowẕat* is at once a very conservative work as well as quite innovative. The structure of the work is very typical of biographical works, including secular ones such as Ibn Khallikān's *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān* (The Passings of Important Persons). Like earlier Arabic *maqātil* and

biographies of the *ahl al-bayt*, the book is divided up into sections dealing with specific persons—in this case, prophets—who are connected with Ḥusayn. These sections taking up so much of the book tends to be more characteristic of *manāqib*, whereas *maqātil* focus more on the climactic battle.

The inclusion of poetry, as we have seen in the Arabic works, is also very typical, however, in the *Rowẕat* poetry is ever-present. The book contains over 1200 poems in Persian alone, most of which are *do-beytī* (two couplet) format or only one couplet long. Kāshefī's text in the 2011 Tehran edition runs to 628 pages, so there are about two poems for every page in this edition. Some of these poems are quotations from other Persian lost *maqātil* or from well-known Persian poets like Ferdowsī, Neẓāmī, Saʿdī, Ḥāfeẓ, and others, but most of the poetry appears to be Kāshefī's.

As such the structure of the *Rowẕat* is actually quite different from previous Arabic *maqātil*.[359] If we look at some of the most famous Arabic *maqātil* or biographic notices which are chronologically closest to the *Rowẕat*, we find the same basic structure. There is usually a section of *manāqib*, a hagiographical overview of the traditions regarding Ḥusayn's life, along with lists and example of his virtues. This is followed by the bulk of the *maqtal*, which is a usually a historical description of the events leading up to Karbalā', the battle, and the fate of Ḥusayn's relatives.[360] Some *maqātil* dispense with the *manāqib* material; Ḥillī's *Muthīr al-Aḥzān*

[359] It is worth noting that Jaʿfariyān does not consider to be an innovator in terms of certain structural elements. Insofar as Kāshefī includes all the traditional elements of a *maqtal* and then, as Jaʿfariyān remarks, return to Karbalā', Kāshefī is not an innovator. My point is more that the choices of arrangement, emphasis, the glut of supernatural elements, and the prodigious use of poetry are what distinguishes Kāshefī primarily from the Arabic *maqtal* tradition, since we cannot say much about the pre-Kāshefī Persian tradition. See: Jaʿfariyān 1995, 37.

[360] I cannot agree with Rūstā and Qorreh-chāhī, who state that "…the subject of the book is very general regarding the Karbalā incident, and the first half of it concentrates on the stories of the divine prophets and the *ahl al-bayt* (*zīrā mowẕūʿ-e ketāb besīʿāmtarāz vāqeʿeh-ye karbalāst, va nīmeh-ye nokhost-e ān beh akhbār-e anbiyā-ye elahī-o ahl-e beytʿalayhum al-salām ekhteṣāṣ dārad*). In the edition I have used, not counting the introduction, biographies of the prophets and the other *ahl al-bayt* only run about 271 pages. On the other hand, Chapter Nine, which details the events of Karbalā, not even considering the birth of Ḥusayn, the martyrdom of Muslim b. ʿAqīl, and the

and Ṭāwūs's *al-Luhūf* are basically of this type and only mention Ḥusayn's birth. Given that no examples of earlier Persian *maqātil* survive, it is not possible to usefully say how much Kāshefī's model differs from theirs.

The *Rowẕat* diverges from that template considerably. The book is divided into ten chapters, including a conclusion. Broadly, the book may be divided into three chunks. The first, comprising chapters one-three, is basically Kāshefī trying his hand at *qiṣāṣ al-anbiyā'* (stories of the prophets), which starts with Adam and ends with the death of Muḥammad. Chapters four-six deal with the hagiographies of the other three members of *ahl al-bayt*: Ḥusayn's mother Fāṭima, his father ʿAlī, and his brother Ḥasan. Chapters seven-ten comprise the largest portion of the book, and deal with Ḥusayn's life, virtues, his arrival at Karbalā', the battle, his death, and the aftermath. An introduction provides' Kāshefī discussion of the book's main theme, *balā* (torment), framed in the context of an exegesis of the Qur'ānic verse 2:155. Finally, a conclusion provides some information on Ḥusayn's descendants. The chapter titles are provided below:

> Chapter One: Regarding the tribulation of some of the prophets: regarding our prophet, blessings and peace be upon them;
> Chapter Two: Regarding the Cruelty of the Quraysh to the Prophet, and the martyrdom of Ḥamza and Jaʿfar Ṭayyār;
> Chapter Three: Regarding the Death of his Lordship, the master of the messengers, upon him be the most excellent blessings of the pious;
> Chapter Four: Regarding the Events in the Life of her Ladyship Fāṭima, from the time of her birth until that of her death
> Chapter Five: Regarding the Events in the Life of Murtaḍā ʿAlī from the time of his birth until that of his martyrdom;
> Chapter Six: Regarding the Exposition of the Virtues of Imam al-Ḥasan and some of the events in his life from his birth until his martyrdom;

aftermath of Karbalā in Chapters Seven, Eight, and Ten, still runs from page 465 to page 632, 167 pages, only 104 pages less than this "other half of the book." In comparison, the entirety of the *Luhūf* in the 1993 Beirut edition, is less than two hundred pages. See: Jamshīd Rūstā and Saʿīdeh Qorreh-chāhī, "Vākāvī-ye Jāygāh-e Siyāsī – Maẕhabī-ye Ketāb-e *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*-ye Mīrzā-ye Kāshefī," *Pazhūheshnāmeh-ye Maʿāref-e Ḥoseynī,* Vo. 1, Issue 1 (Spring 2016), 38-57; 48.

> Chapter Seven: Regarding the hagiography of Imam al-Ḥusayn, and his birth, and the events after the death of his brother;
> Chapter Eight: Regarding the Martyrdom of Muslim b. ʻAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, and the murder of some of his children;
> Chapter Nine: Regarding the Arrival of Imam al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā' and his battle with his enemies and the martyrdom of his lordship and children and relatives and the rest of the martyrs;
> Chapter Ten: Regarding the Events after the Battle of Karbalā' which befell the Ahl al-Bayt, and the punishments of the opposition who were the agents waging that battle;
> Conclusion: Mention of the descendants of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, and the connections of their lineage to them.[361]

Given Kāshefī's status as a popular preacher, who regularly gave sermons in various prestigious locations as well as in markets,[362] it is likely that this structure of ten chapters purposely alludes to the ten days of Muḥarram. Indeed, given the orality of other sorts of literature (*Shāhnāmeh*, *Abū Muslimnāmeh*) which I have argued influenced Kāshefī,[363] the chapters may have originated as drafts of sermons intended to be preached for each day of *ʿĀshūrā'* during Muḥarram. Thus, in contrast with the Arabic *maqātil*, the *Rowẕat* opens its narrative with nearly eighty pages of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*. All of these stories are thematically tied directly to the central concept of *balā*, with subsection headings such as "the story of Adam's weeping" (*dāstān-e geristan-e Ādam*) or "the brothers' envy of Joseph" (*ḥasad bordan-e barādarān beh Yūsuf*). After this, six chapters deal with the biographies and *manāqib* of the five *ahl al-bayt* members. The remaining chapters are dedicated to events preceding the battle, during it, and its outcome. While hagiographic material is typically interspersed throughout *maqātil*, the *Rowẕat* specifically incorporates *manāqib* as whole chapters of its text.

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[361] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 112.
[362] Kāshefī's weekly schedule is described by Khᵛāndmīr and demonstrates that he was a very busy man. He preached at the Solṭān-Ḥosayn *madrasa-khānaqa* on Tuesdays, then at the shrine of Abū al- Walīd Aḥmad on Wednesdays. On Friday mornings he preached first at the prestigious Dār al-Sayādeh, then in the afternoon after Friday prayers at the mosque of ʿAlī-Shīr Navāʾī. He is also known to have delivered sermons later in life at the tomb of the Timurid prince Solṭān Aḥmad Mīrzā on Thursdays. See: Gheyās̲ Al-Dīn b. Homām al-Dīn Khᵛāndmīr, *Tārīkh-e Ḥabīb al-Siyar fī Akhbār Afrād Bashar*, (Tehran: Ketābforūshī-ye Khayyām, 1983), 4: 345.
[363] Babayan 2002, 177-8.

The main theme of the book is essentially *balā.* As previously mentioned, Kāshefī frames his entire introduction around a discussion of how torment affected all the prophets, the *ahl al-bayt*, mystics, and humanity as a whole. Beyond the thematic content, as I have previously suggested, the *Rowẕat* is clearly an attempt to Persianize the Karbalā' narrative. Obviously, the book is written in Persian, which is already a significant departure from previous *maqātil*, but Kāshefī also reminds us three separate times that he has chosen to compose the book in Persian for the benefit of Persian speakers and has either omitted Arabic poetry or translated it whenever possible.[364] Obviously, Qur'ānic citations are present in abundance, but they are nearly always followed by a translation into Persian, often with an exegetical interpretation also in Persian.

Beyond this, there are multiple references throughout the book to Persian mythological characters. There are also two closely paraphrased (*taẕmīn*) quotations from the *Shāhnāmeh* in the book, which I will examine in more detail in the next chapter. Finally, there is also the appearance of Shahrbānū, the legendary wife of Ḥusayn. While Kāshefī is hardly the first to discuss her, she has a relatively significant part in the story, is present at Karbalā', gets her own lines and poetry, and is referenced by name 28 times throughout the book. In one discussion, concerning the genealogy and life of the fourth Imam, Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, Kāshefī gives her a well-known epithet, *shāh-e zanān* (queen of women). He states essentially that she was a Iranian princess by furnishing her with a somewhat mangled genealogy, possibly adapted from genealogy of Yazdegerd III in the *Fārsnāmeh* of Ibn Balkhī (fl. circa 1116 C.E.) or a similar source:[365] the daughter of Kasrá (Khosrow VI?)[366], son of Yazdejerd (Yazdegerd III, d. 651

[364] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 112, 483, 516.
[365] The genealogy of Yazdegerd III is very similar—at least to the listing of his supposed grandfather—to the genealogy provided by Ibn Balkhī, which also provides nearly identical spellings. See: Ibn Balkhī, *The Fársnáma of Ibnu'l-Balkhí*, (London: Luzac &, 1921), 26.
[366] Possibly just generically used, since by this period, *kasrá* is a generic word for a Persian king, derived from an Arabic deformation of *khosrow*. Regardless, there is no known "Khosrow," son of Yazdegerd III.

C.E.), son of Shahriyār (d. 628 C.E.), son of Parvīz (Perōz II? d. 630 C.E.), son of Hormaz (Hormizd IV? d. 590 C.E.), son of Nūshīrvān (Khosrow "Anūshīrvān" I d. 579 C.E.).[367] Obviously, this is a rather fanciful genealogy, but its purpose is really to provide Ḥusayn (and thus his descendants) with a direct connection to the kings of Iran, through which Kāshefī can also invoke its legendary past. Shahrbānū herself almost certainly did not exist but is a combination of a possibly Persian or Sindhi concubine of Ḥusayn's with Persian folklore. [368] This is even more interesting given Boyce and Bāstāni Pārīzī have convincingly demonstrated that Shahrbānū is actually a half-remembered form of the Zoroastrian *yazata* Arduuī Sūrā Anāhitā, the divinization of fresh waters.[369] The fact that Shahrbānū is itself in origin an epithet meaning "Lady of the Land"[370] associated with Anāhitā and that alleged tomb (*maqbareh*) of Shahrbānū in Ray on Mount Tabarak was almost certainly a pre-Islamic shrine to Anāhitā only strengthens the idea of Shahrbānū as a symbolic representation of Iranian identity.[371] All of these issues come together in making the *Rowẕat* a fundamentally Persian text and an important nexus eventually linking Twelver Shiʿism to Iran.

It is worth noting that an appeal to connecting the ancient Persian kings to Ḥusayn's family had gone through some shifts before Kāshefī. In Chapter Four, we will see this invocation in connection with Shiʿi sympathies has ancient roots in the Persian *shuʿūbiyya* and

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[367] Ibid, 715.

[368] Sayyed Jaʿfar Shahīdī has sifted through the sources, which are too extensive to repeat here, and concluded that Ḥusayn was never married to anyone named "Shahrbānū" nor were any Iranian princesses captured by the Arabs. The early sources describing Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn's mother, referred to as an *umm al-walad* (concubine) simply do not match with the later descriptions of Shahrbānū. See: Sayyed Jaʿfar Shahīdī, *Cherāgh-e Rowshan dar Donyā-ye Tārīk yā Zendagānī-ye Emām-e Sajjād*, (Tehran: ʿElmī, 19??), 46-63.

[369] Mary Boyce, "Bībī Shahrbānū and the Lady of Pārs," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 30, no. 1 (1967): 30-44; 36-7.

[370] Note also that Shahrbānū is one of the few major characters in the *Rowẕat* with a Persian name rather than an Arabic one.

[371] The legend of Shahrbānū's tomb at Ray, that when fleeing the battle of Karbalā', she stopped in exhaustion, calling out to God, whereupon the mountain swallowed her up in safety, only leaving part of her veil behind, can only be shown to go back to the 18th century in *taʿziyeh* dramas. Indeed, Kāshefī does not mention the story, and Shahrbānū abruptly disappears as an active participant in the narrative before the battle ends. See: Boyce 1967, 35.

Khorramdīniyyeh movements. However, as recorded by the Twelver jurist and theologian ʿAbd al-Jalīl b. Abī l-Ḥusayn b. Abī l-Faḍl al-Qazwīnī al-Rāzī's (fl. circa late 11th-early 12th century C.E.) *Kitāb al-Naqd* (The Book of the Refutation), Sunni eulogists (*faẓā'el-khᵛānān*) in his time were invoking Rostam, Sohrāb, and chanting the *Shāhnāmeh* to agitate their Twelver rivals.[372] Given the Shiʿism of Ferdowsī,[373] it seems that this may have been a Sunni tactic to subvert narratives connecting Persian epic history with Shiʿism. Unlike the Sunni eulogists, who would curse ʿAlī, regardless of Kāshefī's confessional status, there is no way he can be seen as a continuation of the *faẓā'el-khᵛānān*. Indeed, his works are clearly a re-orientation of the invocation of Persian epic history back towards the ʿAlid cause, if not a Shiʿi cause.

Overall, even in terms of structure, the *Rowẓat* is a departure from the Arabic *maqātil*. The text is much less interested in extensively sourced *ḥadith* and *khabar* citations and far more dependent on poetry, whether original or quoted from another source. The *aḥādīth* which he quotes are not furnished with *asānīd* (chains of narration), and many of his other references come from Sufi texts. This is not to say that the book is a total break from the earlier Arabic tradition, or that there is neither continuity nor extensive conservativism.

Here it is important to note that the book is still quite extensively furnished with *aḥādīth*, however a crucial point is that these *aḥādīth* are usually cited without any interest to their technical status as *ṣaḥīḥ* or without any regard to their creedal affiliation. Both the historical notes and *ḥadīth* citations come from a mix of Sunni and Shiʿi sources; Kāshefī's most commonly cited references are from the *Shavāhed al-Nobovvat* (Evidence of Prophecy) from

[372] Rosemary Stanfield-Johnson, "The Tabarra'iyan and the Early Safavids." *Iranian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 47-71; 52, especially n. 19, 20.
[373] Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi, Abu'l-Qāsem i. Life," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, IX/5, pp. 514-523; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ferdowsi-i (accessed on 27 March 2020).

Jāmī at 26 citations;[374] *Nūr al-A'imma* (Light of the Imams) at 20 citations,[375] and unknown *maqtal* of Abū al-Mufākhir Rāzī again at 20 citations.[376]

While the *Shavāhed ol-Nobovvat* is a Sunni work, Jāmī apparently felt free to cite Shiʿi sources as well; while his antipathy towards the Shiʿa is well-known, none of this feeling is apparent from Kāshefī's use of Jāmī's text.[377] Regarding the second text, the author of *Nūr al-A'imma* may not be from the same Khᵛārazmī as the well-known Persian scholar, Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Khᵛārazmī (d. 1172-73 C.E.), despite the fact that Kāshefī mentions him as its author. Khᵛārazmī also authored a *maqtal*, which is not titled *Nūr al-A'imma* but simply *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*.[378] The *Nūr al-A'imma* may have been authored in Persian, since Kāshefī seems to indicate he is quoting Persian poetry from it.

I tested whether *Nūr al-A'imma* refers to the well-known *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* of Khᵛārazmī by selecting one of Kāshefī's citations attributed to this book, which describes the martyrdom of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿArwa al-Ghaffārī, and portrays him reciting poetry which mentions the Persian heroes Rostam and Zāl.[379] The Arabic *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* of Khᵛārazmī contains only three references to a person named "Rostam" (none to Zāl) within the same space, in the description of al-Mukhtār's lineage.[380] However, this is not the legendary Rostam, but Rostam Farrokhzād (d. 636 C.E), the military marshal of Ādurbādagān (northwestern Iran) who died in

[374] Calmard apparently does not believe that this is Jāmī's *Shavāhed al-Nobovvat* since it is labeled with a question mark in the relevant column, but it is possible that the book was not available to him. See: Jean Calmard, "Le culte de l'Imām Husayn: étude sur la commémoration du drame de Karbalā dans l'Iran pré-safavide," PhD diss., Ecole pratique des hautes études, 1975; 309, and Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 639.
[375] Calmard, Ibid.
[376] Ibid.
[377] Manṣūr Dādāshnezhād, "Zendagānī-ye Davāzdah Emām dar Ketāb-e *Shavāhed ol-Nobovvat-e Jāmī*," *Moṭāleʿāt-e Eslāmī: Tārīkh-o Farhang*, Vol. 3-4: n. 87 (Fall-Winter 2011-2012), 51-67; 52-3, 57, 64-5.
[378] Jaʿfariyān considers the *Nūr al-A'imma* one of Kāshefī's most important sources, however he remarks that it is not clear whether the text is a translation of al-Khᵛārazmī or something else entirely. See: Jaʿfariyān 1995, 32.
[379] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 549.
[380] Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Makkī al-Khᵛārzamī, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, (Qom: Dār Anwār al-Hudá, 1998), 2:201.

battle with Arab forces during the Arab conquests. In addition, in Khᵛārazmī's extremely short mention of Ḥusayn's companion, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿArwa al-Ghaffārī's martyrdom, al-Ghaffārī also recites poetry, but the poem neither mentions Rostam or Zāl, nor does it resemble the Persian version Kāshefī quotes whatsoever.[381] As such, three possibilities present themselves: 1) Kāshefī has misattributed the work to Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Khᵛārazmī,[382] 2) *Nūr al-A'imma* is a less well-known, second *maqtal* by al-Khᵛārazmī or a Persian translation thereof, or 3) that Kāshefī is quoting from a lost Persian translation of the well-known *maqtal* which has interpolated or taken significant liberties with the original text.

While it is very difficult to reconstruct anything concrete about if this is a different Khᵛārazmī or his book simply based on likely paraphrased citations, it is worth mentioning that the tone of these citations appears to be quite Shiʿi in flavor or at least highly Shiʿi sympathetic. One citation refers to Ḥusayn as having a holy spirit (*rūḥ-e moqaddes*) who gazes down at the tears of his followers from his litter in heaven (*howdaj-e qods*) and will intercede (*shafāʿat bar bandad*) on their behalf.[383]

Not much information is known about the last source, Abū al-Mufākhir Rāzī, though evidently, he was popular enough for Kāshefī to use his work as a major source. The 16th century Central Asian biographer, Dowlatshāh Samarqandī (d. 1494 or 1507 C.E.) in his biographical dictionary *Taẕkirat ol-Shoʿarā'* (Memorial of the Poets) says that Rāzī was a poet who lived during the reign of the Seljuq sultan Muḥammad b. Malikshāh (d. 1118 C.E.) and composed poetry in honor of the eighth Twelver Imam, ʿAlī al-Riḍā (d. 818 C.E.).[384] Again, while this does

[381] Ibid, 2:26.
[382] Possible, since he may have misattributed some references to al-Mufīd.
[383] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 639. I have also been unable to locate a reference resembling this citation in Khᵛārazmī's extant Arabic *maqtal.*
[384] Dowlatshāh Samarqandī, *The Tadhkiratu 'sh-shu'ará = "Memoirs of the Poets" of Dawlatsháh Bin 'Alá'u 'd-Dawla Bakhtísháh Al-Ghází of Samarqand,* (London: Luzac, 1901), 76.

not definitively confirm that Rāzī was Shiʿi, at the very least it does suggest that he was a sympathizer. Jaʿfariyān, however, classifies him as a clearly Twelver Shiʿi writer.[385]

At least one of Kāshefī's important sources is the *ḥadīth* text, *Akhbār ʿUyūn al-Riḍā* (The Narrations of the Eyes of ʿAlī al-Riḍā), though it is not as commonly quoted as the previous three. The text is cited eight times throughout the book, and three of the citations deal specifically with early *ʿĀshūrā'* ritual recommendations.[386] The book is noteworthy for Kāshefī citing it for two reasons. Firstly, the *Akhbār ʿUyūn al-Riḍā* is as explicitly a Shiʿi text as can be usefully described for the formative period of Shiʿism. The complier of the book was Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Bābawayh al-Qummī, d. 991 C.E.), an especially important Persian Shiʿi scholar whose more famous text, *Man Lā Yuḥḍuru 'l-Faqīh* (For the One Who Does Not Have a Judge at Hand) is one of the four canonical Twelver Shiʿi *ḥadīth* collections (*al-kutub al-arbaʿa*). The narrations in the *Akhbār ʿUyūn al-Riḍā* are also notably attributed to the eighth Twelver Imam, ʿAlī al-Riḍā. Secondly, as previously mentioned in Section IV, the *Akhbār ʿUyūn al-Riḍā* was also a text wherein Kāshefī's family name was included in the chain of transmission (*silsila*); it is possible that he or his father may have even been authorized to transmit it.[387] The use of such a famous Shiʿi text as one of Kāshefī's sources is worth considering in terms of complicating the creedal concerns of the *Rowẕat.*

An extensive investigation of the creedal commitments of all of Kāshefī's sources is far beyond the scope of this study. However, a brief glance at the fact that several of his sources were from Shiʿi authors or Shiʿi-inclined Sunnis suggests that either Kāshefī did not care about the allegiances of his sources—which seems highly unlikely—or that the confessional leanings

[385] Jaʿfariyān 1995, 31.
[386] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadāʾ*, 636-8.
[387] Ẕū 'l-Feqārī 11.

of this book, which again, was composed at the end of his life, were considerably more complex. As I have previously discussed in Section IV of this chapter, the latter interpretation tracks well with my previous conclusions.

Overall, it is quite clear that Kāshefī is more interested in literary artistry and provoking an emotional response in his audience than he is in creating an accurate description of historical events. Two well-known stories, that of the appearance of Zaʿfar, leader of the fairies, before Ḥusayn, and the Wedding of Qāsim, Ḥusayn's nephew, are commonly believed to have first been mentioned in writing by Kāshefī. [388] However, many scholars, perhaps most notably Mortaẓá Moṭahharī (d. 1979 C.E.), have publicly questioned the veracity of these narratives and concluded they are distortions (*taḥrīf*).[389] However, Kāshefī wanted to make his audience weep; thus, in service of this goal, the supposed "objective truth" is subordinated to the narrative context in which the hero teaches his audience. It is important to note that most of the supernatural occurrences in his text come from referenced sources, and so it is not proper to say that he introduced heavy supernatural elements into the *maqtal* genre. At the same time, is the combination of the sheer amount of these supernatural references, their arrangement in the context of the narrative, the break from the more basic pietism of the Arabic *maqātil*, and the overt allusions to the Persian literary heritage which sets Kāshefī apart.

The following analysis does not cover the entire *Rowẕat* and it is arranged thematically, not chronologically. Owing to brevity and concerns of space, the passages analyzed in the following subsections are generally confined to the introduction, chapter seven, chapter nine, and chapter ten.

[388] While interesting on its own, the story of Qāsem's wedding is less pertinent to my analysis, and thus has not been covered in great detail in this dissertation. For the full story, see: Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadāʾ*, 582-596.
[389] Mortaẓá Moṭahharī, *Ḥamāseh-ye Ḥoseynī*, (Tehran: Ṣadrā, 1985), 87.

Supernatural Elements in the Rowẕat

The supernatural elements of the *Rowẕat* may be divided into two broad groups: specific anecdotes relating explicitly paranormal events within the main narrative, and descriptions or events which diverge from the usual, meaning poetic exaggeration, rhetorical devices, or brief, unusual commentary which cannot properly be called an anecdote, but which moves the flow of narrative from a historical realm to a mythic one. The highlighting of this material as a particular thematic section should not be taken to imply that no supernatural events ever occur in earlier *maqātil*, but rather that they are both different in thematic tone, being presented matter-of-factly, and do not suffuse the narrative in such overwhelming detail as in the *Rowẕat*. Some of these stories predate Kāshefī and he (usually) cites his sources to that effect, but their presentation, elaboration, and use as thematic elements of the overarching narrative is his own.[390]

One of the first major instances of a supernatural event is provided in the introduction. It is not an anecdote, but one of the latter type of descriptive material:

> Know that the lord[391] who possesses a noble soul, as I have [previously] related, on the day which they made him a martyr, a group of angels stood in his meadow and wept; [and] until the Day of Resurrection they will weep ceaselessly. Each Friday night, seventy thousand angels come and lament over his grave until morning comes, [when] they return to their celestial domains, the heavenly beings chant for him, saying "Abū ʿAbdullāh the murdered," the angels on earth say, "Abū ʿAbdullāh the slaughtered," the angels of the sea say, "al-Ḥusayn, the wronged," and the angels of the air say, "al-Ḥusayn, the martyr."
>
> Regarding the murder of Ḥusayn, the heavens and the earth weep

[390] See for example, some of the descriptions of Ḥusayn's birth, some of which are repeated by Kāshefī, though often greatly embellished, with multiple different narratives provided one after another: Mahmoud Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islām: a Study of the Devotional Aspects of 'Āshūrā' in Twelver Shī'ism*, Religion and Society 10, (The Hague: Mouton, 1978), 71.

[391] The edition has a break here, text supplied from another edition:
بدان خدایی که جان کعب به دست اوست که چنین خوانده ام که آن روز که وی را شهید کنند گروهی از فرشتگان بسر روضه وی بایستند و مـگویند تا قیامت.

Ḥosayn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadāʾ*, (Newal Kishor, 1873), 5.

> From the heights of the Divine Throne to [the] depths of the earth they weep.
> The fish in water and the bird in the air
> Weep over the funeral procession of the King of Karbalā'[392]

The text uses the term angels (*malāyekeh*), the image of a division between angels belonging to different levels of the world (heaven, air, sea, earth) suggests less angels in the traditional sense, who are nearly always associated with heaven or celestial bodies. Rather, these seem to be elemental spirits of some sort. The most interesting thing about this passage however, it is that it has quite ancient parallels. I have previously mentioned Ibn Waḥshiyya in the section on occultism and his connection to Kāshefī. It is possible that this connection produced an indirect thematic recapitulation of one of the stories Ibn Waḥshiyya relates about Tammuz. In his story, after Tammuz has been murdered gruesomely by a wicked king, on the night of his death, all the angels, idols, and *sakīna*s (divine hypostases) came from all over the earth to Babylon, and there mourned over Tammuz, recited litanies, and retold the story of his life. This they did from sunset until sunrise. After this, they return to their own abodes.[393]

While it is difficult to argue for an undeniable connection, the story, its themes, its characters, and its details are very similar to the extract from the *Rowẕat*. Since we know that Kāshefī had read Ibn Waḥshiyya since he tells us himself that he did, it is hardly impossible that this story may have exerted an influence on parts of the *Rowẕat.* As I will discuss in detail in the

[392] Ibid.
بدان خدایی که جان کعب به دست اوست که چنین خواندهام که آن روز که وی را شهید کنند گروهی از فرشتگان بسر روضه وی بایستند و می گویند تا قیامت که هرگز از گریه باز نایستند و هر شب جمعه هفتاد هزار فرشته آیند و بر سر قبر وی، زاری کنند، چون بامداد شود به صوامع طاعت خود باز روند اهل آسمان او را «ابو عبدالله المقتول» خوانند، فرشتگان زمین «ابو عبدالله المذبوح» و فرشتگان دریا او را «حسین مظلوم» خوانند و ملائکة هوا «حسین شهید» گویند.
بر قتل حسین، ارض و سما می گریند — از عرش علا تا به ثرا می گریند
ماهی ته آب و مرغ در روی هوا — در ماتم شاه کربلا می گریند

[393] In addition, the idol of Nasr, the god of Tihāma and identified as an ancient Arab god, continues to weep over Tammuz's death ceaselessly. See: Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Waḥshiyya, *Kitāb al-Fi*l*āḥa al-Nabaṭiyya*, (Damascus*:* al-Maʿhad al-ʿIlmī al-Faransī lil-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabīyah bi-Dimashq, 1995), 296-298.

next chapter, like in the stories of Tammuz and Siyavash, Ḥusayn's death is also immediately followed by environmental disasters. In the description above, we are provided with a cosmic perspective of the entire universe essentially grinding to a halt and stopping to weep over him; the clouds rain blood and the sky grows dark.[394] Nature is intimately connected with the well-being of Ḥusayn, and at his death, it cannot help but react. The environmental theme is a central aspect of the two verses of poetry at the end of the excerpt, which we will see repeated at Ḥusayn's death in chapter nine.

Before we turn to the discussion of the miraculous events of Karbalā', there is another important event mentioned earlier in the text, in chapter seven, which focuses on Ḥusayn's childhood and youth. As we shall see, this anecdote acts as a specific elaboration of the points mentioned above, as well as linking some important parallels with events later in Ḥusayn's tale.

At his birth, Ḥusayn is regarded as extraordinary many times; he glows in the dark, he is beautiful beyond compare, he is only in Fāṭima's womb for six months, and so on.[395] Beyond his extraordinary appearance, however, he also works fantastic miracles. One specific miracle is discussed in connection with an angel named Fuṭrus: [396]

> Shaykh Mufīd[397] has related that when Gabriel appeared to deliver congratulations on the birth of Ḥusayn, he saw an angel who had fallen to earth crying out in great pain. Aware

[394] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 231, 635-7.
[395] Ibid, 387, 391.
[396] Fuṭrus is almost certainly in origin an alternate pronunciation of Syriac *peṭraws/peṭrōs*, i.e. Peter, which is usually rendered as *buṭrus* in Arabic.
[397] The earliest reference to this story can be found in the *Dalā'il al-Imāma* (Proofs of the Imamate) attributed to Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. circa early 11th century C.E.). See: Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Dalāʾil al-imāma*. (Ṭehran: Markaz al-Ṭebāʻeh va al-Nashr fī Moʾassasat al-Beʻs̱eh, 1992), 190. The story is essentially the same, though much abbreviated compared to the Persian version of Kāshefī. The major differences are that the *ḥadīth* notes that Fuṭrus had been cast down to an island (*fī jazīratin min al-jazā'iri al-baḥr*) and that he had been there for five hundred years. See also: Omid Ghaemmaghami, *Encounters with the Hidden Imam in Early and Pre-modern Twelver Shi'i Islam*, Arab History and Civilization 167, (Leiden: Brill, 2020); 142 n. 15. Most later mentions of this *ḥadīth* occur later in the 11th century, such as in the *ʿUyūn al-muʿjizāt* of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (fl. 11th C.E.?), the *al-Kharā'ij wa al-jarā'iḥ* of Saʿīd b. ʿAbd Allah al-Rāwandī al-Kāshānī (d. 1177 C.E.), etc. I have not been able to locate a version related by Shaykh al-Mufīd; Kāshefī does not mention the name of the book, and this *ḥadīth* does

that his name was Fuṭrus, and that he was an angel of the third heaven in charge of 70,000 angels, Gabriel approached him. Gabriel said, "Oh Fuṭrus, what is this state I find you in?" Fuṭrus said, "Oh faithful spirit, God, praise be to him, order me to perform an action, and I reacted with some indifference. A lightning bolt of anger flashed, then my feathers and wings burst into flame. Yesterday I was at the peak of my glory, but today I am on the precipice of ruin:

Yesterday, none could equal my beauty
Today, none can equal my disgrace

O Gabriel, where are you going?" Gabriel said, "God has sent me to attend to the lord of the world, blessings and peace of God be upon him, in order to congratulate him on the birth which has occurred." Fuṭrus cried out, "Can you take me with you? Perhaps the Prophet might intercede on my behalf, and my wings might be restored, then I may return to my place in heaven." Gabriel brought Fuṭrus with him, and after greeting and congratulating the Prophet, presented Fuṭrus' situation to him. Ḥusayn was in that very place next to the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him. The Prophet said, "Oh Fuṭrus, come and touch your hand upon my Ḥusayn." Fuṭrus approached and touched the blessed form of Ḥusayn, and discovering that his glorious feathers and prestigious wings (*par-e farr o bāl-e eqbāl*) had returned,[398] he took flight and returned to his cloistered worship (*ṣowmʿeh-ye ʿebādat-e khod*). After the martyrdom of Ḥusayn, when he learned what had happened, he said: "Oh God, were it so that I had known, I would [not] have I gone down to earth with my compatriots and fought with his enemies?" God called out: "Although that has already happened, go straightaway with 70,000 angels who should follow you, then perform the rites over his tomb. Weep over his tomb day and night, and with the recompense of your own tears, beg pardon of those who wept for him during this tragedy." Fuṭrus descended to Karbalā and performed what God had commanded:

The eyes of the angels weep because of this event
The core of the sun in the heavens itself is roasted because of this sorrow.[399]

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not appear in his extant works. This *ḥadīth* was probably very obscure until the 11th century, and unless Kāshefī actually took it from a now-vanished copy of al-Mufīd's alleged text, it is possible that he simply repeated the attribution from one of these 11th century texts and it was never related by al-Mufīd at all. This latter possibility seems more likely, since one of the texts that mentions this *ḥadīth*, *Rawḍat al-Wāʿiẓīn* (The Meadow of the Preachers) by Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Fattāl al-Nayshābūrī (d. 1114 C.E.) has previously been attributed to al-Mufīd (Calmard makes this same mistake in his dissertation, see: Calmard, 1975, 311). Most likely Kāshefī made this same error, and some, if not all of his unsourced references to Shaykh al-Mufīd actually come from Nayshābūrī. See: Matthew Pierce, *Twelve Infallible Men: the Imams and the Making of Shi'ism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 183 n. 23.

[398] Reading with the alternate *khod bāz yafteh*.

[399] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 390-1.

شیخ مفید آورده که در وقتی که جبرئیل به تهنیت ولادت حسین می‌آمد فرشته‌ای دید که بر روی زمین افتاده و زار زار می‌نالید جبرئیل نزد وی آمد او را بشناخت که از ملایکه آسمان سوم بود و فطرس نام داشت و مقدار هفتاد هزار ملک در فرمان وی بودند جبرئیل گفت: ای فطرس این چه حالست که از تو مشاهده می کنم گفت: ای روح الامین حق سبحانه مرا کاری فرمود و اندک تهاونی در آن از من واقع شد برق غیرت در آمد و پر و بال من بسوخت دیروز بر مسند عزت بودم و امروز در مهلکه مذلتم:

دیروز کسی نبد به زیبایی من
و امروز کسی نیست به رسوایی من

ای جبرئیل تو کجا می‌روم گفت: مرا به ملازمت سید عالم فرستاده‌اند جهت تهنیت مولودی که او را واقع شده فطرس بنالید که چه شود که مرا با خود ببری شاید که آن حضرت مرا شفاعت کند و پر و بال من به من باز رسد و به مقام خود روم جبرئیل او را همراه بیاورد و بعد از تحیت و تهنیت

The very first point worth mentioning is that in many ways, this anecdote acts as a "prequel-sequel" to the more abstractly phrased discussion of angels performing *taʿziyeh* over Ḥusayn's tomb in Kāshefī's introduction. In fact, I would argue that this more elaborate tale is designed to serve as a direct explanation and expansion of an image which might, at first, seem more poetic than anything. The story of Fuṭrus suggests that Kāshefī intended his 'poetic image' to be a rehearsal, a reflexive event occurring in sacred time which lays out ritual activity to be conducted in equally timeless cultic time.[400] The time expressions used in both places explicitly evoke a cyclical eternal return, i.e "Perform the rites over his tomb and day and night" (*bar sar-qabr-e vay molāzem show har ṣobḥ o shām*) and "…until the Day of Resurrection they will weep ceaselessly" (*qeyāmat keh hargez az geryeh bāz nāyistand*).

Indeed, Kāshefī indicates that the two anecdotes are absolutely related by specifying in the introduction that there are 70,000 angels who will weep over Ḥusayn's tomb—just as Fuṭrus commands a garrison of 70,000 angels and leads them in mourning. The cosmic significance of Ḥusayn is also explicitly indicated in the story of Fuṭrus rather than simply presented in poetic language: Ḥusayn actually restores an angel's wings! Consider, it was God himself who punished Fuṭrus by combusting his wings. Angels in Islamic theology are not simply people with wings; this is just a form they choose to wear—their true nature is awesome and profoundly

صورت واقعه را به عرض رسانید و در آن محل حسین بر کنار رسول بود و آن حضرت فرمود: که ای فطرس بیا و خود را بر حسین من بمال فطرس بیامد و خود را بر وجود مبارک حسین مالید و پر با فر و بال اقبال خود باز یافته پرواز نمود به صومعه عبادت خود باز رفت و بعد از شهادت حسین بر آن قضیه مطلع شده گفت: الهی چه بودی که مرا خبر شدی و با رفیقان خود به زمین رفتمی و با دشمنان او حرب کردمی خطاب رسید که اگر آن صورت وقوع نیافت حالا با هفتاد هزار فرشته که تابع تواند بروید و بر سر قبر وی ملازم شوید و هر صبح و شام بر وی گریه می کنید و ثواب آب دیده خود را بدان‌ها که در مصیبت وی گریانند ببخشید فطرس به زمین کربلا فرود آمد و بدانچه فرموده‌اند مشغولست.
زین واقعه دیده ملك گریانست
زین غم دل مهر بر فلك بریانست

[400] For details on reflexive ritual rehearsal, see: Kimberley C. Patton, *Religion of the Gods: Ritual, Paradox, and Reflexivity*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 305-6, 308.

alien.[401] For Ḥusayn to have such emotional and spiritual power over them is a statement of the deep and primordial role he plays in Kāshefī's cosmological vision. This is markedly different understanding of Ḥusayn's basic nature than the noble and pious but still very human Ḥusayn of the earliest *maqātil*. Thus, weeping for him is an act of equally cosmic and timeless significance. I shall return to this story both at the end of this section and again in the next chapter, where I will consider it in connection with two other significant narratives, but now let us turn to the miraculous events of Ḥusayn's later life.

Another miraculous story begins in Ḥusayn's childhood and ends after his death. This anecdote illustrates very clearly the notion that the supernatural infused Ḥusayn throughout his life:

> In the *Lamps of Hearts*, it is related that Gabriel brought a pomegranate (*anār*), an apple (*sīb*), and a quince (*beh*)[402] from heaven and gave them to the *ahl al-bayt*. They were pleased by this, and his excellency the Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, said [to Ḥusayn], "Take these fruits to your father and mother, and eat them together, but leave some (*bāqī*) from each of them. They did this. The next day, they found that the fruits had become whole (*dorost shodeh būd*) and had returned to their original state (*beh ḥāl-e avval bāz rafteh*). Whenever they ate a bit from the fruits and left a bit remaining, the next day, they would be whole, until it happened that Fāṭima died, and the pomegranate disappeared. When they (the Kharijites) martyred ʿAlī, the quince also disappeared, but the apple remained with Ḥusayn. Ḥusayn kept it with him when he was overcome with thirst at Karbalā', the sweet smell of the apple lessened his thirst. When they martyred Ḥusayn, the apple also disappeared, but they smelled the apple's perfume from the holy ground [upon which he died] (*tarbat-e moqaddaseh-ye ū*). Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn related that every sincere believer who made a pilgrimage to Ḥusayn's tomb during the proper season, would smell the scent of that apple from the same ground. The scent of his excellency's grave is a thousand times more fragrant than musk, and better than the perfume of ambergris; *"peace be upon the earth which encloses his body."*[403]

[401] Consider for example, that in many *ḥadīth*, Gabriel is described as gigantic in his true form, with 600 hundred wings which stretch through space. See: J. Pedersen, "D̲jabrāʾīl," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 20 April 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1903>

[402] I am here indebted here to Rania Elsayed for pointing out the long-standing mythological symbolism of the quince.

[403] Kāshefī. *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā*, 470-1.

A number of themes in this anecdote are worth remarking on. First of all, the fact that Gabriel appears more like a trusted family friend or even a sort of fairy advisor figure rather than one of the mightiest angels in heaven speaks to how closely connected Ḥusayn and his family are to the divine.[404] Secondly, this anecdote strongly connects Ḥusayn with mythic themes of fertility, vegetation, and resurrection. Ḥusayn is not simply given a wonderful treat, he is given magical regenerating fruit, which symbolizes plenty as well as reinforcing a connection between his life and the seasonal cycle of life/death/rebirth. The cyclic theme is recapitulated in how the final fruit disappears with Ḥusayn's death. Finally, the fact that the scent of the apple remains even after Ḥusayn's death and the disappearance of the apple is a very old religious image. In Christianity, this is a concept termed "odor of sanctity," and those who emit it are termed *muroblútēs* (those who emit the scent of myrrh).[405] The anecdote closes by essentially promising Ḥusayn's favor to those who perform a pilgrimage to his tomb, with the scent of the apple as visible sign thereof.

One of the most unusual stories, from the point of view of earlier *maqātil*, is Ḥusayn's encounter with the 'King' of the Jinn (or fairies) on the eve of battle.[406] The quotation is worth presenting in its entirety:

> The prince wanted to attack when suddenly, a cloud of dust appeared, however, no one else saw anyone at all. Soon after, a terrifying individual with a strange visage [appeared] sitting on a mount. His head and hands had the form of a horse, and his feet resembled a lion. He came before Ḥusayn and greeted him with the words, "Peace be upon you, and upon your

[404] A minor point worth mentioning is that the fruits pattern with figures especially important in Shiʿism; a fruit associated with Ḥasan is rather conspicuous in its absence!
[405] Ivan Drpić, *Epigram, Art, and Devotion in Later Byzantium*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 97.
[406] The editor of the Arabic translation wastes no time in placing a single snarky footnote after the story, directly instructing the reader to pay no heed to such "clever prattle" (*khuzʿabalāt*)! See: Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī, *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā'*, ([Iran]: Intishārāt al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 2009), 671 n. 1.

grandfather, your father, and your mother." Ḥusayn returned his greeting and said, "Who are you, O fortunate one, who greets mistreated wretches and wandering strangers at such a time?" He said, "O son of God's messenger, I am the master of the fairies (*mehtar-e paryān*), the client of the lord of the end of my age, the servant of the king of mankind. They call me 'Za'far the Ascetic,' and my army is within this desert. Your father, when he arrived at the pit of *Bi'r Dhāt al-'Alam*, made the demons (*dīv*) into Muslims with the stroke of his sword *Dhū l-Fiqār*.[407] He gave my father the rank of a prince amongst them, and after my father's death, they were at my command. I have given leave so that I might come with my army, and accept the plea from these people gathered here.

By God's grace, I would gladden my companions
And trample these perverse tyrants underfoot

Ḥusayn said, "Oh Za'far, may God reward you with his beneficence; it is not your right to kill human beings, since you have subtle bodies; they will not see you, but you will see them and this is unfair. The angels had desired to come to my grandfather's aid at the Battle of Badr to fight the infidels; this was at God's command. You should turn back and return home. Za'far said, "Oh lord, we will appear to them in human form and do battle; if they kill some of our people, then we would then be on your martyr's path. Ḥusayn stated, "Many thanks, O Za'far, but I am satisfied with my life, and I have seen the future. Today, I will meet God the omnipotent himself. For my sake, please turn back and do not hinder these people. Za'far turned back, and at that very moment, the cloud of dust disappeared.[408]

[407] The provenance of this story is not entirely clear and mentions of this battle are not common in mainstream literature. The earliest reference to this narrative appears to be in a brief poem attributed to the 2nd century Hijrī (8-9th century C.E.) poet Sufyān Muṣʿab al-ʿAbdī which is embedded in the Persian Shiʿi scholar Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Shahrāshūb al-Sarawī al-Māzandarānī 's (d. 1192 C.E.) famous hagiography, *Manāqib Āl Abī Tālib* (The Hagiography of the Family of Abū Ṭālib). Subsequent versions of the story become progressively more elaborate, featuring ʿAlī facing dragons and a seven-headed demon king; these elements may owe some influence to the *Shāhnāmeh* as well, such as the stories of Ẓaḥḥāk and Haftvād and his seven sons' worm. See: Raḥīm Farajollāhī and Gholām-ḥoseyn Sharīfī Veldānī, "Zamīneh-o Siyar-e Tārīkhī-Ye Dāstān-e 'Be'r Zāt Ol-ʿAlam,'" *Farhang-o Adabiyyāt-e ʿĀmmeh* 6, no. 24 (Bahman and Esfand 2019): 199–222; 201, 209.

[408] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 619-20.

شاهزاده می خواست که حمله کند که ناگاه گردی و غباری پدید آمد؛ چنان چه هیچ کس، هیچ کس را نمی دید مقارن این حال شخصی مهیب با شکلی عجیب بر مرکبی نشسته که سر و دستش به سر و تن اسب می مانست و پایش مشابه پای شیر بود. پیش حسین آمده، سلام کرد؛ بدین عبارت که «السلام علیک و علی جدک و علی ابیک و امک.» حسین جواب سلام او باز داد و گفت: تو چه کسی ای نیکبخت که در چنین وقتی بر مظلومان بیچاره و غریبان آواره، سلام می کنی؟ گفت: یابن رسول الله، من مهتر پریانم و مولای سید آخر الزمانم و چاکر شاه مردانم مرا زعفر زاهد گویند و لشگر من درین بیابان است پدرت در وقتی که به چاه «بئر العلم» درآمده دیوان را به ضرب ذوالفقار مسلمان ساخت پدر مرا بر ایشان مرتبه امارت داد و بعد از فوت پدر من همه در فرمان من اند، دستوری ده تا با لشکر خود بیایم و دهار از این قوم بر آرم: دوستان را شاد گردانم به توفیق خدای وین ستم کاران سرکش را در اندازم ز پای حسین گفت: که ای زعفر خدایت به نیکویی مزد دهد، شما را دستوری نیست که قتل آدمیان کنید از آن که شما جسم لطیف اید، ایسان شمارا نبینند و شما ایشان را ببینید این ظلم باشد. اما آن که ملائکه در حرب بدر و حنین نزدیک جدم آمده با کفار حرب کردند آن به حکم خدای بود، تو باز گرد و با منزل خود معاودت کن. زعفر گفت: ای سید، ما خود را به صورت انسان بدیشان نماییم و حرب کنیم، اگر از قوم ما هم بکشند شهید راه تو باشیم. حسین فرمود: «جزاك الله خیرا یا زعفر» دلم از زندگانی دنیا سیر شده است و در علم المنایا دیده‌ام که من امروز به لقای پروردگار خود خواهم رسید. تو برای خاطر من باز گرد و متعرض این قوم مشو. زعفر بازگشت و فی الحال غبار فرونشست.

The terminology and setting of this event is worth highlighting in more detail. Firstly, the story itself is notable because it appears to be original.[409] No earlier extant *maqtal* (to my knowledge) contains a story of Ḥusayn being offered aid specifically by the king of the jinn (or *parī*);[410] notably, when Kāshefī relates anecdotes which are more specific rather than his own outline of the narrative, dramatic flourishes, or synthetic conclusions, he usually sources them. This narrative is not, and more so, it is never presented as a narrative extracted from a *ḥadīth*. Structurally, Kāshefī usually sources his anecdotes directly prior to relating them or at the very least, inserts "a narrator related that…" (*rāvī āvordeh keh…*). Some descriptive material about Ḥusayn being at Karbalā' alone and two lines of poetry are sourced from the (probable) *maqtal* called *Nūr al-A'imma* (The Light of the Imams) before this anecdote, but they have no particular

[409] This fact has been noted by several Shiʿi clerics as well. The 19th century Iranian Shiʿi *muḥaddith* Mīrzā Ḥusayn al-Nūrī al-Ṭabarsī (d. 1902 C.E.) hedges a bit by saying the story was available to earlier scholars (*taḥta naẓari kibāri ʿulamā'inā al-sābiqīn*), but they neglected to write about them (*lam yanqalūhu fī kutubihim*)—meaning by implication that this story first shows up, at least in writing, in the *Rowẓat.* He describes the situation in his instructional manual for preachers, *al-Lu'lu' wa al-marjān fī ādāb ahl al-minbar* (The Pearls and Corals in the Proper Conduct of Preachers): "Rather, all of these ideas pivot around weak narrations and unreliable books which were available to the leaders among our scholars of the earlier periods; nevertheless, they were not anxious about these narrations and did not reference them until those like the scholar Majlesī and the *ḥadīth* experts of his time; both those who came before him and those after him did not have doubts about anything in these books, which have detailed the stories of Zaʿfar Jinnī and the Marriage of Qāsim, which were well-known to them. However, they did not transmit this in their books; both of these stories are present in the *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā'* (*Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*) of Kāshefī, and the second of which is present in the Selection of Shaykh al-Ṭurayḥī, together with other weak narrations…" See: Ḥusayn Taqī Al-Nūrī Ṭabarsī, *Al-Lu'lu' wa-al-Marjān fī Ādāb Ahl al-Minbar*, (Beirut: Dār al-Balāgha, 2003), 227-228.

[410] The *Luhūf* of Sayyid b. Ṭāwūs gives a *ḥadīth* with a vaguely similar but far more abbreviated story: there is no named jinn/*parī* king, no moral discussion on the chivalry of fair play, and most of the details are completely different. In Ṭāwūs' story, Ḥusayn is met by battalions (*afwāj*) of angels and jinn; however, this is on the road from Mecca to Medina, not on the fields of Karbalā right before Ḥusayn's death. Neither army has a named leader, nor are they described in any detail. The content of their conversation is very different as well; there is no discussion that their supernatural nature would be an unfair advantage. Obviously, there is also no mention whatsoever of ʿAlī defeating a king of demons. The only real similarities are supernatural beings offering Ḥusayn aid and him turning them down, with the implication that Ḥusayn's death is fated. It is possible that the *ḥadīth* inspired Kāshefī, but it is surprising that if this were the case, he would neglect to mention Ṭāwūs at least as source for any jinn meeting with Ḥusayn. It is more likely that at best, the *ḥadīth* is just too different in its details to be amenable to the story of Zaʿfar, particularly in terms of location and thematic content. Remember again, Zaʿfar is never called a jinn by Kāshefī; this is a construction of later Persian literature. It seems more likely that the story is inspired by a folktale which Kāshefī heard or the story of Geyūmarṯ and Sorūsh from the *Shāhnāmeh.* See: ʿAlī b. Mūsá b. Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Ṭāwūs, *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn ʿalayhi al-salām al-Musammá bil-Luhūf fī Qatlá al-Ṭufūf,* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Aʿlamī lil-Maṭbūʿāt, 1993), 41-2.

narrative connection to what follows. Given Kāshefī's structural conventions, it is highly unlikely that this story comes from *Nūr al-A'imma* or he would have made it clear that it does.[411]

To my knowledge, this is also the first instance of a supernatural entity specifically named "Zaʿfar" being mentioned in Persian literature, and generally most of the *ʿulamā'* who bother to mention it—usually with distaste—describe Kāshefī's book as the first textual appearance.[412] In later literature, he is almost always called Zaʿfar Jinn[ī], i.e. Zaʿfar, [king] of the jinn.[413] The meaning of the name is unclear; *zaʿfara* is a denominative verb in Arabic, meaning "to dye saffron in color," transparently derived from *zaʿfarān* (saffron), itself ultimately an Arabization of the Persian *zarparān* "[the thing with] yellow filaments."[414] It seems unlikely that this is the origin of the name, since the story does not describe Zaʿfar's color, nor is there any apparent connection between jinns and saffron. Another possibility is that it is a deliberate transformation of Jaʿfar[415] and is intended to evoke ʿAlī's brother Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 629 C.E.) or the sixth Imam, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 765 C.E.). It is also possible that the name is glossolalia[416] or improvised by Kāshefī because it sounded exotic to him.

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[411] This is even more the case given that *Nūr al-A'imma* is attributed to Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Khᵛārazmī (d. 1172-73 C.E.), a Persian Sunnī scholar. Al-Khᵛārazmī's extant *maqtal*, simply titled *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn*, contains no references to Zaʿfar, or any intervention by jinn or *parī*s. In addition, as Kāshefī himself obliquely mentions, al-Khᵛārazmī was a noted student of the famous Maḥmūd b. ʿUmar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144 C.E.), a Persian exegete infamous for his Muʿtazilī sympathies; this makes the inclusion of such a miraculous tale in an early Sunnī *maqtal* extremely unlikely. Given that, as I have previously mentioned, the attribution to Muwaffaq b. Aḥmad al-Khᵛārazmī may be a mistake, this makes establishing a connection between the *Nūr al-A'imma* and the Zaʿfar narrative almost impossible either way. See: Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 618.

[412] This is explicitly noted by Z̲ū 'l-Feqārī in his introduction. See: Ibid, 78.

[413] The figure is particularly popular in South Asian *marāthī* and occultism. The poet Mīr Anīs (d. 1874 C.E.), a prodigious composer of Urdu *marthiya*, composed many *marāthī* featuring Zaʿfar Jinnī as a major or secondary character. One *marthiya* features him prominently: "Zaʿfar Jinn learned from someone…" (*pā'ī yeh kẖabar zaʿfar-i jinn ne jo kisī se*).See: Mīr Anīs, *33 Ghayr Maṭbūʿah Marṣiye*, (New Delhi: Markazī Anīs Ṣadī Kamīṭī, 1990), 174.

[414] Asya Asbaghi, *Persische Lehnwörter Im Arabischen*, (Wiesbaden: O. Harrassowitz, 1988), 145.

[415] This similarity is noted by Z̲ū 'l-Feqārī. See: Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 78.

[416] This was a typical feature of the theurgic and occult sciences which Kāshefī wrote about; often, angels and jinn would be given names that were clearly not Arabic, sometimes said to be *al-lugha al-suryāniyya* – that is, a mythologized interpretation of Syriac as a "magical" or "angelic" language. This possibility was pointed out to me by Hajnalka Kovacs.

Despite the later tradition referring to Zaʿfar as a jinn, he is never called a jinn in the actual text. Kāshefī instead describes Zaʿfar using the native Persian word *parī* "fairy," and says he rules over the *dīv*s "demons." Both figures have long and complex histories in Iranian legend. Originally, the *parī* was a minor *dīv*; the Avestan *pairikā* was a type of witch or sorcerous female demonic being in league with the *daeva*s, major demonic entities.[417] By the time of Ferdowsī, the *parī* had a significantly more benign meaning essentially becoming a type of Iranian fairy.[418] Why would Kāshefī use *parī* instead of than *jinn*? While previously, the two words had become somewhat synonymous (and to a degree, *dīv* as well), Kāshefī avoids ever using the word *jinn* throughout the entire anecdote. I believe the choice is deliberate, once again to highlight the connection between Persianate culture and Ḥusayn; the image of Ḥusayn being visited by a powerful *parī* strongly calls to mind a story provided by Ferdowsī in the *Shāhnāmeh*. He describes the angel Sorūsh—a survival from Zoroastrianism, being the *yazata* or worship-worthy spirit Sraoša— visiting the first king of the world, Geyūmart, also in the form of a *parī,* and offering his help against the armies of Ahriman and his son.[419]

It is also worth noting that this anecdote arguably invokes medieval occult legends surrounding King Solomon, who was said to be able to command the jinn.[420] As we have seen from the *Asrār-e Qāsemī*, this is a concept that Kāshefī was quite familiar with, so when considering this book, the incorporation of an interaction with a powerful spiritual entity is much less surprising. What is more surprising and interesting is what Ḥusayn does with that power: he

[417] Siamak Adhami, "Pairikā," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2010, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/pairika (accessed online at 26 January 2020).
[418] Though there may be some aversions, such as in the case of Haftvād's daughter in the *Shāhnāmeh*, who is associated with the *parī*s as well and does not represent a benign force,
[419] Abū al-Qāsem Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 1: 22.
[420] These legends are also pre-Islamic in origin, deriving from Midrashic literature. See: J. Walker, and P. Fenton, "Sulaymān b. Dāwūd," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 27 January 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7158>

doesn't use it; perhaps Kāshefī is hinting that the ability to control spiritual powers is available, but needs to be strictly controlled and indeed, it is morally preferable *not* to use them.

As an event, the anecdote does three things: firstly, it serves as yet another reminder of the powers attributed to Ḥusayn and the other Imams. In this case, this power is *ʿilm* (knowledge), which encompasses a variety of different kinds of knowledge, such as knowing the language of animals; more specifically, it is *ʿilm al-ghayb*, the "knowledge of the unseen world." The jinn and other spirits are part of this world, which is why they are normally invisible, as Ḥusayn indicates in the anecdote. Ḥusayn's ability to see Zaʿfar and not just the cloud of dust (*ghobār*) indicates his special status and supernatural powers. His complacent attitude in the anecdote also strongly implies that he knows what will happen in the battle and will not defy fate with subterfuge; he has seen his fate through his special knowledge of the future and will allow it to come because he is going to meet God (*va dar ʿelm ol-manāyā dīdeh am keh man emrūz beh leqā-ye parvardagār-e khᵛod khᵛāham resīd*). The term used, *ʿelm ol-manāyā,* is an Arabic expression which literally means, "knowledge of fate."

Secondly, the tale also acts as bookend for the earlier story of Fuṭrus. Both of these stories deal with supernatural entities who approach Ḥusayn with requests. Yet Fuṭrus and Zaʿfar complement each other in paradoxical ways; for example, Zaʿfar is presented as a pious Muslim *parī*—inferior to angels in power and dwelling on earth or below it—while the celestial Fuṭrus is shown as a penitent sinner who has fallen from heaven. Fuṭrus is present at Ḥusayn's birth, while Zaʿfar is at Karbalā' near Ḥusayn's death.[421]

[421] It is theoretical, though entirely impossible to confirm, that Kāshefī may have intended this parallelism as an oblique reference to an earlier version of the same *ḥadith* that Ṭāwūs gives about angels and jinn offering aid to Ḥusayn. The *ḥadīth* is sourced again, unsurprisingly, from Shaykh al-Mufīd, from a book called *Kitāb Mawlid al-Nabī wa Mawlid al-Awṣiyā'* (The Book of the Prophet's Birth and the Birth of his Inheritors). This book does not seem to be extant, and I have otherwise found no evidence that this *ḥadīth* was ever transmitted by al-Mufīd; while it may be present in a lost work, the repeated vagueness about where al-Mufīd transmitted these *aḥādīth* suggests that he may simply be a conveniently respectable authority to source an apocryphal *ḥadīth* from.

Essentially, these stories form a kind of antithetic parallelism where two similar themes are used in a manner that both highlights their dissimilarity in perspective while still complementing the unifying concept. As we shall see in Chapter Three, Zaʿfar will also have some interesting parallelism with a supernatural figure who appears at the birth of Iranian mythic history, Sorūsh. Finally, the story has a strong moral edge; Ḥusayn demonstrates his nobility by turning down a power which he deems unfair. I will discuss this more in the following section on chivalry and Sufi values, which is where we turn now.

Sufi Chivalry and Heroic Ethics in the Rowẕat

Sufi elements are put forward *Rowẕat* though the text does not cast itself as explicitly Sufi in perspective.[422] A large number of his citations in the introduction alone are Ṣufi in tone or written by known Sufis, such as *Rūḥ al-Arwāh* (The Spirit of Spirits), by Ḥosaynī Sādat Amīr (b. 1272 C.E.), who also lived in Herat,[423] the Yemeni scholar al-Yāfiʿī's (d. 1367 C.E.) *Mir'āt al-Janān* (The Mirrors of the Gardens), the founder of the Yāfiʿiyya order,[424] and couplets from Rūmī's *Maṯnavī-ye Maʿnavī*. As we have seen earlier, in Kāshefī's perspective, *fotovvat* and Sufism are intimately connected. We shall see some examples in this section.

In the previous section, I discussed the story of Zaʿfar meeting Ḥusayn and offering him an army of *parī*s to defeat the forces sent by Yazīd. In addition to the supernatural elements suffused in the story, it also contains ethical teachings. Ḥusayn is offered overwhelming power

[422] The word *ṣūfī* only occurs a few times in the text, and in some cases, it has the sense of a pun, i.e. *zāhed az sūz-e ghammesh lab-e khoshk-o ṣūfī dīdehtar* ("the ascetic is more clearly seen with his burning sorrow by his dry and chapped lips), where the word *ṣūfī* here is a pun referring to both *zāhed*, a synonym for the same, and as a synonym for *khoshk* in the sense of "rough [wool]." Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 630.
[423] M. Hidayet Hosain, "Ḥusainī Sādāt Amīr," in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, First Edition (1913-1936)*, Edited by M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann. Consulted online on 11 August 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_2904>
[424] Alexander D. Knysh, *Ibn 'Arabi in the Later Islamic Tradition: The Making of a Polemical Image in Medieval Islam*, SUNY Series in Islam, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 118-19.

which could easily defeat his enemies. Instead of taking it, he refuses it on the grounds that using an army of invisible soldiers against human beings would be unfair (*ẓolm*). This statement draws on the previously mentioned background in the section on the *Fotovvatnāmeh* about the qualities of the Imam, which emphasizes a chivalrous and quietist attitude. In addition to that, several section in the *Fotovvatnāmeh* discuss the relationship between battle and knowledge (*ʿelm/dānesh*), for example: "If one is asked what is the crux of battle (*maʿrakeh*), say: knowledge, for whoever is ignorant should not step on the battlefield without awareness."[425] This could be interpreted to mean practical awareness, but given the orientation of the text, it also means spiritual awareness. In another section, on fighting and wrestling, he includes a set of guidelines for the *pahlavān*: to fear God, follow the *sharīʿa*, a strong body, an eloquent tongue, a brave heart, complete wisdom, total patience, true knowledge, continual striving, a purified constitution, temperance from immoral acts, and constant grace.[426] Ḥusayn's reaction to Zaʿfar's offer is a subtextual invoking of these principles.

Another short anecdote during the battle of Karbalā' introduces us to a minor character, the "Turkish slave" (*gholām-e tork*). His story is included under the martyrdom of ʿAbbās, his master. The text describes the Turks as arriving before Ḥusayn with a face "glowing like the moon, shining like the sun" (*bā rū-ye chūn māh rakhshandeh va chehreh-ye chūn āftāb tābandeh*).[427] He is also described as an accomplished reciter of the Qur'ān (*qārī-ye qurān*) and one who had memorized it. He begs Ḥusayn for permission to fight in the battle under his banner, and it is granted. While fighting, he recites verses (*rajaz*) in Turkic and Arabic praising

[425] Kāshefī, *Fotovvatnāmeh*, 276.
[426] Ibid, 310.
[427] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 562.

Ḥusayn and proclaiming his loyalty to him. The Turk distinguishes himself greatly with his fighting prowess, to the extent that Ḥusayn's son, Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, congratulates him:

> A warrior went forth and was killed at his hands, until many enemies lay dead before the Turk. Overcome with thirst, he turned back, and once again came to the tent of his lordship Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn. The son of Ḥusayn praised him and approved of his actions in battle. He applauded him, greeting him happily with glad tidings like a draught from the river Kawthar (*sharbat-e kowsar*),[428] joy, and blessings *from God most great*. That honest, pure-hearted Turk, having kissed the hand and feet of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, requested permission to retire from the inner chambers of the sinless and pure. He cried out bitterly from the pain of separation (*sūz-mofāraqat*) from him, then having faced the battlefield, stirred up feelings of torment (*gard-balā*) and cast curses amongst the cloudy-faced warriors. The reward of Sorūsh, from the hidden world (*ʿāqebat-e sorūsh-e ʿālam-e ghaybī*), calling out upon that final battlefield the cry of "*return to your Lord!*" delivered itself to the ears of his noble soul. From the plane of nearness to the Lord of all servants, the excellent words, "*enter into my paradise*" firmly entered the ears of the intellect of that pure Turk.[429]

Eventually, he expires in battle. In a rather grisly occurrence, Ḥusayn goes on foot to the battlefield, and upon finding the Turk's half-dead body, brings it back to his son's tent. All of sudden, the seemingly dead Turk's eyes open, and looks right at Ḥusayn. He smiles, and greets both Ḥusayn and his son, before passing away.[430]

As we have previously discussed, these supernatural elements serve to heighten the tension and enhance the emotional impact by making the drama all the more intense. In this particular anecdote, there are several things going on. Prior to the scene itself, the mentioning of the Turk's status as a *ḥāfiz* and his reciting poetry praising Ḥusayn on the battlefield returns us to

[428] A famous mystical river believed to flow through paradise.

[429] Ibid.

آخر تشنگی بر او غالب شده باز گردید و دیگرباره به در خیمه حضرت امام زین العابدین آمد امامزاده بر وی آفرین گفت و مبارزات او را پسندید و بسیار تحسین نمود و به بشارت شربت کوثر و مژده و رضوان من الله اکبر مبتهج و مسرورش گردانید و آن ترك صادق دل پاکیزه نهاد دست و پای امام زین العابدین علیهالسلام را بوسه داده دیگرباره از مخدرات حجرات عصمت و طهارت بحلی طلبید و از سوز مفارقت ایشان به های های بگریست پس روی به میدان نهاده گرد بلا می انگیخت و خاك هلاك بر فرق مبارزان تیره روی می ریخت عاقبت سروش عالم غیبی و منادی عرصه لا ریبی ندای ارجعی الی ربك به سمع روح شریفش رسانید و خطاب مستطاب و ادخلی جنتی از فضای ساحت قرب رب العباد به گوش هوش آن ترك پاك اعتقاد رسید.

[430] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 562-3.

the *Fotovvatnāmeh*'s emphasis on the chivalrous gentleman being a master of both the spiritual and the physical. The Turk's recitation of poetry praising Ḥusayn is also significant, as it may be Kāshefī's way of foreshadowing the practice of reciting *marāthī* over Ḥusayn's tomb in Karbalā'.

The theme of purity and obedience fully colors the anecdote. The true *javānmard* is one who keeps his allegiance to the spiritual master—i.e. the Imam—up to and even after death. The anecdote also stresses the value of loyalty to the Imam (*tavallā*), which we have also mentioned previously regarding the *Fotovvatnāmeh*.

Another theme, which is not explicitly articulated, but is thematically relevant is the actual progression of that spiritual purification (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) implicit in this scene. In several Sufi ethical systems, the progression of the lower, personal soul (*nafs*) is schematically described as occurring in three phases: *al-nafs al-ammāra* [*bil-sū'*], the "commanding soul," meaning that part of the soul which entices a person to commit sins. Overcoming this form of the self leads to the formation of *al-nafs al-lawwāma,* the "self-reproaching soul." This is the phase of the soul where a person begins to realize the wicked deeds they have done and acknowledges blame for these actions. Finally, there is the "tranquil soul," *al-nafs al-muṭma'inna.* This is the state of a person who has purified themselves of the desire to disobey God and has found satisfaction with his decisions. All of these states of the soul are drawn from Qur'anic references.[431]

At the start of this anecdote, the Turk has already passed beyond the *nafs ammāra*, evidenced by his request to fight on Ḥusayn's behalf even if it costs his life. Further on, he passes the *nafs lawwāma* when he begs the *ahl al-bayt* to think of him on the day of resurrection,

[431] Gavin Picken, *Spiritual Purification in Islam: The Life and Works of Al-Muhasibi*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), 135-9.

even if he has fallen short in the pursuit of virtue.[432] Finally, he reaches the state of the *nafs muṭma'inna* during his last stand against Ḥusayn's enemies, fully satisfied in his quest. This state is evidenced by the reference to Sorūsh, the personification of obedience, In the case of the Turk in this narrative, the sense is that by surrendering himself to the will of God by sacrificing himself for Ḥusayn's sake, he has reached the final stage of a tranquil soul. Without cultivating such a state, no one would be able to interiorize the principles of *javānmardī* and *tavallā,* because they demand an individual with a clear understanding of right and wrong.

All these values are deeply entrenched in the scene. The Turk's brief return to life, in addition to re-emphasizing the tendency of supernatural events to occur in Ḥusayn's vicinity, also suggests that the Turk felt that he could not rest before properly taking his leave of the Imam. The mention of Sorūsh is also worth noting. Sorūsh is the New Persian rendering of the Zoroastrian *yazata* (worship-worthy divinity) Sraoša, who I have also mentioned above in connection with the jinn. Sraoša's name means "obedience," of which he is the personification thereof.[433] While often identified with the angel Gabriel in post-Zoroastrian Iran, it is interesting that Kāshefī chooses to mention him doling out a reward for loyalty at this instance, instead of mentioning an angel from the Qur'ān instead. Sraoša was one of the most popular *yazata*s and one of the few to survive into the Islamic era in the Persian literary tradition.

[432] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 563.
[433] The name Sraoša comes from the Indo-Iranian root *sru*, *srāuuaiieiti*, "to hear," also related to the Greek *kléō* "I make famous (i.e. by hearing the story of someone)." See: William W. Malandra. *An Introduction to Ancient Iranian Religion: Readings from the Avesta and the Achaemenid Inscriptions*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 135.

Tragic Torment in the Rowẕat

The first part of the text contains an extensive introduction which lays out Kāshefī's basic premise for the book: *balā*, (fated) torment or suffering. *Balā* and its synonyms are repeated over and over throughout the introduction and several other major themes flow from it. Kāshefi's basic motivation in his composition of the *Rowẕat* is indeed presented in the introduction. He opines that *balā* is essentially the natural state of the world, since it is present from the very beginning of humanity with Adam.[434] The *Rowẕat* is united through and through by this theme and it colors all the biographies he presents as well. Kāshefī's point in providing the biographies of prophets and then finally Ḥusayn is a spread-out rhetorical device to build the rising action to the climactic battle at Karbalā', and a dénouement depicting the fate of Ḥusayn's heirs. Kāshefī quite specifically states near the end of his introduction that the *Rowẕat* is the book which:

> …which this miserable wretch, Ḥoseyn Kāshefī, assisted by mysterious grace, labored in composing a complete text wherein the events which befell the tormented ones among the prophets, the chosen ones, the martyrs, the rest of those afflicted with tribulation, and the lives of the people of the cloak, [are described] as previously mentioned in detail. [435]

The notion of *balā* as the primordial state of humanity brings to mind the concept of *mīthāq*, "covenant." This is a particularly important idea in Shiʿi esoteric theology. Therein, in pre-eternal time, the spirits (*arwāḥ*) and phantoms (*ashbāḥ*) of the Shiʿa, in particular the prophets and Imams, are called by God to acknowledge him as their lord. This acknowledgement

[434] Kāshefī. *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 115.
[435] Ibid, 112.
این فقیر حقیر حسین الکاشفی امده باللطف الخفی به تألیف نسخه‌ی جامع که حالات اهل بلا ازانبیا و اصفیا و شهدا و سایر ارباب ابتلا و احوال آل عبا بر سبیل تفصیل در وی مذکور و مسطور بود، اشتغال نماید و از ابیات عربی آن چه ضروری الذکر باشد مع ترجمه ایراد کند و از منظومات فارسی آن چه مناسب اذهان اهل زمان بود در رشته‌ی بیان کشد.

creates an eternal pact between God and creation.[436] The general exegesis draws from the Qur'anic verse 7:172: "When your Lord extracted progeny from the backs of the children of Adam, he called them to testify upon themselves, 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we testify,' otherwise you might say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were unaware of this." (*Wa 'idh akhadha rabbuka min banī ādama min ẓuhūrihim dhurriyyatahum wa ashhadahum ʿalá anfusihim alastu bi-rabbikum qālū balá shahidnā an taqūlū yawma 'l-qiyāmati innā kunnā ʿan hādhā ghāfilīna).*It is worth noting that this same esoteric interpretation of the "day of the covenant" (*rūz-e mīs̱āq*) is indeed referenced explicitly by Kāshefī in his discussion of Ḥusayn's earlier life, and framed as an exposition of why Ḥusayn and Yazīd are fated to opposed each other.[437]

Taking this central theme of *balā* in the context of the *mīthāq* then, it can be interpreted that essentially, the suffering of the *ahl al-bayt*, Ḥusayn, and all of humanity in general is in fact a concomitant of their covenant with God. The *ahl al-bayt*, the prophets, and the Imams, as closest to God and the first testifiers to this covenant, suffer the most. In order to fully testify to the true nature of reality and that of God, human beings are also required to suffer—by their acknowledgement of the Imams, the persecution this involves, and thus the acceptance of God's plan—in order to reach their true state of being. Ḥusayn is thus the archetypical model for observing this covenant with God.

It is also through this central theme of *balā* that the Sufi background appears. The suggestions are in many places implicit, but the connection is not hard to draw: "As for torment, it is not a sweet drink which they give to postulants of the path. Rather, it is a goblet of deadly

[436] Michael Ebstein, "Covenant (religious) pre-eternal," in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 15 May 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_25584>
[437] Kāshefī. *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 412.

poison which is given to those who are mature."[438] This suggests a deeper level of the *Rowẕat*; beyond the blessings that Kāshefī claims will come from the weeping provoked by his book, his introduction is littered with abjurations to his audience that suffering is the path to nearness to God (*qorb*).

Here it is appropriate to remark on one major way that the *Rowẕat* diverges from some of its epic components: the villain. While of course the *Rowẕat* contains many villains, and a portion of chapter ten is in fact devoted to explaining how they are all punished, the *Rowẕat* lacks a main, central villain. There is no Ẓaḥḥāk or Afrasiyāb for Ḥusayn to contend with. Shimr b. Dhī al-Jawshan is of course the one who kills Ḥusayn, but he spends comparatively little time on stage and is a pawn of his superiors, though a very vocal one. Yazīd is a very distant evil force who is not even present at Karbalā'. Kāshefī devotes several pages to an exposition of the reasons for his practical and metaphysical wickedness, but his direct impact on the narrative is primarily as an instigator of the tragedy.[439] Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Ziyād are present and perform evil acts throughout like keeping Ḥusayn's forces from water or setting their tents on fire, but neither emerge as a central villain. In fact, I would argue that the central antagonistic force is fate, for Kāshefī, a manifestation of *balā.* Obviously, this is not a true villain, but an inexorable force which drives the tragedy. *Balā* is set against the hero, the archetypical *fatá*, as the central trial which he must endure in order to reach the highest level of realization.

Balā is thus notably not equivalent to *dahr* as considered in Chapter One. *Dahr* is a cruel, amoral force which simply destroys without any real purpose beyond destruction. On the other hand, *balā* is the primary manifestation of divine testing; its purpose is to refine the human soul to its final goal of salvation. Its destruction is purposeful and ultimately a means for deliverance

[438] Ibid, 108.
[439] Ibid, 412.

and renewal. This is the primary difference between the Arabic poetical conception of inexorable fate and the Persian one.

The cosmic significance of *balā* is put front and center at the end of chapter nine, right after Shimr has killed Ḥusayn as he knelt in prayer. Kāshefī provides a moving set of verses:

اندرین غم نه همین ارض و سما بگریستند — آفتاب و ماه و عرش و کرسی و لوح و قلم
در هوای آن لب محروم از آب فرات — کاهل عالم از ثریا تا ثری بگریستند
در غم شاه شهید کربلا بگریستند — ماهی اندر آب و مرغ اندر هوا بگریستند
اولیا گشتند بهر مرتضی زارىکنان — در قصور جنت الفردوس حوران سر به سر
انبیا بر اتفاق مصطفی بگریستند — از برای خاطر خیرالنسا بگریستند

Earth and heaven wept in sadness that had no like in this world
The sun, moon, throne of God and his footstool, the tablet and pen
In love for the lips bereft of Euphrates water
Which the people of the universe, even up to the Pleiades moistened the ground with in weeping
In sorrow for the king of the martyrs of Karbalā they wept
The fish in the water and the birds of the air wept
The saints turned about in lamentation for all the ʿAlids
In the castles of Paradise, every one of houris
The prophets wept in concord with Muḥammad
For the sake of the best of women, they wept.[440]

This poem serves as the perfect bookend for Kāshefī. It reprises the same themes that we saw earlier in Kāshefī's introduction, as was previously discussed in the subsection on supernatural events. Here we see a recapping of the second major theme of the book, which is also first presented in the introduction: the cosmic significance of weeping (*gerīstan*).[441] While this poem is much longer than the one in the introduction, several of the poetic images are the same. In particular, the images of God's throne (*ʿarsh*) weeping, even the fish in the water and birds of the air weeping are the same. The poem also repeats Ḥusayn's title of "king of Karbalā'" (*shah-e*

[440] Ibid, 629-30.
[441] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadāʾ*, 1873, 5.

karbalā'), though here, fittingly since Ḥusayn has just been killed in the narrative, it is extended to "king of the martyrs of Karbalā'" (*shah-e shahīd-e karbalā'*).

The overall effect is absolutely cosmic. Structurally, Kāshefī makes a point of including either complementary dyads or contrasting sets of two: the throne and footstool, the tablet and pen, the birds and fish, heavens and earth, prophets and saints, houris and Fāṭima. The idea of this is to create an atmosphere of intensity which underscores weeping, and thus its cause, *balā*, as part of a universal drama.

The final main thematic component of the book is the importance of intercession (*shafāʿat*). Essentially, *balā* is what enables intercession to be possible, as a kind of universal resource able to be used for the ransom of followers of the *ahl al-bayt*. The means for providing *shafāʿat* is weeping (*gerīstan*/*geryeh*) over the torment of Ḥusayn and the *ahl al-bayt*:

> Ḥusayn will enter the heavenly courts on the Day of Judgement with a face smeared with blood, and will say: *Lord, grant me intercession for whosoever weeps over my tragedy*; [meaning in Persian] O God, give me the power of intercession(*shafāʿat*) on behalf of anyone who has wept over my tragedy; all those on earth who have cried over my martyrdom, my alienation, my deprivation, my oppression, my abandonment, my thirst, and my hunger, grant their absolution to me. The intercession of his lordship was granted; God bestowed permission for salvation (*najāt*)[442] upon Ḥusayn's mourners.
>
> If they shed tears in weeping for the martyrs,
> Through the king of the martyrs, God will absolve your sins.[443]

As I mentioned in the Introduction of this dissertation,[444] the effect of *shafāʿat* in Shiʿism is complex and although sharing some similarities to Christianity, has significant differences.

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[442] Another manuscript has adds Persian *avordeh-ye behesht* "being brought to heaven" following Arabic *najāt* as a translation for "salvation." Ibid, 147, n. 14.

[443] Ibid, 147.

حسین روز قیامت به عرصات در آید با چهره‌ی خونآلود گوید «رب اشفعنی فیمن بکی علی مصیبتی» خدایا مرا شفاعت ده در حق کسی که بر مصیبت من گریسته است. الهی، هر که در دنیا بر شهیدی و غریبی و محرومی و مظلومی و بی کسی و تشنگی و گرسنگی من گریه کرده، او را به من بخش. شفاعت آن سید به محل قبول رسیده، گریندگان حسین را برات نجات، ارزانی فرمایید:

گر آب زنی به گریه راه شهدا　　بخشند گناه تو، به شاه شهدا

[444] See Introduction, Section IV: *Holy Week and ʿĀshūrā': A Caveat* for more details.

Obviously, given his tangled confessional status as discussed above, Kāshefī cannot limit *shafāʿat* to the Shiʿa and does say "whoever/anyone who…" (*har keh…*), however, two points of difference with Christian schemes of salvation should be mentioned. Firstly, intercession is clearly a power given to Ḥusayn—as evidenced by him being either the direct object (with *-rā*) or the indirect object (with *beh*) of verbal constructions involving granting forgiveness (*bakhshīdan*, *shafāʿat dādan*). He is not the source of it. Thus, his power of salvation is not the same as Christ's; it is more comparable to the intercession provided by saints or the Virgin Mary in Catholicism. Secondly, the intercession is not guaranteed, cosmically, as a fact of Ḥusayn's martyrdom. In most forms of Christianity, Christ's salvation is guaranteed by his sacrifice due to the way sin works and must essentially be ceded away by a lack of faith, a lack of good works, or a combination of both depending on sect. In Kāshefī's understanding of *shafāʿat* as well as in Twelver Shiʿism, salvation is available, but not guaranteed; one must first weep for Ḥusayn.

Still, it is important to understand the massive importance this conditional salvation awards Ḥusayn. One cannot deny the redemptive flavor of lines of poetry like:

به روز حشر ببینی به دست پیغمبر　　کلید گنج شفاعت به خون‌بهای حسین

> On the Day of Gathering, you will see, through power of the Prophet
> The key to the storehouse of intercession is through the blood-price (*khūn-bahā*) of Ḥusayn[445]

Together with *balā* and *gerīstan*, *shafāʿat* completes the cosmological and soteriological paradigm offered in the *Rowẕat*. The book, then, is something of a manual for salvation. Metatextually, we can also slot these themes into the methodological framework of *memory relics* presented throughout the text: *gerīstan* (weeping), is the formal element, the ritual set up in order to provide tangible space for the other levels; *shafāʿat* (intercession) is the functional

[445] Kāshefī. *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 470.

element, the benefit intended through the performance of the ritual of weeping; and finally, *balā* (torment) is the meaningful element, wherein the formal and functional elements combine in collective memory to evoke a concept which makes the other two persist or evolve within the community. In other words, the community weeps ritually for the purpose of intercession, which allows the true nature of worldly torment to take on a meaningful context within communal identity.

This effect permeates the book and including anecdotes on the suffering of the earlier prophets, reinforces the cyclical and perpetual effect of *balā* as a fundamental principle of Kāshefī's narrative universe. Indeed, the entire story of Qāsem's wedding, while replete with obvious fertility themes (i.e a marriage in the middle of desert), is arguably mentioned as a thematic tactic to heighten the overall effect of the tragedy that will inevitably follow it—it is not consummated, for one thing.[446] *Balā* ties the supernatural, ethical, and performative elements of the *Rowẕat* together by providing them with a central theme, a goal that they are all intended to serve: to make the audience weep. Weeping is the human response to *balā*, and this is hardly a rhetoric artifice of Kāshefī—crying is a very human reaction to suffering. Weeping over Ḥusayn though becomes a transformative event, a way to take back one's power, while still acknowledging the overwhelming power of fate. Weeping is also the means to salvation, obtained through Ḥusayn's intercession. This is spelled out by Kāshefī, an idea which repeats the same sentiment we saw in the previous chapter on the institution of weeping for Ḥusayn in *al-Kāmil fī al-Ziyārāt*:[447]

> Weeping over this funeral procession is required to obtain divine favor and the way to enter the Everlasting Gardens, as is related in the narration [from *The Refinement of the Laws*]:

[446] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 582-596.
[447] See Chapter One, Section VII for more details.

> "*Whosoever weeps for al-Ḥusayn or encourages another to weep deserves paradise.*" Meaning [in Persian]: Anyone who weeps over Ḥusayn, or takes it upon oneself to weep becomes worthy of being conducted to Heaven. The shaykh Jārullāh ʿAllāma states that anyone who weeps for al-Ḥusayn, indeed he deserves heaven, as well as whoever exhibits weeping himself, because: "Whoever resembles a people, he is one of them." According to the promise, "He deserves paradise," he shall enter [therein].[448]

The final statement, from *Daʿā'im al-Islām* (Pillars of Islam) "whoever resembles a people, he is one of them (*man tashabbaha bi-qawmin fa-huwa minhum*),"[449] is what really seals the idea of participation in Ḥusayn's passion as *imitatio Ḥusayni*, the imitation of Ḥusayn. Weeping and mourning affirm the tragedy of the situation, but they become extraordinary when ordinary people participate in the suffering of an extraordinary person. This is catharsis, both physical and spiritual. Thereby, through the production of a deep emotional impact, Kāshefī imparts the values of the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, to Persian society using a language that they would understand.

A Résumé for Ritual

Now that we have seen examples of the structure and thematic content of the *Rowẕat*, it is worth considering the ritual elements. As I have previously noted, the basic structure of the *Rowẕat* itself suggests that the text was probably intended to be recited, in total or in piecemeal, as part of the ten-day long *ʿĀshūrā'* observances. Since Kāshefī was a professional preacher, and the text easily lends itself to a quasi-dramatic form of recitation, the notion of the text as intended

[448] Kāshefī. *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 110.
و گریه در این ماتم، موجب حصول رضای ربانی و سبب وصول به ریاض جاودانی است؛ چنان چه در آثار آمده که «من بکی علی الحسین أو تباکی وجبت له الجنة» یعنی هر که بر حسین بگرید یا خود را به تکلف بر گریه دارد سزاوار باشد که او را به بهشت برند.شیخ جار الله علامه می فرماید که: هر که بر حسین بگرید بهشت بر او واجب شود و هر که خود را گریان فرانماید به حکم «من تشبّه بقوم فهو منهم» در وعده وجبت له الجنة داخل است.

[449] Quoted from the famed Fatimid-era (Ismāʿīlī!) jurist, Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nuʿmān al-Tamīmī (d. 974 C.E.); this is a seminal textbook of jurisprudence which is arguably his most famous work.

for ritual performance is not farfetched. As we shall see in Chapter Four, this is eventually what ended up happening anyway.

The text itself does not provide an explicit, delineated prescription of a ritual framework beyond its basic organization. However, Kāshefī does indeed provide strong suggestions about the intended environment for his text. One of these is most obvious by virtue of the central theme of mourning, which permeates the book from beginning to end. Funerals (*mātam*), even of private citizens, are by their nature a communal affair.[450] Thus, Kāshefī's recommendation that not only should the listener weep, but also that they should encourage others to weep as well (*gerīyānīdan*), necessitates that that this mourning is not private, but conducted in a group.

Moreover, Kāshefī presents weeping for Ḥusayn as a rehearsal of an event which is previously enacted on two levels: firstly, as a cosmic event, in which supernatural beings and even celestial bodies participate, and secondly, as a quasi-historical one, which Ḥusayn's family and companions perform. Thus, the third level, that of contemporary mourning by "devotees of the *ahl al-bayt*" (*havādārān-e ahl-e beyt*), rehearses the previous two levels and replicates them. Doing this creates an emotive and sensual connection between the historical/legendary events of the text and the living participants.

The beginning of the final chapter of the *Rowẕat* devotes itself to a description of *ʿĀshūrā'*;

> It should be known that in all of time, there is no story (*ḥekāyat*) more heartrending than the story of the martyrs of the *ahl al-bayt*. No tale (*qeṣṣeh*) in any age among the centuries and eras is more filled with woe that the event of Karbalā'. It is due to the wonder of this event, which from the day of Ḥusayn's martyrdom up until the date of the composition of this book, being around eight hundred forty-seven years, that whenever the month of Muḥarram returns anew, the sign of this funeral's renewal (*tajdīd*) upon the pages of the hearts of Muslims and the devotees (*havādārān*) of the lord of mankind's *ahl al-bayt*, blessings and peace be upon him, will be inscribed. This cry regarding the disaster-stricken

[450] Leor Halevi, *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 124.

ones of the *ahl al-bayt* will be heard [coming] from the tongue of the invisible speaker, the undoubtable, all-knowing announcer:

> O dearly beloved, lament over the sorrow of the Prophet's grandson
> Enflame your chests with burning passion (*sūz*) for the king of Karbalā'
> Let loose your tears upon the earth for his thirsty lips
> During your weeping, smile over the memory of those lips
> Because when you remember the earth and his blood, O friends,
> The memory will harden; weep as the clouds with eyes raining bloody tears
> Water the palm-tree of his stature with streams of tears
> At the very hour it occurred, make [it into] a bed of roses and a garden
> Through yearning for his visage, see it as rose-petals in the meadow
> Lament like the nightingales with a heart full of woe
> Even if the scent of fresh hyacinths wafts through your nose
> Remember the memory of those black ringlets and hair perfumed with musk

An eminent person said that although the month of Muḥarram was a venerable (*moḥtarem*) month, and Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī was an honorable king, those ignorant obstinate ones and stonehearted haughty ones, neither observed the sanctity of this month nor observed deference for its king. The month of Muḥarram is one of the sacrosanct months (*māh'hā-ye ḥarām*), and the day of *ʿAshūrā'* is a venerable day, and Friday is the lord of the days.The time of Friday prayer is a place for the answering of requests, and the presentation of pleas and wishes. In such a month, they intended to make a king, and on *ʿĀshūrā'*, they brought tumult to the *ahl al-bayt*. On such a day, they stained a delightful face with blood. At such a time, they overthrew the rightful place of the ruler. How strange that a day when the souls of the prophets and messengers, the assembly of the angels nearest to God, in sympathy with the lord of the first and the last, wept due to that event. The houris of heaven and the pure-eyed maidens concorded with the holy virgin Fāṭima in suffering, sorrow, mourning, and pain. On that day, the family flag was overturned, with uncountable desolation, rage, adversity, and tribulation, the earth cried out that today is the day of *ʿAshūrā'*! Time roared that the day was one of conflict, tumult, and evil.[451]

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[451] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 634-5.
بباید دانست که در هیچ وقتی از اوقات روزگار، دل آشوب‌تر از حکایت شهدای اهل بیت، قصه‌ی نبوده و به هیچ زمانی از ازمنه‌ی قرون و اعصار پر سوزتر از واقعه‌ی کربلا صورتی روی ننموده و به واسطه‌ی غرابت این حال است که از روز شهادت حسین تا تاریخ تألیف این کتاب که قریب هشت‌صد و چهل و هفت سال است، هرگاه که ماه محرم نه شود، رقم تجدید این ماتم بر صفحات قلوب اهل اسلام و هواداران اهل بیت سید انام علیه‌الصلوت و السلام کشیده می گردد و از زبان هاتف غیبی و نادی عالم لاریبی نسبت با مصیبت‌داران اهل بیت این ندا شنیده می شود:

> کای عزیزان در غم سبط نبی، افغان کنید
> سینه‌را از سوز شاه کربلا بریان کنید
> از پی آن تشنه بر خاک ریزید آب چشم
> در میان گریه، یاد آن لب خندان کنید
> چون ز خاک و خون او یاد آورید، ای دوستان
> می سزد گر چون سحاب از دیده خون‌باران کنید
> نخل قدس را ز جوی دیده‌ها آبی دهید
> اندر آن ساعت که گشت گلشن و بستان کنید
> در چمن چون روی گل بینید از شوق رخش
> با دل پر درد هم چون بلبلان افغان کنید
> گر رسد از سنبل بویی در مشام

While the previous quotation provides us with a description of *ʿĀshūrā'* and some suggestions about its ritual content, Kāshefī continues on with even more detail a bit later:

> On this day, the devotees of the *ahl al-bayt* should push happiness and companionship to the margins of their lives (*karāneh namāyand*) and throw open the doors of sorrow and tribulation in their burning hearts. They should shed tears of repentance (*ashk-e nadam*) from their eyes during this time, and at this moment, and heave plaintive sighs (*āh-e sūznāk*) from their chests. In the *Eyes of Riḍā* (*ʿUyūn al-Riḍā*), it is mentioned that they have said on the day of *ʿĀshūrā'*, you should cry, considering this day as your own day of tribulation and calamity (*rūz-e meḥnat-o moṣībat-e khᵛod*), leaving the concerns of everyday life aside. You should observe the ceremonies of calamity (*marāsem-e moṣībat*), so that whosoever puts aside worldly affairs (*kārhā-ye donyā*) on the day of *ʿĀshūrā'*, God, may he be praised, will provide for their needs in this world and the next. Whosoever considers this day as their own day of sorrow and pain (*rūz-e gham-o alam-e khᵛod*), God, most high, will make the Day of Judgement their day of rejoicing and happiness. Their eyes will shine with the glory of the *ahl al-bayt* in the gardens of heaven. Also in the *Eyes*, in the *ḥadīth* of Rayyān b. Shabīb, it is related that, "O Ibn Shabīb, if you desire to be in the highest heaven at the highest station with us, then be sorrowful over our sorrow, be aggrieved at our grief, and then our friendship will be upon you, for all those who are loved will be gathered. O Ibn Shabīb, if you weep for Ḥusayn, to the extent that even some teardrops flow down your face, then God, most high, will forgive your sins, the trivial and the serious, both few and many. O Ibn Shabīb, if you wish to reach God and be free of all sin, then make a pilgrimage to Ḥusayn's tomb above all else (*ziyārat kon mar ḥoseyn-rā*). If you wish to dwell in the mansions of heaven, then cast your curses upon the murderers of Ḥusayn. If you are happy with your fate, then remember the reward (*s̲ovāb*) of those who became martyrs in service to Ḥusayn; whenever you remember the events of Karbalā', meditate to yourself (*bar khāṭer begoz̲arān*), "Would that I were present at that battlefield, so that I could sacrifice my life for the unjustly treated king."
>
> I would have sacrificed my life for the right of God
> If I had been there at the time of Ḥusayn[452]

یاد آن جعد سیاه و موی مشک افشان کنید

بزرگی فرموده که ماه محرم ماهی محترم بود و حسین بن علی شاهی محتشم، آن معاندان جاهل و مستکبران سنگین‌دل، نه حرمت ماه به جای آوردند و نه حشمت شاه نگاه داشتند. ماه محرم یکی از ماه‌های حرام و روز عاشورا، روزی با احترام و یوم‌الجمع سید ایام و وقت نماز آدینه محل اجابت دعا و روان شدن مدعا و مرام. در چنین ماهی قصد چنان شاهی کردند و در عاشورا شور از اهل بیت برآوردند و در چنان روزی رخسار دل فروزی به خون، رنگین ساختند و در چنان ساعتی بنای حرمت چنان صاحب دولتی از پای درانداختند. عجب روزی که ارواح انبیا و مرسلین و زمره‌ی ملایکه‌ی مقربین بر موافقت سید اولین و آخرین از آن واقعه، گریان بودند و حوران بهشت و عینان پاکیزه سرشت در مصیبت و غم و تعزیت و ألم، با بتول عذرا اتفاق نمودند. در آن روز علم عشرت نگون‌سار بود و خیل و حشم و شدت و محنت بی‌شمار، زمین بنالید که امروز روز عاشورا است. زمان فریاد می زد که روز فتنه و شور و شر است.

[452] Ibid, 636-7.

هواداران اهل بیت در این روز از شادی و عشرت کرانه نمایند و درهای اندوه و محنت بر روی دل سوخته بگشایند. زمانی اشل ندم از دیده ببارند و ساعتی آه سوزناک از سینه برآرند. در عیون‌الرضا مذکور است که گفته‌اند روز عاشورا بگریید و این روز را روز محنت و مصیبت خود دانید و ترک مهمات دنیا کرده، به مراسم مصیبت قیام نمایید که هرکه روز عاشورا کارهای دنیا را بر طرف نهد؛ حق سبحانه حاجت‌های دنیا و آخرت او برآرد و هرکه این روز را روز غم و الم خود شناسد. خدای تعالی روز قیامت را روز فرح و سرور وی گرداند و دیده‌ی وی در روضه‌ی جنان به

While this extract does not provide an explicit rundown of the elements of its proposed *ʿĀshūrā'*, it does give some very specific recommendations. Firstly, it provides a tangible suggestion, that mourners need to abstain from earthly concerns (*kārhā-ye donyā*). Secondly, they should perform certain acts, specifically, they should weep and they should produce heaving sighs (*āh-e sūznāk*) from their chests. These acts are essentially ritual performances of funerary practices. While the text does not discuss chest-beating (*sīneh-zanī*), the heavy focus on cultivating a sensation of a "burning chest" (*sūz-e sīneh*) certainly suggests it.[453] Thirdly, mourners are recommended to perform a pilgrimage to Ḥusayn's tomb (*ziyārat kon mar ḥoseyn-rā*). This suggestion is, of course, a particularly old one, since as we saw in Chapter One, commemoration rituals for Ḥusayn had involved ritualized pilgrimages to his tomb by at least 10th century.[454] Fourthly, mourners should cultivate a *habitus*. In other words, the text recommends a very specific form of mental visualization, wherein the mourner imagines themselves as a fellow warrior fighting at Karbalā' in Ḥusayn's service. This should be done in order to evoke the sense of identification with Ḥusayn's suffering, and essentially to place themselves within sacred time. Indeed, it can easily be argued that the entire purpose of the book is to provide a vivid mental picture of the Karbalā' narrative, especially given the detailed visual descriptions and poetry

جمال اهل بیت روشن گردد و هم در کتاب عیون در حدیث ریان بن شبیب آمده که یابن شبیب اگر می خواهی که در جنت اعلی بر درجات اعلی با ما باشی، پس بر اندوه ما اندوهناک باش و به غم ما غمگین شو و بر تو باد به دوستی ما که هر کسی را دوست دارد، اورا با آن کس حشر خواهند کرد. ای پسر شبیب، اگر بگریی بر حسین به حیثیتی که قطره‌های اشک بر رخسار تو روان گردد، حق تعالی بیامرزد گناهان صغیره و کبیره و اندک و بسیار تو را. یابن شبیب اگر خواهی که به خدای رسی و تو را هیچ گناهی نباشد، زیارت کن مر حسین را و اگر خواهی در غرفه‌های بهشت ساکن شوی، نفرین کن بر قاتلان حسین و اگر شاد می گرداند تو را آن که بیایی ثواب کسانی که در ملازمت حسین شهید شده‌اند هرگاه که از واقعه‌ی کربلا یاد کنی، بر خاطر بگذران که کاشکی من در آن معرکه حاضر بودمی، بران شاه مظلوم جان نثار نمودمی:

جان فدا کردمی به حق خدای
بودمی گر به روزگار حسین

[453] The term *sīneh-zanī,* or rather, *sīneh-zanān* "those who beat their chests," is only mentioned once in the context of the suffering of Ayyūb (Job). Ibid, 184.
[454] Abū al-Qāsim Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Qūlawayh al-Qummī, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, (Qom: Mu'assasat Nashr al-Fiqāha, 1996). 208-9.

which abound throughout the text. Finally, the extract mentions "ceremonies of calamity" (*marāsem-e moṣībat*). The implication is that these ceremonies refer specifically to the tangible practices like weeping and sighing, but also, by implication, the rest of the previously discussed recommendations.

One ritual element conspicuously absent in the above recommendations is a ritualized recounting of the narrative itself. In other words, the book does not seem to tell us that this specific text should be implemented as a part of the ritual practice. This point is implicit throughout the book, however. The strongest suggestion of the *Rowẕat* itself as part of the ritual complex arguably occurs again in the same chapter:

> Also in the *Eyes of Riḍā*, he says that whoever remembers our disaster, meaning the tale of Karbalā' (*qeṣṣeh-ye karbalā*), then cries (*begerīd*) and makes someone else cry (*begeriyānad*), their eyes will not shed tears on the day when all other eyes weep. Whoever sets up a mourning session (*majlesī*) where one brings our memory to life (*ẕekr-e mā-rā zendeh gardānad*), their soul will not die even when all other souls are dying in terror. So then, dearly beloved, strive until the final days of adversity to pour teardrops from your eyes, and you will not consider those tears to be lost or of no avail; your offering on *the day wherein neither wealth nor children will be of use* (26:88) will be your tears and burning chest.[455]

Again, the text does not explicitly self-reference, but this extract tells us two things by its inclusion. Firstly, Kāshefī uses this citation from the *ʿUyūn al-Riḍā* to strongly emphasize the importance of some form of recounting the story of Karbalā' (*qeṣṣeh-ye karbalā*). He does not tell us the form of this recounting, oral or otherwise, just that it should be remembered (*yād konad*). Here, context is important. Consider that as previously mentioned in this section, these mourning rituals are not private affairs, they are communal. While theoretically Kāshefī could be suggesting that mourners

[455] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 638.
و هم در عیون‌الرضا فرموده که هرکه مصیبت ما را؛ یعنی قصه‌ی کربلا را یاد کند، پس بگرید و کسی را بگریاند، چشم او نگرید در روزی که همه‌ی چشم‌ها گریان باشد و هرکه مجلسی سازد که ذکر ما را زنده گرداند، دل او نمیرد به وقتی که همه‌ی دل‌ها از هول بمیرد، پس ای عزیز، جهد کن تا درین ایام مشقت انجام، قطره‌ای آب از دیده بباری و آن قطره را ضایع و بی‌حاصل نپنداری که هدیه‌ی تو در «یوم لا ینفع مال و لا بنون» آب دیده و سوز سینه خواهد بود؛

should keep the Karbalā' narrative in their minds as they weep, this begs the question of how exactly they are supposed to be reminded of the story's details. As I have previously mentioned, this book is intended for a more general audience than Kāshefī's other works on rhetoric or the occult, which means that the audience probably would not have access to the written text itself. Furthermore, we know from the *Fotovvatnāmeh* that Kāshefī was not only acquainted with the techniques of the *qeṣṣeh-khᵛān*s but recommended his own guidelines.[456] We also know from his repeated references to Persian speakers listening to the story that some form of oral recounting was involved in the ***Rowẕat***.[457] If the book was not intended to be orally performed, then why would he specify the need to make meanings clear for Persian speakers?

Finally, this quotation specifically mentions a session (*majlesī*) where "one brings our memory to life" (*zekr-e mā-rā zendeh gardānad*). Again, theoretically, this could be intended as a reference to only the evocation of a mental narrative. However, this possibility seems very unlikely since it is mentioned in the context of a *majles*, a communal activity, and the idea of a group of people sitting around silently thinking about Karbalā' for hours while punctuating this activity through occasional weeping and sighing strains credulity. As such, there must have been an oral component. Since Kāshefī does not recommend reading from another specific book, he almost certainly intended for his own book to be recited as part of these sessions. The most likely option is that the conventions against self-aggrandizement prevented him against explicitly saying, "Use this book during *ʿĀshūrā'*, this is why I wrote it." Instead, it is strongly implied; the closest Kāshefī comes to explicitly saying that the book is intended as to be specifically used for ritual recitation occurs at the close of his Introduction: "Through chanting and writing down this book, he (God) will grant the common folk among the Muslims and all the faithful countless

[456] Ḥosayn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī, *Fotovvatnāmeh-ye Solṭānī*, (Tehran: Bonyād-e Farhang-e Īrān, 1971); 302-4.
[457] Ibid, 112, 483, 516.

rewards," (*va ʿāmmeh-ye mosalmānān-o kāffeh-ye ahl-e īmān-rā az khᵛāndan-o neveshtan-e īn ketāb masūbat-e bī-ḥesāb karāmat konad*).[458]

However, the fact that Kāshefī gives recommendations for a specific set of actions to be performed in the context of what is already a ritual sphere (i.e. *ʿĀshūrā'* observance) creates a pathway for eventual ritualization. Bell remarks that, "…ritual-like activities reveal an even more fundamental dimension of ritualization—the simple imperative to *do* something in such a way that the doing itself gives the acts a special or privileged status."[459] As such, the fact that Kāshefī is transmitting content which already has a ritual dimension to it, combined with cultural references which perpetuate *memory relics* lodged in Persian collective memory, results in the nigh-inevitable possibility of the text itself becoming an element of ritual practice. The text encourages this ritual action by creating an atmosphere of memetic activity. The ritual actions encouraged by the text, particularly ritual mourning, are not something spontaneously performed, but rather have already be enacted in sacred time, by angelic and celestial entities, in mytho-historical time, by religious figures, and finally are to be recapitulated in present ritual time by the audience of the book.[460] As per my discussion in the Introduction of this dissertation that *memory relics* can inform the use of narrative as a replacement or a reconstitution of an actual physical relic of a holy person, I would go so far as to suggest that in its recitation, Kāshefī essentially presents the Karbalā' narratives as an actual relic of Ḥusayn for veneration. In this way, the *Rowẕat* is not just a book; it is a résume for further ritual action—ritual action which will come into definite existence in the Safavid period.

IX. Conclusion

[458] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*,
[459] Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 166.
[460] See Introduction, Section III: History of Religions Methodology for more details.

In this chapter, I have discussed all of the important issues which lead us to a greater understanding of Kāshefī and his intentions in composing the *Rowẕat*. This is a multi-layered, complex work which requires a background in Kāshefī's voluminous literary output to fully appreciate. As I have demonstrated, the influences Kāshefī drew upon are quite varied, and while they are rooted in the Islamic world of 15th-16th century Herat, that is not the end of the story.

One might argue that we should merely consider the *Rowẕat* as an example of Persian *maqātil* on its own, without reference to native Persian heroic epics. However, as we see from Kāshefī's explicit referencing of the heroes and supernatural beings of these epics in his own *maqtal*, this position is not tenable. This approach instead risks presenting Persian *maqātil* as simply clones of the Arabic tradition. Babayan counters the sequestering of Islamicate Persian literature, whether *maqātil*, mirrors for princes, or poetry: "Va'iz-i Kashifi's Garden of Martyrs (Rawzat al-shuhada) should be seen as an endeavor to propagate that past with a thick Alid coating, and the author did success [sic] in memorializing Husayn in the imaginations of inhabitants of the Persianate world on a broader level."[461] Babayan sees this effort as a "translation" of pre-Islamic Persian tropes into existing genres of literature. While the names of Jamshīd, Fereydūn, Zāl, Bahrām, and Sorūsh are specifically mentioned in the *Rowẕat*,[462] Ḥusayn's narrative has more in common thematically with the stories of Siyāvash and Zarīr.[463] These shared tropes will be discussed in the next chapter.

[461] Babayan 2002, 182.
[462] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 111-12.
[463] This has been pointed out in particular by Yarshater and Shahīdī. See: Yarshater, 93, and ʻEnāyat Allāh Shahīdī, and ʿAlī Bolūkbāshī, *Pazhūheshī dar Taʻzīyeh-o Taʻzīyeh-khᵛānī: az Āghāz tā Pāyān-e Dawreh-ye Qājār dar Tehrān*, (Tehran: Daftar-e Pazhūheshhā-ye Farhangī: Komīsiyūn- e Millī-e Yūniskū dar Īrān, 1979), 24.

While Kāshefī clearly appeals to the conventions of the Arabic *maqtal* genre, he is also drawing on a set of Persian literary tropes, narratives, and values which would have appealed more to his audience—one steeped in the heritage of the *Shāhnāmeh* and other Persian epics. As Babayan argues, "We know that Iranian heroic epics continued to be recited by storytellers in the medieval Islamic era. And for some Muslims, they seem to have provided a model for the employment of the heroic personae of Ali and the Imams."[464]

Thus, the *Rowẕat* is a Persian *maqtal* strongly informed by epic literature, a different kind of *maqtal*, an epic *maqtal*. The themes of tragedy, fate, heroic virtue, and remembrance through mourning become the nucleus of Kāshefī's text and are at the core of its lasting appeal. In the next chapter, I will discuss these themes in more detail as features of cultural memory, their genealogy, and how they were used to create group identity, with the *Rowẕat* being a vehicle for reviving them in an Islamicized context.

[464] Babayan 2002, 179-180.

Chapter Three: To Love Pure and Chaste from Afar

سیاوش بنالید با کردگار — که ای برتر از جای و از روزگار
یکی شاخ پیدا کن از تخم من — چو خورشید تابنده بر انجمن
که خواهد ازین دشمنان کین من — کند تازه در کشور آیین من
همی شد پس پشت او پیلسم — دو دیده پر از خون ودل پر ز غم

Siyāvash lamented to the Creator
O you who are above space and destiny
Make a branch from my seed arise
as a shining sun before the multitude
Who will bring my vengeance upon these enemies
And renew my customs within the realm
While Pīlsam walked behind him
With eyes full of blood and heart full of sorrow[465]

I. Introduction: Holding Out for a Hero

In the previous chapter, I briefly mentioned some instances where statements in the *Rowẕat* appear to draw from ancient traditions in Iranian and Mesopotamia.[466] These connections are particularly interesting since the *Rowẕat* is a text intended to be presented as part of preaching during *ʿĀshūrā',* a distinctly Shiʿi Muslim ritual commemoration. These occurrences in and of themselves suggest that Kāshefī's methodology in composing the *Rowẕat* was far less bound to the earlier Arabic *maqtal* model of *isnād*-based narratives.

Now, one might ask what value is obtained by considering either pre-Islamic Zoroastrian texts or the *Shāhnāmeh,* a work which —regardless of when it was composed—prior to

[465] Abū al-Qāsem Ferdowsī. *Shāhnāmeh*. Ed. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, Persian text series. New series; no. 1. (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 2:356-7.
[466] Calmard cautiously though provocatively notes: "Comme nous avons essayé de le montrer, et bien qu'il convienne d'examiner avec la plus grande prudence ce genre de rapprochement, l'influence des cultes/mythes anté-islamiques sur la commémoration du Drame de Karbalā ne saurait être mise en doute." See: Jean Calmard, "Le culte de l'Imām Husayn: étude sur la commémoration du drame de Karbalā dans l'Iran pré-safavide," PhD diss., (Ecole pratique des hautes études, 1975), 111.

Kāshefī's time was seen as a product of the same non-Muslim period?[467] Are these not the vestiges of a bygone time, of little import in considering Persian *maqātil*, which continue to this day? ʿOmrānī argues that this is the case, and that the connections between pre-Islamic rituals and those of *ʿĀshūrā'* in Iran are purely coincidental and of a formal nature.[468] Floor first states that "no direct relationship exists," but then waffles, saying "…a fact is that the Shiʿite passion literature has been inspired by and has borrowed from many of the literary devices that have been used to evoke the suffering of Siyavosh in Iranian epic literature."[469] I argue that the true connection is more complex. While ʿOmrānī and Floor are correct in that we cannot establish a straight link between the rituals of the *Siyāvashān* directly influencing Iranian forms of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals, there is evidence linking the textual narratives of Ḥusayn and Siyāvash, which then in turn may have influenced the rituals. The textuality of this link and the relationship of text to performance is crucial, and I do not argue that Iranians simply 'borrowed' the *Siyāvashān* and repurposed them for Ḥusayn, but that they were drawn through the medium of layered *memory relics* preserved in texts like the *Shāhnāmeh* and local religious poetry before they re-emerged into textual reference and then into ritual.

Both the *Shāhnāmeh* and the pre-Islamic Iranian past are entirely vibrant in both the medieval as well as modern Persian consciousness. In Kāshefī's time, *Shāhnāmeh-khᵛānī* (*Shāhnāmeh* recitation) was popular enough for the religious authorities of Herat to complain

[467] Babayn references a certain Persian eulogist, Ḥasan-e Kāshī in his 1308/1309 text, *Tārīkh-e Moḥammadī*, as warning his readers to concentrate on devotion to the *ahl al-bayt* and to stop listening to recitations of the *Shāhnāmeh*, condemning it as a "book of sin" (*gonāh-nāmeh*). See: Babayan 2002, 180-1.
[468] Seyyed Abū 'l-Ḥasan 'Omrānī, *Ta'ziyeh-o Savūshūn (Sūg-e Siyāvash)*: *Bar'rasī-o Naqd-e Elhām-gīrī-ye Ta'ziyeh az Āyīn'hā-ye Osṭūreh-ye Īrān-e Bāstān*, (Shiraz: Enteshārāt-e Navīd-e Shīrāz, 2015), 97-8.
[469] Floor is also incorrect in dating the end of the *Siyāvashān* to 1000 C.E., when they survived at least into the end of the 11th century, though written evidence does not allow us to postulate further continuous survival beyond this point. See Section VII for details. See: Willem M. Floor, *The History of Theater in Iran*, (Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 2005), 109, 125.

about it. To this day, many Muslim Iranians are named after characters from the *Shāhnāmeh*.[470] The text is still memorized and recited, even in popular contexts; Iranian media like the 2007 TV series *Chehel Sarbāz* (Forty Soldiers) and 2018's animated film, *Ākherīn Dāstān* (The Last Story) draw on the *Shāhnāmeh* for their narrative content. As mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, the character of Siyāvash is also firmly established in the Iranian modern consciousness, with Dāneshvar's novel *Savūshūn* being a particularly well-known example.

Kāshefī's *Rowẕat* features references to several characters from the *Shāhnāmeh*, mostly named in passing. However, it is important to consider not only the characters Kāshefī explicitly names, but also which characters show the greatest thematic connections to his narrative. For the purposes of this dissertation and the sake of space considerations, while Kāshefī does mention several different Persian heroes throughout the *Rowẕat*, I will only focus on a few. For example, he mentions Jamshīd, Fereydūn, and Rostam by name, but I will not be focusing on these heroes except incidentally. Indeed, it may be that Kāshefī's decision not to mention Siyāvash by name was calculated for the same possible reasons he does not dwell in any significant detail on the life of Jesus, despite him being one of the most important prophets in the Islamic tradition: the similarity to Ḥusayn is simply too strong, and Kāshefī wanted to avoid being accused of drawing too much inspiration directly from non-Islamic sources. Instead, I argue that he prefers to suggest and imply through strong allusion and resemblance.

While these previously mentioned heroes are his textual references which establish a connection to the *Shāhnāmeh* and the Persian epic past as a receptacle of cultural memory, thus forming the basis of the *Rowẕat* as a new example of a *memory relic,* these heroes do not bear a strong thematic connection to Ḥusayn. Rostam, does die tragically, killed by his half-brother

[470] Nicholas Jubber, *Drinking Arak Off an Ayatollah's Beard: A Journey Through the Inside-Out Worlds of Iran and Afghanistan*, (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2010), 95-6.

Shaghād, but his story lacks the themes of the innocent victim, sacrifice, the overt connection to rebirth, and rituals of mourning.[471] However, Siyāvash, and to a lesser extent, Zarīr, do bear many important similarities to Ḥusayn. In the case of Siyāvash in particular, the manner of his death has often been described as sacrificial and a martyrdom. Most importantly, they both have either had cults dedicated to their commemoration or eulogies composed in their honor, which is the crux of the evolution of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals and the composition of the *Rowẕat*. Indeed, even though Kāshefī does not mention them by name as he does more instantly recognizable figures, I argue that it is Zarīr and especially Siyāvash that he had in mind as the primary symbolic sources of connecting Ḥusayn to the mythic Persian past. They are embedded, archetypal figures who draw on very specific themes of martyrdom and righteous conflict, whereas figures like Rostam are used more generally and rhetorically as a shorthand for Persian tradition. It is for this reason that focusing on the figures of Zarīr and Siyāvash in this chapter is necessary, rather than the heroes mentioned by name in the *Rowẕat.*

II. The Concerns of this Chapter

This chapter consists of six sections and a conclusion. The first section will bridge the discussion from the previous chapter, where I discussed the main themes of Kāshefī's *Rawẕat ol-Shohadā'* and briefly mentioned its connections with pre-Islamic literature. In this section, I will highlight Kāshefī's quotations from the *Shāhnāmeh* and his explicit or implicit references to characters from that text. Having considered these mentions of the Persian heroes, in the second

[471] Babayan does note however, that in many ways, the story of Rostam recapitulates many structural aspects of the story of Siyāvash. In general, the Persian audience was more likely to connect ʿAlī with Rostam. See: Babayan 2002; 31, 180.

section I will consider the Persian words for hero, including their etymology, whether Kāshefī employs them, and in what manner he uses them. This will provide the segue into the third section, where I will discuss the characteristics of heroism described in Middle Persian literature, which serves as the paradigm for Ferdowsī's characters. In the next two sections, I will consider two specific examples of Persian heroes whose stories Ferdowsī narrates, including their origins in the literature prior to the *Shāhnāmeh* and their actual occurrence within the *Shāhnāmeh* itself. These two figures are Zarīr, a hero who defends the new religion of Zoroaster against the army of a sorcerer, and Siyāvash, the son of the Kayanian king Kay Kāvūs, who is murdered by the forces of Iran's enemy kingdom, Tūrān. Similarities to Ḥusayn will be noted for both of them as applicable. In the sixth section, I will discuss another possible pre-Islamic influence on the *Rowẕat*, the cult of Tammūz as described by the 10th century pharmacologist-occultist Ibn Waḥshiyya, upon whose works Kāshefī had previously relied. Following this, there will be a conclusion, which discusses in detail the similarities and connections between these pre-Islamic narratives and Kāshefī's *maqtal*.

III. Prototype: The *Shāhnāmeh* in Kāshefī's Conception

Before I consider the thematic parallels between the *Rowẕat* and pre-Islamic literature, it is important to establish the direct textual parallels which support this conclusion. As has been elaborated in the previous chapter, Kāshefī was clearly familiar with the *Shāhnāmeh* and includes references to its characters throughout several of his works. In the introduction to the *Rowẕat* itself, Kāshefī explicitly compares Ḥusayn to Jamshīd and Fereydūn, and suggests he is in some way descended from them, saying that he is the one, "…possessed of the secret

knowledge of Jamshīd and Fereydūn (*dārā-ye jamshīd-e mokhber-e Fereydūn*), having a countenance like the glory of the sun (*farr-e khorshīd-e manẓar*), the purest of all the children of renowned rulers, the purity of the grandchildren of the emperors of highest rank."[472] The term *farr* ("glory"), in particular, denotes a specifically Persian conception of divine radiance, which is granted by God to the Persian kings in epic literature; I will return to this concept in detail below. In the following verses, Ḥusayn is also described as the one whose "…banner is of Bahrām's rank (*rāyat-e bahrām-e jāh*)" and "valiant like Mehr (*ṣafdar mehr*)."[473] Note that the 2010 Arabic translation of the *Rowẓat* omits all of these references and does not translate the verses which follow them; arguably because they do not have any cultural reverberance in the Arab world.[474]

Before turning to the quotations, let us consider another appearance of a Zoroastrian *yazata* (worship-worthy being or divinity) in the *Rowẓat*, that of the hypostasis of obedience, Sorūsh (Avestan: Sraoša, Middle Persian: Srōš). In the previous chapter, I have briefly discussed the appearance of Sorūsh, both as a brief mention in the story of the Turkish slave, and also in the form of Zaʿfar, the leader of the *parī*s. Let us consider him now in more detail. Without taking into account the impact of the *Shāhnāmeh* on Kāshefī's *Rowẓat*, it is hard to satisfactorily explain the appearance of Zaʿfar in chapter nine of the *Rowẓat*. This story has no known parallel in the Arabic *maqātil*, and beyond stories of King Solomon commanding the jinn, this theme is not very common. The jinn were considered to be unpredictable, dangerous, and at worst,

[472] Kāshefī, *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*, 111.
[473] Ibid, 112. Note also that both Bahrām and Mehr originate as Zoroastrian *yazata*s (worship-worthy beings or deities) who personify respectively victory (Avestan: *vərəθraγna* "smasher of resistance") and loyalty (Avestan: *miθra*, "covenant"). Both of these beings have cognates in Vedic religion, *vṛtahan*, associated with Indra, and Mitra, the personification of oaths. As mentioned with Sorūsh in the previous chapter, these are yet more examples of Zoroastrian figures being mentioned in the *Rowẓat*, filtered through the lens of the *Shāhnāmeh.* See: Ehsan Yarshater, *The Cambridge History of Iran Seleucid Parthian Volume 3. The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanid Periods, Part 1*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 343-4.
[474] Ḥoseyn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī, *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā'*, ([Iran]: Intishārāt al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 2009), 53-4.

servants of the devil.[475] Given the belief that Muḥammad was sent as a prophet for the entire universe however, it would be a mistake to imagine them as generally evil; a few are mentioned in the Qur'ān and depicted as open to the message of Islam.[476] Some jinn, for example, are Muslims and have aided the Shiʿa.[477] While Ḥusayn being able to see fairies (*parī*) and jinn such as in the story of Zaʿfar is not very surprising, given the long history of attributing *ʿilm al-ghayb* (supernatural knowledge of the unseen world) to the *ahl al-bayt*, an actual dealing with them, and in such congenial manner is not common—though not unknown. It is worth noting though, that many scholars did not believe the Prophet ever actually saw the jinn, but only heard them, which would make Ḥusayn's very clearly visual interaction with Zaʿfar all the more noteworthy.[478]

However, the full impact of this story becomes clearer in meaning when viewed in the context of Persian epic literature. At the beginning of the *Shāhnāmeh*'s actual narrative, the story of Geyūmart is recounted.[479] Geyūmart, the first king in world[480] (Avestan: *Gaiia-marətan* "mortal life," Middle Persian: *Gayōmarθ*) is faced with war against a terrible demonic enemy, the black *dīv* (*dīv-e siyāh*) son of Ahriman, who kills Geyūmart's son Siyāmak in battle. Sorūsh appears before Geyūmart to offer assistance by providing him information on the enemy:

[475] The malevolence of the "heretic jinn" was especially feared; they were believed to engage in curses and particularly in possession of the unwary. In fact, even the Arabic word for "crazy" (*majnūn*) means essentially, "one who is worn as clothing by jinn (cf. *malbūs* "worn," also "possessed") or possessed by jinn." The Persian word for "crazy," *dīvāneh*, has similar meaning. See: Amira El-Zein, *Islam, Arabs, and the Intelligent World of the Jinn*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2009), 70, 74, 80.
[476] Specifically, in 46:29-32 and 72:2-7. See: El-Zein 2009, 65-66.
[477] See: Mahmoud Omidsalar, "Genie," *Encyclopædia Iranica,* Vol. X/4, pp. 418-422; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/genie- (accessed on 28 March 2020).
[478] El-Zein 2009, 67.
[479] Calmard also notes that connections have been drawn between Geyūmart and Ḥusayn, though only briefly and without elaborating any details. Calmard 1975, 111.
[480] In Zoroastrian literature, this entity, of arguably androgynous gender, is the first human, a primordial giant perhaps akin to the Norse Ymir ("twin," cognate to Jamshīd or Yima-xšaēta "shining twin") and Vedic Puruṣa ("man").

گیومرت ازین خود کی آگاه بود که تخت مهی را جزو شاه بود
یکایک بیامد خجسته سروش بسان پریی پلنگینه پوش
بگفتش به راز این سخن دربه در که دشمن چه سازد همی با پدر

Who informed Geyūmart
Who possessed a great throne besides the king
When all of a sudden blessed Sorūsh appeared
In the form of a fairy (*parī*), wearing a leopard-skin
Told him of the secrets of this plan
Which the enemy was making with his father

Several of the details in this part of the story bear a distinct resemblance to the anecdote about Zaʿfar in the *Rowẕat*. Both Sorūsh and Zaʿfar are addressed as "fortunate or blessed," (*khojasteh* and *nīkbakht*, respectively), they both appear with some sort of animal aspect—a leopard-skin for Sorūsh, the head and hands of a horse and the feet of a lion for Zaʿfar—and they both are described as fairies (*parī*s) or fairy-like. Both offer the heroic character supernatural aid against a terrible enemy, though in Ḥusayn's case, he turns it down, but for different reasons. Based on these similarities—and knowing that Kāshefī was familiar with the story of Geyūmart since he refers to him by name as the first king of the world in his *Fotovvatnāmeh*—this is unlikely to be a pure coincidence.[481] The story in the *Rowẕat* is simply too unusual to explain otherwise.

While these references are interesting in of themselves, we cannot ignore the most direct connection to the *Shāhnāmeh* in the *Rowẕat*, which are the two quotations previously mentioned in Chapter Two. Both quotations from the *Shāhnāmeh* occur in the *Rowẕat* in chapter nine, during the actual *maqtal* portion. They both show up in short succession in the narrative about the martyrdom of Ḥusayn's companion Ḥurr b. Yazīd Riyāḥī, a former Umayyad commander who defected to Ḥusayn's side.

[481] Kāshefi, *Fotovvatnāmeh,* 354.

The first quotation occurs when Ḥusayn meets with Ḥurr on the battlefield, and Ḥurr asks him if he is pleased with his performance (*az man rāẕī shodī*). Ḥusayn replies that he is. Ḥurr responds by quoting these lines of poetry (*neṣār*) to describe Ḥusayn—more than three centuries before they were composed.

In the context of the *Shāhnāmeh*, this verse occurs after the death of Siyāvash, when the hero Rostam is sent out to rout the armies of Afrāsiyāb to avenge Siyāvash, and defeat the terrible demon Akvān-e Dīv. Regarding his heroism in battle, his soldiers exclaim:[482]

بدین مژده گر دیده خواهی رواست که این مژده آرایش جان ماست

It is proper to rejoice in this good news,
This good news which adorns our souls![483]

The version given in the *Rowẕat* is nearly identical, simply substituting *jān-feshānam* "sacrificing my soul," for *dīdeh-khᵛāhī* "desire of the eye," *āsāyesh* "comfort" for *ārāyesh* "adornment," and *bar īn* ("for this") for *bedīn* ("in this"), which are nearly the same in meaning:

برین مژده گر جان فشانم رواست که این مژده آسایش جان ماست

For this good news it is proper for me to sacrifice myself,
This good news which comforts our souls![484]

Implicitly, in the context of the *Rowẕat*, Kāshefī is comparing Ḥusayn to Rostam and his struggle with Yazīd to the battle with Afrāsiyāb and the demons.

[482] According to Nöldeke, Akvān-e Dīv is yet another Zoroastrian survival, and derives from the Middle Persian demonic hypostasis of wicked intent, Akōman (Avestan: Akəm Manō, "evil mind"). See: Theodore Nöldeke, *Das iranische Nationalepos,* (Berlin; Leipzig, Vereinigung wissenschaflicher verleger, 1920), 10.
[483] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh,* 3:169
[484] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 522.

The second quotation, which occurs on the next page, is slightly more altered in comparison to the first. In the *Shāhnāmeh*, the line appears in the prelude to Kay Kāvūs' story. The prelude appears as a warning, emphasizing that abandoning the virtue laid out by one's father shall lead the son to destruction, foreshadowing the terrible mistakes Kay Kāvūs will make in the future:

گر او بفگند فرّ و نام پدر　　تو بیگانه خوانش مخوانش پسر

If he casts away the glory and name of his father
Then call him a stranger, don't call him son[485]

The version in the *Rowẕat* is similar, but in addition to some word substitutions, it omits *khᵛānesh* "say of him" (though implies it), and substitutes the vaguer *neshān* "mark" for *farr o nām* "name and glory." The sense is the same, however; these rephrasings are essentially examples of a literary technique called *taẕmīn* "collocation," where the poet crafts lines which deliberately imitate an original by preserving features which explicitly point to imitation being operative:[486]

پسر کو ندارد نشان پدر　　تو بیگانه خوانش مخوانش پسر

When the son doesn't have the mark of his father
Then call him a stranger, don't call him son.[487]

[485] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh,* 2: 3.
[486] This is a well-established poetic technique particularly in the Timurid period. See: Maria Subtelny, "A Taste for the Intricate: The Persian Poetry of the Late Timurid Period," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft,* Vol. 136, No. 1 (1986),pp. 56-79; 63.
[487] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 523.

Here, the quotation is used in the *Rowẕat* in reference to Ḥurr's son, ʿAlī, who arrives at Ḥusayn's encampment soon after. Ḥusayn asks him who he is, and ʿAlī tells him, saying he has come to offer his service to Ḥusayn, and sacrifice himself (*jān fedā konam*). This line of poetry is offered as the justification, suggesting that if ʿAlī does not follow Ḥurr's example, then he has no right to call himself his son. The use of this quotation is perhaps less salient than the previous one, since Kāshefī is using it more in the sense of a proverb then with the narrative simile implicit in the previous quotation. It is still an example of *taẕmīn*, and as such, an explicit reference to the *Shāhnameh.* At least, we can perhaps say that Kāshefī is using Kay Kāvūs as a paradigmatic example of a son who squanders his father's legacy, and those who do the same follow his model. This legacy not only includes his divine glory (*farr*), but also the preservation of the character of Iran as a land of heroes. As such, it is a very strong demonstration of influence both textually and thematically. Metatextually, given that both the quotations originate in sections of the *Shāhnāmeh* which concern Siyāvash's story, they can be seen as an oblique reference in the *Rowẕat* to Siyāvash himself. Thus, while Kāshefī does not reference Siyāvash by name in his book, he both thematically and metatextually does reference his narrative. In the next section, I will consider the uses of such terms for "heroes" as present in the *Rowẕat*, discuss their etymology, how Kāshefī employs them, and what this may suggest regarding the semantic changes in Persian during his time.

IV. The Word for Hero is…: The Terminology of the Persian Hero

In Chapter One, I discussed the etymology and lexical meanings of the most common Arabic word for "hero," *baṭal*, in order to frame the later discussion of the concept of the pre-

Islamic Arab hero. In this section, for the same reasons, I will take a look at the two most common Persian words for hero, *pahlavān* and *qahremān*. I will discuss their occurrence in the *Rowẕat* and consider the context of these usages before I proceed with the most tangible examples of their usage: Persian epic literature.

In Persian, the common terms for hero are *qahremān* and *pahlavān*, both of which come from the native stock of inherited Indo-Iranian lexemes.[488] The first term, *qahremān*, derives from Middle Persian *kārframān* "overseer."[489] The exact details of the semantic change from 'overseer' to 'hero' or 'champion' are not entirely clear. However, De Bruijn speculates that the famous *Qahremān-nāmeh* may have influenced the development of the word by the popular appeal of its eponymous demon-slaying hero, Qahremān.[490]

The second, *pahlavān*, is more complicated. It is connected to the word *pahlavī/pahlawī*, i.e. "that of the *pahlaw*s."[491] The term *pahlaw* originally bears a linguistic meaning rather than denoting a type of person; etymologically, it derives from the Old Persian proper name 'Parthia' (*Parθava*) via a common Iranian sound change of the clusters with /r/ plus a dental consonant to turn into /hl/ or /l/ depending on the voicing of the original dental obstruent, c.f. Persian *sāl*

[488] It is worth noting that of these two words, *qahremān* is currently the more common term in the everyday speech of modern Iranians. *Pahlavān* has become associated with sports, specifically wrestling, and it is in the sense of 'wrestler' that it has been borrowed into Urdu. Regarding demon-slaying, note that there is a long history of dragon and demon-slaying being attributed in local Afghani legend to ʿAlī. This idea is alluded to briefly in the story of Zaʿfar in the *Rowẕat*. See: Louis Dupree, *Afghanistan*, Princeton Legacy Library, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 115.

[489] J.T.P. De Bruijn, "Ḳahramān-Nāma", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 09 December 2018 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_3787>

[490] This would then be an interesting case of a common noun becoming a proper noun and then re-morphing into a new common noun with an extended meaning.

[491] Bloom and Blair note that, "As evidenced by these texts, the denominations *Pahlawī*, *Pārsī* and *Darī* may have changed their references to varying degrees during the first centuries of the Islamic era, denoting various written and spoken varieties depending on the text where they appeared. Accordingly, *Pahlawī* or *Pahlawānī* (literally meaning "Parthian" originating from Pahlaw < Parthava "Parthia"), appears to have referred at one time to Parthian and Middle Persian but also to the local dialect of the northern region called Fahla in an Arabicised form…" See: Sheila S. Blair, and J.M. Bloom, "Iran, iii. Languages", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 07 December 2018 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1409>

"year," from Old Persian *θard* (Avestan *sarəd*).[492] The Old Persian word is likely connected to Avestan *pərəθu* 'broad [land], bridge' Sanskrit *pṛthú* 'broad.' (cf. Sanskrit Pṛthvī́, 'broad one,' the deification of the Earth).[493] It is also worth noting that the spelling of the word *pahlawān* in the Pahlavī script is very close to the Middle Persian word *ahlawān* 'righteous' (Pahlavī spelling: *phlw'n* versus *'hlw'n*), which may have exerted an influence on the semantic evolution of the term via phono-semantic convergence.[494]

This being said, whether the term in its sense of 'hero' really means 'Parthian' is doubtful, even though there is an etymological connection.[495] Due to the invasion and cultural dominance of the Parthian Arsacid dynasty until 224 C.E., the term *pahlaw* eventually became conflated in many cases with *pārs*, the latter term broadly referring to the area which is now the modern Iranian province of Fārs. It is also worth noting that Middle Persian and Parthian are

[492] Mark Hale, "Pahlavi," *The Ancient Languages of Asia and the Americas*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 128.

[493] Haug mentions a possible connection to Modern Persian *pahlū* 'side,' and promptly rejects it. *Pace*, while Haug is right that it is not the direct origin of the word *pahlavī*, *pahlū* is etymologically related to it via the Proto-Indo-European root *$*pleth_2$*, "flat," the same origin of the above cited Avestan and Sanskrit words. See: Martin Haug, *Essays on the Sacred Language, Writings, and Religion of the Parsis*, (Boston: Houghton, Osgood, 1878), 78. For the connection to *pərəθu*, see: Hormazdyar K. Mirza, "Literary Treasures of the Zoroastrian Priests," *A Zoroastrian Tapestry: Art, Religion & Culture*, (Ahmedabad, India: Middletown, NJ: Wappingers' Falls, NY: Maping Publishing Pvt. Ltd; Grantha, 2002), 162.

[494] This is a known process described in historical linguistics where two formerly unrelated terms gradually develop convergence in meaning due to their phonetic similarity, which is then often justified through the creation of links in their semantic content. One example is that the English words for ear (part of the body) versus ear (of corn) where formerly distinct both in form and meaning. See also Old French *mareschal*, literally "horse servant," and *marcial* "relating to war," which respectively give Modern English *marshal* and *martial*. The convergence manifests in that *marshal*, such as in lexemes like *field marshal*, has acquired a secondary sense relating it to *martial.* The phonetic similarity exerts an influence on the semantics, along with what Hock calls, "semantic good will;" i.e. the tendency for speakers to readily make semantic connections if there is enough motivation to do so. See: Hans Henrich Hock, *Principles of Historical Linguistics*, (Berlin; New York: Mouton De Gruyter, 1991), 297.

[495] Lazard states that: "Dans la suite, pârsi, langue 'des *mowbad*,' des savants et de leurs semblables' est évidemment le moyen-perse littéraire ou pahlavi. Le mot est pris dans le sens qu'il avait à l'époque sassanide.
Le pays de Pahla, défini comme a la région comprenant Ispahan, Rey, Hamadan, Māh Nihāvand et l'Azerbaïjan, est l'ancienne Médie. Le *pahlavi*, langue du Pahla, est le parthe, s'il y vivait encore comme langue de littérature orale, ou les dialectes locaux, ses proches parents. Xwārizmī et Yāqūt ajoutent que ce *pahlavi* était employé dans les 'séances' royales." Gilbert Lazard, "Pahlavi, pârsi, dari: les langues de l'Iran d'après Ibn al-Muqaffa," in *Iran and Islam, in memory of the late V. Minorsky*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 361-391; 385.

extremely closely related languages.[496] By the Middle Persian period under the Sassanids, Parthian culture and language had become almost completely subsumed or replaced by Middle Persian, with Parthian perhaps surviving in highly localized, unwritten dialects. The term *pahlaw* no longer specifically refers to the extinct Parthian dynasty, but to their successors, to the point that the writing system for Middle Persian is called *pahlavī*. By the Islamic period, there is considerable confusion as to whether *pahlavī* (or *al-lugha al-fahlawiyya* in Arabic) is just another name for *pārsig*, Middle Persian.

The terms *pahlavān* and *qahremān* only rarely occur in the *Rowẓat*, and expressions of heroism are typically implied through circumlocutions or nominal/adjectival predications (*delīr* "brave," *shojāʿat* "courage," *jor'at* or *jarā'at* "daring," etc.). In fact, the most common descriptor for Ḥusayn in the *Rowẓat* besides *emām* "Imam" is probably *shāhzādeh* "prince," despite the fact that, as previous discussed in Chapter One, Ḥusayn was not formally a prince. The use of this term does serve as another, slightly different but no less significant way of connecting Ḥusayn to the Persian epic heroes, who are almost always royalty.[497] This is yet another narrative and linguistic device that Kāshefī employs to encourage his audience to Persianize this tradition in their minds as he has in language. As such, I argue that Kāshefī's occasional choice to substitute *shāhzādeh* for *emām* is to suggest both an equivalence or translation logic for the terms, and also to emphasize Ḥusayn's transformation into a Persian hero. It is not, in my opinion, a Sunni tactic of de-emphasizing Ḥusayn's status as a religious

[496] Both are Middle West Iranian languages and share similar morphological, syntactic, and lexical features. See: Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Middle West Iranian," in *The Iranian Languages*, Routledge Language Family Series, (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 196-278; 196.

[497] Humayuni emphasizes that the use of *shāhzādeh* for Ḥusayn is a very specific kind of allusion to Persian tradition, which served to evoke greater emotional attachment. *Shāhzādeh* was never used for the sons of caliphs, but always for the sons of Persian kings. See: Sadeq Humayun, "An Analysis of the Taʿziyeh of Qasem," *Ta'ziyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran*, New York University Studies in Near Eastern Civilization; No. 7, (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 12-23; 20.

leader, despite what Zū 'l-Feqārī suggests as evidence that has been presented for Kāshefī's Sunni allegiance. [498]

However, the two terms *pahlavān* and *qahremān* do occur. The word *pahlavān* appears twice in the *Rowẕat* and is implied at least in one other occasion. In the first case, set in the narrative relating the martyrdom of Zuhayr b. Ḥassān al-Asadī, Zuhayr goes to ʿUmar b. Saʿd's camp and challenges his men to single combat. Here, ʿUmar's troops are referred to as *majmaʿ-e pahlavānān*, "group of strongmen."[499] Thus, the meaning cannot be "heroes," since the text describes them cowering at Zuhayr's challenge. In the second instance, it is again used with reference to ʿUmar's troops, during the portion of the battle resulting in ʿAbdullāh b. Muslim b. ʿAqīl's martyrdom. Again, they are described as being afraid of the ferocity of Ḥusayn's companions (*hameh az vay tarsān o herāsān shodeh*).[500] In one of the few thematic similarities with the earlier Arabic *maqātil* with the term *baṭal*, the use of *pahlavān* in the *Rowẕat* seems to be mostly sarcastic. The one positive occurrence does not appear literally in the text, but is only implied by the use of the first quotation from the *Shāhnāmeh* (For this good news it is proper for me to sacrifice myself/As such tidings are that which adorns our souls!);[501] in the context of the original *Shāhnāmeh*, at the line right before the one quoted, Rostam is called a *pahlavān*, and it is for this reason that his soldiers praise him.[502] The possible sarcasm may be mitigated somewhat—unlike that of *baṭal* in the Arabic *maqātil*—since, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the word *pahlavān* was going through a semantic shift during Kāshefī's time, when it was increasingly applied to athletes competing in the *zūrkhāneh*, though the shift was not

[498] See Chapter Two, Section IV for more details.
[499] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 527.
[500] Ibid, 571.
[501] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 522
[502] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 3:169.

complete. Since the word was acquiring the sense of "strongman," perhaps Kāshefī felt it was inappropriate to directly apply this term to Ḥusayn or his companions. As for the term *qahremān* only appears once, in a list of the descendants of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, which occurs at the end of chapter ten.[503] In the next few sections, we will look at the crystallization of these Persian terms within the context of the Persian literary tradition, first in Middle Persian literature, then in the *Shāhnāmeh*.

V. Texts for Vanquishing Demons: The Hero in Persian Literary History

While we have seen some concrete examples of what the Persian epic hero does and what his role in relation to destiny is, we should consider the underpinnings of the values he represents. The heroes of pre-Islamic Arabic literature wore their values on their sleeve—but given the multivalent role that poetry served in that context, the clear expression of tribal values is not surprising. On the other hand, in the Persian context, there is a longer tradition of not only written literature, but also of separate genres of written literature. As such, poetry and narrative texts are not the only source we may depend on to reconstruct Persian heroic values.

The pre-Islamic Persianate literary tradition is very different from that in pre-Islamic Arabia. For one thing, there is a tradition of well-defined canon of literature that stretches all the way back to somewhere between the 16th and 11th centuries B.C.E.; the oldest of these are the Gathas (Avestan: *gāθā* 'song'), traditionally attributed to the prophet Zoroaster.[504] These texts

[503] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 711.
[504] Zoroaster (Avestan: *Zaraθuštra*), a member of the ancient Iranian Spitama clan, spoke an Old Northeastern Iranian language which we conventionally term Avestan. The term is back-projected from Middle Persian *abestāg,* which seems to refer to the received holy texts themselves, as opposed to commentary (*zand*). The religion he founded, natively termed *mazdāyasna* 'worship of [Ahura] Mazdā,' was a massive deconstruction of the native Indo-Iranian polytheism and reconstruction into an ethical, theologized dualism. For dating, see: Helmut Humbach,

are highly archaic and pose a variety of difficulties in semantic and grammatical interpretation. The Gathas shares much in common with the Sanskrit Vedas, to which they are linguistically, culturally, and religiously closely related.[505] Most of these early texts are explicitly liturgical and meant for use in Zoroastrian rituals. Their survival is almost certainly due to the fact that they were orally memorized in exacting ritualized detail long before they were written down, and so escaped loss to the mists of history. More formally secular literature simply did not have the vast institutional effort of priests behind it, to preserve it—though many texts still remain.

This being said, there are a great number of traditional Iranian heroes whose tales are recounted, embedded piecemeal within the larger religious literature. More material is available from the Middle Persian period (5th century B.C.E. to 7th C.E.). While much of the Middle Persian texts deal with Zoroastrian religious issues or are commentary on the *Avesta*, several popular heroic narratives have survived.

To a degree, the focus on the morality of pre-Islamic Iranian heroes is a consequence of the religious environment. Unlike the pre-Islamic Arabs, Iranian societies had a canonized religious literature, centuries of written material as well as several different writing systems,[506] a priestly bureaucracy which received imperial support, and a systematized, theologized moral system which was deeply embedded in every aspect of the public consciousness. The Persian hero is the representative of the urbanized ideal, which fits with the mores of a sedentary society

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Prods O. Skjærvø, and Josef Elfenbein, *The Gāthās of Zarathushtra: And the Other Old Avestan Texts*, Indogermanische Bibliothek, Erste Reihe, Lehr- Und Handbücher, (Heidelberg: Winter, 1991), 24-30.

[505] Indeed, the larger part of the Old Avestan corpus is the Gathas themselves and there simply is not a large enough corpus to aid the interpretation of poorly understood lexemes—the Zand commentaries were standardized around the 2nd-4th centuries C.E., much of the research on the Gathas was originally done with Vedic Sanskrit in mind, and some of the earliest orientalists specializing in Zoroastrianism began as Sanskritists—notably Martin Haug. The first manuscripts obtained by Europeans where initially dismissed as forgeries in garbled Sanskrit. See: Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, Textual Sources for the Study of Religion, (Manchester, U.K. ; Dover, N.H., U.S.A.: Manchester University Press, 1984), x.

[506] Indeed, a massive library called *Sārūyeh* existed in pre-Islamic Iran which was described as awe-inspiring and huge; its ruins are located near Esfahan.

with an elaborate bureaucratic structure. Some of the qualities considered heroic in the pre-Islamic Arabic literary tradition as discussed in Chapter One would probably be considered recklessness or antisocial behaviors by ancient Iranian standards. These were character flaws that dragged a hero down, not even contextually admirable qualities.[507]

This is not to say there are no commonalities whatsoever. In later periods, some of the later ʿAbbasid literati waxed nostalgic, looking back towards an imagined Persian past of high civilization, rather than reminiscing over the gone-by days of tribal Arab life. They noted the contrast between nomadic Bedouins values and the ensconced sedentary values of the Persians and commented on the differences.[508] Obviously, this is a much later reconstruction, reflecting the values of a society that was already forgetting how to speak let alone read Middle Persian—and only the elites of Middle Persian-speaking society would have been able to read these texts anyway. As we have seen previously, these cultural differences were explicitly addressed and worried over during the Arab acquisition of Sassanid institutional structures, but in those cases, it was usually from the perspective of those nostalgic for the Bedouin lifestyle.

Unfortunately, very little epic poetry has survived from Middle Persian. For this reason, we simply do not have the resources to attempt any comments on the style and structure of the poetic form itself, as we can for pre-Islamic poetry. It is difficult to determine if this means that

[507] Thus it is hard to imagine any "brigand-poets" like the *suʿlūk* appearing as heroic archetypes in early Persian literature.

[508] It was not just the Persians who noted this, but the Arabs themselves. For example, the ʿAbbasid era poet al-Walīd b. ʿUbayd Allāh al-Buḥturī (d. 897 C.E.), used the image of the pre-Islamic Sassanian dynasties as a circumlocution for a fallen, sophisticated society, using them as a metaphor for misfortunes of the ʿAbbasids:

أَتَسَلّى عَنِ الحُظوظِ وَآسى لِمَحَلٍّ مِن آلِ ساسانَ دَرسِ
أَذكَرتِنيهُمُ الخُطوبُ التَوالي وَلَقَد تُذكِرُ الخُطوبُ وَتُنسي
وَهُمُ خافِضونَ في ظِلِّ عالٍ مُشرِفٍ يَحسِرُ العُيونَ وَيُخسي

I console myself over some misfortune, and grieve/Over the dwelling of the family of Sāsān, which is effaced//Calamity after calamity reminds me of them /Since calamities cause one to remember and then forget//They dwelt in the shadow of a high place/A lofty one which tires and saddens the eyes//

See: Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, *Jacut's Geographisches Wörterbuch Aus Den Handschriften Zu Berlin, St. Petersburg, Paris, London und Oxford*, (Leipzig: In Commission Bei F. A. Brockhaus, 1866), 109-110.

there is a lacuna because there was no epic poetry or that most of it has been lost. Hameen-Anttila cautiously states that, "While epic tales were obviously sung at some phase in pre-Islamic Iran, as also comparative Indo-European evidence would tend to show, the evidence for the Sassanian period and immediately after is scarce, and one should not take the widespread existence of such epics in Sassanian times for granted."[509]

The *Shāhnāmeh* (The Book of Kings) of Abū al-Qāsem Ferdowsī (d. between 1020-1025 C.E.) is a great example of some possible survivals from older epics; it preserves many elements from a Middle Persian or Pahlavī[510] prototypical text or cluster of texts, the *Khwadāy-nāmag* (also: The Book of Kings).[511] Khaleghi-Motlagh for example, states that he believes that the source of the Abū Manṣūrī version which Ferdowsī used was in Pahlavī (*mākhaz-e aṣlī-ye shāhnāmeh abū manṣūrī-ye beh zabān-e pahlavī būdeh ast*),[512] noting that the four authors all have Persian, non-Muslim names—a rarity in 11th century Iran.[513] However, the question of the oral tradition of the *Shāhnāmeh* is a thorny one that I cannot address in detail here,[514] but it should be noted that Ferdowsī seems to at least be gesturing towards a tradition of epic

[509] Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Khwadāynāmag: The Middle Persian Book of Kings*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2018), 24.
[510] I have previously noted in Section IV the complications inherent in the term *pahlavī* and the question of whether it refers to Middle Persian (*pārsig*) or Parthian or both. Khaleghi-Motlagh further comments that it is a mistake to assume that in Persian the term *pahlavī* always means Middle Persian (*fārsī-ye miyāneh*). See: Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Dar Pīrāmūn-e Manābeʿ-e Ferdowsī," *Īrānshenāsī* 10 (1998): 512-40; 531.
[511] Mary Boyce, *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 11.
[512] Omidsalar dismisses the idea that Ferdowsī's text is based on a Middle Persian version, saying that when Ferdowsī uses the term *pahlavī*, it simply means "heroic" (from *pahlavān*). However, this does not mean that one of Ferdowsī's sources, i.e. such as Abū Manṣūrī could not have been based on a Middle Persian version; this appears to be Khaleghi-Motlagh's belief. As I have mentioned above in the notes and in Section IV, the exact meaning of *pahlavī* and the original of *pahlavān* is quite complex and assigning one particular meaning in a given context above all others is not a simple task, especially given that the *Shāhnāmeh* both deals with the *pahlavān* and well as incorporating characters which have clear antecedents in Middle Persian literature. See: Mahmoud Omidsalar, "Unburdening Ferdowsi (Book Review)," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116, no. 2 (1996): 235-42; 238.
[513] Khaleghi-Motlagh 1998, 512.
[514] For a further discussion, arguing for an oral tradition, see: Olga M. Davidson, *Poet and Hero in the Persian Book of Kings*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 24-5. For discussions arguing for a completely written source, see: Khaleghi-Motlagh 1998, and Omidsalar, 1996. See also Davidson's response to the latter: Olga M. Davidson, "The Text of Ferdowsi's 'Shahnama' and the Burden of the Past," *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118, no. 1 (1998): 63-68.

recitation—though these were unlikely to be that of itinerant bards. In the preamble (*dībācheh*) for example, he says that he learned from the "lords of speech" (*cho shenīd az īshān sepahbod-e sokhan*),[515] and the openings of several stories mention hearing them from "narrators"[516] (*sorāyandeh*):[517]

به گفتار دانا کنون بازگرد　　نگر تا چه گوید سراینده مرد
کهن گشته این داستان‌ها زبن　　همی نو شود روزگار کهن

To the words of the sage now return
Look to what the narrator says
These stories, their language has become old
But now the bygone days are revived again[518]

Still, it is important to keep in mind that at this point, we are speaking of a highly literate culture, and in this case, reference to oral literature or oral recitations of written texts should not be taken to imply that Ferdowsī was not working from a well-established collection of written sources. Regardless, the important point here is not whether the *Shāhnāmeh* drew on oral sources or not, but rather that in later periods it became oral as a recited performance.[519] Indeed, my interest is how a textual genealogy may be imported to form the basis of practiced ritual.

[515] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 1: 12. Khaleghi-Motlagh, however, cautions that we must be careful in assuming that Persian words for speech (like *sokhan* and *goftār*) always mean "oral speech" (*sokhan-e shafāhī*), when they can also mean "oral speech" and "written speech," and Ferdowsī uses them in both senses. See: Khaleghi-Motlagh 1998, 536.
[516] Note however, that the word *sorāyandeh* has a much wider semantic range than "minstrel," including "singer," "narrator," "envoy," etc. See: Omidsalar 1996, 240-1.
[517] Yamamoto seems to waffle between whether these sorts of statements, which appear frequently throughout the *Shāhnāmeh* at the beginning of various stories, really mark orality of some kind or as per Nöldeke, they are simply narrative devices in a story that was entirely textually composed. Davidson has also criticized a particularly narrow understanding of oral literature, especially the idea that it is without 'conscious design and artistic purposes.'" See: Kumiko Yamamoto, *The Oral Background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and Poetry*, Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures; v. 26, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), 60-80, and Olga M. Davidson, "Yamamoto, Kumiko: The Oral Background of Persian Epics," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 103, no. 3 (2008): 305-16. 310.
[518] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 201-2.
[519] Indeed, Khaleghi-Motlagh believes that a tradition comparable to *shāhnāmeh-khᵛānī* or *daftar-khᵛānī*, existed before the coming of Islam for epic poetry, but distinguishes it from the oral poetry of the *gōsān*, saying that this was the difference between sophisticated court poetry and the compositions of illiterate wandering bards. He further

Popular legend has it that Ferdowsī was commissioned to compose the text by Maḥmūd of Ghaznī (d. 1030 C.E.). The poem does contain praise of Maḥmūd, almost certainly in an attempt to favorably connect him with a traditional archetype of Iranian culture, and particularly, to compare him with the Persian hero-kings.[520] However, there is no evidence to suggest that Ferdowsī was ever selected by Maḥmūd or his court to compose the poem, nor that he was ever paid for his work. Rather, the poet was probably hoping that when he sent the poem to Ghaznī with praise for him inserted, Maḥmūd would be so impressed and flattered that he would lift Ferdowsī out of poverty.[521] Ferdowsī apparently believed that people had repeated lies about him to Maḥmūd, which resulted in him ignoring the poem. Despite his interest in the Persian legacy, Maḥmūd was also staunchly Sunni, in contrast to Ferdowsī.[522]

Just prior to Ferdowsī's time, the Buyids, a Shi'i family hailing from the Daylam region around the southern Caspian Sea, had appropriated the temporal power of the 'Abbasid caliph. Claiming descent from the Sassanids, the Buyids had reintroduced elements of symbols of traditional Persian royal authority. The Buyid *amīr* 'Aḍud al-Dawla (983 C.E.) revived the title of *shāhanshāh* (king of kings), a royal title whose history goes as far back at least as the Achaemenids, who used the Old Persian ancestor of the term, *xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām* (king of

points to the fact that Ferdowsī specifically says in his Preface that stories from the Abū Manṣūrī version was recited in gatherings. See: Khaleghi-Motlagh 1998, 538-9.

[520] See: A. C. S. Peacock, "Firdawsi's Shahnama in Its Ghaznavid Context," *Iran* 56, no. 1 (2018): 2-12; 2-3, and: Ghazzal Dabiri, "The Shahnama: Between the Samanids and the Ghaznavids," *Iranian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2010): 13-28; 14.

[521] Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi, Abu'l-Qāsem i. Life," *Encyclopedia Iranica*, IX/5, pp. 514-523; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ferdowsi-i (accessed on 27 March 2020).

[522] Ibid.

kings).[523] Ferdowsī was also Shiʿi himself, which makes the connection between his own religious orientation and the topic of Persian identity all the more salient.[524]

As the name implies, the *Shāhnāmeh* is essentially a royal chronicle (mostly mythical or mythicized) arranged as an epic poem, covering a period from the creation of the world until the fall of the last Sassanid king Yazdegerd III (d. 651 C.E.) to the third Sunni caliph ʻUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's forces.[525] The poem is filled with obvious references to Zoroastrian religion, especially in that many of the heroes chronicled have explicit counterparts as far back as the Avestan canon.[526] The influence and tropes of the *Shāhnāmeh* will be discussed in more detail later in this dissertation, especially since some of these heroes are explicitly referenced in Kāshefī's *maqtal*. But before we turn further to the text of the *Shāhnāmeh*, let us consider some of its antecedents.

Besides the *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* previously mentioned in Chapter Two, we do not have any other extant pre-Islamic Persianate epic poems. However, several other texts which give us a sense of how heroes were understood. The Middle Persian genre of *andarz*, or 'advice' literature, is ostensibly designed to exhort its audience toward proper Zoroastrian morality. *Andarz* texts

[523] F.C. de Blois, "Shāh "king", and Shāhanshāh", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 10 December 2018 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6744>. Regarding the ancient usage of this title, see also for example, Darius I's statement, "I am Darius, Great King, King of Kings (*xšāyaθiya xšāyaθiyānām*), King in Persia, King of Lands." See also: Matt Waters, "Xerxes and the Oathbreakers: Empire and Rebellion on the Northwestern Front," *Revolt and Resistance in the Ancient Classical World and the Near East: In the Crucible of Empire*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East; v. 85, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 93-102.
[524] Khaleghi-Motlagh considers this to be indisputable and the references to Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān in some versions of the *dībācheh* to be later intrusions. See: Khaleghi-Motlagh. "Ferdowsi, Abu'l-Qāsem i. Life."
[525] Jamshīd, under the Avestan name Yima-xšaēta, for example, is mentioned many times, such as in *Yasna* 9.4 or *Yašt* 19.35, which discuss his possession of divine favor. See: Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Jamšid i. Myth of Jamšid," *Encyclopædia Iranica.* XIV/5, pp 501-522; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jamsid-i (accessed on 21 November 2018).
[526] For example, Ferdowsī opens his work by specifically choosing to emphasize God's wisdom: *be-nām-e khodavānd-e jān-o kherad, ka-z-īn bartar andīsheh bar nagozarad* ("In the name of the Lord of life and wisdom, beyond which thought cannot reach") Then he launches into a praise of wisdom (*goftār andar setāyesh-kherad*). All of these examples arguably reflect the traditional Zoroastrian emphasis on Ōhrmazd's wisdom; even the origin of the name, Ahura-Mazdāh in Avestan, literally means 'wise lord.' In addition, the order of the creation of the physical elements (fire, air, water, and earth) mirrors the order that physical elements are created in traditional Zoroastrian accounts of creation like the Middle Persian *Bundahišn*. Then, of course, there is the fact that Ferdowsī often refers to the devil as Ahriman, i.e. the Zoroastrian anti-god. See: Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 1:3-5.

typically consist of sets of loosely arranged sentences which impart moral advice on different topics in a general sense.[527] There may be an abbreviated frame story to establish the interlocutors, or the advice may be embedded inside anecdotes presented as the words of ancient sages or the stories of heroes. One such famous text is the *Mēnōg-ī Xrad* (The Spirit of Wisdom), which was probably compiled sometime during the reign of Khosrow I (d. 579 C.E.).[528] While this text keeps the usual terse format for *andarz* texts, its format is slightly more complex. The work is set up in a question-and-answer format, where the instructor is asked a question and provides an answer, often using an anecdote or example from the stories of ancient Persian heroic or religious figures. In one chapter, the interlocutor, simply called 'Dānāg' (sage),[529] asks the teacher, the loosely personified spirit of wisdom, "What sort of man is stronger? (*mard kadām tagīgtar?*)" The spirit then replies: "The stronger man is he who has the power to struggle against his own demons (*druz-ī xwēš*),[530] and especially to banish the five demons from his body, for example concupiscence (*āz*), anger (*xešm*), desire (*waran*), shame (*nang*), and dissatisfaction (*ahunsandīh*)."[531] This statement is expressed in dramatic terms, comparing the struggle with one's own faults to literal demons (*druz*) which need to be fought (*kōxšīdan*).[532] This struggle

[527] Saul Shaked, Z. Safa, "Andarz," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, II/1, pp. 11-22, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/andarz-precept-instruction-advice (accessed on 17 January 2020).
[528] Aḥmad Tafażżolī, "Dādestān ī Mēnōg ī Xrad," *Encyclopædia Iranica.* VI/5, 554-555; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dadestan-i-menog (accessed on 17 November 2018).
[529] Modern Persian *dānā*, 'wise person.'
[530] This type of advice bears some similarity to the *vincere animum* genre in some form of Medieval European literature, as well as the concept of the struggle with the *nafs* (lower self) typical of Sufi handbooks previously mentioned in Chapter Two, Section VIII.
[531] Friedrich Carl Andreas, *The Book of the Mainyo-i-khard: Also, an Old Fragment of the Bundehesh, Both in the Original Pahlavi; Being a Facsimile of a Manuscript Brought from Persia by Westergaard and Now Preserved in the University-library of Copenhagen,* (Kiel: Lipsius and Tischer, 1882), 44. Alternate translation available in: E. W. West, *The Book of the Mainyo-I-Khard*. Stuttgart and London, 1871.
mard ān tagīgtar kē abāg druz ī xwēš kōxšīdan tuwān ud pad nāmčišt kē ēn panǰ druz az tan dūr dārēd ī čiyōn hast āz ud xešm ud waran ud nang ud ahunsandīh.
[532] It's worth noting that the Middle Persian word used here for 'demon' is *druz,* related to Avestan *draoγa* and *druj* 'lie, the personification of evil,' cf. Modern Persian *dorūgh* 'lie.' Ultimately, the strong man is one who resists 'his own lie,' i.e. lying to himself.

inevitably leads to a discussion of fate, and then, the presence of the mythical Persianate heroes is never far off; an earlier chapter states:

> How have those people who from Geyūmart, and others, from Hūshang (Hōšyang) the lawgiver, the lords and nobles, up to Goshtāsb (Wištāsp), the king of kings, been thus so successful? They obtained much favor (*nēkīh*) from the Worshipful Ones (*yazadān*), and they have been mostly ungrateful towards them; and there are those who have been very ungrateful, breaking oaths and sinning. For what good reason have they been separately created, and what profit or advantage comes out of that creation? The spirit of wisdom answered that, 'You should be aware of and know the good reason or the opposite of that which you are asking about them. For all the affairs of the world follow from destiny, time (*zamānag*), and the decisive judgment of the self-existent Zurwān, the mighty and eternal lord.[533] Because from age to age, a lot (*baxt*) is apportioned to everyone, as it must happen. As it is clear from the inheritance of the noble ones, the ancients, that in the end, the good reason was that their coming to the creations of Ohrmazd was necessary."[534]

The spirit then goes on to give a list of characters, whose names would be instantly familiar from the *Shāhnāmeh:* Jamšēd (Jamshīd), Frēdōn (Fereydūn), Siyāwaxš (Siyāvash), and many others, giving examples of a terrible demon they defeated or how they contributed in some way to the edification of the religion. The purpose of this, says the spirit, is even though some of these heroes committed sins, the benefit of their heroic deeds far outweighs their sins.

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[533] This is the ancient Zoroastrian concept of *zruuan akarana*, Avestan for "boundless time," which was conceived of by some Zoroastrian thinkers (i.e. in later official court Zoroastrianism—in no way a Zurvanite "heresy") as a primordial divine entity superior to both Ahura-Mazdā (Ohrmazd) and Aŋra Mainiiu (Ahriman), as well as being the origin of both. The word *zruuan*, related to Sanskrit *jarā* and Greek *gêras*, both meaning "old age," is likely the source of the Middle Persian word *zamān* "time," which is borrowed into Aramaic as *zabnā* and Arabic as *zamān*, with the same meanings. See: Albert De Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature*, Religions in the Graeco-Roman World; Volume 133, (Leiden; Boston; Cologne: Brill, 1997), 197.

[534] Andreas, 31. Alternate translation available in: E. W. West, *The Book of the Mainyo-i-Khard*. Stuttgart and London, 1871.

čē rāy mardōm ī az gayōmart ud ān iz ī az hōšyang ī pēšdād xwadāyān ud dahibedān tā ō wištāsp ī šāhān šāh ēdōn kāmag-widār būd hēnd u šān az yazadān nēkīh wēš windād ud frahist ān ī andar yazadān anespās būd hēnd, ud hast iz kē abēr anespās ud mihrōdruǰ ud wināhgār būd hēnd, ēg awēšān ǰud ǰud čē nēkīh rāy dād būd hēnd u šān bar ud sūd aziš čē raft? mēnōg ī xrad passox kard kū: ān ī awēšān rāy pad nēkīh ayāb pad ǰuttarīh pursē āgāh bāš ud be dān, čē kār ī gēhān hāmōyēn pad brēh ud zamānag ud wizīr ī brīn rawēd, ī xwad ast zurwān ī pādixšā ud dagrand-xwadāy, čiyōn andar āwām āwām ō harw kē rāy baxt ēstēd ān ī abāyēd madan abar rasēd, čiyōn az iz ham paywand ī awēšān pēšēnīgān ī widardag paydāg kū abdom ān nēkīh ī az awēšān ō dāmān ī ohrmazd abāyist madan be mad.

Essentially, this is probably a justification for the popular hero cults of pre-Islamic Iran. We have already seen that many of the heroes show up in the Avestan *Yašt*s, and Boyce believes that the *frauuašī*s (personified or guardian spirits) are remnants of ancestor worship and/or hero cults.[535] Far and away, the text stresses the essential nobility of these characters, even if they commit sins. This is both metaphorical as well as literal nobility, because most of them, in contrast to what we have seen above in the Arabic texts, are actual royalty. Ultimately, as this text tells us, the heroes must be a force for good because this is what has been ordained for them.

While not explicitly from the *andarz* genre—in fact, a liturgical text—another piece contains some interesting comments about death, fate, and moral character. The *Aogəmadaēcā* (And We Profess) is an anonymous fragmentary text, ostensibly composed in Avestan, though a much expanded Middle Persian version is also extant. Jamaspasa postulates that the text was intended as an *āfrīn*, a funerary benediction intended to bless the departed.[536] The overall tone of the text is framed as a sermon on the need for one to accept the inevitability of death. In order to illustrate this point, the Middle Persian version of the text mentions the fate of many heroes:

> Or it (would) have been Yam, the bright, of good flocks, the son of Vīvaŋhān, who (was) bright (and) brilliant, (who) was (in) possession of good flocks [that is, he kept well the flocks of men and sheep. Who for six hundred and sixteen years, six months, and thirteen days, maintained this world immortal (*amarg*), ageless, and who withheld greed and need from the creation of Ōhrmazd. When death came even unto him, he delivered up the body(*tan bē dāt*), he was not able to struggle with his own death (*xvēš kōxšītan*)…now I am thankful to the lord Ōhrmazd, and I offer thankfulness. When the beast of burden has come, it does not go without the load. Similarly, it is not possible to thrust aside fate (*baxt*) which has come.[537]

[535] Mary Boyce, "Fravaši," *Encyclopedia Iranica.* X/2, pp. 195-199, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fravasi- (accessed on 5 December 2018).
[536] Kaikhusroo M. Jamaspasa, *Aogemadaēcā: A Zoroastrian Liturgy*, Veröffentlichungen Der Iranischen Kommission; Bd. 11, (Wien: Verlag Der Österreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften, 1982), 10.
[537] Translation from Jamaspasa. See: Jamaspasa, 83, 86.

Similarly, the text contains references to Hūshang, Fereydūn, and others, even including some notorious villains like Ẓaḥḥāk and Afrāsiyāb. However, in the text, it is the heroes who embrace the virtuous paradigm of "good thoughts, good words, good deeds." The purpose of the *Aogəmadaēcā* is then to prepare the soul for death by offering examples of figures who exemplify both acceptance of their fate, which "it is not possible to thrust aside," and those who defy divine decree and resist it. Ultimately, both will die, but it is the virtuous who will obtain salvation.

Consider the previously mentioned quotations from the Middle Persian *Mēnōg-ī Xrad;* the spirit of wisdom says that, "Because from time to time, a lot (*baxt*) is apportioned to everyone, as it must happen."[538] This fate is personified and theologized in the form of Zurwān, and it is not a malevolent force—unlike *dahr*. Here, fate is still an inexorable force, but the tragedy does not lie in the hero succumbing to fate. The tragedy lies in the narrative superstructure, in dramatic irony, and in cosmic meaning. In the following two sections, I will examine in detail the reactions of two Persian epic heroes to this fate and how their role in the narrative explicates that cosmic meaning.

VI. The Man with the Golden Armor: Zarīr as the Archetype of the Righteous Warrior

In the previous section, I considered some of the Middle Persian writings that lay the groundwork for the evolution of the Persian idea of the epic hero. Specifically, those texts that establish the specific moral qualities indispensable to the heroes and identify that their fate is predetermined in the war of the divine against evil. In this section, let us turn to the

[538] Andreas, 44.

manifestations of that heroic paradigm which are later articulated in the *Shāhnāmeh* and eventually influence Kāshefī's compositions. First, due to his central role in the only known epic (arguably) 'poem' in Middle Persian, as well as one of the earliest known Persian laments, I will discuss the story of Zarīr.

The earliest mention of Zarīr appears to be in the *Yašt*s, in the *Arəduuī Sūrā* or *Ābān Yašt* 112-113, the hymn to Anāhitā (New Persian: *nāhīd*), the personification of pure waters. Therein, Zairivairi, Avestan for "the golden-plated one," offers up prayer and sacrifices to Anāhitā for victory over the evil (*druuaṇtəm*) king of Tūrān, Arəjataspa (Middle and New Persian: Arjāsp):

> Zairivairi, the horse-fighter (*aspāiiaoδō*), sacrificed (*yazata*) to her [Anāhitā] behind the waters of the river Dāitiia, a hundred stallions, a thousand bulls, and ten thousand rams. And then he implored her, "Grant me that prosperity, O good, O most mighty Arəduuī Sūra Anāhitā, that I may be victorious over Pəšōcaṇgha the corpse-burier, Humaiiaka the worshipper of the Daēvas (*daēuuaiiasnəm*), and the wicked Arəjataspa, in the battles of this world."[539]

The story is considerably expanded in the only surviving example of an epic poem from the Middle Persian era, the *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* (Commemoration of Zarēr).[540] This piece dates to the 5th or 6th century C.E., and according to Boyce, was probably based on an earlier Parthian version.[541] We do not have any information about the author of the text beyond this, and it may

[539] *tąm yazata aspāiiaoδō zairivairiš pasne āpō dāitiiaiiå satəm aspanąm arşnąm hazaŋrəm gauuąm baēuuarə anumaiianąm āaţ hīm jaiδiiaţ auuaţ āiiaptəm dazdi mē vaŋuhi səuuište arəduuī sūre anāhite yaţ bauuāni aiβivaniiå pəšōciŋghəm aštōkānəm humaiiakəm daēuuaiiasnəm druuaṇtəmca arəjaţaspəm ahmi gaēϑe pəšanāhu.* My translation. For the Avestan text, see: Karl F. Geldner. *Avesta, the Sacred Books of the Parsis*. (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1886), 2: 99. For another translation, see: James Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta*. Sacred Books of the East; v. 4, 23, 31. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), 23: 80.

[540] It is worth noting that Omidsalar criticizes the classification of *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* as a poem. He argues that Benveniste's 1932 article which subsequently informed the understanding of it as poetry is the result of Benveniste editing the original Middle Persian to fit into hexasyllabic verse format. He suggests that it may be more possible to view the text as prose punctuated by poetry. Ironically, if this interpretation is correct, it would make the *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* very similar in form to the *Rowẕat*. See: Omidsalar 1996, 239.

[541] It has been argued that indeed, pre-Islamic Persian epic literature had strong Parthian influences; compare *Vīs-o Rāmīn*, which also probably dates back to a Parthian version. This may partially explain the beginnings of the use of *pahlavān* to mean 'hero.' Boyce 1990, 77.

have belonged to the repertoire of bards.[542] Ferdowsī's *Shāhnāmeh* itself was at least partially based on an ancient pre-Islamic written tradition which also incorporates another version of the *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* derived from Daqīqī.[543] The primary source(s) that Ferdowsī and Daqīqī relied on were a lost prose *Shāhnāmeh* or a corpus of such texts.[544] As such, by the time of the defeat of the Sassanian Empire and its incorporation into the Muslim caliphate, the Persianate concept of the heroic epic and the character of its heroes were well-established. The fact that *Ayādgār-ī Zarērān* only is extant in a single manuscript might give the impression that this was an obscure text. However, the story itself was obviously well-known to the extent that al-Ṭabarī includes a short rendition of it in his *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa'l-Mulūk* (The History of Messengers and Kings). In this rendition, al-Ṭabarī also specifically mentions that Bishtāsb's son, Esfandiyār,[545] sings about him after his death (*fa-'ḥsana l-ghinā' ʿanhu 'bnuhu Isfandiyār*) – in other words, this is a reference to lament as part of the Persian literary landscape as well.[546]

Ayādgār-ī Zarērān is not an easy text; it is only preserved in a single manuscript, where the text appears highly corrupted, and according to Shaki, the Parthian elements in it are more extensive than first appears, which make it difficult to read.[547] The general story is as follows: Zarēr is the brother and a general of King Wištāsp, who is very important to early Zoroastrianism

[542] Ibid. Note however that Khaleghi-Motlagh has criticized Boyce's insistence on the importance of the *gōsān*s and argues that it refers to illiterate singers who would have not had access to sophisticated literature. See: Khaleghi-Motlagh 1998, 514.
[543] Mary Boyce, "Ayādgār ī Zarērān," *Encycloœedia Iranica*, III/2, pp. 128-129; available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ayadgar-i-zareran (accessed on 14 November 2018).
[544] Hameen-Anttila states, "Both the *Ghurar* [of al-Thaʿālibī] and the *Shāhnāme* go back to a source (the Prose *Shāhnāme*) which resembles the *Ayādgār* and contained a translation of the *Ayādgār* set in the frame of Persian national history. Al-Thaʿālibī has abbreviated this source by, e.g., dropping the names of the messengers, whereas Firdawsī/Daqīqī has freely rewritten the story, elaborating it with details. In passages where al-Thaʿālibī rather closely follows the *Ayādgār*, we may with good reason assume that his source, the Prose *Shāhnāme*, was also close to the original." See: Hameen-Anttila 2018, 161.
[545] There has been some confusion in this line, which has been translated to suggest that Esfandiyār was Zarēr's son, rather than Bishtāsb's. Hameen-Anttila corrects this. See: Hameen-Anttila 2018, 164.
[546] Ṭabarī, *The History of Al-Ṭabarī = Taʾrīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 5:3.
[547] Mansour Shaki, "Observations of the Ayadgar I Zareran," *Archív Orientální* 54 (1986): 257-71; 258.

for his patronage of the prophet Zoroaster. This poem takes place after Wištāsp and most of his kingdom has accepted the new religion. However, another kingdom, that of the Chionites (*xiyōnān*), continues to worship demons (*dēw*), and is led in battle by an evil sorcerer (*jādūg*) named Wīdrafš. In the beginning of the poem, Zarēr dictates a letter in the name of the king, warning the enemy of what they will face:

> So firstly, we will not abandon this holy religion and we will not join with you in your false teachings. We received this holy religion from Ohrmazd and we will not give it up; in another month, we will drink the nectar of immortality without you. There at the forest of Hutōs and the Murw of Zardušt where there are neither high mountains nor deep lakes, on the flat plain, horses and brave soldiers [will reach] a resolution. You will come from over there so that we may come from here and you will see us as we see you. And then we will show you how the demons are smote by the hand of the Worshipful Ones.[548]

Zarēr is a seasoned warrior, and though we see his ferocity and bloodlust in battle, he tells his enemies exactly what he is going to do and why he is doing it. There is no hint of guile in his letter, quite to the contrary. What is more, Zarēr is not fighting for himself. His ordeal is in service of a higher cause: both to preserve the true religion from the sorcerer, and to protect his family from inevitable slaughter. We know he is going to die; the reference to 'drinking

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[548] Jāmāspjī Mīnocheherjī Jamāsp-Āsānā and Behramgore Tehmuras Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Texts*, (Fort Printing Press, 1897), 202-3.
pad fradomīh nē amā ēn dēn abēzag hilēm ud abāg ašmā ham-kēš nē bawēm ud amā ēn dēn abēzag az ohrmazd padīrift ud bē nē hilēm ud bē ašmā dudīgar māh anōš xwarēm. anōh pad hutōs ī razūr ud murw ī zarduštān kē nē kōf ī borz ud nē war zofr, bē pad ān dašt ī hāmōn aspān nēw payān wizārišn. ašmā az ānōh āyēd tā amā az ēdar āyēm ud ašmā amā wēnēd, amā ašmā wēnēm. u-tān nimāyēm kū čiyōn zad bawād dēw az dast ī yazdān.

While I have translated *dēw* as 'demon,' I do not think that the inverse can be done for *yaz[a]d*. A *yazd* is literally something deserving worship (Avestan *yazata*, from the same root as *yasna* 'sacrifice,' Sanskrit: *yajña*; cognate with Modern Persian *jashn* 'feast'); they are not really equivalent to angels, even though in the present day, they are typically identified as such. More properly, they are hypostases of specific virtues or abstract concepts, and blur the line between deity and servitor spirit in the Zoroastrian cosmological scheme. By the Islamic period, the singular had almost disappeared, to be replaced by the plural (of majesty, most likely), which had the singular meaning of 'God,' a sort of archaic-sounding synonym for *khodā.* For an alternate translation, consult: Charles F. Horne, *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East: With Historical Surveys of the Chief Writings of Each Nation*, (Parke, Austin, and Lipscomb, 1917), VII: 214.

immortality' (*anōš xwarēm*) is simply too direct a statement to assume otherwise, even before the any prophecies are uttered. Several other thematic elements stand out in the story of Zarēr, including a grim prophecy of death, and possibly the first recorded elegy in Middle Persian:

> Though it was always your desire that you would take to the battlefield with the Chionites, now you have been killed and thrown down in our battle, just like any man without rank or wealth (*agāh aganj*)?
> Thus the winds have ruined this hair and beard, and the horses trampled your pure body (*abēzag tan*) underfoot. Dust lays upon your face (*grīw*). But now, what can do? If I were to get off my horse and embrace my father's head and remove the dust from his face, I could not mount the horse again easily.
> Chionites might arrive and they would kill me as you were killed as well. Then the Chionites would two names carry off, [saying] that "we killed Zarēr, commander of Iran's armies (*ērān spāhbed*), and we also killed Bastwar, his son."[549]

The drama of the chivalrous hero's demise is addressed both on an emotional and practical level. Bastwar speaks in a clearly grief-stricken tone and expresses disbelief at his father's death. He describes the corpse, emphasizing the desecration of his father's body as an expression of outrage—i.e., Wīdrafš has reduced Zarēr to base dead flesh left behind in the dust of the battlefield. The literary contrast of the dirtiness of the dust (*xāk*) with Zarēr's "pure body" (*abēzag tan*) highlights the themes of a dualistic clash between good and evil.

Even more wondrous, the text describes Bastwar as a child of seven (*kōdak-i haft sālag*)![550] This is likely a symbolic notation designed to elicit awe, to increase the impression of

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[549] Jāmāspjī Mīnocheherjī Jamāsp-Āsānā and Behramgore Tehmuras Anklesaria, *Pahlavi Texts*, (Fort Printing Press, 1897), 213-4.
ka-t hamē ēdōn kāmist kū-t abāg xiyōnān kārezār kunē, nūn ōzad abgand hē andar amā razm čiyōn a-gāh a-ganj mardōm. u-t ēn xwahl wars ud rēš wādān wišuft ēstēd, u-t abēzag tan, aspān xwast pad pāy, u-t xāk ō grīw nišast, bē nūn čiyōn kunēm čē agar az asp bē nišīnēm ud tō pidar sar andar kanār gīrēm u-t xāk az grīw bē gīrēm ud pas sabukīhā abāz ō asp nišastan nē tuwān. ma xiyōn<ān> rasēnd ud man ōzanēnd čē-šān tō-iz kušt, pas xiyōn<ān> dō nām barēnd kū-mān ōzad zarēr ērān spāh-bed, u-mān ōzad bastwar ī-š pus.
Alternate translation in Horne, 221.
[550] Ibid, 212.

the supernatural origins of Zarēr and his family.[551] These elements of wonderment and application of supernatural qualities to heroes is common not only here, but as we shall see, in the *Shāhnāmeh* as well. We shall revisit these concepts later in this dissertation, but for now, it is enough to make note of the qualities of Zarēr that the text dwells on: his bravery, his strength, his piety, and his fairness.

The story of Zarīr occurs in the *Shāhnāmeh* as well. Ferdowsī's text preserves the Zoroastrian elements of Zarīr as the central defender of Zoroastrian religion against demonic forces, represented by Bīdrafs (Wīdrafš) and Arjāsp. Like in the selections from the Middle Persian poem, my focus here is on two primary ideas: of Zarīr as the personification of righteousness and the mourning over his death on the battlefield.

Of the narrative, a thousand lines are taken from Daqīqī's incomplete composition, which dealt with this story. Ferdowsī includes a short interlude right before Daqīqī's verses begin, where he acknowledges the poet.[552] The majority of the action concerning Zarīr takes place in Daqīqī's lines. After refusing to turn over tribute from Iran to Arjāsp, the king of Tūrān, Zarīr rides out to battle. In it, he fights bravely, but is killed by Bīdrafs through evil magic. Eventually, after killing Bīdrafs, Esfandiyār finds the body of Zarīr, and sings this lament over him:

همی گفت کای شاه گردان بلخ — همه زندگانی بکردیم تلخ
دریغا سوارا، شها، خسروا — نبرده دلیرا، گزیده گوا
ستون منا، پرده‌ی کشورا — چراغ جهان، افسر لشکرا

He said: O you, the king of the warriors of Balkh
We have turned our entire life to bitterness
Alas, O knight, O king, O great lord (*khosrovā*)!

[551] The number seven is of course well-known as mystical number, and no less so in ancient Iran: seven climes, the seven-ringed cup of Jamshīd (*jām-e Jam*), the seven sons of Haftvād (whose name means 'seven sons!'), etc.
[552] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 5:75-6.

> O valiant and fearless one, O chosen among heroes!
> My pillar and veil of the land!
> Light of the world (*cherāgh-e jahān*), diadem of the army![553]

Obviously, this is a much simpler kind of lament than the Middle Persian lament, or even what we saw earlier in the poetry of al-Khansā' in Chapter One. Hameen-Anttila also points out that the lament is filled with the rather archaic vocative ending *-ā*, which has mostly fallen out of use in Modern Persian with the exception of some frozen phrases like *khodāyā* (O God!).[554] The lament is structurally quite different from most sorts of laments performed by women, in that it primary focuses on two themes: praise of the dead and the suffering brought about by their absence.[555] There is no defense of status, no frenzy, no rending of garment to accompany the lament. However, it provides a template for the sorts of metaphors and themes to be expected in Persian epic literature.

Here, the focus is still on the eternal glory frozen in the image of the departed, which is a central idea cultivated in the conception of Ḥusayn as the righteous warrior fighting for true religion on the field of battle. The mourning dirge over Zarīr calls to mind the mourning for the death of Ḥusayn as we have seen in previous chapters. Here, I highlight this image of the warrior's death in battle, as compared to the conspiracy and execution enacted on Siyāvash, who, as we shall see in the next section, in most other ways parallels Ḥusayn more closely.

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[553] Ibid, 5:148-9.
[554] Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, *Khwadāynāmag: The Middle Persian Book of Kings*, Studies in Persian Cultural History; v. 14, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2018), 164.
[555] For example, in the context of ancient Greek laments, Alexiou argues that praise for the dead was considered more appropriate for men, while lamentation was assigned to the women. Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*, Revised by Dimitrios Yatromanolakis and Panagiotis Roilos, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 105.

VII. The White Rider on the Black Horse: Siyāvash as the Paradigmatic Ancient Iranian Martyr

In the previous section, we have seen a representation of the mourning over the righteous warrior's death in battle, as manifested by the character of Zarīr. In this section, I will examine a narrative from Persian literature which demonstrates the concept of a sacrificial martyrdom, that of Siyāvash. As we shall see, the number of parallels between Siyāvash and Ḥusayn are myriad and rooted in the emotive pouring out of grief over the unjust murder of the innocent victim.

In his edition on the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid periods of Iranian history in the *Cambridge History of Iran*, Yarshater writes that, "It appears that the mourning cult of Siyāvush, a legacy of Iranian pagan times, paved the way and provided the mold for the development of the Shiʿite mourning rites in Iran which eventually led to the emergence of the *taʿziya*…the passion of Siyāvush bears too close a resemblance to that of Imām Ḥusain in ritual, imagery and emotive underpinnings to be ignored in an explanation of the Islamic genre."[556] Indeed, Siyāvash remains a perennial figure in Iranian culture to this day. As I have previously mentioned, *Savūshūn* (Siyāvash Rituals),[557] the first Persian novel written by an Iranian woman, and Sīmīn Dāneshvar's (d. 2012 C.E.) most famous novel, portrays scenes of mourning ceremonies for Siyāvash, noting the similarity between him and Ḥusayn.[558]

Unfortunately, outside of some scattered mentions in academic works on *taʿziyeh*, the connection of Siyāvash to these rituals has indeed been overlooked. This section will attempt to

[556] Yarshater, 451.
[557] The word *savūshūn* is a dialectal pronunciation of *siyāvashān*, i.e mourning rituals for Siyāvash or mourners of Siyāvash.
[558] At one point, a crowd is gathered in a funeral procession and crying out to Ḥusayn, while in response, the novel's protagonist, Zarī explicitly compares the situation to the *Siyāvashān.* See: Sīmīn Dāneshvar, *Savūshūn*, (Tehran: Sherkat-e Sehāmī-e Enteshārāt-e Khʷārazmī, 1969), 44, 270, 297.

rectify this issue by providing a discussion of some of the most salient themes in the story of Siyāvash, from its earliest textual origin in the Avestan *Yašt*s to its most full articulation in the *Shāhnāmeh*.[559] It is only through a full exploration of the features of Siyāvash's story, a veritable pre-Islamic Persian martyrdom narrative, that the "ritual, imagery and emotive underpinnings" highlighted by Yarshater which permeate this narrative may be properly explained. Siyāvash, who occupies a central position in the Persian epic consciousness of the 'pure hero,' is often compared to Ḥusayn, and Meskūb even argues that Siyāvash was essentially reconceptualized as Ḥusayn after the coming of Islam.[560]

The Cult of Siyāvash

Siyāvash apparently had a vast cult or cultic-like rituals dedicated to him in Bukhara, and probably other places as well.[561] The earliest alleged reference to a mourning cult dedicated to him is tentatively identified by most scholars as the "Mourning Scene" mural from Temple II, dedicated to the goddess Nana in Panjikent, Tajikistan and dated to around the 6th century C.E.[562] The mural depicts a variety of deities and epic figures conducting funerary rites supervised by Nana over the body of a young crowned man on a bier.[563]

One of our best sources describing the cult of Siyāvash is provided by Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar Narshakī (d. 959 C.E.), a Bukharan Samanid-era historian. Nothing is known of his life beyond this book, *Tārīkh-e Bokhārā* (The History of Bukhara), which does not

[559] The best overview of the post-Islamic historical sources describing the story of Siyāvash is given in: Z̲ū 'l-Feqār ʿAlāmī and Nasrīn Shakībī Momtāz, "Siyāvash dar Tārīkh-e Dāstānī-ye Īrān (pas az Eslām), *Faṣlnāmeh-ye Pazhūhesh'hā-ye Adabī*, vol. 4, no. 17 (Fall 2007), pp. 107-124.
[560] Shāhrokh Meskūb. *Sūg-e Siyāvash: Dar Marg va Rastākhīz*, (Tehran: Khvārazmī, 1972), 82.
[561] Judging from the fact that Rāmeshān and Bukhara are far west from Ṭūs, where Ferdowsī was born and died.
[562] Possibly a local form of Anāhitā or Spənta Ārmaiti; see: Guitty Azarpay, *Sogdian Painting: The Pictorial Epic in Oriental Art,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 134, 137.
[563] Azarpay notes that there is disagreement though over whether the crowned figure represents Siyāvash or his son Forūd. See: Ibid, 130.

survive in the original Arabic, evidently because the original was unpopular until it was translated into Persian.[564] Note also that based on the dating of Narshakhī's life, Ferdowsī would have been around 19 to 24 when Narshakhī died. As such, the cult of Siyāvash was well-established long before Ferdowsī, and lends credence to Ferdowsī's claim that he knew the story from pre-existing tradition. The first relevant quotation is found under the entry for Rāmeshān, a village in Qazvīn province in northern Iran:

> Rāmeshan has a large ancient fortress and is a well-established town. It is older than Bukhara. In some books about Bukhara they have called this village Bukhara itself. From ancient times, it has been the seat of emperors. After Bukhara became a city, the emperors spent their winters in this village. It was also like this during the time of Islam. When Abū Muslim arrived in this village, he resided there and made it his seat. Afrāsiyāb built this village and whenever Afrāsiyāb came to this province, he did not reside in any place other than this village. Likewise, in the books of the Persians, it is said that he lived for two thousand years. He practiced magic (*jādū*) and was a descendant of Noah. He [Afrāsiyāb] murdered his own son-in-law, whose name was Siyāvash. Siyāvash had a son named Kay Khosrow. He came to the province seeking vengeance for his father's blood with a huge army. Afrāsiyāb made the village of Rameshan into a fortress, and for two years Kay Khosrow laid siege to with his army and built a village facing it; he named that village Rāmeshān. They named it Rāmeshān for its beauty and this village is still inhabited. In the village of Rāmeshān there is a fire temple (*ātashkhāneh*). The Magi say that this fire temple is older than the other fire temples of Bukhara. Kay Khosrow captured Afrāsiyāb two years later and killed him. The tomb of Afrāsiyāb is upon the city of Bukhara by the gate of the temple. Adjacent on that large hillock there is the hillock of Khᵛājeh Imām Abū Ḥafṣ Kabīr. The Bukharans have strange songs (*sorūd-hā*) about the murder of Siyavash. The singers call these songs "the vengeance of Siyāvash (*kīn-e siyavash*)." Muhammad b. Jaʿfar says that these songs are three thousand years old. But God knows best.[565]

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[564] C.E. Bosworth, "Narshakhī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 7 March 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5805>

[565] Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ja'far Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-e Bokhārā*, (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Bonyād-e Farhang-i Īrān, 1972), 18-19.

رامشن کهندژی بزرگ دارد و دیهی استوار است و از شهر بخارا قدیمتر است. و در بعضی کتابها بخارا آن دیه را خوانده‌اند. و از قدیم باز مقام پادشاهان بوده است. و بعد از آنکه بخارا شهر شده است پادشاهان زمستان به این دیه می باشیده‌اند. و در اسلام هم چنین بوده است. و ابومسلم چون به بخارا رسیده است به این دیه باشیده و مقام کرده است. افراسیاب بنا کرده است این دیه را. و افراسیاب هرگاهی که به این ولایت آمده جز به این دیه به جای دیگر نباشیده است. و اندر کتب پارسیان چنان است که وی دو هزار سال زندگانی یافته است. و وی مردی جادو بوده است و از فرزندان نوح بوده است. و وی داماد خویش را بکشت که سیاوش نام داشت.

و سیاوش را پسری بود کیخسرو نام؛ وی به طلب خون پدر به این ولایت آمد با لشکری عظیم. افراسیاب دیه رامشن را حصار کرد. و دو سال کیخسرو بر گرد حصار با لشکر خویش بنشست و در مقابلهٔ وی دیهی بنا کرد و آن دیه را رامشن نام کرد. و رامشن آتشخانه‌ای نهاد. و مغان چنین گویند که آن آتشخانه قدیمتر از آتشخانه‌های بخارا است.

The second account fills in additional details and is found under the entry for the fortress of Bukhara, located in the modern-day Uzbek city of Bukhara:

> Aḥmad b. Muhammad b. Naṣr says: Abū al-Ḥasan Nīshābūrī in his "Treasuries of the Sciences" has related that reason for the building of the Ancient Fortress of Bukhara (*kohandezh-e bokhārā*), meaning the enclosure of the tower of Bukhara, was that Siyāvash, the son of Kay Kāvūs fled from his own father and passed through the Jayḥūn River, coming to Afrāsiyāb. Afrāsiyāb greeted him with honor and gave him his own daughter in marriage. Some have said that he gave him his entire kingdom. Siyāvash wanted to leave a monument (*asar*) in this region, and for that reason, this region was loaned to him. So he built the fortress of Bukhara, and usually lived there. When there was bad blood between him and Afrāsiyāb, Afrāsiyāb killed him, and they buried him in that fortress, at the eastern place, inside where the straw-sellers are, which they call the porcelain gate (*darvāzeh-ye ghūriyān*). For this reason, the magi of Bukhara hold it dear, and each year, everyone brings a rooster (*khorūs*) and sacrifices it before sunrise on Nowrūz. The people of Bukhara have eulogies (*nowḥat*) about the murder of Siyāvash which are quite well-known in every region. The singers have composed songs and they recite them. The storytellers call those songs "the weeping of the magi (*gerīstan-e moghān*)." This account is more than three thousand years old. According to this account, this fortress was built by Siyāvash. Some have said that Afrāsiyāb built it.[566]

A slightly later and much shorter account is given in a rather unexpected place: *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* (Compendium of Turkic Languages), a dictionary/lexicon complied by the Qarakhanid scholar, Maḥmūd b. Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Kāshgharī (d. 1102 C.E.). The book, written in

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و کیخسرو بعد دو سال افراسیاب را بگرفت و بکشت. و گور افراسیاب بردر شهر بخارا است به دروازهٔ معبد، بر آن تل بزرگ که پیوسته به تل خواجه امام ابو حفص کبیر است.
و اهل بخارا را بر کشتن سیاوش سرودهای عجب است. و مطربان آن سرودها را «کین سیاوش» گویند.
و محمد ابن جعفر گوید که از این تاریخ سه هزار سال است. و الله اعلم.

[566] Ibid, 28-9.
ابوالحسن نیشابوری در خزاین العلوم آورده است که سبب بنای کهندژ بخارا یعنی حصارک ارگ بخارا آن بود که سیاوش ابن کیکاوس از پدر خویش بگریخت و از جیحون بگذشت و نزد افراسیاب آمد. افراسیاب اورا بنواخت و دختر خیوش را به زنی به وی داد. و بعضی گفته‌اند که جملهٔ ملک خویش را به وی داد. سیاوش خواست که از وی اثری ماند در این ولایت، از بهر آنکه این ولایت اورا عاریتی بود. پس وی این حصار بخارا بنا کرد، و پیشتر آنجا می بود، و میان وی افراسیاب بدگویی کردند و افراسیاب اورا بکشت، و هم در این حصار به آن موضع که از در شرقی اندرآئی ا ندرون در کاهفروشان و آن را دروازهٔ غوریان خوانند اورا آنجا دفن کردند. و مغان بخارا بدین سبب آنجا را عزیز دارند، و هر سالی هر مردی آنجا یکی خروس برد و بکشد پیش از برآمدن آفتاب روز نوروز.
و مردمان بخارا را در کشتن سیاوش نوحه‌ها است چنانکه در همهٔ ولایتها معروف است. و مطربان آن را سرود ساخته‌اند و می گویند. و قوالان آن را گریستن مغان خوانند. و این سخن زیادت از سه هزار سال است.
پس این حصار را، به این روایت، وی بنا کرده است. و بعضی گفته‌اند افراسیاب بنا کرده است.

Arabic and completed around 1077 C.E., was intended to aid the Abbasid Empire in their contact with the various Turkic peoples they were encountering as the realm expanded.[567] The relevant entry reads:

> Qāz: the name of the daughter of Afrāsiyāb. She is the one who built the village of Qazvin. The origin of Qazvin's name is *qāz oyni*, meaning "Qāz's playground," because she used to reside and play there. Because of this, some of the Turks deem Qazvin as the borderlands of the Turks. The same is the case with the village of Qom, because in the language of the Turks, Qom means "sand." The daughter of Afrāsiyāb used to hunt there and was fond of it. Some of the Turks deem the borders as stretching from Marv, because her father Toŋa Alp Är,[568] or Afrāsiyāb, built the city of Marv, three hundred years after Ṭahmūrath (Tahmūraṯ) built the fortress (*quhandiz*).[569] Many of the Turks deem everything beyond the river (i.e. Transoxiana) as Turkic lands, the first part of which is Baykand. This is *diz rūyīn*[570], meaning "city and castle of copper," due to its strength, and it is near the city of Bukhara. The husband of this daughter of Afrāsiyāb, Qāz, who was named Siyāvash, was killed therein. The Magi come here one day every year and weep over the site of his murder (*maqtalihu*). They perform animal sacrifices (*yaʿtirūna ʿatā'ir*), shedding their blood over [the site of] his blood. Thus is their habit.[571]

Most of these details are very similar to the ones mentioned by Narshakhī, though I cannot explain the name Qāz for Farangīs; possibly this is simply a Turkic deformation of the alternate form Kasīfarī as given by Thaʿlibī.[572] A few other points are worth considering. The usual connection between Afrāsiyāb and significant places in Central Asia is given, and some details about the story of Siyāvash. It is worth noting that Kāshgharī conspicuously omits any reference

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[567] Robert Dankoff, "Qarakhanid Literature and the Beginnings of Turco-Islamic Culture," in *Central Asian Monuments,* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1992), pp. 73-80; 73.

[568] Also found as Alp Är Toŋa. This name is Middle Turkic for "brave tiger man."

[569] This word is probably a deformation of Persian *kohan dezh* "ancient fortress;" cf. the name of the fortress in Bukhara as noted by Narshakhī in the previous quotation.

[570] I.e., *dezh rūyīn*.

[571] Maḥmūd b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Kāshgharī, *Kitāb Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk,* (Istanbul: Dār al-Khilāfa/Maṭbaʿah Āmira, 1925); 3:110-1.

قاز: اسم بنت افراسياب. وهي التي بنت بلدة "قزوين". واصله "قازايني" اي ملعب قاز. لانها كانت تسكن ثمه وتلعب. فلهذا المعنى عد بعض الترك "قزوين" من حدود ديار الترك. وكذلك بلدة "قم". لان "قم" بلغة الترك الرمل. وان بنت افراسياب هذه كانت تصيد ثمه وتألفها.

وبعضهم عد من "مروالشاهجان". لان اباها "تنكا الب ار" وهو افراسياب بنى مدينة "مرو" بعد ما بنى "طهمورث" القهندز بثلثمائة سنين.

وبعضهم عد جميع ما وراء النهر من ديار الترك. اولها "ينكند". وهي كانت "دزرويين" اي مدينة وقلعة من نحاس لشدتها وهي قرب مدينة "بخارا".

قتل فيها زوج "قاز" هذه بنت افراسياب المسمى "سياوش". فالمجوس يأتونها كل سنة يوماً ويبكون حول مقتله ويعثرون العثائر ويصبون دمها على دمه. هكذا دأبهم.

[572] Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Farangīs" *Encyclopædia Iranica.* online edition, 2012, available at https://iranicaonline.org/articles/farangis (accessed on 9 December 2020).

to Afrāsiyāb as being the cause of Siyāvash's death; this may be because Kāshgharī was related to the Qarakhanids, who claimed descent from Afrāsiyāb![573]

Kāshgharī confirms that the Magi were still coming to Bukhara even in his time, over a century after Narshakhī's death and around half a century after Ferdowsī, meaning that Siyāvash's cult was durable. Furthermore, the citation of Turkic names for Farangīs (Qāz) and Afrāsiyāb (Alp Är Toŋa)[574] means that the story had filtered into Turkic legend. Finally, the citation also illustrates the use of blood sacrifice in commemoration of Siyāvash; while Narshakhī mentions the sacrifice of roosters (*khorūs*),[575] Kāshgharī instead uses *ʿatā'ir*, singular *ʿatīra*. This is an archaic Arabic word which means a ritually sacrificed animal, generally goats or sheep. The difference suggests either that there were multiple types of sacrifices performed, or that Zoroastrian priests may have sacrificed larger animals as opposed to the common people sacrificing roosters. Perhaps coincidentally, Kāshgharī also uses the Arabic word *maqtal*, in its locative sense, to refer to the site of Siyāvash's death.[576]

From this information, we can establish a few details about Siyāvash's cult. First of all, it was well-known throughout the Persian world; while Narshakhī tells us it stretched from

[573] Note that despite the identification see in Kāshgharī's text and other works, besides this entry, the epic cycles concerning Alp Är Toŋa have very little in common with the version of Afrāsiyāb found in the *Shāhnāmeh* and Iranian legend or religion. It is possible that the identification of the Turkic hero Alp Är Toŋa was originally made during the early periods of contact between the Iranians and the Turkic tribes, when the Turks were beginning to be conflated with Tūrān, and the identification was a bit of mythological propaganda by one of the sides. See: Dankoff 1992, 76-7, and: James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 53.

[574] An elegy in Middle Turkic exists in manuscript which eulogizes Alp Är Toŋa as a heroic character. Notably, this manuscript is dated to 1073 C.E., the same period when Kāshgharī was compiling his *Dīwān*, and was also copied down by another native of Kāshghar. See: Nora K. Chadwick, and Victor M. Zhirmunsky, *Oral Epics of Central Asia*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 77.

[575] Note also that the choice of roosters for sacrifice may be significant; roosters were a choice sacrifice to Ahura Mazda and Mithra in ancient times for one, and Ferdowsī even opens his story of Siyāvash with a reference to the cry of the rooster (*khorūsh-e khorūs* or *bāng-e khorūs* depending on manuscript variant). Roosters are, for obvious reasons, also commonly associated with the sun. See: Farzād Qā'emī, "Naqd-o Tahlīl-e Sakhtār-e Āyīnī-Ye Osṭūreh-ye Siyāvash (Moqāyaseh-Ye Siyāvash – Siyāvashān Bā Trāzhedī – Diyūnīsiyā Barmabnā-Ye Naẓariyyeh-Ye Osṭūreh-o Āyīn)," *Naqd-e Adabī* 7, no. 25 (Spring 2014): 153–84; 163, and Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 202.

[576] See Chapter One, Section IV for more details.

Northern Iran to Uzbekistan, Abū Reyḥān al-Bīrūnī (d. circa 1050 C.E.) also mentions references to the commemoration of Siyāvash farther east in Central Asia, in Sogdiana and Khwarazm.[577] The Persian geographer Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhrī (d. 957 C.E.) additionally relates a practice continuing into his day of the people of Khorasan carrying coffins (*tābūt*) around during a ritual calling for rain; while there is no explicit reference to Siyāvash in his account, the thematic content of the practice may suggest a relationship.[578] Kāshgharī's entry tells us that some Turkic tribes were also aware of the story.

Secondly, there must have been some sort of retelling of the life of Siyāvash as part of cultic practices, given the details Narshakhī provides about Siyāvash's life. Thirdly, this cult involved some sort of ritualized weeping, since Narshakhī mentions *nowḥat* (laments or eulogies) and refers to the songs as the "weeping of the magi" or "revenge of Siyāvash," and Kāshgharī separately confirms that ritual weeping occurred. Finally, it can be surmised that the cult probably had some connection to solar and/or vegetation worship, given that a sacrificial ritual took place on Nowrūz, an ancient Iranian festival with strong connections to the sun and rebirth.[579] If we take the suggestion that Iṣṭakhrī's comments on Khorasani rain rituals as obliquely referring to Siyāvash, this supports the vegetation symbolism. While these proposals are only theoretical, as we shall see later in this section, they are strengthened by the connections Ferdowsī draws between Siyāvash and fire, light, and vegetation.

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[577] Yarshater also describes murals found in the ruins of Panjikent, near Samaqand, which depict mourning rites for a young prince attended by mortals and gods; according to his sources, this is probably supposed to be Siyāvash. See: Ehsan Yarshater, "Taʿziyeh and Pre-Islamic Mourning Rites in Iran," *Taʿziyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran*, New York University Studies in Near Eastern Civilization; No. 7, (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 88-94; 91.

[578] Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb Masālik al-Mamālik: wa-huwa Muʿawwal ʿalá Kitạb Ṣuwar al-Aqālīm lil-Shaykh Abī Zayd Aḥmad ibn Sahl al-Balkhī*, (Leiden: Brill, 1927); 92.

[579] Mary Boyce, "Nowruz i. In the Pre-Islamic Period," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2016, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nowruz-i (accessed on 12 March 2020).

At this point, one important objection should be addressed. The exact nature of this cult is complicated by orthodox Zoroastrian beliefs regarding death and funeral rituals. Orthodox Zoroastrianism does not condone the veneration of graves, largely due to the fact that traditional funerary rituals involve sky burial, or exposure to the elements on a "tower of silence" (*dakhmeh*).[580] Dead bodies are considered a major vector for ritual pollution (*nasu*), and the combination of blood sacrifices over tombs seems rather at odds with traditional Zoroastrian ritual practice.[581] As such, I suggest three possibilities. First, that Narshakhī and Kāshgharī were mistaken, and these ceremonies were not presided over by Magi (i.e. *mowbad*s). The second possibility is that what we see in these accounts is simply a regional ritual. Finally, another possibility is that after the demise of the Zoroastrian priestly power base with the downfall of the Sassanids, the religion simply changed, or reincorporated rituals formerly regarded as vulgar popular practice into the fold. Of these three, the last seems most likely; we have no reason to suspect that Narshakhī and Kāshgharī could not properly identify Magi, especially since their descriptions of Siyāvash match up rather well with the *Shāhnāmeh*, which Narshakhī could not have known and Kāshgharī was very unlikely to know.[582] The second possibility is even more unlikely, since rituals for Siyāvash are known from Bukhara, Khwarazm, and Sogdiana, and of course Ferdowsī in Tus, a huge range of distances apart. As such, what we see in these rituals may not have gelled well with Zoroastrian purity laws, but as we shall see in Chapter Four, Zoroastrianism by this period had become a provincial religion and underwent a large amount of intermixture with Islam, especially in the Shuʿūbiyya movements.

[580] Boyce 1967, 30.
[581] Daryaee and Malekzadeh additionally point out that self-flagellation rituals were also not sanctioned by orthodox Zoroastrianism in pre-Islam Iran. This suggests that *siyāvashān* may have always been popular traditions, perhaps also in origin part of a hero-ancestor cult. See: Touraj Daryaee and Soodabeh Malekzadeh, "The Performance of Pain and Remembrance in Late Ancient Iran," *The Silk Road*, (vol. 12, 2014), pp. 57-64; 58.
[582] It is however, possible that either of them may have known of one of Ferdowsī's source-texts; however, neither mention any written text, but explicitly refer to oral, folk traditions.

The cult was probably quite long-lasting; at the very least, ritual sacrifices to Siyāvash continued through the 11th century C.E. Ḥoṣūrī also argues that remnants of these rituals, the *Siyāvashān* probably continued in several villages which had *Siyāvashān* as their appellations, suggested by the fact that naming villages after various ritual ceremonies, such as birthdays and circumcisions is a common trope in Iranian culture. [583] one village named *Siyāvashān* exists in the Guzara district of Herat, which Ḥoṣūrī suggests may be linked to a legendary genealogy tracing tribal origins to Siyāvash.[584] There is also still a Qajar-era mosque named *Masjed-e Siyavāshān* (Mosque of the Mourning Ceremonies of Siyāvash) in the Sang-e Siyāh (Black Stone) neighborhood in Shiraz. While Ḥoṣūrī suggests that *Siyāvashān* rituals were held here or near here at some point, he does not offer any strong evidence for this, so it seems more likely that the area where the mosque was built had some association with Siyāvash or perhaps a family that revered him, and then became a traditional name.[585]

It is hard to know for certain whether these *Siyāvashān* were continuously practiced, especially after Kāshgharī's time where the evidence is scant, let alone whether they were thematically merged with legends surrounding Ḥusayn. It is possible that they were periodically revived or even more likely, reinvented over time.[586] At least thirty years prior to the publication of Dāneshvar's book, another famous Iranian novelist, the intellectual Sādeq Hedāyat (d. 1951 C.E.) recorded in his article *Tarāneh'hā-ye ʿĀmmiyāneh* (Colloquial Songs) that in Dehdasht in southwestern Iran he observed *Siyāvashān* ceremonies to this effect:

> Also during the mourning ceremonies of Kūhkīlūyeh (Dehdasht), there are woman who sing very old compositions with a sorrowful melody for mourning sessions, wailing and

[583] ʿAlī Ḥoṣūrī, *Siyāvashān*, (Tehran: Nashr-e Chashmeh, 1999), 121.
[584] Ibid, 100-101.
[585] Ibid, 123.
[586] For example, the Iranian festival of lights (*cherāghānī*) conducted during Nowrūz fell into decline until they were revived by the Safavid Shāh ʿAbbās in 1609. See Chapter Four, Section V of this dissertation for more details.

> lamenting. They call this ritual *sūsīvash*[587] (mourning for Siyāvash)…[t]hese women sing poetry which is not extemporaneous, they existed previously; though I admit they alter them according to the occasion.[588]

Siyāvash and rituals for him are thus a persistent archetype of Iranian culture.[589] While we cannot establish a direct line of continuity for these rituals, beyond the fact that they at the very least periodically re-manifest, it can be demonstrated that the form, function, and meaning of their performance is remarkably durable. They thus can be argued to constitute a *memory relic.* Now that I have examined the historical mentions of a Siyāvash cult in Central Asia, I will move on to the literary discussion of his story.

Siyāvash in Pre-Islamic Persian Literature

Having considered the popular ritual background of the Siyāvash cult, it is now important to consider Siyāvash as a key character in the Persian literary tradition—especially as a primary example of the unjustly killed martyr. Siyāvash is the New Persian reflex of Middle Persian Siyāwaxš,[590] ultimately from Avestan Siiāuuaršan, "the possessor of black horses."[591] He is not a particularly important character in the Avesta, and appears in only in brief mentions in four *Yašt*s (canonical hymns of praise): *Druuāspā Yašt* (Hymn to Dvāspā, the Horse Divinity), *Aši Yašt* (Hymn to Aši, the divinization of fortune) *Zām Yašt* (Hymn to the Earth), and the

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[587] This word is clearly, as Hedāyat implies in parentheses, a colloquial pronunciation of *sūg-e siyāvash*. Ellison of final /g/ in Persian is also well-known from the transition between Middle Persian to New Persian.

[588] Ṣādeq Hedāyat, *Majmū'eh-ye Neveshteh'hā-ye Parākandeh-ye Ṣādeq Hedāyat*, (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1955); 355. در مراسم سوگواری نیز در کوه کیلویه زنهائی هستند که تصنیف های خیلی قدیمی را با آهنگ غمناکی بمناسبت مجلس عزا میخوانند و ندبه و مویه میکنند . این عمل را سوسیوش (سوگ سیاوش) مینامند … این زنها اشعاری میخوانند که فی البدیهه نیست و قبلا وجود دارد ، گیرم بمناسبت موقع تغییر میدهند.

[589] Dāneshvar describes the rituals she implies were part of the rural background of Iran while she was growing up. In particular, her depiction of the rituals includes sacrifices (*qorbān*), a rider on a black horse who passes through a fire set up by the mourners, the singing of laments, and a mock beheading. Ḥoṣūrī suggests these descriptions may be based on actual fact. See: Dāneshvar, 277; and Ḥoṣūrī 40, 123.

[590] The Middle Persian form is occasionally preserved in the *Shāhnāmeh* as the alternate form *Siyāvakhsh.*

[591] Prods Oktor Skjærvø, "Kayāniān vi. Siiāuuaršan, Siyāwaxš, Siāvaš," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2016, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kayanian-vi (accessed on 25 February 2020).

Frauuaṣī Yašt (Hymn to the Guardian Sprits). The first three of these hymns provide basically the same information, that Siiāuuaršan is a hero murdered treacherously (*zūrō jatahe narahe*) whose son, Kauui Haosrauuh (Kay Khosrow) seeks to avenge him by binding and killing the sorcerer-king Fraŋrasiian (Afrāsiyāb).[592] The wording in these three *Yašt*s is almost exactly the same. The mention in the *Frauuaṣi Yašt*, while also quite brief, confirms that Siiāuuaršan was at one point the focus of worship: "We sacrifice to the guardian spirit of the righteous Kayanian Siiāuuaršan" (*kauuōiš siiāuuarṣānō aṣaonō frauuaṣīm yazamaide*).[593] Notably, the Avestan verb *yazamaide* "we sacrifice/worship" (cf. *yasna* "worship, sacrifice")[594] is very specifically a reference to authorized, formal worship ceremonies, cf. above in the *Ābān Yašt* where the same verb in the third person singular imperfect middle voice (*yazata*) denotes sacrifice to a divine being, Anāhitā.[595] This *Yašt* seemingly confirms Boyce's belief that the *frauuaṣi*s were probably a hero cult in origin, suggesting the notion that the cult of Siiāuuaršan was very ancient and widespread, even if it receives little individualized attention in the Avestan texts.[596] This brings us back to the notion of ancestor worship as discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation.[597]

These texts, however, provide little details as to why Siiāuuaršan's death is considered so terrible. Some more material can be gleaned from a single line from the *Āfrīn-i Zartōšt*, a

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[592] M. Rahim Shayegan, *Arsacids and Sasanians: Political Ideology in Post-Hellenistic and Late Antique Persia*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 25.
[593] My translation. Note that the middle voice verb *yazamaide* (abbreviated after the first instance in Geldner as *y-*; cf. active voice third person singular *yazaiti*) "we sacrifice/worship (for our sake)" is related to *yazata* "worship-worthy being," mentioned previously, and cognate to Sanskrit *yajati* "sacrifice." Note also that "righteous" is *aṣauuan* (genitive: *aṣaonō*), also, "truthful," or more literally, "one who is characterized or possessed of *aṣa* (truth, law, cosmic order, etc.) cf. Sanskrit *ṛtavan*, same meaning, and Middle Persian *ahlawān*, mentioned in Section IV. See: Geldner. *Avesta, the Sacred Books of the Parsis*, 199-200.
[594] Modern Persian: *jashn* "celebration;" Sanskrit: *yajña* "sacrifice."
[595] See: William W. Malandra, "Sacrifice I. In Zoroastrianism," *Encycloœedia Iranica,* online edition, 2010, available online at https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sacrifice-i (accessed on 20 December 2020), and: Almut Hintze, "On the Ritual Significance of the Yasna Haptaŋhāiti," *Zoroastrian Rituals in Context*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), pp. 291-316; 292.
[596] Mary Boyce, "Fravaši," *Encyclopædia Iranica*. X/2, pp. 195-199, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/fravasi- (accessed on at 5 December 2018).
[597] See Introduction, Section IV: *Identity and Definition* for more details.

fragmentary prayer which like the *Aogəmadaēcā* was intended to be used for funerary services. The Avestan reads: "May you be beautiful and innocent of body like the Kayanian Siyāvash (*srīrəm kəhrpəm anāstrauuanəm bauuāhi yaϑa kauua siiāuuaršānō*)."[598] The word *anāstrauuana* "innocent," is particularly work noting; it literally means "characterized by invulnerability; protected." It is also etymologically related to the Avestan word *nasu* "corpse," which was one of the worst vectors of pollution in Zoroastrianism and well as a personified demon of impurity.[599] The root of both, **nas*- "ruin, be destroyed," is the source of the second syllable in the Modern Persian word *gonāh* "sin,"[600] while the first syllable derives from a fortition of the Old Iranian prefix **vi*- which occurred during the transition from Middle Persian to New Persian.[601] Thus, the word *anāstrauuana* can also be theoretically interpreted as "sinless, protected from ritual pollution."

[598] My translation. The Avestan text, unsurprisingly, has many cognates in Sanskrit, of which three are worth mentioning for the insight they offer into the intended meaning: *srīra* "beautiful," is cognate with Sanskrit *śrī/śrīla* "blessed, beautiful, fortunate"; *kəhrpəm* "body," is cognate with Sanskrit *kṛp* "beautiful appearance" (cf. *kṛpā* "grace, virtue"), and *anāstrauuana* with Sanskrit *anāṣṭra* "indestructible" (cf. also *vināśa* "spoil, destruction," *naśyati* "perish, be damaged," all from PIE **neḱ*- *"disappear"* cf. also Greek *νέκυς* "corpse," Avestan *nasu*). The New Persian version in the Revāyats is very similar: *nīk kerpeh avī-venāh beyd chūn kay siyāvakhsh* "Be of good virtue and sinless like the Kayanian Siiāuuaršan;" The New Persian translation thus de-emphasizes Siiāuuaršan's physical perfection in favor of his moral character, though as demonstrated above, the Avestan *kəhrpəm* while meaning "body," may already specifically imply a divinely blessed body. The New Persian wording is extremely archaic, with words like *kerpeh* "body/virtue" and *avī-venāh* "sinless" having been generally replaced by *tan* and *bī-gonāh*, respectively; the *avī* portion of *avī-venāh* is probably a transitional form between Middle Persian *abē* "not" and New Persian *bī* (MP. *abē-wināh* > Early NP. *avī-venāh* > NP. *bī-gonāh*). Of the seven words used in the New Persian version versus the seven in the Avestan, five (*kerpeh*, *avī-venāh*, *beyd*, *kay*, *siyāvakhsh*) are etymologically related to the original Avestan. *Kerpeh* (Middle Persian: *kirb*, "body" and *kirbag* "virtue") directly related to Avestan *kəhrpəm* "body," seems to be nearly extinct; its New Persian form is the uncommon *kerfeh* "virtue;" thus, the Revāyat lexeme seems to be a pun of sorts, which preserves both the Avestan original in form, and reinforces *nīk*, which replaces *srīra*. This example serves to demonstrate the close connection not only thematically and textually between Persian literary forms, but also a deliberate attempt at linguistic continuity. See: Johnny Cheung, *Etymological Dictionary of the Iranian Verb,* Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series, 2, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 282-3. For both the Avestan and the New Persian translation thereof, see: Rustamji Maneckji Unvala, and Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, *Dârâb Hormazyâr's Rivâyat,* (Bombay: British India Press, 1922), 400.

[599] Mahnaz Moazami, "Nasu*." Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2016, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/nasu-demon (accessed on 25 April 2020).

[600] Hypothetically, the Avestan cognate of *gonāh* would be **uuināsa*, cf. Sanskrit *vināśa*, above.

[601] Cf. Middle Persian *wuzurg* "big" > NP. *bozorg*.

This text focuses on the wish for the obtaining of specific virtues manifested especially by important heroes. In this case, the *Āfrīn-i Zartōšt* mentions the particular virtue of Siiāuuaršan (absent from the *Aogəmadaēcā* and only obliquely implied in the *Yašt*s): his innocence. However, we shall have to wait and see the context of this innocence from later texts.

The Middle Persian texts provide more information, but only slightly. One of the largest quotations comes from the Greater Bundahišn:

> Because of the treachery (*āhōg*) of Sūdābag (Sūdābeh), the wife of Kay Us (Kay Kāvūs), Siyāvaxš did not go back to the land of Iran. Then when he had received protection (*zēnhār*) from Frāsiyāv (Afrāsiyāb), then he did not return to Kay Us. He went on his own (*be x^{w}ad*) to Tūrān (*turkastān*), taking the daughter of Frāsiyāv in marriage. Kay Xosrow (Kay Khosrow) was born from this. Then they killed Siyāvaxš.[602]

From the Avestan and Middle Persian selections here, it is not entirely clear what the connection between Siyāvash and Ḥusayn might be. We are not provided any details of Siyāvash's character beyond a simple statement of innocence, except that he was betrayed twice and murdered. However, there is strong implication that we should understand this as a tragic event. I draw this conclusion based on the fact that most of the excerpts from the *Yašt*s are supplications in the voice of Kay Khosrow, begging for vengeance on Afrāsiyāb from different *yazata*s, and that the title of the Bundahišn chapter is *abar wizend hazārak hazārak ō ērān-šahr [ā]mad* (regarding the tribulations that came upon the land of Iran from millennium to millennium).[603]

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[602] G. Messina "Mito, Leggenda e Storia Nella Tradizione Iranica." *Orientalia*, vol. 4, 1935, pp. 257–290. 264, and Harold Walter Bailey, *The Greater Bundahisn* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1933), 996.
āhōg-i sūtāpīh-i zan-i kāyūs būd siyāvaxš abāz ab ērān-šahr nē šud pad ē i frāsiyāv čiyōnaš padaš zēnhār padīrift ēstēd ō kāyūs nē āmad bē xwad ō turkastān šud duxt-i frāsiyāv pad zanīh grift kai husrav aziš zād siyāvaxš ud ōzad hēnd. My translation. Note that I have corrected the transliteration of the Middle Persian text here, following Mackenzie's standard.
[603] Bailey 990.

Siyāvash in the Shāhnāmeh

The story of Siyāvash is significantly more extensive in the *Shāhnāmeh*. Ferdowsī is not explicitly forthcoming about his sources, but his introduction to the story strongly suggests a long written tradition, perhaps incorporating oral performance.[604] Fittingly, his story begins by commenting on the remarkable nature of Siyāvash's birth. In addition to being a descendent of Fereydūn and Jamshīd who both possessed *farr* (divine glory and favor) — which he himself also has[605]—Siyāvash is described as having an otherworldly appearance.[606] The fact of his possession of these qualities and *farr* is an indication that he has an anointed, holy status in the narrative world of the *Shāhnāmeh.* He looks like a fairy (*parī*), a typical simile in the *Shāhnāmeh* used to designate the physiognomy of exceptional persons. He has face that resembles Ādar (*beh chehreh be-sān-e bot-e Ādarī*), the divinization of the sacred fire—which also connects him to a central Zoroastrian conception of ritual and spiritual purity.[607] As befitting his remarkable appearance, he of course has a destiny—which is unfortunately one that will end in sorrow. From the very beginning of his story, at his very birth, the shadow of tragedy hangs over the infant:

جهاندار نامش سیاوخش کرد — برو چرخ گردنده را بخش کرد
از آن کو شمار سپهر بلند، — بدانست و نیک و بد و چون و چند،
ستاره بر آن کودک آشفته دید — غمی گشت چون بخت او خفته دید
بدید از بد و نیک، آواز اوی — به یزدان پناهید در کار اوی

The Emperor (*jahāndār*) named him Siyāvash
He apportioned his fate in the spinning wheel of heaven above[608]

[604] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:201-2.
[605] Ibid, 210.
[606] Tavousi argues that Siyāvash's obscure mother was a fairy (*parī*) based on the description provided. See: Maryam Nemat Tavousi, "Siyāvoš as a Vegetation Deity," *Iranian Studies* 41, no. 2 (2008): 173-82; 176.
[607] Siyāvash also endures a trial by fire after being accused of impropriety by Sūdābeh; he emerges unscathed which also underscores a relationship to fire as well his own purity and innocence. See: Jamsheed K. Choksy, *Purity and Pollution in Zoroastrianism: Triumph over Evil*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989), 13, 106.
[608] I.e., the king cast his horoscope.

About him, the countless stars of the heavenly sphere
Knew, the good and bad, the when and how
The king saw the stars in distress above the child
The king grieved because he saw that he was ill-fated (*bakht khofteh*)
He saw the good and bad in his fate
Sought refuge in God (*yazdān*),[609] in his plan[610]

Siyāvash's predestined fate is quite different from what we saw attributed to the pre-Islamic Arab heroes in Chapter One. The fatalism is explicitly cosmological, because Siyāvash himself is part of a cosmic drama, a battle of good versus evil. The first step on the road to his tragic fate is indicated by his interaction with his stepmother, Sūdābeh. She tries to seduce him, and with a characteristic showing of the chivalrous principles of *javānmardī*, he turns her down, since he "knew what love was, for this sort of affection was not in keeping with godly morals (*siyāvash bedānest k'ān mehr chīst, chonān dūstī n'az rah-e īzadīst*).[611] This serves to underscore the evaluation of Siyāvash as fundamentally pure, foreshadowing his martyrdom.[612]

Eventually, as we saw above in the earliest Zoroastrian-era texts, Sūdābeh manipulates Kay Kāvūs through word and magic against his son and forces the former to put his son to a trial by fire. This event is particularly noteworthy in several ways, as we shall see:

زمین گشت روشن‌تر از آسمان جهانی خروشان و آتش دمان
سیاوش بیامد به پیش پدر یکی خود زرین نهاده به سر
سراسر همه دشت بریان شدند بدان چهر خندانش گریان شدند
هشیوار با جامه‌های سپید لبی پر ز خنده دلی پر امید

[609] Cf. also *īzad* "God;" *yazdān* is in origin a plural noun now frozen into a singular grammatical sense (i.e. *pluralis majestaticus*). Both words derive from Avestan *yazata*.
[610] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 202.
[611] Ibid, 216. This incident is also the primary source of the popular connection drawn between Siyāvash and Joseph. Some scholars have mentioned in particular the parallels between Siyāvash and Joseph's conflict with Potiphar's wife Zulaykha. See: Neguin Yavari, "Polysemous Texts and Reductionist Readings: Women and Heresy in the *Siyar al-Mulūk*," in *Views from the Edge: Essays in Honor of Richard W. Bulliet*, (New York: Columbia University Press for the Middle East Institute, Columbia University, 2004), 322-346; 335.
[612] Bahār relates this attempted seduction and rejection to the ritual marriage ceremony performed on the tenth day of the Mesopotamian Akitu festival, which notably, was also a New Years' celebration and held in the spring, much like Nowrūz. See: Mehrdād Bahār, *Pazhūheshī dar Asātīr-e Īrān*, (Tehran: Āgah, 1996); 424-430, 447.

یکی تازیی برنشسته سیاه
پراگنده کافور بر خویشتن
بدانگه که شد پیش کاوس با
رخ شاه کاوس پرشرم دید
سیاوش بدو گفت انده مدار
سری پر ز شرم و بهایی مراست
ور ایدونک زین کار هستم گناه
به نیروی یزدان نیکی دهش
خروشی برآمد ز دشت و ز شهر
چن از دشت سوداوه آوا شنید
همی خواست کو را بد آید بروی
جهانی نهاده به کاوس چشم
سیاوش بر آن کوه آتش بتاخت
ز هر سو زبانه همی بر کشید
یکی دشت با دیدگان پر ز خون
چن او را بدیدند پرخاست غو

همی گرد نعلش برآمد به ماه
چنان چون بود رسم و ساز کفن
فرود آمد از اسپ و بردش نماز
سخن گفتنش با پسر نرم دید
کزینسان بود گردش روزگار
اگر بی گناهم رهایی مراست
جهان آفرینم ندارد نگاه
ازین کوه آتش نیابم تبش
غم آمد جهان را از آن کار بهر
برآمد به ایوان و آتش بدید
همی گشت جوشان پر از گفت وگوی
زبان پر ز دشنام و دل پر ز خشم
نشد تنگ دل جنگ آتش بساخت
کسی خود و اسپ سیاوش ندید
که تا او ز آتش کی آید برون
که آمد ز آتش برون شاه نو

The earth became brighter than the heavens
The world cried out and the fire grew terrible
Siyāvash came before his father
As one wearing gold upon his head
The entire field was baked with fervor
Weeping at that smiling face
The insightful one, clad all in white
A mouth full of laughter, a heart full of hope
Seated on a black steed
Kicking up dust from its hooves up to the moon
Sprinkling camphor upon himself
Just as is custom for a shroud
In that manner he approached Kay Kāvūs
He descended from the horse and bowed in homage
He saw the face of King Kāvūs was filled with shame
But his words to his son were gentle
Siyāvash said to him, “Don’t worry,”
“That fate has turned out like this,”
I am filled with shame; this is the price I must pay
If I am blameless, then this is my liberation
If it is the case that I am guilty of this
Then the creator of the world will pay me no heed
Through the power of God whose gift is goodness,
The heat from this mountain of fire will not find me
A wail arose from the crowd and the city
The entire world filled with sorrow due to that deed
When Sūdābeh heard the sound coming from the field
She went out upon the balcony and saw the fire
She wished ill would come upon him

She became filled with madness and raged in her words
Everyone fixed their eyes on Kay Kāvūs
Their tongues full of invective, their hearts full of fury
Siyāvash spurred his horse into the mountain of fire
Without any despondency he made to fight the conflagration
From all around the tongues of flame licked at him
None could see him or his horse
It was a crowd with eyes weeping blood
Until the time when he appeared out of the fire
When they saw him, a clamor arose
That the one who had come from out of the fire was the new king[613]

There are several important points to be mentioned here. First of all, the entire scene foreshadows Siyāvash's death several times. There is a repeated emphasis on weeping and sorrow from the crowd throughout. Before he enters the fire, the text tells us that the crowd was openly weeping for him (*geryān shodand*). After his heart-breaking words, which shame his father through their earnestness, the crowd is consumed by sorrow (*gham āmad*). Finally, while he passes through the fire, they weep tears of blood (*bā dīdgān por z' khūn*). The last incident of sorrow in particular prefigures the same image that occurs at his death, when Pīlsam weeps tears of blood at Siyāvash's beheading.[614] The most explicit foreshadowing, however, is the description of Siyāvash preparing to enter the fire: clad all in white, in a golden helmet, he anoints himself with camphor (*kāfūr*), often used to perfume corpses for burial. The text explicitly tells us that this is customary for burials (*rasm o sāz-e kafan*).

Despite the repeated mentions of sorrow and weeping, the tone of the narrative is decidedly not despondent. On the contrary, it is triumphant. Like Ḥusayn when offered the army of the jinn, Siyāvash entrusts himself entirely to God and depends only on his personal virtue to

[613] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 234-6.
[614] Ibid, 2:356-7.

suffer through this test. He does not blame his father, but rather lets the process demonstrate his innocence, which is arguably clear to everyone even before he enters the fire.

On the material level, Bahār has argued that this narrative is a symbolic reference to the ripening of crops. He says that Siyāvash's passing through the fire is "…a symbol of the desiccation and yellowing of plants, which occurs during the beginning of the summer solstice when crops are harvested (*nemād-e khosh shodan-o zard gashtan-e giyāh va dar vāqeʿ-e āghāz-e enqelāb-e ṣeyfī-o hangām bardāshtan-e maḥṣūl ast*).[615] As we will see, vegetation is strongly connected with Siyāvash, so when his story is taken in total, this is a possible interpretation. Regardless, the underlying concern, both material and abstract, is the theme of transformation and purification. There is a strong undercurrent of purification suffused throughout this anecdote. I have already mentioned the anointing with camphor. Beyond that, the fire can also be understood as a physical manifestation of *farr*, which has long held a religious and iconographic connection with radiance, the sun, and fire.[616] As such, Siyāvash can be seen materially as a representation of the plant ripened by the sun, and abstractly as the soul purified by the fire and light of divine grace. The trial by fire ritual is also notably associated with the *yazata* Miθra, especially insofar as the fire is a tangible representation of guaranteeing an oath of truthfulness, as well as a visible manifestation of that divine being's association with the sun.[617]

The final hemistich of this extract is also important to the narrative. As a purification ritual, the trial by fire also implies a spiritual rebirth. The final line, where the crowd exclaims

[615] Mehrdād Bahār, *Jostārī-ye Chand dar Farhang-e Īrān,* (Tehran: Fekr-e Rūz, 1994); 45.
[616] The very word *farr* is etymologically connected with the first element in *khorshīd* "sun." Gnoli postulates that the underlying meaning of the Iranian root *hu̯ar-* is "smolder, burn." Many Middle Persian and Avestan texts associate *farr* with fire, such as the *Zādspram*, which says that Zoroaster's *farr* (Middle Persian: *xʷarrah*) manifested as fire (*pad ātaxš ēwēnag*, where *ātaxš* is the direct ancestor of New Persian *ātash* "fire"). Zoroastrian iconography of *farr* has also often depicted it visually as an aura of flames. See: Gherardo Gnoli, "Farr(ah)," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 1999, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/farrah (accessed on at 1 March 2020)
[617] Mary Boyce, "On Mithra, Lord of Fire," in *Monumentum H. S. Nyberg,* (Tehran: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1975) .pp. 69-76; 70-1.

that Siyāvash is the new king (*shāh-e now*) can also be understood to mean that not only is he worthy to become king, but indeed, that through proving his innocence and becoming ritually pure, he has been transformed into a new person.[618] This person is essentially one who has been prepared for sacrifice, rendered worthy of being sacrificed as a way of ridding Iran of corrupt rulership.

The idea of passing through fire to prove one's innocence was not new or created by Ferdowsī for the *Shāhnameh.*[619] The tradition was quite ancient and is mentioned in the story of Vīs and Ramīn as well. A variation on this was a trial by molten lead, which was undergone by the priest Ādurbād ī Māraspandān during the reign of Shāpur I (d. 270 C.E.).[620] Both traditions appear to be based in narratives stating that Zoroaster went through these trials to prove his faith. The ancient Iranian would swear oaths by the fire as well to ensure truthfulness. Finally, it is also possible to interpret this trial as sacrificial. While Zoroastrians usually took great care to avoid polluting any instance of fire, however it was also involved in sacrifices where a portion of fat from a sacrificed animal would be offered to the fire.[621]

Even though Siyāvash succeeds in proving his innocence in a trial by fire, he no longer feels safe at home. He ends up traveling to the land of Tūrān, which is ruled by the sorcerer-king Afrāsiyāb with whom he has just made a treaty. He marries Afrāsiyāb's eldest daughter Farangīs and for a time, is happy. However, while consulting the astrologers, he sees the future and prophecies, confiding in his loyal companion Pīrān that:

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[618] Note that Kay Kāvūs is still alive and the reigning king; this statement can also be understood as an indictment of Kay Kāvūs's rule.
[619] Yumiko Yamamoto, "The Zoroastrian Temple Cult of Fire in Archaeology and Literature (II)," *Orient* 17 (1981): 67-104; 88.
[620] Ibid.
[621] Choksy 13. This ritual probably has connections to the Vedic *agnihotra*, where ghee was offered to a sacred fire believed to be the manifestation of Agni.

فراوان بدین نگذرد روزگار — که بی کام بیداردل شهریار
شوم زار کشته ابر بی گناه — کسی دیگر آراید این تاج و گاه
تو پیمان همی داری و رای راست — ولیکن فلک را جزینست خواست
ز گفتار بدگوی و از بخت بد — چنین بی گناه بر تنم بد رسد
برآشوبد ایران و توران بهم — ز کینه شود زندگانی دژم
پر از رنج گردد سراسر زمین — زمانه شود پر ز شمشیر کین

Not much time will pass
Before by the hand of the ever-vigilant king[622]
I will be treacherously killed, though sinless (*bī-gonāh*)
This crown and throne will adorn someone else
You always keep your oaths and your counsel is true
But destiny (*falak*) has decided otherwise (*joz-īn-ast khᵛāst*)
Because of a liar (*badgū'ī*) and calamity (*bakht-e bad*)
Such wickedness will befall my blameless self
Iran and Tūrān will fight amongst themselves
Life will become misery due to hatred
The entire earth will be twisted with affliction
And the age will be one full of enmity's sword[623]

In this extract, we see the restating of the prophesies which have been repeated throughout Siyāvash's story. The third hemistich, "I will be treacherously killed, though sinless" (*shavam zār koshteh abar bī gonāh*) is a key section; here the full contradiction of Siyāvash's situation is encapsulated: he has done nothing wrong, and is indeed sinless (*bī gonāh*), but will be the victim of violence regardless. Indeed, it is this very statement which provides the Siyāvash narrative's version of dramatic irony, as I will return to in the conclusion of this chapter. As an innocent, he necessarily must be treacherously killed in order to fulfill destiny. It is not entirely clear where these dreams or visions are coming from, though it is possible that their source is Sorūsh, a common medium for divine guidance throughout the *Shāhnāmeh.* He is at least present during the story, and Meskūb argues for Sorūsh's integral involvement in the deliverance of

[622] Note that here, I have taken the alternate reading *keh bar dast-e* instead of *bīkām.* See: Ferdowsī. *Shāhnāmeh*, n.45, 2:, 310.
[623] Ibid, 310-11.

visions during these events.[624] If it is Sorūsh sending these dreams, it represents a possible additional connection to the story of Zaʿfar in the *Rowẓat.*

The emphasis in this extract is again explicitly cosmological, highlighted by the use of terms such as destiny (*falak*), fortune (*bakht*), the passage of time (*rūzgār*), and age (*zamāneh*). Furthermore, the last four hemistiches provide a more specific scope of this cosmic stage i.e. the entire earth (*sarāsar zamīn*). Eventually, Siyāvash is betrayed and is beheaded by Gorvī on Afrāsiyāb's orders.[625] The impact of Siyāvash's death on the environment is made explicit at the time of his death:

یکی باد با تیره‌گردی سیاه — برآمد بپوشید خورشید و ماه
کسی یکدگر را ندیدند روی — گرفتند نفرین همه بر گروی
چو از سروبن دور گشت آفتاب — سر شهریار اندرآمد به خواب
چه خوابی که چندین زمان برگذشت — نجنبید و بیدار هرگز نگشت

A wind filled with gloomy black dust
Arose, covering the sun and moon
No one could see the face of the person in front of them
All cast a curse upon Gorvī
When from the cypress tree the sun disappeared
The head of the prince passed into dream
Such a dream in which time had passed
He never stirred nor awoke[626]

A fisher-king trope is strongly implied here, meaning that Siyāvash's life and the health of the land are intimately connected[627]—his death will trigger an ecological as well as political

[624] Meskūb, 171.
[625] Note another parallel here: Siyāvash is beheaded by a henchman of an evil king just as Ḥusayn is beheaded by Shimr, Yazīd's henchman!
[626] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 358.
[627] This is a very old trope in Indo-European mythic paradigms of sovereignty. West specifically mentions how Afrāsiyāb's corrupt rule destroys the environment, with water turning to pitch or drying up, animals not producing offspring or milk and other such disasters. As is the case with the Fisher King in de Troyes' *Perceval ou le Conte du Graal*, there is an underlying notion that the king's physical and spiritual status is connected to the land. West notes, "Justice and right were conceived as being not merely a function of human society but an alignment of the cosmic order...it is expressed particularly in the doctrine that the justice of the ruler conditions the fertility of the earth and

calamity.[628] This compounds the tragedy; it is not merely the fact of his death which is tragic, but also the disasters which it portends. The environmental theme becomes even more apparent in the verses immediately preceding these:

به جایی که فرموده بُد تشت خون — گُرویزره برد و کردش نگون
فروریخت خون سر پر بها — به شخی که هرگز نروید گیا
همانگه که خون اندر آمد به خاک — دل خاک هم در زمان گشت چاک
بهساعت گیاهی از آن خون برست — جز ایزد نداند که آن چون برست
گیا را دهم من کنونت نشان — که خوانی همی خون اسیاوشان
بسی فایده خلق را هست از اوی — که هست آن گیا اصلش از خون اوی

When the dish (*tasht*) for his blood was requested
Gorvī carried it and turned it over
That priceless blood spilled out
In a place where no plant emerged
As soon as the blood sunk into the earth
At the same time a cleft appeared deep in the ground
Right then from that blood a plant grew
None but God would know how it grew
Now I will explain that plant's name
It is known by the name of "Siyāvash's Blood"
And holds many benefits for (the) people
That plant, whose origin is his blood[629]

The disaster only begins to abate when Kay Khosrow and his mother Farangīs enter the palace-city that Siyāvash had built, suggesting that with the return of Siyāvash's scion to his rightful place, the world will begin to become whole again:

فرنگیس و کیخسرو انجا رسید — بسی مردم آمد ز هر سو پدید

livestock in his territory. We find this doctrine in the Indian and Iranian epics, and in Greek, Irish, and Norse literature, and it is also attested for ancient Burgundy." See: Martin L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 422-3. According to some sources, Afrāsiyāb is not simply a sorcerer-king, but a *dīv* (*dēw*), a demonic entity. Yarshater notes, "His most characteristic destructive activity is the suppression of waters, draining of rivers, and causing of drought, famine, and desolation, a fact that is evident from the accounts of his rule." For more details on the natural corruption produced by Afrāsiyāb, refer to: Ehsan Yarshater, "Afrāsīāb," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, I/6, pp. 570-576, 2011, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/afrasiab-turanian-king (accessed on 17 July 2019)

[628] Meskūb, 69.

[629] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 358.

به دیده سپردند یکسر زمین — زبان دد و دام پر زآفرین
کز آن بیخ برکنده فرخ درخت — ازین گونه شاخی برآورد سخت
ز شاه جهان چشم بد دور باد — روان سیاوش پر از نور باد
همه خاک آن شارستان شاد گشت — گیا بر چمن سرو آزاد گشت
ز خاکی که خون سیاوش بخورد — به ابر اندرآمد یکی سبزنرد
نگاریده بر برگ‌ها چهر اوی — مهی بوی مشک آمد از مهر اوی
به دی مه بسان بهاران بدی — پرستشگه سوگواران بدی
کسی کز سیاوش بباید گریست — به زیر درخت بلندش بزیست

When Farangīs and Kay Khosrow arrived [at Siyāvashgerd]
Many people came, appearing from all directions
Bowing with downturned gaze in homage
The tongues of both men and beast full of praise
Saying that, "from the glorious tree uprooted
A branch sprouted, newly made from the same source
May the evil gaze of the emperor be far away
And the soul of Siyāvash be full of light!"
All the ground of that grand city became full of gladness
The herbage of the fields grew abundant (*āzād*) with willow trees
From the earth which had consumed Siyāvash's blood (*khūn-e siyāvash*)
Clouds arrived, bringing green tree trunks
Upon the leaves of which was painted Siyāvash's face
And a powerful perfume of musk arose from his beneficence (*mehr-e oy*)[630]
In winter months as in spring months it would be
A temple for mourners (*paresteshgah-e sūgvārān*)
Any person who might weep (*bebāyad gerīst*) for Siyāvash
Would live (*bezīst*) beneath his tall tree.[631]

Obviously, both of these above selections have very strong mythological pedigrees. Several elements of the story recall similar cults which flourished from the Levant to Mesopotamia from ancient times; for example, the inherent fertility of Siyāvash's blood recalls the story of Adonis as narrated in Ovid's Metamorphosis.[632] Based on the parallels with other

[630] Note that this can arguably also be understood as a reference to Mehr (Miθra), a *yazata* associated with the sun; this is particularly possible given the vegetation imagery abundant in this extract.
[631] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:375-6.
[632] Upon his sudden death from being gored by a wild boar, the goddess Venus descend and mourns his death with much wailing, beating her breast, and tearing at her hair and garments. She mixes his blood with divine nectar (or in some versions, her tears) to bring forth a red flower which she calls an anemone. Most scholars agree that Ovid's story, founded on Greek myths first mentioned in the poetry of Sappho (d. c. 570 B.C.), derives from the Sumerian cult of Dumuzid, which became Tammuz/Adonai when borrowed into polytheistic Semitic religions. See: Martin L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*, (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press, 1997), 57.

vegetation deities, Tavousi has suggested that the legend of Siyāvash is what remains of an ancient Iranian vegetation cult, and Bahār explicitly terms him as having the appearance of a vegetation god (*nemād bā khodā-ye nabātī*).[633] In this particular occurrence, Siyāvash's blood becomes a metaphor for rain, which fertilizes the earth by watering it.[634] The second extract repeats the same theme, reaffirming the fisher-king element by showing the restoration of proper kingship through Siyāvash's heir. Perhaps most importantly, the scene contains a hint of the *Siyāvashān* ceremonies involving ritualized weeping, and a promise of divine favor for those who weep—prefiguring elements of weeping for Ḥusayn.[635] Note also that in Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition, the verses in the first extract have several variants. In particular, he offers the alternate readings of *par* (hair) and *farr* (glory) as alternates for *khūn* (blood) as the first element in the name of the plant, which once again connects Siyāvash's martyrdom with his ultimate triumph over evil.

The connection of weeping and blood with vegetation and health does not end here though. In traditional Persian folk medicine, there is indeed a particular plant named *par-e siyāvash* or *par-e siyavashān* (Siyavash's Hair)—the Maidenhair Fern (*Adianthum capillus-veneris*).[636] There are several recorded Arabic names for the plant, including *barshiyān, barshiyāshān, kuzbarat al-bi'r* (well coriander), *shaʿr al-ghūl* (demon's hair), and *shaʿr al-jinn* (jinn's hair).[637] The first two names are transparently derived from early Arabic transcriptions of

[633] Tavousi 182, and Bahār 1994, 45.
[634] Note that the skies are said to have literally rained blood on the day of Ḥusayn's death. See: Kāshefī, *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*, 231.
[635] See also: Teymūr Mālmīr and Fardīn Ḥoseynpenāhī, "Taḥlīl-e sākhtār-e Hambasteh-ye Dāstān'hā-ye Siyāvash, Kay Khosrow-o Forūd," *Matn-shenāsī-ye Adab-e Fārsī*, 9, no. 33, (Spring 2017), pp. 19-36; 31-32.
[636] Efraim Lev, *Practical Materia Medica of the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean According to the Cairo Genizah*, Sir Henry Wellcome Asian Series (Brill Academic Publishers) ; v. 7, (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2008), 444.
[637] Khaleghi-Motlagh notes an Arabic comment on the name of the plant, which states that the Arabs call it *dam al-akhawayn*, i.e "blood of the two brothers." It is by no means certain, but perhaps these "two brothers" are a reference to Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. See: Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 358, n. 3. Moʿin opines that the name of the plant derives from Avestan *parenô (yô) syâvarshânahe*, with the same meaning. See: Moḥammad Ḥoseyn b. Khalaf

the Persian name. While the plant has several listed usages in medical works, its primary use in the Persian-speaking world is as an expectorant and throat-ease. [638] The dried fronds are commonly brewed in a tea for this purpose[639] and continue to be used for this purpose to this day.[640] Why is this plant specifically used for throat ailments? Beyond any possible real medicinal applications, note the line from the *Shāhnāmeh* above: *basī fāyideh khalq-rā hast az vay* (…it holds many benefits for the people). The word *khalq*, literally "creation," but often used to mean "people," could easily be misspoken or misread and lose the diacritic (*noqteh*) which distinguishes it from *ḥalq* "throat," and instead be read as *basī fāyideh ḥalq-rā hast az vay* (…it holds many benefits for the throat).[641] Such a misreading would impair neither the grammar of the verse nor the meter. I will revisit this point on the connection of mourning cults with throat diseases in the next section.

Overall, the conflict reflects Zoroastrian dualist theology, with Tūrān and its evil king, given powers by Ahriman himself in a mockery of *farr*, representing cosmic evil and the sterility of the earth. Siyāvash stands as the purest representative of the forces of good, symbolized as Iran, or more abstractly, those who have access to the *farr* which comes from God. The *farr* marks Siyāvash as not merely killed unjustly, but a martyr in a cosmic war. Iran has, however, been weakened by foolishness and treachery, symbolized by Kay Kāvūs and Sūdābeh, and

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Tabrīzī Borhān; Moḥammad Mo'īn, *Borhān-e Qātie': Mū'allaf be-Sāl-e 1062 Hijrī Qamarī, bā Moqābeleh-ye Noskheh-ye Mota'addedī va Khatṭī-o Chāpī va Tasḥīh-o Touwzīḥ-e Vajh-e Eshteqāq, va zikri-e Shavāhed, va Afzūdan-e Loghāt-e Besyār va Tasāvīr va Naqsheh'hā*, (Tehran: Ketābforūshī-ye Ebn Sīnā, 1963/1964); 1:385.

[638] Sheida Dayani, personal conversation with the author, December 10, 2019.

[639] Nicolas Roth speculates that the tendency for the fern to grow at the edge of springs, waterfalls, and wells (hence the Arabic *kuzbarat al-bi'r*), all places perpetually impregnated with dripping water, encouraged the identification with the blood of Siyāvash. Nicolas Roth, personal email with the author, March 13, 2020.d

[640] For example, a search on Instagram for #پرسیاوشان produces hundreds of hits, and the Arabic form occurs on internet forums advising cures for sore throats. Ibid.

[641] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:358.

Siyāvash is their hope of redemption.[642] When we consider the vegetation aspect, the martyrdom trope, or specifically, the sacrificial trope, becomes even clearer.[643] His death provides the final push that the other heroes of Iran need to destroy Afrasiyāb's empire. Siyāvash's death leaves an indelible impression on the narrative progression of the *Shāhnāmeh*.

Given that there is much evidence for the commemoration of Siyāvash outside of his role in the *Shāhnāmeh* as we have seen from Narshakhī, and as well as his hugely 'expanded' role in it in comparison to the pre-Islamic literature, one must conclude that his cult of remembrance was probably the major source of lore specifically about him. Given Ferdowsī's references to a long tradition of the story combined with the discussions of Siyāvash's cult in Central Asia from Narshakhī and Kāshgharī, it seems likely that some sort of elegiac tradition (*sorod'hā-ye kīn-e Siyāvash*) existed. However these were probably not epics but lamentations probably far closer to Arabic *rithā'* literature than the *Shāhnāmeh* or *Ayādgār-i Zarērān*.[644]

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[642] At this juncture, it is also important to point out that Ḥusayn's 'salvation' offered through *shafāʿat* and obtained through mourning for him is schematically different from that offered by figures like Siyāvash or Tammūz. The salvation they offer is far more material; in Siyāvash's case, the eventual deliverance of Iran from corruption on the macro scale, or the growth of the curative plant *par-e siyāvash* on the micro scale. These are more tangible examples of salvation, reflecting more material concerns. This material meaning in this context reflects the origin of the word "soteriology;" from Greek *sōtḗr* (σωτήρ) —savior, itself an agent noun from the old adjective sōs (σῶς) —safe, Proto-Indo-European **tueh*$_2$*us*—strong, i.e. the one who makes something or someone safe. The original sense of *sōtḗr* is simply one who guaranteed safety, especially of one's life. Many of the Greek gods could be a savior, for example Zeus or Poseidon. Burkert notes how sailors poured out libations to Poseidon the Savior in order to mollify him into sparing their ships. Thus, the title of *sōtḗr* as applied to him in this case—and probably many other gods called 'savior'— contains no semantic subtlety. The epithet simply means that Poseidon, if propitiated correctly, will keep the sea under control and the sailors from dying. See: Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), 182-3.

[643] This is another ancient Indo-European (and Levantine-Mesopotamian) mythological trope, i.e. the sacrificial victim as a microcosm of the universe, whose ritual death and dismemberment allows creation to take place. Lincoln comments, "..,the transformations all move from the microcosm to the macrocosm: that is, these are cosmogonic accounts, stories of how the world was created from the dismembered parts of a primordial victim. What is more, priests within the Indo-European tradition claimed to repeat this process with the performance of every act of ritual sacrifice. Such is clear, for instance, in Herodotus' account of Persian rites (I.131) in which the Magi are said to have chanted a 'theogony,' i.e. a hymn of creation, during the dismemberment of an animal victim, this being performed for the benefit of heaven, sun, moon, earth, fire, water, and wind: i.e., the elements of the macrocosm." See: Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); 168-9.

[644] Hämeen-Anttila supports this conclusion, referencing Narshakhī explicitly. See: Hämeen-Anttila, 2018, 24.

Unlike the previously mentioned Arab heroes, heroes like Zarīr and Siyāvash in Persian epic are not average. This may sound tautological, but the point is that they are not simply men who are born into a respected lineage (*nasab*) nor have they just performed praiseworthy deeds for the glory of the tribe (*ḥasab*). They have a fated, grand destiny which is written in the stars by the creator. These heroes battle with sorcerers and demons, struggling against personifications of cosmic evil, and their deaths have profound metaphysical consequences. They are not merely warriors of great prowess but are manifestations of a mythic reality. Their tragedy is not located merely in family grief, but in the 'lost cause' of the battle with tyranny. I argue that this is a central theme which runs through not only the texts described above, but also through later Persian literature, in particular that concerned with mourning for Ḥusayn. The connection between these Persian epics may seem oblique at first, but here Ferdowsī is a central lynchpin. The *Shāhnāmeh*'s status as the Persian epic *par excellence* ensures the diffusion of the characters and narratives into the wider Islamic Persian literary milieu—orally and textually. Ferdowsī's invocation of the pre-Islamic literary landscape, both textual and oral, connects pre-Islamic Persian literature with what is to come after him—such as Kāshefī's *maqtal* and the tradition that emerges out of it. In the next section I will consider one final possible pre-Islamic influence, one which is not directly Iranian, but may easily have had ancient connections due to the historical relationship between Iraq and Iran under Iranian imperial rule.

VIII. Mourning in July: Tammūz and Mesopotamian Mourning Cults in Kāshefī's Narrative

In the previous chapter, I noted that according to Kāshefī's own admission in his *Asrār-e Qāsemī,* he was not only acquainted with the works of the Iraqi pharmacologist-occultist Ibn Waḥshiyya, but also claims him as one of his sources for the *Asrār*. He also cites a text, *Muṣḥaf Hirmis al-Harāmisa* as a source, whose eponymous author Hermes Trismegistus is identified by Ibn Waḥshiyya with the pan-Mesopotamian and Levantine vegetation deity Tammūz.[645] Given the typological similarities between the ritual weeping for Tammūz and Ḥusayn—as suggested by Yarshater[646]—as well as textual parallels from the *Rowẕat* which I have described in the previous chapter, it is worth considering the Tammūz narrative as given by Ibn Waḥshiyya in *al-Filāḥa al-Nabaṭiyya*.[647] The Arabic quotation is quite long, so I have selected only the sections which are of most interest:

> The people of Yanbūshādh's time claimed that all the divine presences (*sakā'in al-ilāha*) and idols mourned for Yanbūshādh after his death, just as all the angels and presences mourned for Tammūzá,[648] and that the idols, they claim, gathered together from all the regions of the earth at the House of Uthkūl[649] in Babylon and proceeded altogether to the Temple of the Sun, specifically to where the great golden idol of the sun was suspended between the sky and earth. The idol of the sun arose in the midst of the temple and the idols of the earth arose all around it. Closest where the idols of the sun from all the other

[645] Ibn Waḥshiyya, *Kitāb Asrār al-Falak fī Aḥkām al-Nujūm*, MS (Tehran, Majlis 6415), 87b.
[646] Yarshater 1979, 93.
[647] It is also worth noting that the *Filāḥa*, despite the small niche it occupies in modern scholarship, was relatively well-known in the medieval period. At the very least, it was well-known enough for Maimonides (d. 1204 C.E.), the revolutionary Sephardi philosopher and Torah scholar to not only mention it by name three or four centuries later, but specifically to cite this particular story in his *Guide for the Perplexed* (*Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn*). The story as he gives it is much the same, with similar though not identical wording, but much abridged, without mention of Nasr, the disasters following Tammūz's death, or the allegation that the Christian remembrances of St. George derived from those of Tammūz. See: Mūsá b. Maymūn al-Qurṭabī al-Andalusī, *Dalālat al-Ḥā'irīn,* (Ankara: Maṭba'at Jāmi'at Anqara, 1974); 585, 587.
[648] A variant of Tammūz, probably from contamination by the Sumerian form Dumuzid/Dumuzi or even the final diphthong in Adonai (Dawānāy), which is also mentioned as an alternate name for Tammūz in Ibn Waḥshiyya's *Kitāb al-Asrār.* See: Ibn Waḥshiyya, *Kitāb Asrār,* Tehran 87b. Alternately, and perhaps more likely, this may simply reproduce the Aramaic form of Tammūz, where the *alif maqṣūra* marks the Aramaic definite article *–ā.* See: Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, "Continuity of Pagan Religious Traditions in Tenth-Century Iraq," *Melammu Symposia 3*: *Ideologies as Intercultural Phenomena*, (Milan: Università di Bologna & IsIao 2002), pp. 89-108; 101.
[649] The meaning of the form 'SHKWL is obscure, but it may be a place name. Hämeen-Anttila dismisses a connection with Hebrew *eshkōl*, and suggests either a scribal mistake for Arabic *uthkūl* "bereft woman," or a deformation of *ashkāl* "celestial forms." Given the context, and that Hämeen-Anttila is partial to the former, I think *uthkūl* is perhaps the most likely reading. See: Ibid, 97.

countries, then the idols of the moon, then the idols of Mars, then those of Mercury, then those of Jupiter, then of Venus, then of Saturn. The idol of the sun began to mourn over Tammūzá, and the idols began to weep. The idol of the sun recounted the story of Tammūzá, and eulogized him in a story. The idols wept altogether from sunset until sunrise the following morning. Then the idols flew and returned to their own countries. The idol of Tihāma, called Nasr, had his eyes overflow with tears which flowed ceaselessly, and will continue to do so forever since that night where he mourned over Tammūzá with the idol of the sun, because of his particular place in the story of Tammūz. This idol named Nasr was the one who taught the Arabs soothsaying (*kihāna*) so that they could communicate knowledge of the unseen world (*al-ghayb*) and interpret dreams before the ones who dreamt them could understand them.[650] Likewise did the idols mourn for Yanbūshādh in the area around Babylon all apart in their own temples, all night long until the morn. At the end of the night, there was a great flood, with lightening, a terrible awful thunder, and a great earthquake which extended from Ḥulwān to the Tigris banks at Binārwāyā east of the Tigris. The idols had returned to their resting places when the flood began, because they had been roused from their resting place a bit. They were the ones who had brought about the flood as a punishment on the people of Babylon for leaving Yanbūshādh's body out in the open in the wilderness of Shāmāṣá, until the flood carried his body to the valley of Aḥfar, after which his body was cast out to sea from that valley. Drought and plague fell upon Babylon for three months, so that the living could not keep up with burial for the dead.

These are the narratives which they have collected and relate in temples after prayers; they weep and mourn over this greatly. I attended these services with the people in the temple, particularly during the feast of Tammūz whose month it was, they related his story and wept. I always wept with them, aiding them by my graciousness in their weeping, though I do not believe in their commemoration of Tammūz, however, I do in Yanbūshādh, for I believe in his story. So when they relate it and weep, I weep with them truly, unlike my weeping for Tammūzá. The reason is that the age of Yanbūshādh is closer to our own than the age of Tammūz, and so his tale his more certain. Perhaps some of the story of Tammūz is true, but his time is so far from our own that I doubt some of it….

All the Sabians of our time from Babylon and all the Harranians likewise mourn and weep over Tammūz during the month that bears his name in their festival which is dedicated to him. They recount great litanies, especially the women here and in Ḥarrān. They mourn and weep over Tammūz, lamenting in the grip of a long mania…

This is what I found in the Aramaic version of the *Nabataean Agriculture* about Tammūz. Afterwards, I stumbled upon another Nabataean book which had an account of Tammūz's story. He invited a certain king to worship the seven planets and the twelve constellations of the zodiac. The king killed him, but he lived again even after being killed. So he killed Tammūz again in many awful manners, but each time he came back to life. Finally, he died. This is the same as the story of Saint George which the Christians have. The Sabians hold a commemoration (*dhukrān*)[651] for Tammūz on his feast-day. Likewise, the Christians

[650] The relationship of Nasr to *kihāna* arguably connects him with the jinn as well, since the pre-Islamic Arabs believed that those who engaged in it were in contact with the jinn. See: El-Zein 2009, 55.

[651] Z̲ū 'l-Feqārī remarks that in later periods, the performers of *dasteh*s (processions) accompanied by music and singing derived from *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* came to be called *z̲ākerīn*, the plural of the active participle derived from the same root as *dhukrān* – i.e. "commemorators." *Dhukrān* is probably a loan-word from Syriac *dūk̲rānā*

> hold a commemoration for Saint George on his feast-day and have a remembrance ceremony for him.[652]

As I have previously mentioned in Chapter Two, there are many notable parallels between the story of Tammūz (and Yanbūshādh, another philosopher-prophet) with the story of Ḥusayn as related in the *Rowẕat*, though I have only mentioned it in passing. In particular, we can identify three central narrative characteristics which connect the stories. Firstly, in Ibn Waḥshiyya's story, Tammūz is a prophetic figure who calls an authority to his understanding of proper worship, and is martyred horribly for his efforts, just as is the underlying characterization of Ḥusayn's passion.

Secondly, the story has a lengthy narrative about celestial beings gathering from all over the world after Tammūz's death to mourn him, which emphasizes the cosmic importance of this event. Finally, Ibn Waḥshiyya's account contains numerous references to memorials held by

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"commemoration." Cf. the Syriac version of the Eucharistic consecration in Luke 22:19: *hāḏê-w aytūn ʿāḇdīn l-ḏūḵrāni* "This that you all do is in my commemoration (i.e., Do this in memory of me)." See: Ḥasan Ẕū l-Feqārī, "*Rowẕat ol-Shohadā*'-o Mo'allef-e Ān," *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 39.

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وقد ادّعى أهل زمان ينبوشاذ جميع سكاين الآلهة والاصنام ناحت على ينبوشاذ بعد موته، كما ناحت المليكة والسكاين كلها على تموزى، وأن الاصنام، زعموا، اجتمعت من جميع أقطار الأرض إلى بيت الاشكول ببابل فقصدوا كلهم هيكل الشمس إلى صنم الذهب الاعظم المعلق بين السماء والأرض خاصة، وأن صنم الشمس قام وسط الهيكل وقامت أصنام الأرض كلها حوله، اولها مما يليه أصنام الشمس في جميع البلدان، ثم أصنام القمر، ثم أصنام المريخ، ثم أصنام عطارد، ثم أصنام المشتري، ثم أصنام الزهرة، ثم أصنام زحل، فجعل صنم الشمس ينوح على تموزى والاصنام تبكي إلى طلوعها آخر تلك الليلة. ثم طارت الاصنام راجعة إلى بلدانها، وان صنم تهامه؛ المسمى نسراً، عيناه تدمعان وتجريان الدهر كله وإلى الابد منذ تلك الليلة التي ناح فيها على تموزى مع صنم الشمس، لما يختص به هذا الصنم في تلك القصة التي كانت لتموز. وأن هذا الصنم السمى نسراً هو الذي أفاد العرب الكهانة حتى اخبروا بالغيب وفسروا المنامات قبل شرح اصحابها لها. قال فكذلك ناحت الأصنام على ينبوشاذ ليلة في إقليم بابل متفرقين وزلزلة عظيمة كانت من حد حلوان إلى شط دجلة عند بلاد بناذرنا من الجانب الشرقي من دجلة، وإن الاصنام رجعت إلى مواضعها في حال السيل لأنهم كانوا انزعجوا عن مواضعهم قليلا، وإنهم إنما أسالوا ذلك السيل عقوبة لأبناء البشر من أهل اقليم بابل على تركهم جثة ينبوشاذ وهو بالعراء في برية شاماصى، حتى حمل السيل جثته إلى وادي الأحفر، ثم اخرج الجثة إلى البحر من ذلك الوادي، ووقع القحط والطاعون في اقليم بابل ثلثة أشهر، حتى لم يلحق الاحياء من الناس دفن الموتى.فهذه أحاديث قد دونوها، يتلونها في الهياكل بعقب الصلوات ويبكون وينوحون من ذلك كثيراً. واني إذا حضرتُ مع الناس في الهيكل، خاصة في عيد تموز الذي يكون في شهره، وتلو قصته وبكوا، فاني أبكي معهم دائما، مساعدة لهم ورقة مني لبكائهم ، لا ايمانا من بما يذكرون من ذلك، فاما ينبوشاذ. فاني أومن بقصته، فإذا تلوها وبكوا بكيت معهم بكاء خلاف بكائي على تموزى، والعلة في هذا أن عهد ينبوشاذ إلى زماننا هذا اقرب من عهد تموز، فخبره اثبت واصح. وقد يجوز أن يكون بعض قصة تموز صحيحة، لكن لبعد زمانه من زماننا شككت في بعض خبره.

والصابيئون كلهم في زماننا من البابليين والحرانيين جميعا إلى وقتنا هذا ينوحون ويبكون على تموز في الشهر المسمى تموز في عيد لهم فيه منسوب الى تموز، ويعددون تعديدا عظيما، و خاصة النساء فانهن يقمن هاهنا وبحران جميعام فينوحون على تموز ويهذون في أمره هذيانا طويلا.

فهذا ما وجدته في كتاب الفلاحة من أمره. ثم وقع لي بعد ذلك كتاب من كتب النبط فيه شرح قصة تموز، انه دعا ملكا إلى عبادة السبعة والاثني عشر، وأن الملك قتله و عاش بعد القتلة له، ثم قتل قتلات بعد ذلك قبيحة في كلها يعيش، ثم مات في آخرها. فإذا هي قصة جورجيس التي في أيدي النصارى سواء هي هي. فالصابيون يقيمون لتموز ذكرانا هو عندهم عيد تموز، والنصارى يقيمون لجورجيس ذكرانا هو عندهم عيد جورجيس وتذكرة له.

Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Waḥshiyya. *Kitāb al-Filāḥa al-Nabaṭiyya.* Damascus*:* al-Maʿhad al-ʿIlmī al-Faransī lil-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabīyah bi-Dimashq, 1995. 296-298. My translation. For an alternate translation, see: Hämeen-Anttila 2002.

people to commemorate his death, all of which involve ritualized weeping and the recounting of Tammūz's story, which is precisely the purpose of the *Rowẓat.* Additionally, Ibn Waḥshiyya not only attests that these commemorations were still held in his time but attempts to connect them to commemoration ceremonies held by another religion of the book, the Christians, for Saint George, who he accuses of "stealing" (*saraqūhā*) the story from the Sabians.

For perhaps the same reasons that Kāshefī does not compare Ḥusayn to Jesus in much detail, Ibn Waḥshiyya does not connect the story of Tammūz with that of Jesus, and instead references Saint George. It is also worth noting that Ibn Waḥshiyya's interlocutor, Qūthāmā—who may simply have been a narrative device created by Ibn Waḥshiyya as an authority for his supposed translation—claims to have been physically present and participated in mourning rituals for Tammūz, which Ibn Waḥshiyya verifies were still being practiced in similar form. Also, consider that when the Islamic calendar with instituted, the 1st of Muḥarram in 622 C.E. ended up corresponding with the 16th of the Assyrian-Babylonian derived Seleucid calendar month of Tammūz—the origin of the Jewish calendar month of Tammūz as well as the modern Levantine month.[653] This of course, was the month in which they mourned for Tammūz.[654]

Here, it is important to remember that unlike Ibn Waḥshiyya, we should be cautious about postulating any direct connection between the cult of Tammūz and the commemoration of Ḥusayn; correspondence does not equal causation. This is not what I am doing here; instead, I suggest that Kāshefī's reading of Ibn Waḥshiyya may have provided additional narrative elements which served to ornament and influence his account. Given the evidence of a

[653] Muḥammad b. Bīrūnī, *The Chronology of Ancient Nations: an English version of the Arabic Text of the Athâr-ul-Bâkiya of Albîrûni or "Vestiges of the Past," Translated and Edited with Notes and Index, by Dr. C. Edward Sachau,* (London: William H. Allen and Co, 1879), 327.
[654] Khālid Sindāwī, "'Ashura' Day and Yom Kippur," *Abr-nahrain,* Ancient Near Eastern Studies, 38 (2001) 200-214; 205.

relationship with Ibn Waḥshiyya and Kāshefī's already clear willingness to appropriate pre-Islamic figures if it serves his narrative purpose, it seems likely that the commemoration rituals that Kāshefī helped recreate or institute around Ḥusayn drew influence from decidedly ancient sources. Given the previous discussion of mourning for Siyāvash, which continued in Iran long after the advent of Islam and the *Shāhnāmeh*'s clear connection to Kāshefī's writing, it is not farfetched to consider such a connection.

In terms of what connection the cult of Tammūz might have with Siyāvash, if any, it is difficult to say beyond typological correspondences, such as an unjust death, an association with the sun and vegetation, as well as a vast and long-lasting cult of mourning dedicated to them. Bahār is one Iranian scholar who believes that the Attis/Adonis/Tammuz cults were clearly related to Siyāvash, however, the material tenability of this theory has been questioned by Ḥoṣūrī.[655] Still, we know that there was much interaction between Mesopotamian and Iranian religions during the many periods which Iranian empires ruled the region. For example, in two Aramaic magic bowls dated to the Sassanid period, there is a juxtaposition of an invocation for protection against the Semitic-Mesopotamian demoness Lilith with two obviously Persian theophoric names. The bowl was apparently fabricated for the protection of "Bahrām-Gušnasp bar Ištarā-Nāhid."[656] It seems that this bowl was created for Aramaic-speaking Zoroastrians or Manichaean citizens of the Sassanid empire, since the names contain clear Iranian deity names. However, the use of 'Lilith' here represents a Semitic intrusion into an Iranian context.

[655] See: Bahār 1994, 45, and Ḥoṣūrī, 20.
[656] The *yazata* Anāhitā is known to have been commonly associated with the Akkadian-Babylonian goddess Ištar. On this association, see: Mary Boyce, M. L. Chaumont, and C. Bier, "Anāhīd." *Encyclopædia Iranica.* I/9, pp. 1003-1011, available online at https://iranicaonline.org/articles/anahid (accessed on 17 July 2019).

Regardless, this bowl demonstrates that there was a definite cross-pollination of supernatural figures between Semitic-Mesopotamian and Iranian religions. [657]

In connection with both Tammūz as well as Siyāvash, there is a tantalizing anecdote noted by the famous Iraqi historian Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. al-Athīr about a mourning cult that seemed to appear quite suddenly around Khuzestan in 1064 C.E., and again in 1203-4 in Mosul:

> This year, during Rabīʿ al-Awwal, a band of Kurds appeared in Iraq, Khuzistan, and many other regions. They had gone out hunting when they saw some black tents out in the open desert and heard loud lamenting blows (*laṭman shadīdan*) and much wailing coming from them, crying out, "Your lord, the king of the jinn, has died! Any land whose people does not strike their chest in lamentation and perform a funeral (*ʿazā'*) for him will be exterminated and its people annihilated." Many women went out to the surrounding lands into the cemeteries striking their chests, wailing, and rending their hair. The men of the underclass went out doing the same, which was utterly ridiculous. The same sort of thing occurred in our time in Mosul and the surrounding land in Iraq and other places, when in the year 600 H., the people were sorely afflicted in their throats, and many died. It seems that the son of a jinni woman called Umm ʿUnqūd (Grape-bunch Mother) had died and whoever did not participate in funeral rituals for him fell ill with this disease. Many did so, and were calling out, "O Umm ʿUnqūd, forgive us; ʿUnqūd has died and we didn't know!" The women beat their chests in lamentation and the riffraff did likewise.[658]

[657] The bowls are tentatively dated from the Sassanid period, i.e. c. 224–651 C.E. See: C.H. Gordon, "Two Magic Bowls in Teheran," *Orientalia,* Roma: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum. Vol. 20, (1951), pp. 306-315; 306.

[658] See: ʿAlī b. Abī al-Karam al-Shaybānī, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh,* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1987), 8:370
في هذه السنة في ربيع الأول ظهر بالعراق وخوزستان وكثير من البلاد جماعة من الاكراد خرجوا يتصيدون فرأوا في البرية خيماً سوداً، وسمعوا منها لطماً شديداً وعويلاً كثيراً وقائلاً يقول: قد مات سيدوك ملك الجن، وأي بلد لم يلطم أهله عليه ويعملون له العزاء، قلع أصله وأهلك أهله فخرج كثير من النساء في البلاد إلى المقابر يلطمن وينحن وينشرن شعورهن وخرج رجال من سفلة الناس يفعلون ذلك وكان ذلك ضحكة عظيمة، ولقد جرى في أيامنا نحن في الموصل وما والاها من البلاد إلى العراق وغيرها نحو هذا، وذلك أنّ الناس سنة ستمائة أصابهم وجع كثير في حلوقهم ومات منه كثير من الناس فظهر ان امرأة من الجن يقال لها أم عنقود مات ابنها عنقود وكل من لا يعمل له مأتماً أصابه هذا المرض فكثر فعل ذلك وكانوا يقولون يا أم عنقود اعذرينا قد مات عنقود ما درينا، وكان النساء يلطمن وكذلك الأوباش.
The astute reader will notice clear parallels with Ibn Kathīr's account of Muḥarram rituals in 963 C.E. as described in Chapter One, not only in terms of the actions of the people, but also with the author's clear revulsion at the display. See Chapter One, Section VII for more details.

We can only postulate exactly who "Umm ʿUnqūd" and her son were, however, there are some possibilities.[659] One option returns us again to Tammūz.[660] Smith explicitly considers Umm ʿUnqūd and her son to be later reflexes of the cult of Ishtar and Tammuz/Venus and Adonis.[661] The fact that both figures are called jinn in Ibn al-Athīr's account also recalls the idea of jinn or angels coming to stand for ancient Mesopotamian and Iranian divinities which were stripped of their explicitly divine status after the advent of Islam. In a similar way that Zaʿfar appears as a fairy or jinn or Sorūsh as an angel in post-Islamic literature, perhaps Umm ʿUnqūd and her son were originally local vegetation deities—or even half-remembered derivates of Ishtar and Tammūz.

Regardless of the provenance of Umm ʿUnqūd, one other important element stands out, which is the issue of throat disease. As we have seen previously in the *Shāhnāmeh*'s closing lines on the fate of Siyāvash, a plant sprouts from his blood. Given that this plant is almost certainly meant to be the *par-e siyāvashān*, when considered in combination with the event from Ibn al-Athīr, of throat disease accompanying the lack of mourning for a supernatural being's death, and Ibn Waḥshiyya's noting of plagues being sent on the population of Babylon for a similar offense, there seems to be common pattern of a disastrous event coming after the death of figures who have a mourning cult dedicated to them. At least in the case of Siyāvash and Umm ʿUnqud's son,

[659] A distant possibility is crumbing remainder of the cult of Dionysus. In some versions of the Greek god of wine Dionysus' life, he is rescued from the ship that he turned into grapevines by his grandmother Cybele or Rhea, a well-known Phrygian deity with cult throughout Asia Minor. Both deities have strong associations with death, salvation, and sacrifice. Given that Dionysus and Cybele were not originally native Greek deities and were imported from Middle Eastern cults, this may be an example of convergence. See: Morris Silver, *Taking Ancient Mythology Economically*, (Leiden ; New York: Brill, 1992), 249. Mourning for Attis-Dionysus was also sometimes a part of cultic practices. See: Walter Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 25.

[660] Note also that in the Sumerian version of the story of Tammūz (Sumerian: Dumuzid), he is recorded as having a sister named Geshtinanna, or "leafy grapevine." Jacobsen essentially presents Tammūz and Geshtinanna as the personifications of grain/beer and the grapevine. See: Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 62.

[661] William Robertson Smith, "From *The Religion of the Semites*," *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader*, Controversies in the Study of Religion, (London; New York: Continuum, 2003), 68.

there is a close connection with diseases which affect one's ability to speak. Perhaps the logic here is that by not lending one's voice to mourn and eulogize the dead, it will be taken from them. While throat disease per se does not appear in the *Rowẕat,* there is a constant return to the discussion of thirst and the torment of the throat which is a particularly vivid pain suffered by Ḥusayn during the battle at Karbalā'. [662] In regard to the connection between throat diseases with Ḥusayn and Siyāvash, one other clear symbolic element presents itself: both Ḥusayn and Siyāvash are beheaded.[663]

As such, we have examples of mourning cults for semi-divine figures taking place at least as late as the 13th century. Since these cults of Siyāvash, Tammūz, and possible figures exported from Tammūz were still well-known in this time period, thus long-lasting, and textual evidence for their existence survived even longer in texts that Kāshefī was acquainted with, it is quite possible that as per his established methodologies, he drew on these textual sources for thematic resonance in crafting his *maqtal.* In the conclusion of this chapter, I will elaborate further on how all these themes demonstrate parallels in Kāshefī's narrative on Ḥusayn.

IX. Conclusion

In the previous sections, I have described in particular the three figures of Siyāvash, Zarīr, and Tammūz. I have discussed the events of their stories as recounted in the textual sources with which Kāshefī would have been most familiar. I have also outlined the practical connections between these textual accounts, both here and in the previous chapter, by using the

[662] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 607-8, 635.
[663] For example, a predestination story in the *Rowẕat* specifically focuses on the cutting of Ḥusayn's "radiant throat" (*ḥalq-e nūrānī-ye ḥusayn*). See: Ibid, 389-390.

Rowẕat and Kāshefī's oeuvre to demonstrate his acquaintance with them. In this section, I will offer some conclusions by outlining systematically some of the most salient parallels between these pre-Islamic figures and Ḥusayn, to reinforce this argument.

The identification of Siyāvash with Ḥusayn is perhaps best expressed by Meskūb, who says:

> An Iranian Muslim who lives in a climate of traditional mythological and cultural traditions is likely to still feel Siyāvash in certain such places. Underneath such a self-conscious image of legend, perhaps such an unconscious conception may be latent. However, this concept cannot be acquired by the self-conscious Muslim man. Thus, although the Zoroastrians are People of the Book, there is a different sort of set-up for salvation and the resurrection. Because "another world has been constructed, another sort of human must be also constructed." This other sort of human is Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, the martyr of Karbalā. The divine Siyāvash (*siyāvash-e elāhī*) has been replaced by him and *taʿziyeh* has taken the place of the mourning for Siyāvash.[664]

This identification not only limited to explicit articulation in the modern period. There are indeed some explicit identifications of Ḥusayn and Siyāvash in the medieval period. The traditions of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq or Yārsān religion—a Kurdish esoteric belief system which probably emerged out of a similar mixture of Shiʿi messianic movements, Iranian esotericism, and Kurdish traditions[665] as the Safavid order did.[666] The oldest and most important of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq holy texts, the *Kalām-e Saranjām* (Final Words), was probably compiled (loosely) in the 15th century in a dialect of the Gorani language. This is the same time frame as a particularly

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[664] Shāhrokh Meskūb, *Sūg-e Siyāvash: Dar Marg va Rastākhīz*, (Tehran: Khvārazmī, 1972), 82.
مسلمانی ایرانی که در آب وهوای سنتهای اساطیری و فرهنگی خود می روید محتمل است که سیاوش را در چنین مقامی احساس کند. در پس چنان تصویر خود آگاهی از افسانه شاید چنین دریافت ناخود آگاهی نیز خفته باشد. اما این دریافت نمی تواند به خود آگاه مرد مسلمان راه یابد. زیرا هر چند مجوسان اهل کتاب اند ولی رستگاری و معاد تمهیدات دیگری دارد. چون "عالمی دیگر ساخته شد آدمی دیگر بباید ساخت." و این آدم دیگر حسین علی شهید کربلاست. سیاوش الهی جای خود را به او وا گذاشت و تعزیه جای سوگ سیاوش را گرفت.

[665] Ibid, 84 n. 61.

[666] See Chapter Four, Section III for details on the rise of the Safavid dynasty and Esmāʿīl's cult of personality. Shāh Esmāʿīl was of Kurdish extract; the founder of the order and his ancestor, Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī was Kurdish, and Ardabil is around 376 kilometers from Urmia, at the edge of the modern Kurdistan region.

intense period of *ghulat* activity in the region, as well as the growth of the Safavid order. The Ahl-e Ḥaqq probably began to take shape within Kāshefī's lifetime. In fact, a version of the *Saranjām*, the *Taẕkīreh-ye Aʿlá* (Highest Memorial), contains an anecdote describing a meeting between the Safavid Sufi order's founder, Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī (d. 1334 C.E.) and the traditional founder of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq religion, Sultan Sahāk/Isḥāq (d. circa 15th century C.E.) in Perdivar, so that the former could receive Sufi investiture from the latter.[667] Even if the story is Ahl-e Ḥaqq propaganda intended to tie them favorably to the Safavids, it suggests that the two movements had some contact in the early period of Safavid growth.[668] At least one poem (*kalām*), spoken in the voice of ʿĀlī Qalandar about Bābā Yādegār,[669] is found in among the Ahl-e Ḥaqq hymns which explicitly identifies Ḥusayn with Siyāvash as incarnations or angelic manifestations (*dūn*)[670] of God:[671]

آو تشت طلا
سه دونم چین آو تشت طلا
اول سیاوخش دومین یحیی
سیمین حسین پور شهنشاه
و تشت طلا کردن نخچیرم
جدا کردن رأس منیرم.

That golden plate (*tasht-e ṭalā*)[672]
Three times my incarnation (*dūnam*) went on that golden plate
The first time as Siyāvash, the second time as John the Baptist
The third as Ḥusayn, son of the Emperor (i.e. ʿAlī)
They hunted me, [putting me] on that golden plate

[667] Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat Sects*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 217-18.
[668] Minorsky notes that Esmāʿīl freely used the term *ahl-e ḥaqq* in reference to his followers, and furthermore that the Ahl-e Ḥaqq religion itself counts Esmāʿīl as one of its saints. See: Vladimir Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismāʾīl I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10, no. 4 (1942): 1006-1029; 1027a.
[669] Religious figures (*haftan*) of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq. ʿĀlī Qalandar, to whom this *kalām* is attributed, was born in 1434-5 C.E., while Bābā Yādegār was born in 1359-60 C.E. See: Reza M. Hamzehʾee, *The Yaresan: A Sociological, Historical, and Religio-historical Study of a Kurdish Community*, (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1990), 106.
[670] This is a deformation of Middle Turkic *tōn*, "garment." See: al-Kāshgharī, 3: 100.
[671] See Chapter Two, Section IV and especially Chapter Four, Section III for details on the *ghulat* belief in *ḥulūl* (incarnation).
[672] This is a reference to the belief that the heads of Ḥusayn, John the Baptist, and Siyāvash were all presented on golden plates to an evil king. The wording in the *Rowẕat* and the *Shāhnāmeh* is not exactly the same as in the above *kalām* but uses the similar but far more common *tasht-e zarrīn* "golden dish/basin." Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:357, 384; and Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 674.

They cut off my shining head (*ra's-e monīram*).[673]

Unfortunately, the exact provenance of this poem is complicated by the fact that these *kalām*s were originally entirely oral, and even the recent written versions are jealously guarded by the Ahl-e Ḥaqq elders. Still, it is fascinating to see a piece which essentially attempts to unite three religious traditions by conceiving the Godhead as manifesting in the forms of Zoroastrian, Christian, and Muslim martyrs.[674] Additionally, the sacrifices of the Ahl-e Ḥaqq are called *sabz namūdan* or "making green." Halm connects this to a survival of fertility cult beliefs in the religion, but I would take this farther and say that it is quite possibility a much-eroded reference to the Siyāvash cult and, in particular, to the story of *par-e siyāvashān*.[675]

Before we fully turn to a detailed comparison of the similarities between Ḥusayn in the *Rowẕat*, with Siyāvash, Zarīr, and Tammūz, it should be emphasized that the outlining of similarities should not be taken to imply identity. There are notable differences in addition to the similarities. Ḥusayn is significantly older than Siyāvash when he dies and has grown children. Ḥusayn (b. 626 C.E.) is also at least twenty years senior to Yazīd (b. 646-7 C.E.), as opposed to the age gap between Siyāvash and Afrāsiyāb. Ḥusayn also does not ever ally with Yazīd while fleeing from his father, nor does he marry Yazīd's daughter—though Shahrbānū is the daughter of an enemy king of the Arabs. There is also no narrative comparable to the conflict between Siyāvash and Sūdābeh in Ḥusayn's story. Likewise, it stretches the allusion to suggest that Ḥusayn was fighting a rival religion's armies, as Zarīr was. Ḥusayn was also not a prophet—

[673] Māshā'llāh Sūrī, *Sorūd'hā-ye Dīnī-ye Yāresān,* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr/Ketābhā-ye Sīmorgh, 1965), 102.
[674] Note that Kāshefī does compare Ḥusayn to John the Baptist (also called *maʿṣūm-e maẓlūm* "the sinless unjustly treated"), and also relates the story of John's head and blood being put into a dish for an evil king. See: Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 193, 387.
[675] Heinz Halm, "Ahl-e Ḥaqq," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, 1982, I/6, pp. 635-637, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ahl-e-haqq-people (accessed on 10 December 2020).

though he was an Imam, a crucially important religious figure—calling a king to his new religion like Ibn Waḥshiyya's description of Tammūz reports. These differences are important to keep in mind when evaluating the following similarities fairly. But let us now turn specifically to the connections between Ḥusayn, Siyāvash, Tammūz, and Zarīr as can be gleaned from the main texts in question.

Like Siyāvash, Ḥusayn is described as being a miraculous individual with a fated destiny at birth. Both are described as descendants of Jamshīd and Fereydūn.[676] How literally Kāshefī intends this descent to be is not entirely clear, but at the very least there is the suggestion of Ḥusayn as inheritor of their kingship, hence *shāhzādeh*, "prince." It is important to note that any connection with Iranian kingship beyond his marriage to Shahrbānū is never suggested by any Arabic *maqtal* I am aware of, nor do Arabic *maqātil* use this distinctly Persian title in reference to him.

Both Ḥusayn and Siyāvash are characterized by a connection to light or fire from birth; Ḥusayn's face glowed so brightly that it illuminated the way in the dark, and Siyāvash's face blazed with the radiance of Ādar, the divinity of fire.[677] Both Siyāvash and Ḥusayn are occasionally associated with Mehr (Miθra) by Ferdowsī and Kāshefī respectively; Mehr is both the personification of covenant as well as the purification of fire.[678] Both of their mothers are described primarily as being especially pure or otherworldly; Siyāvash is "being born of a pure mother" (*az mādar-e pārsā bezāyad*).[679] Compare this to the description of Fāṭima in the *Rowẕat*, where she is repeatedly referred to as virginal (*batūl* and *ʿazrā*).[680] Fāṭima is also typically

[676] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:210, and Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 111.
[677] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, Ibid, and Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 391.
[678] Boyce 1975, 70-1.
[679] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:237.
[680] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 635. Note that both of these terms for her do predate the *Rowẕat*; the point is both that Kāshefī repeatedly highlights them and that when read in conjunction with the other parallels, provide extra support.

associated with the Houris when in heaven; she is even called "an houri in human form" (*ḥowrā-ye ensiyyeh*),[681] which may be compared to the theory that Siyāvash's mother was originally a *parī*. Ḥusayn only remains in the womb for six months, and upon his birth, he is described as being born under a blessed horoscope (*khojasteh rukh o akhtar, mobārak fāl*).[682] Compare this to the description of Siyāvash's horoscope being drawn up at the beginning of his story. Note however, that blessed in this sense does not imply "happy," since at his birth, Gabriel appears before Muḥammad and prophesizes Ḥusayn's death at Karbalā and offers his condolences. The prophet, ʿAlī, and Fāṭima all then weep over Ḥusayn's tragic fate, much like how Kay Kāvūs grieves over Siyāvash's predestined end at his birth.[683]

There is also a possible connection between the wives of Siyāvash and Ḥusayn, Farangīs and Shahrbānū, the latter of whom who I previously discussed in Chapter Two.[684] Notably, Farangīs and Shahrbānū are both princesses from nations who engaged in hostilities with the family of the martyred hero, Siyāvash and Ḥusayn respectively. Both mourn bitterly and both are spoken of as giving birth to sons which are the focus of divine favor, Kay Khosrow and Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn. As I have previously discussed as well, Shahrbānū is certainly an attempt to link Ḥusayn and his progeny to Iran, and she herself probably derives from the Zoroastrian cult of Anāhitā.[685]

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[681] Ibid, 308.
[682] Ibid, 388.
[683] Ibid, 388-9, and Ferdowsī. *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 202.
[684] See Chapter Two, Section VIII: *Structure of the Rowẕat* for more details.
; to my knowledge, this connection has not been much explored. One mention is found in: Jāber ʿAnāṣerī, *Dar Āmadī bar Namāyesh-o Niyāyesh dar Īrān*, (Tehran: Vāḥed-e Fowq-e Barnāmeh-ye Bakhsh-e Farhangī-e Daftar-e Markazī-ye Jehād-e Dāneshgāhī, 1987), 17, 44.
[685] Furthermore, Ḥoṣūrī notes that the marriage of Siyāvash and Farangīs has similarities to the marriage of Miθra and Anāhitā. See: Ḥoṣūrī 47-48. Recall here that both Miθra is associated with both Siyāvash, arguably in the *Shāhnāmeh* (as *mehr*, the embodiment of love), and with Ḥusayn in the *Rowẕat*. See: Ferdowsī. *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:375; and: Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 112. I have already mentioned here and in Chapter Two that the cult of Shahrbānū is almost certainly a relic of the cult of Anāhitā. See Chapter Two, Section VIII: *Structure of the Rowẕat* for more details.

Ḥusayn is frequently described as a righteous and courageous warrior. Both Ḥusayn and Siyāvash are strongly associated with horses, symbols of warrior prowess and noble status; both of these horses are also named: Dhū 'l-Janāḥ (Swift One or Winged One) for Ḥusayn, and Shabrang Behzād (Night-Colored Purebred) for Siyāvash. Interestingly, there is a juxtaposition of colors here: while Dhū 'l-Janāḥ is white, Shabrang Behzād is black. However, Siyāvash is associated with white clothing, while Ḥusayn with black clothing; white is the color worn during Zoroastrian funerals, while black is the color of mourning for Ḥusayn.[686]

In one passage in chapter seven, which describes Ḥusayn's virtues and early life, his courage (*shojāʿat*) is compared to that attributed to Rostam (*dāstān-e rostam dastan-rā mansūkh sākhteh*)[687] Obviously, given that a huge chunk of the book, chapter nine, is devoted to Ḥusayn's exploits at Karbalā[688] and his belief that this is God's will, the parallel to Zarīr going into battle against the demon-worshipping legions of Tūrān is also clear. Furthermore, the fact that Zarīr has a eulogy for him composed on the spot is an important element in understanding early Persian mourning rituals. All the more so since, while Narshakhī tells us that while something similar existed for Siyāvash, we have no extant examples of what such eulogies beyond this actually looked like.

Like Siyāvash, Ḥusayn is described as a victim (*maẓlūm*) whose death has an element of sacrifice to it and he is associated with vegetation.[689] Both Ḥusayn and Siyāvash are contrasted to

[686] See: Janet Kestenberg Amighi, *The Zoroastrians of Iran: Conversion, Assimilation, or Persistence*, (New York: AMS Press, 1990), 384, and: Ingvild Flaskerud, *Visualizing Belief and Piety in Iranian Shiism*, (London; New York: Continuum, 2010), 251.
[687] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 395.
[688] A large amount of this is concentrated in the narrative of his death, where he dispatches many enemies before dying. See: Ibid, 616-32.
[689] Ḥusayn is not specifically called *bī-gonāh* in the *Rowẕat*; though Fāṭima implies this of him upon hearing the prophecy of his death (*Ḥoseyn-e man che gonāh kardeh bāshad*). It seems that in the *Rowẕat, bī-gonāh* is commonly used of children rather than adults, to mean "innocent," rather than in the generic sense of "sinless" that Ferdowsī uses it (note that this semantic development parallels that of *maʿṣūm* in Urdu). Thus, the Arabic *maẓlūm* (or

their enemies, tyrannical rulers in the person of Yazīd and Afrāsiyāb, respectively, and both have personal connections to them; neither of them face these rulers in a direct final battle before their deaths, rather they are overarching antagonistic forces. They give themselves over to their enemies and are killed savagely in a manner not unlike the sacrificial victim—a victim who blood serves as an eventual source of rebirth. Also like Siyāvash, Ḥusayn is beheaded by a minion of his enemy, and the spilling of his blood is likened to water as per the repeated references to the skies weeping blood.[690] While no plants grow from Ḥusayn's blood, right after his death a magical tree with a wonderful scent and medicinal properties started pouring blood.[691] Additionally, the story of the three magical fruits which regenerate throughout Ḥusayn's life and whose scent lingers about his tomb also ties him to vegetation and rebirth.[692]

Both Ḥusayn and Siyāvash are associated with red tulips (*lāleh-ye vazhegūn*) in the *Rowẕat* and the *Shāhnāmeh*; the image of the tulip is in fact a very old Iranian symbol of innocent blood.[693] What is more, the *Rowẕat* is permeated with metaphorical representations of

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sometimes *maʿṣūm* which has the more specific sense of "sinless" in Arabic) essentially takes over many of the semantic senses of *bī-gonāh.* Ibid, 389.

[690] Ibid 473-4, 622-23, 629-30, 639.

[691] Ibid, 639-40.

[692][692] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 470-1.

[693] See: Sylwia Surdykowska and Teresa Opalińska, *Martyrdom and Ecstasy: Emotion Training in Iranian Culture*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 151. Note also that the tulip, or specifically, the *lāleh-ye vāzhegūn* "upturned tulip," or *Fritillaria* (possibly specifically *Fritillaria Imperialis*) occupies a similar place as a similar red flower, the Anemone coronaria, the flower said to have grown from Adonis' blood. Popular belief suggests that the Fritillaria grew either from Siyāvash's blood (i.e. an alternate interpretation of the *par-e siyavashān;* though the *Shāhnāmeh* calls it simply a plant, *giyā*) or grew in response to his death. A popular verse reads:

چو سرو سیاوش نگون‌سار دید　　سراپردهٔ دشت خون‌سار دید
بیفکند سر را ز انده نگون　　بشد زان سپس لالهٔ واژگون

When it saw the form of Siyāvash overturned/It saw the entire enclosure of the meadow as full of blood//Then it let its own head hang down from grief/Afterwards, it became [known as] the inverted tulip//

I have not located this verse in the *Shāhnāmeh*; it is possible that it is simply a spurious verse or a local creation; based on comparison with the earliest online versions, I have established the verse would be inserted that after the fifth verse in the second set of variant verses given under note 7 for line 2265 on page 356 of volume 2 of the Khaleghi-Motlagh edition. See: https://bit.ly/3ci4b5p ; and: https://bit.ly/3eoCTNq. Given the above-mentioned connection between throat ailments and the Siyāvash plant, the fact that the Fritillaria has been used in the past as an expectorant is all the more interesting and suggests further research. See also: Afsaneh Bonyadi, Seyyedali Mozaffarpur, Mohammad Azadbakht, and Mortaza Mojahedi, "The Emergence of Fritillaria Imperialis in Written

vegetation; Ḥusayn is described as *nahāl,* "new plant shoot," many times,[694] along with associations of rosebuds (*ghoncheh*), flowers (*gol*), gardens (*ḥadīqat*, *būstan*), grassy fields (*chaman*), and so on—indeed, the very title of the book is "Meadow of the Martyrs." The association with vegetation, of course, makes the contrast with death all the more powerful and highlights the eulogizing of Ḥusayn as a kind of preservation of the vitality of his fame through a literary 'garden'—i.e. poetry and elaborate prose.[695] Considering this, it is no surprise that his demise brings darkness, earthquakes and environmental disaster with it.[696] Thus, on the day of his death as well, the air was filled with red dust, and the sky grew so dark (*tārīk*) that no one could see each other (*chonān cheh mardom yekdīgar-rā nemī dīdand*).[697] This description is remarkably similar to the description of the events immediately following the death of Siyāvash, where the sky also grows dark to the extent that no one can see each other; even the wording of the two passages is similar (*kasī yekdegar-rā nadīdand rū-ī*).[698]

The darkness covering the earth after both Ḥusayn and Siyāvash die can be contrasted with the way that both of their heads are likened to the sun. Both have their heads or blood from their dismembered head placed in a golden dish (*tasht-e zarrīn*).[699] In addition to being a bit of

References of Traditional Persian Medicine: A Historical Review," *Herbal Medicines Journal* 2, no. 1 (2017). https://doi.org/10.22087/hmj.v1i2.585.

[694] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 387.

[695] It is worth noting a thematic parallel to the nigh ever-present comparison of the fame of ancient Greek heroes like Achilles as "unwilting fame" (*κλέος ἄφθιτον*), which will endure forever in the songs of his glory. See: Gregory Nagy, *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 88. On this topic, Lincoln notes the importance of eulogizing poetry, in particular due to its connection to ensuring a definite kind of immortality: "In a universe where impersonal matter endured forever but the personal self was extinguished at death, the most which could survive of that self was a rumor, a reputation. For this, the person craving immortality—a condition proper only to the gods and antithetical to human existence—was totally reliant on poets and poetry." See: Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 15.

[696] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 623, 627, 630.

[697] Ibid, 630.

[698] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 358. This is also arguably a solar image in both cases; i.e. when Siyāvash and Ḥusayn are beheaded, the sun vanishes from the world and it is overtaken by darkness—in some way, they are connected to, represent, or are the sun. This is strengthened in Ferdowsī's case by how he compares Siyāvash's fallen head to the sun. Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 310-311.

[699] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:357, 384; and Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 674.

narrative shared with the Ahl-e Ḥaqq *kalām* mentioned above which explicitly equates Ḥusayn and Siyāvash, the term *tasht-e zarrīn* is a Persian poetic expression for the sun.[700] I have extensively described above Siyāvash's numerous connections to light and the sun, not least of which is that Ferdowsī explicitly compares his dismembered head to the sun (*cho az sarvbon dūr gasht āftāb*).[701] Likewise, in the *Rowẕat*, Kāshefī compares Ḥusayn's dismembered head to the sun (*rakh chon āftābesh*) poetically.[702] In a more literal example, Shimr's army leaves Ḥusayn's head behind in a locked boxed at a monastery (*deyr*), later visited by the *ahl al-bayt*. Despite the fact that there are no candles or lamps in the house (*bī shamaʿ o cherāgh*), a light emanates from it that all can see. Every hour, the light grew in intensity to the extent that none could bear the light (*ān rowshanī har sāʿat ziyādeh mī-gardad tā beh ḥaddī keh hīch dīdeh tāb-e moshāhadeh-ye ān nūr nadāshtī*). The scent of musk and rosewater also emanate from the same box.[703] A similar story describes how Khawlī b. Yazīd, one of ʿUmar b. Saʿd's soldiers, hid Ḥusayn's head inside his oven (*tanūr*), after which it began to glow like "a hundred thousand candles and lamps" (*gūyā ṣad-hezār shamʿ-o cherāgh bar afrūkhteh'and*).[704]

When contrasted with the dust which obscures the sun in the sky after Ḥusayn and Siyāvash's respective deaths, a possible allusion to the archetypical "hidden sun" myth emerges.[705] Ḥusayn and Siyāvash represent a missing sun, the source of life for the entire earth.

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[700] According to Dekhodā, the phrase is "a metonym for the sun" (*kenāyeh az khᵛorshīd ast*). ʿAlī Akbar Dehkhodā, "*Tasht-e Zarrīn,*" *Loghatnāmeh-ye Dehkhodā* (digital version, http://dehkhoda.ut.ac.ir) Based on the 15-volume physical version, published in 1998; Dehkhoda Dictionary Institute and International Center for Persian Language Teaching, University of Tehran, 2016; available online at https://dehkhoda.ut.ac.ir/fa/dictionary/88513/ تشت زرین (accessed online at 30 December 2020).

[701] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 358.

[702] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 635.

[703] Ibid, 663-5.

[704] Ibid, 646. Note also that both of these stories remain quite popular, and are common subjects for lamentations, usually termed *rowẕeh-ye deyr-e rāheb* (Lamentation on the Monastery of the Monk) and *rowẕeh-ye tanūr-e khowlī* (Lamentation on Khawlī's Oven). Considering the titles, the *Rowẕat* may have been the text that popularized these stories.

[705] Witzel notes the common theme of the sun being contained inside a house or a box, both of which fit the anecdote from the *Rowẕat* mentioned above. In the ancient Iranian version, the container is Yima's (Jamshīd)

The sun is typically trapped in a box, house, fortress, or cave under the earth. After the sun disappears, the world is consumed by darkness and death until the sun—i.e. their descendants and bearers of their divinely obtained radiance (*farr* or *nūr*)—return to bring back life to the world. Note that elements of this myth are present in the story of Tammūz as well.[706]

The theme of mourning for Ḥusayn, as mentioned previously in this section regarding his birth and discussed in detail in Chapter Two of course has clear parallels. After the events at Karbalā', the Houris weep together with Fāṭima in heaven,[707] and Fāṭima cries so loudly that Yazīd hears her lamentations in Damascus and trembles.[708] Similarly, Farangīs, Siyāvash's wife, tears at her face and curses her father for Siyāvash's death, resulting in her being dragged before Afrāsiyāb and beaten.[709] When Farangīs and Kay Khosrow enter Siyāvashgerd, we also see hints of a cult of mourning for Siyāvash, such as the establishment of a "temple for mourners" (*paresteshgah-e sūgvārān*).[710] The story of the three magical fruits in the *Rowẕat* also has thematic similarities to the establishment of this temple, since the tree that grows there with Siyāvash's face offers solace for those who mourn for him, just as the scent of the vanished apple perfuming Ḥusayn's tomb offers respite to the sincere believer.[711] Like Siyāvash and Tammūz,

fortress under the earth. See: Michael Witzel, *The Origins of the World's Mythologies*, (Oxford University Press, 2012), 141. See Ibid, 148 for a comparative chart of some the most common elements of the myth.

[706] The elements are less clear in Ibn Waḥshiyya's version, beyond the clear associations of Tammūz with the sun and his death but are far more obvious in the original Mesopotamian versions of the myth, which has Tammūz imprisoned in the underworld until delivered by Ištar, the "queen of heaven." In these original versions as well, Tammūz is clearly associated with the sun. See: S.H. Langdon, *Tammuz and Ishtar: A Monograph upon Babylonian Religion and Theology, Containing Extensive Extracts from the Tammuz Liturgies and All of the Arbela Oracles*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), 30.

[707] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 639-40.

[708] Ibid, 685.

[709] Farangīs is also essentially a captive of her father after her husband's murder, much like the women of Ḥusayn's family, especially his sister Zaynab, become captives of Yazīd. See: Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2: 359. Yarshater also notes this point, but more obliquely: Yarshater 1979, 92.

[710] Ferdowsī, *Shāhnāmeh*, 2:375.

[711] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 470-1.

Ḥusayn had a cult of mourning devoted to him which sprang up soon after his death when people began making pilgrimages to his grave.

Additionally, both figures become focuses of what can be interpreted as an ancestor cult; Siyāvash insofar as he becomes a *frauuašī* as well as the legendary founder of Bukhara wherein a major version of his *Siyāvashān* were held, and Ḥusayn as the personification of Safavid legitimacy through their claim of descent from him.[712] Also, like Tammūz, Ḥusayn's martyrdom was commemorated morning and night by all the celestial beings of the heavens and earth, who perform a prototypical version of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* over his death.[713]

An even more direct parallel to Tammūz is the story of the angel Fuṭrus which Kāshefī relates when describing Ḥusayn's birth. Fuṭrus, an angel from the third heaven, falls to earth and ruins his wings after disobeying God. Gabriel leads him to the infant Ḥusayn, who heals him with a simple touch. After Ḥusayn's martyrdom, Fuṭrus leads his garrison of 70,000 angels in perpetual mourning, day and night, over Ḥusayn's tomb.[714] Now compare this with the story of the deity Nasr mentioned by Ibn Waḥshiyya in the previous section, a pre-Islamic Arabian god associated with dreams and esoteric arts.[715] This god also is described as mourning perpetually over the site of Tammūz's martyrdom in Babylon, day and night. This is the only character among the various celestial beings mourning for Tammūz who is actually named and has a backstory, much like Fuṭrus.

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[712] Azarpay explicitly terms the cult of Siyāvash as an ancestral cult and notes its similarity to Graeco-Iranian dynastic cults. See: Guitty Azarpay, "Iranian Divinities in Sogdian Painting," in *Monumentum H. S. Nyberg*, (Tehran: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1975), pp. 19-30; 22. As for Ḥusayn, I shall revisit this point in Chapter Four, but later travelogues specifically note the similarity of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals to Roman festivals dedicated to ancestral spirits.

[713] Ibid, 110. Recall also the Panjikent murals noted by Yarshater, which depict gods and mortals mourning for Siyāvash. See: Yarshater 1979, 91.

[714] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 390-1.

[715] Ibn Waḥshiyya, *Kitāb al-Filāḥa al-Nabaṭiyya*, 296-297.

A large section of chapter ten in the *Rowẕat* is dedicated to describing the punishments and revenge visited on the killers of Ḥusayn by the surviving ʿAlids. In this way, this can also serve to reinforce the connection to Siyāvash, who also has a campaign of revenge in his memory mounted by Kay Khosrow and Rostam. Abū Muslim (d. 755 C.E.) is an instrumental figure in this, connecting the ʿAlid supporters with the Persian past. In the *Rowẕat*, Abū Muslim is called the "Lord of the religious assembly and dynasty (*ṣāheb-e dowʿat-o dowlat*) who brings vengeance on the scions of Yazīd by annihilating the Marwanids (*chandīn marvānī-rā halāl kard-o dūd-e estīṣāl az tokhmeh-ye marvāniyān bar āvord*).[716] Abū Muslim may meaningfully be compared to Rostam and Kay Khosrow (and indeed was) as the figure who enacts this revenge by means of his toppling the Umayyad caliphate – just as Rostam and Kay Khosrow are instrumental in destroying the *dīv*s and breaking Afrāsiyāb's power. Note that that this is borne out by Babayan, who observes that Shāh Esmāʿīl connected himself with both Rostam and Kay Khosrow, possibly as their reincarnations, and Abū Muslim, as his successor and likewise a quasi-divine messianic figure.[717] These identifications may have be even earlier, as Narshakhī in his entry on Rāmeshān mentions that both Abū Muslim and Kay Khosrow spent much time there, with Kay Khosrow supposedly having built the city himself while laying siege to Afrāsiyāb's forces in pursuit of vengeance for Siyāvash.[718]

Here, it is appropriate to reiterate the theme of tragedy which colors many of the narratives mentioned above. I have previously used the terms "tragedy" and "dramatic irony" in a way which is somewhat idiosyncratic in comparison to the traditional definitions of these terms originating in Greek poetics, and it is worth considering how these terms should be understood in

[716] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 193-4.
[717] Babayan 2002, 279-280.
[718] Narshakhī, *Tārīkh-e Bokhārā*, 18-19.

the context of the narratives of Ḥusayn and Siyāvash. Both Hyder and Husain mention that the story of Ḥusayn in these accounts is not a tragedy in the proper sense of Greek poetics.[719] In Greek drama—and its inheritors, such as Shakespearean tragedy—the hero has a fatal flaw (*hamartía*) of some kind, which provides the irony necessary to predestine them to destruction. Oedipus doesn't know the implications of murdering the man who turns out to be his father, Hamlet doesn't know that his careful, deliberate planning is exactly the thing which results in his death.

In the case of Ḥusayn, Kāshefī repeatedly tells us the opposite; Ḥusayn not only has no fatal flaw, but in fact, he is fundamentally sinless (*maʿṣūm*) as a matter of cosmological course. Similarly, Siyāvash has no fatal flaw and is also sinless (*bī-gonāh*). They simply cannot fulfill the theological requirements of their narratives if they are not flawless. However, as the aforementioned scholars point out for Ḥusayn, their fatal flaw is the paradoxical notion that they have no flaws at all. As fundamentally pure, sinless, and heroic beings, their natural state contains the necessity of their sacrifice as a cosmological fact. They are doomed because the world can simply not do without a pure sacrifice for its salvation. They are thus, to quote the old adage, "too good for this sinful earth," and so the conditions for their tragedy are fulfilled. The irony is not that we, the audience, know before they do that their destiny and character demand their destruction, but that they know this before we do—from their very birth— that tragedy is their end. This metanarrative point is the final and perhaps most important connection between Ḥusayn and Siyāvash.

[719] Karrar Husain, "The Social and Spiritual Significance of the Urdu *Marthīya*," *Al-Ṣerat 12: Papers from the Imam Husayn Conference*, (London: Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 1986), 172, and: Syed Akbar Hyder, *Reliving Karbala: Martyrdom in South Asian Memory*, (Oxford University Press, 2006), 220 n. 31.

With all these connections, it strains credulity to dismiss them as simple coincidence—though it is very important to note that they are neither the same narratives, nor do I suggest that Kāshefī was attempting to revive pre-Islamic vegetation cults, or that he was 'copying' them. Rather, since we know that Kāshefī was well-acquainted with both the *Shāhnāmeh* as well as the the *qeṣṣeh-khᵛān*s and surrounded by a milieu fascinated with messianic reincarnations of ancient Persian heroes, it is far more likely that he drew on these narratives as a way of Persianizing Ḥusayn's martyrdom. Here, then, we can see the Avestan and Middle Persian narratives of Siyāvash as a *point of contact* which texts like the *Shāhnāmeh* introduce into the vocabulary of the Persian public, often in the form of oral performances like *Shāhnāmeh-khᵛānī* as a *place of contact*, in turn evoking the collective memory in the *substratum of contact*. This process is then repeated in the *Rowẕat* to map the heroes of Persian epic literature as a synonym for Ḥusayn. In this way, *memory relics* of pre-Islamic narratives are reinterpreted in the form of the Karbalā' narrative, serving the function of Persianizing Ḥusayn's story, in order to transmit a meaning that all these narratives encapsulate Persian values of sacrifice and salvation. In this manner, the story of an Arab religious figure who died eight centuries before his time became far more accessible to the Persian-speaking populace. Likewise, this accessibility made the story far more useful in the Safavids' later efforts to convert the population of their empire to Shiʿism by making Shiʿism equivalent in the popular imagination with Persian-ness. In the next chapter, I will consider exactly how they accomplished this effort, and how the textual narrative of the *Rowẕat* evolves into the dramatic, theatrical endeavor that is *taʿziyeh*.

Chapter Four: The World Will Be Better for This

Know, O faithful army,
I have not seen in these wretched time
Any more faithful than my own companions,
Better than my own beloved supporters.
No one has seen his fellow crawl to sleep.
My lord will give you a good reward for my sake,
He will grant you a boon from His mercy.
A revelation came upon me now,
That a thousand disasters lie ahead of us.
Now I have released you from your oaths of obedience,
This is an opportunity for you.
I have no expectation of help from you,
No one is free of sorrow in these times.[720]

I. Introduction: The Place of Legend, the Place of History

In the previous chapter, I considered in detail the various elements from pre-Islamic Iranian and Mesopotamian mythic material which I argued Kāshefī incorporated for the purposes of his project. In particular, I argued that the figure of Siyāvash is a culturally significant allusion for Kāshefī's attempt to reframe Ḥusayn not simply as a Muslim or Shiʿi religious figure, but as an Iranian/Persian hero. In this chapter, I will build upon this discussion by considering how the Safavids instrumentalized this Persianization of Ḥusayn and made it part of their official imperial agenda.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I outlined some hermeneutic principles I would be incorporating into the process of analysis. In particular, I highlighted the concepts of collective

[720] Mayel Baktash, "Taʿziyeh and its Philosophy," *Taʿziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran,* (New York: New York University Press; Soroush Press, 1979), pp. 95-120; 116.

memory,[721] *lieux de mémoire,* [722] and deterritorialization[723] as techniques that I would be modifying and applying to my reading of these texts. As noted in the introduction, these theories were originally articulated to describe phenomena different from the development of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals as described in this dissertation. Thus, the concept of *memory relics* was necessitated by adapting these theories, and constructing a new theoretical paradigm designed specifically to interpret this data.[724] *Memory relics* are vectors for collective cultural memory realized through a three-layered pattern describing how cultural artifacts, whether textual, ritual, or practical, evolve and move through a cultural consciousness.

In the previous three chapters, I have been operating with this concept as a guiding principle in interpreting the textual material, but in this chapter, open articulation is necessary since now we are not just dealing with literature, but records of particular physical manifestations (i.e. descriptions of rituals, official documents, deeds) in which the literary elements of these texts become embodied. This is difficult to present purely in the context of textual analysis, but it will become particularly important in this section.

Essentially, *memory relics* are intended as a guide for interpreting how the textual material introduced and analyzed in the previous three chapters can be understood as ritual blueprints. It is not enough to say that they suggest ritual or look like ritual. For us to understand the *Rowẓat*'s significance as an initiator of a whole new era of *ʿĀshūrā*' devotions, we need to understand what form these devotions took, in other words, in what sorts of rituals the *Rowẓat* was involved, and whether we can we document them. To inquire about the function of the

[721] Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), and *The Collective Memory*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).
[722] Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France = Les Lieux De Mémoire*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xvii.
[723] Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 174.
[724] See Introduction, Section III for more details.

Rowẕat is to ask how the Safavid government provided an institutional framework for its implementation and what sorts of official, political, and ideological purposes it served for Iran on a practical level. Finally, what did the rituals inspired by the *Rowẕat* mean to the Iranians? How did it simultaneously create a consensus of Iranian Shiʿi identity while still drawing on Iranian collective memory by positioning Ḥusayn as an "Iranian [Muslim] hero?" How do the themes of suffering, open emotion, catharsis, and intercession interact with these rituals?

II. The Concerns of this Chapter

In the previous chapter, I moved backwards in time to present pre-Islamic primarily Persian heroic figures who I argue inform the narrative and thematic structure of the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*. After comparing the significant similarities between the story of Ḥusayn as presented by Kāshefī and in particular that of Siyāvash, I concluded that Kāshefī uses archetypical characters and tropes to inform the crafting of the book. In doing so, he summons the Iranian collective memory of the ancient heroes and the glories of the past and uses them to present the Passion of Ḥusayn as not simply a part of Islamic history, but also coloring it as deeply Persian.

The three previous chapters have mostly consisted of the textual analysis of literary and historical works. In this chapter, I will switch gears somewhat, in that only a small portion of this chapter will deal with literary analysis. Rather, here I am focused primarily on three basic ideas: firstly, the reception of the *Rowẕat* by Safavid Iran; secondly, the quick adoption of the underlying values of *Rowẕat* by the Safavids as part of their imperial agenda of creating consensus and legitimizing their rule through the institutionalization of Shiʿism; and thirdly, that the *Rowẕat* came to form the basis of ritual activity during *ʿĀshūrā'*, absorbing pre-existing

mourning rituals into what would become a distinctly Iranian form of Shiʿi ritual performance. In doing so, along with references from later Safavid-era literature, I will present archival research into official endowments (*vaqfnāmeh*) prescribing resources and spaces set aside for mourning rituals, testimonies provided by European travelers to Safavid Iran, evidence from manuscript diffusion, and a theoretical structure of my own design, with which to interpret all of these.

This chapter consists of six sections and a conclusion. After the introduction and concerns of the chapter, I discuss the rise of the Safavids focusing in particular on Shāh Esmāʿīl and his implementing of messianic propaganda in promoting a heavily Iranian-themed form of Shiʿism. In the second and third sections, I consider the reception of the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*. The second section deals specifically with how the pattern of manuscript circulation of the *Rowẕat* allows us to demonstrate its quick and wide range of movement. The third section amplifies this argument by showing that the text was not only popular enough to be translated four times by the middle of the 16th century, but also provides evidence for its later connection to Safavid religious policy. In connection with the first section, in sections II and III, I argue that the near-instant popularity of the text made it an attractive source from which the Safavids could establish their vision of institutional Shiʿism. In the fourth section, using archival evidence from official documents, inscriptions, and travelogues, I demonstrate that official patronage of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals instrumentalizing the *Rowẕat* as a basic text began early on and I consider the types of rituals which developed in this environment. Section V focuses on the explosion of new Persian *maqātil* and *maqātil*-related works and how they served to reinforce the institutionalization of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals—as well as how they alter Kāshefī's paradigm. Section VI deals with the tail end of the Safavid dynasty and explores the emergence of *taʿziyeh*, particularly

in its dramatic forms which were promoted by the Qajar dynasty. These sections are followed by a conclusion, which lays the groundwork for the general conclusion of the dissertation to follow.

III. I Wonder What the King is Doing Tonight: The Rise of the Safavids

In 1499, at the tender age of twelve, Esmāʿīl Ṣafavī (d. 1524 C.E), the tutelary leader of the Safavid Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*) emerged from the forests of Gīlān, Iran, and two years later was crowned *shāh* in Tabrīz.[725] The comparisons with the occultation of the Twelfth *Ithnāʿasharī* Imam surely could not have gone unnoticed, especially given the later attempts to construct an ʿAlid descent for him through the seventh Imam, Mūsá al-Kāẓim.[726] The ascent of Esmāʿīl to the throne of Iran came to mark a whole new era in the Iranian political, social, and religious consciousness, one which would have profound effects even to this day.

In order to properly understand these effects and the instrumentalizing of the *Rowẕat*, we first need to understand what sort of context required its instrumentalization. To do this, we need to consider who the Safavids were and what was politically and religiously significant to them in building this new Shiʿi state. It should be stressed that this section is not intended to be a complete history of the Safavid dynasty nor is it an exhaustive discussion of Esmāʿīl's career.[727] Here, I am primarily focused on two particular points: firstly, Esmāʿīl's propaganda efforts through his followers, and secondly, his cultivation of a cult of personality and ritualism which

[725] For an overview of Esmāʿīl's life and career, see: Roger M. Savory, Ahmet T. Karamustafa. "Esmāʿīl I Ṣafawī." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, VIII/6, pp. 628-636, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/esmail-i-safawi (accessed on 8 May 2020).
[726] Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat Sects*, Contemporary Issues in the Middle East, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 457, n. 19.
[727] For an extensive overview of the relevant literature, see: Rudi Matthee. "Safavid Dynasty (cont.)," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2008, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/safavids-ii (accessed on 8 May 2020).

drew on synthetic fusion of classical Shiʿi sympathies and the memory of a mythic Iranian royalty. Both of these points lay the groundwork for the eventual institutionalization of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals later on.

My analysis of the messianism in Esmāʿīl's movement generally follows that of Babayan and Csirkés; the Safavid revolution was not a single, unique strand of thinking that emerged wholesale out of nowhere in the 15th-16th centuries; instead, it was a culmination and revitalization of syncretic trends merging Shiʿi, Iranian, and miscellaneous Mesopotamian/Central Asian revolutionary ideas which had been waxing and waning since the arrival of Islam centuries earlier.[728] Direct inheritance of pre-Islamic traditions is a dubious concept because of the practical and social difficulties in preserving direct continuation on such a scale. Instead, I propose a highly localized Iranian milieu of cultural survival and reinterpretation in three main forms. Firstly, this survival occurs narratives about "culture heroes," whether they be mythic kings and heroes, or revolutionaries like Abū Muslim. Major strands of this thinking occur in a vast swath of different textual forms,[729] whether heresiographical texts, historical chronicles, poetry, or oral traditions. Secondly, it remained in ritual customs which proved to be remarkably durable, surviving long after the religions which initially patronized them faded from legitimacy. Finally, both of the previous two were periodically revived by revolutionary, heterodox, or mystical movements, such as the *shuʿūbiyya* or the *ghulat,* and in the context of the present chapter, the Safavids. The first two forms I have already focused on abundantly in the previous two chapters, particularly in Chapter Three. The third constitutes the major topic of this chapter.

[728] Ferenc Csirkés, "A Messiah Untamed: Notes on the Philology of Shah Ismāʿīl's Dīvān," *Iranian Studies* 52, no. 3-4 (2019): 339-95; 343.
[729] Here I mean "text" in the wider sense of any piece of precomposed literary output, which may be material written down, or orally transmitted.

Here, we will see in detail the full functioning of *memory relics* as a hermeneutical concept for interpreting exactly how these survivals replicated and evolved. Essentially, texts represent a preserved meaning, usually in the sense of consensus-creation, identity formation, or cultural replication, rituals are a formal aspect encapsulating meaning preserved in texts and providing them with a vehicle, and religious, social, and political movements are the functional usage of the previous two, by which they become a tangible object with political effect. So then, let us turn to the discussion of the religious socio-political movement par excellence of this time: the Safavids.

One major effect of the ascendence of the Safavids was a specific kind of the routinization of charisma. After ʿAlī' b. Abī Ṭālib was assassinated in Kufa in 661 C.E., a process of hereditary charisma began to slowly crystallize around his male heirs. This hereditary charisma effectively ended for the Twelvers in 873 C.E. when the Twelfth Imam, Ḥujjat Allāh al-Mahdī disappeared, entering the Lesser Occultation (*al-ghayba al-ṣughrá*).[730] Contact between the Imam and the Shiʿa community was retained through the proxies of four ambassadors (*sufarā'*), who began a process of routinization that reached its next stage when the Imam ceased contact with the fourth and last ambassador in 940 C.E. in an event called the Greater Occultation (*al-ghayba al-kubrá*). After this, authority was essentially placed in the hands of Twelver scholars and the changeover from charismatic authority to legal-traditional authority began. This was a patchwork effort with little internal hierarchy until the Safavids

[730] This is not the case for other Shiʿi communities. The Zaydīs do not have a charismatic hereditary Imam but rather the Imam can be any descendent of Muḥammad through Fāṭima. Ismāʿīlīs, primarily divided into the Nizārīs and the Ṭayyibīs, still believe in an Imam who is physically present on earth. The Nizārīs believe in a living, present Imam in the person of Āghā Khān IV, Shāh Karīm al-Ḥusaynī (b. 1936). The Ṭayyibīs technically have a living Imam, though he is currently living anonymously in *satr* (concealment), while charismatic and temporal organs of community leadership have been delegated to his representative, the *dāʿī muṭlaq* (absolute propagandist). The *dāʿī muṭlaq* is believed to maintain contact with the Imam, thus his *satr* is categorically different from the Greater Occultation of the Twelvers.

arose and began asserting charismatic authority once again in the person of Shāh Esmāʿīl. Essentially, Esmāʿīl did this by creating an elaborate cult of personality, which presented his charismatic power as emanating from God through the Imams and Iranian kings combined. Thus, he both invoked ancient mythos and then centered it around himself.

Esmāʿīl, the founder of the Safavid dynasty, was born into an environment which was permeated by a thick coating of mythic thinking. Mazzaoui has noted that in the late 15th century, Central Asia saw the explosion of various movements rooted in Sufi or *ghulat* Shiʿism.[731] This state of affairs was at least partially caused by the weakening of strong institutions of Sunni orthodoxy following the Mongol invasions and Timurid expansionism in the 13th and 14th centuries.[732] With the decline of traditionalist Sunni powers, there was ample space for various syncretic movements and charismatic leaders to formulate heterodox dogmas, particularly in local environments where the control of orthodoxy had never been particularly strong to begin with.

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the *ghulat* movements were quite strong during Kāshefī's time; one important group, the *mushaʿshaʿiyyūn* (either meaning "the irradiated ones" or the "half-drunk")[733] was an Arab Shiʿi-Sufi order originating in Khuzestan and an early rival of the Safavids, mirroring them in doctrinal trends, charismatic authority, and militarism. In the early 15th century, their founder, Sayyid Muḥammad b. Falāḥ joined his voice to the variety of messianic trends emerging in the area by declaring himself the Mahdī in either 1417 or 1436.[734]

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[731] Michel M. Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Ṣafawids; Šīʿism, Ṣūfism, and the Ġulāt*. (Freiburger Islamstudien; Bd. 3. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1972), 3.
[732] Michel M. Mazzaoui, "Mushaʿshaʿiyan*:* A Fifteenth-Century Shiʿi Movement in Khūzistān and Southern Iraq," *Folia Orientalia,* 22 (1981-1984), 139-162; 152.
[733] Qarāgozlū gives some additional suggestions as to the origin and context of this term. See: ʿAlīreẓā Z̲akāvatī Qarāgozlū. "Nahẓat-e Moshaʿshaʿī-o Goz̲ārī bar Kalām al-Mahdī," *Maʿāref*, Vol. 13, No. 1, (Farvardīn-Tīr 1375/1996), 59-67; 61.
[734] Mazzaoui 1981-1984, 141, 145.

Many of their beliefs were quite similar to the Safavids, and indeed, they even claimed descent from the same Imam, Mūsá al-Kāẓim.[735] Like the Safavids as well, the *mushaʿshaʿiyyūn* were a militarized order; historical chronicles describe Ibn Falāḥ as possessing a personal army, engaging in combat with the Mongols, and even attempting to wrest Ḥuwayzā' in Khuzestan from Timurid control.[736] For our purposes, it is worth noting that the *mushaʿshaʿiyyūn* were apparently active in Herat during Kāshefī's lifetime, since Nūr Allāh Shushtārī (d. 1610 C.E.), the famous *al-shahīd al-thālith* (third martyr) executed by the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr (d. 1628 C.E.), tells us that Ibn Falāḥ's grandson Ibrāhīm was active at the court of Sultan Bāyqarā, and had even got into fights there![737]

The *mushaʿshaʿiyyūn*'s similar doctrines and similarly militarized nature eventually brought them into conflict with the Safavids, who defeated them, and then essentially absorbed them after they were given control of Ḥuwayzā' and what became Arabistan, the southern part of Khuzestan.[738] Considering the activities of the *mushaʿshaʿiyyūn*, the Safavids, and a scruff of Sufi-cum-messiahs active in Herat as well as throughout Iran and Central Asia, it is not surprising that Kāshefī's work—which, as I have shown in the last two chapters, is filled with messianic tropes—would find lasting appeal.

Like the *mushaʿshaʿiyyūn*, the Safavids' initial power grew out of their charismatic leadership. Their heterodox doctrines were probably to a large degree an integral part of cultivating their cult of personality. While Esmāʿīl's claims of divinity are well-known, these heterodox ideas preceded Esmāʿīl's rise to power; in his contemporary history of the early

[735] Ibid, 143. It also seems possible that the *mushaʿshaʿiyyūn* were influenced or at least receptive to some Ismāʿīlī ideas, since Falāḥ was apparently in contact with their teaching centers in Quhistan. See: Ibid, 145.
[736] Ibid, 147.
[737] Ibid, 151-2.
[738] P. Luft, "Mushaʿshaʿ," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 15 May 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0809>

Safavids, the Shirazi historian Faẕl Allāh b. Moḥammad Khonjī Eṣfahānī (d. 1521 C.E.) in his *Tārīkh-e ʿĀlam-ārā-ye Amīnī* (The Trustworthy World-Adorning History) discusses the charisma attributed to Esmāʿīl's father, Ḥeydar, and grandfather, Joneyd. This quotation is well-known in Safavid studies as one of the earliest attributions of divinity to a Safavid shaykh:[739]

> The ignorant persons of Rūm who are a group of perdition and the troops of a Satanic imagination, struck a gong of heretical Christian propaganda on the roof of the monastery of the world and just like that community gone astray, they created their own trinity (*sāles-e salaseh*), deserving punishment and retribution in the abyss of hell; they proclaimed that Shaykh Joneyd was God and his son was the Son of God. *The heavens nearly cleave apart from it, the earth splits and the mountains sink down in devastation when they claim that the Merciful has a son; it is not seemly that the Merciful adopt a son* (19:90-2). Disregarding that, they plainly see his frail corpse smeared with dust and blood, [but] they still concoct [things like] "He is the Living One; there is no god but he."[740]

This is one of the pieces of information we have about the early supporters of the Safavids. The "ignorant people of Rūm" (*johhāl-e rūm*) probably is a generic reference to the diverse collection of Turkic tribes who came to be called the Qızılbaş. As Bashir points out, the term *qızılbaş*, Turkic for "red-head," is uncommonly encountered in contemporary writings; at first, it was only a simple descriptor of dress, probably intended in a derisive way.[741] In sympathetic texts or those

[739] See for example: Amelia Gallagher, "The Apocalypse of Ecstasy: The Poetry of Shah Ismāʿīl Revisited," *Iranian Studies* 51, no. 3 (2018): 361-97; 367.

[740] Faẕl Allāh b. Moḥammad Khonjī-Eṣfahānī, *Tārīkh-e ʿĀlam'ārā-ye Amīnī: bā Maʿānī-o Vāzhah'hā-o Loghāt-e Doshvār*, (Tehran: Khānavādeh, 2000), 293.

جهال روم كه زمرة ضلال و جنود شياطين خيال بودند ناقوس دعواى باطل نصارى را بر بام دير عالم زدند و چون امت غاوية ثالث ثلثه خود را مستحق عقوبت و نكال هاويه كردند شيخ جنيد را به مجاهره آله و ولدش را ابن الله گفتند « تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا أَن دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ وَلَدًا وَمَا يَنبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا» با آنكه بچشم عيان لاشه زبونش آغشته خاک و خون ديدند « هو الحى لااله الا هو » در ثنايش گزيدند

[741] Shahzad Bashir, "The Origins and Rhetorical Evolution of the Term Qizilbāsh in Persianate Literature," *JESHO* 57, no. 3 (2014): 364-91; 367-8.

by Esmāʿīl's own hand, these supporters are referred to very generically as *ṣûfî* (mystic), *ğâzî* (warrior), *türkmân* (Turk), or even *şehîd* (martyr):[742]

> From Pre-Eternity the Shah is our Sultan,
> Our *pir* (leader) and *murshid* (guide), our soul.
> Having pronounced the name of the Shah we have walked along this path.
> We are Husayni, to-day is our period.
> We are slaves of the Imams, in all sincerity.
> Our token is to be martyrs and ghazis.
> Our path is narrow, narrower than anything.
> This time our fundamental rule is to give our heads away.
> I am Khata'i. From Pre-Eternity I am the Mystery of Haydar.
> He who does not recognize him (Haydar?) as Truth (Haqq) is a stranger to us.[743]

The above poem, taken from Esmāʿīl's *dīvān* which I will discuss in more detail later in this section, contains a clear exhortation to his followers as well as a basic blueprint for exactly what sort of followers he wants: if the reader forgives the cheesy sounding rendition, essentially mystic-warriors. This compact little poem contains a large amount of imagery which suggests that Esmāʿīl expects his followers to take Ḥusayn as their example, their *imago Husayni.* This sentiment is related explicitly, "We are Husayni" (*ḥüseynî'yüz*), [744] archetypically, "Our sign is to be martyrs and ghazis" (*şehîdluq ğâzîluq nişânumız'dur*), and via allusion [to Ḥusayn's beheading], "…our fundamental rule is to give our heads away" (*baş vermege erkânumız'dur*).[745]

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[742] Ibid. Note that he does use the term *qızılbaş* in a positive sense in poem 211, though this usage is in the minority compared to other more generic terms. See: Vladimir Minorsky, "The Poetry of Shāh Ismāʾīl I," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10, no. 4 (1942): 1006-1029; 1038a. Thus, it is not correct to say that there are no suggestions towards the application of *qızılbaş* in Esmāʿīl's works; for example, in another poem, he refers to himself as the one with a red crown (*qırmızı tâj*), which may be a nod to the traditional headgear associated with his followers. See: Ibid, 1038a, 1048a.

[743] Minorsky's translation. Ibid, 1034a, 1044a.

[744] Transcription note: the transliteration of Turkic words and phrases generally follows the Library of Congress, with the following exceptions: the letter ض is given as *ẓ* rather than *ż*, the letter ق is given as *q* rather than *ḳ*, and غ as *ğ* rather than *ġ*. All long vowels are rendered with a caron: *î, û, â*.

[745] Ibid.

Along with this recipe for his true followers, the clear theological and imamological material which pervades the poem suggests that that it may have been part of Esmāʿīl's propaganda campaign; perhaps verses were incorporated into public speeches to his Qızılbaş soldiers or their tribal chieftains—or maybe were originally written for this purpose.

Here, we should consider two facts about his poetry: firstly, it was no secret that he composed such poetry, and secondly, the vast majority of this poetic output was composed in a Turkic dialect related to Ottoman and Azerbaijani. Esmāʿīl was not a Turk himself; his ancestors came from Ardabil and were ethnically Kurdish-Iranian. It is of course possible, however, that Esmāʿīl was more comfortable writing poetry in Turkish. Considering that his major supporters were of Turkic extract, it is within the realm of possibility that he spent a great deal of time conversing in Turkish; likewise, if the poetry was intended for Turkic audience, it would make sense for him to write in Turkish. Gallagher also cautions, however, that the first recorded instance of his poetry being recited before an audience was during Ṭahmāsp's reign, not Esmāʿīl's. Still, she does not dismiss the idea that some of the poetry was performed publicly and suggests that the structure of some poems implies their use in exhorting his soldiers to battle.[746] Indeed, the overall structure of the above poem, with its opening statement of loyalty to Esmāʿīl, discussion of the attitude of a good soldier and exhortation to battle, then closing with a declaration of enmity upon those who do not share the highlighted values, suggests a rousing call to arms more than anything else.

Beyond the hints provided by contemporary accounts and Esmāʿīl's poetry, we do not know much about what sorts of formal rituals Esmāʿīl instituted for his followers.[747] The earliest

[746] Gallagher 2018, 367-8.

[747] There are some early reports of cannibalism supposedly being ordered by Esmāʿīl to be practiced upon enemies of his followers. Bashir states, and I concur, that these events as described cannot be considered rituals, since they are spontaneous and don't operate according to a pre-established framework so much as they are supposed to

account of an initiation for Safavid followers occurs in the Venetian merchant Michele Membré's 1540 C.E. description of an initiation ritual called *chūb-e ṭarīqat* (the stick of the order) conducted by Esmāʿīl's son Shāh Tahmāsp.[748] During this ritual, postulants sang Esmāʿīl and Tahmasp's poetry, confessed their sins to the king, after which they were ritually beaten. Before this, we can only speculate as to what Esmāʿīl's initiation rituals may have involved, though it is certain that they must have existed. Given that the Safavids originated as a Sufi initiatory order, it is not only probable but certain that they practiced elaborate rituals. At the very least, Sufi orders in general typically required initiation rituals to be admitted formally and to advance in the hierarchy.[749] Particularly in the case of Shiʿi or Shiʿi influenced orders, a formal declaration of loyalty to the *pīr* (leader of the mystical order) and the Imam was also required.[750] This declaration can be observed in rudimentary form in the poem above.

Rituals of this type are particularly well-known amongst the Ismāʿīlīs and *ghulat*; the Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs practiced a ritual called *nidā'* (proclamation), wherein a mystic had to publicly

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demonstrate the loyalty of the *shāh*'s troops. *Pace* Bashir, but even with the caveat that they may be "reflections of real events," I think that such reports are almost certainly fanciful thinking at best and outright calumny at worst; cannibalism, along with accusations of incest, free love, sodomy, idol worship, etc. are simply too common attacks leveled at unusual religious groups to be taken seriously without extremely strong evidence. See: Shahzad Bashir, "Shah Ismaʿil and the Qizilbash: Cannibalism in the Religious History of Early Safavid Iran," *History of Religions* 45, no. 3 (2006): pp. 234-56; 236-7, 246.

[748] Kathryn Babayan, "The Safavids in Iranian History (1501–1722)," in *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 286-303; 296-7. For the original citation, see: Michele Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539-1542)*, (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1993), 42.

[749] An initiation ritual in an Ismāʿīlī context is described in detail in the *Kitāb al-ʿĀlim wa al-Ghulām.* Here, the initiate is first asked a series of questions to determine their suitability, then required to wait seven days, and upon returning for formal initiation, required to pledge not to reveal any secrets presented during the spiritual instruction sessions. See: James Winston Morris, *The Master and the Disciple: An Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue: Arabic Edition and English Translation of Ja'far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman's Kitāb al-'Ālim wa'l-ghulām*. Ismaili Texts and Translations Series (Institute of Ismaili Studies); 3. (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 118-120.

[750] The declaration of an oath of loyalty (*bayʿa*) is well-known in many contexts from a very early period; *bayʿa* was usually sworn to kings or caliphs who were being acknowledged as legitimate and having the military, religious, and political authority to carry out their declarations: Roy P. Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society*, (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 50-1. A description of the Ismāʿīlī version of an oath is given in: Morris 2001, 17, 79.

announce their belief in the divinity of the Imams.[751] While we do not have explicit discussions of similar rituals from the Safavid order, based on reports discussing Shaykh Joneyd and Ḥeydar Ṣafavī's period, it is likely that members of the Safavid order practiced something similar. References to formal mourning rituals for Ḥusayn are also not well-reported from this early period, but some anecdotal evidence and allusions to mourning for Ḥusayn suggest that Esmāʿīl probably held *majālis* (mourning sessions), likely as an initiation ritual,[752] of some kind during his reign, though certainly nowhere near as elaborate as the *taʿziyeh* under his descendants.[753] It is also worth noting that as the Safavids grew in power, formal initiation in Sufi orders came to a standstill throughout governmentally sanctioned circles in Iran; it is possible that this was at least partially an artifact of the Safavid's origins as an initiatory order, who now thought of the entire populace as already 'initiated' in allegiance to them.[754]

Beyond the exhortations of texts and the performance of ritual, there is also something to be said for the value of functional gestures which say much without using words. It surely was not enough for Esmāʿīl to make connections with his words, he also had to create consensus with his actions. Winning battles was of course very important in assuring his followers of his power, but Esmāʿīl also made a grand drama of his actions in other symbolic ways. The otherwise little-known scribe of Shāh Tahmāsp, Qāsem Beg Ḥayātī Tabrīzī (fl. mid 16th century C.E.) mentions a particularly interesting anecdote in his closing narrative about Esmāʿīl's invasion of Baghdad

[751] Yaron Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs: An Introduction to the Religion, History, and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria*, Islamic History and Civilization; v. 77. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 126.
[752] This is also theorized by Rahimi. See: Babak Rahimi, *Theater State and the Formation of Early Modern Public Sphere in Iran*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 212.
[753] Moḥammad ʿĀref b. Moḥammad Sharīf Espanāqchī Pāshāzādeh, *Enqilāb-e Eslām beyn al-Khavāṣṣ-o al-ʿAvāmm: Tārīkh-e Zendagī o Nabard'hā-ye Shāh Esmāʿīl Ṣafavī-o Shāh Salīm ʿOs̲mānī Vaqāyeʿ-e Sāl'hā-ye 905-930 Hejrī,* (Qom: [?], 1990), 271.
[754] John Cooper, "Rūmī and Ḥikmat: Towards a Reading of Sabziwari's Commentary on the Mathnawi," in *Classical Persian Sufism from Its Origins to Rumi (700-1300)*, The Heritage of Sufism: Vol. 1, (Oneworld Publications, 1999), 409-433; 416-7.

in 1508. While travelling with his troops, he stopped at several shrines for the Imams. However, following this, he makes a different stop: the tomb of Salmān al-Fār[i]sī (*maqbareh-ye salmān al-fārsī*) in Madā'in, near Baghdad.[755] This is described as a pilgrimage (*zeyārat*) by Ḥayātī; Salmān is also referred to in Esmāʿīl's poetry, where he declares that he will protect his birthplace in Dasht-e Arzan.[756]

Right afterwards, Esmāʿīl goes sightseeing in the ruins of Ctestiphon, at the Arch (*ṭāq-e kasrá*) and the *īwān* of Anūshīrvān.[757] While it is likely that Esmāʿīl was doing this to enjoy himself, we should not overlook the fact these would have been powerful symbolic gestures to his troops. Salmān was the first Persian to convert to Islam, and the image of Esmāʿīl at the ruins of the famous Sassanian capital would have both served to connect him in a very immediate way to both the Persian heritage of Islam and the memory of pre-Islamic Iranian royalty. It should be remembered that before the modern era, very little was concretely known about pre-Islamic Iran; to a large extent, the stories of the epic heroes of *Shāhnāmeh* were the history of Iran. As such, there is something to be said about the awe it would have evoked to see the Shāh who so clearly invoked the memory of ancient kings to be seen striding boldly through their monuments.

So much for the initiates and their rituals, but what was the substance of the propaganda which Esmāʿīl presented to them? Let us turn to considering exactly what sorts of tropes show up in Esmāʿīl's propaganda efforts.[758] Several sources through Esmāʿīl's reign provide extensive

[755] Qāsim Bayg Ḥayātī Tabrīzī and Kioumars Ghereghlou, *A Chronicle of the Early Safavids and the Reign of Shah Ismāʿīl: (907-930/1501-1524)*, American Oriental Series; v. 98., (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2018), 363.
[756] Gallagher 2018, 388.
[757] Ḥayātī, 363.
[758] To be clear, we cannot say that Esmāʿīl purely composed poetry to amplify his political agenda, though for some of his poetry this is clearly the case. Here it is important to note that while Esmāʿīl's poems of religious propaganda have been largely the lens which modern academic studies have analyzed his literary output through, they are hardly the whole of it. To wit, Karamustafa notes: "As a poet, Şah İsmail belonged to the Azeri poetic tradition that had its most easily identifiable roots in the works of the Hurufi poet Nesimi (d. around 820/1417) and arguably reached its high point in the poems of İsmail's contemporary Fuzuli (d. 963/1556). He was a productive and skillful poet who

discussions of his particular religious persuasion. While a full consideration of the theological and imamological trends which may have influenced Esmāʿīl's perspectives is far beyond the scope of this dissertation, in this context, it will suffice to consider the major possible ideas which may have been circulating in his milieu. Indeed, it is likely that Esmāʿīl was drawing on local traditions which went back quite far. Esmāʿīl's commentary on his religious perspective is perhaps most vividly expressed in his poetry. Let us consider two additional poems in Esmāʿīl's *Dīvān*:

> My name is Shah Isma'il. I am God's mystery. I am the leader of all these ghazis.
> My mother is Fatima, my father is 'Ali; and eke I am the Pir of the Twelve Imams.
> I have recovered my father's blood from Yazid. Be sure that I am of Haydarian essence.
> I am the living Khidr and Jesus, son of Mary. I am the Alexander of (my) contemporaries.
> Look you, Yazid, polytheist and the adept of the Accursed one, I am free from the Ka'ba of hypocrites.
> In me is Prophethood (and) the mystery of Holiness. I follow the path of Muhammad Mustafa.[759]

> To-day I have come to the world as a Master. Know truly that I am Haydar's son.
> I am Faridun, Khosrau, Jamshid, and Zohak (!). I am Zal's son (Rustam) and Alexander.
> The mystery of Anā'l-Ḥaqq is hidden in this my heart. I am the Absolute Truth (or "God") and what I say is Truth.
> I belong to the religion of the "Adherents of the Vali (i.e. ʿAli)" and on the Shah's path I am a guide to everyone who says: "I am a Muslim."
> My sign is the "Crown of Happiness." I am the signet-ring on Solomon's finger.
> Muhammad is made of light, 'Ali of Mystery. I am a pearl in the sea of Absolute Reality.
> I am Khata'i, the Shah's slave full of shortcomings. At thy gate I am the smallest and the last (servant).[760]

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used the stock themes and images of this poetic tradition with ease and considerable originality." See: Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "In His Own Voice: What Hatayi Tells Us about Şah İsmail's Religious Views," in *L'Ésotérisme Shi'ite: Ses Racines Et Ses Prolongements = Shi'i Esotericism: Its Roots and Developments*, Bibliothèque De L'École des Hautes études, Section Des Sciences Religieuses; v. 177., (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2016), 601-611; 602.

[759] Minorsky's translation. Minorsky, 1031a, 1042a.

[760] Minorsky's translation. Ibid, 1037a, 1047a. Here I must note Karamustafa's comment that this is the only place that links Esmāʿīl with these figures; see: Karamustafa 2016, 608. *Pace* Karamustafa, but this is incorrect. Another poem in Esmāʿīl's collection, for example, states: "Heroes, indeed in this world, I have become Rostam, son of Zāl" (*pehlevanlar çoh cihânda Rüstem-i Zâl olmuşem*). See: İbrahim Aslanoğlu *Şah İsmail Hatayî: Divan, Dehnâme, Nasihatnâme ve Anadolu Hatayîleri*, (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1992), 121. Furthermore, the fact that he mentions

Several themes emerge from these poems. Firstly, Esmāʿīl is clear that he considers himself to possess a quasi-divine status or be in possession of divine light; this is indicated by statements like "I am God's mystery (*ḥaqquñ sırrıyem*)" in poem 15 and "I am the Absolute Truth and what I say is Truth, (*ḥaqq-ı müṭleqem ḥaqq söylerem men*)" in poem 195. The poems both use copulas or verbs in the first person singular rather than expressing the concepts more obliquely.

The words used are worth noting as well. *Sırr* is straightforwardly "secret" (Arabic: *sirr*). However, in Sufi parlance it has an additional shade of meaning; it is also a name for a subtle organ which is one of the components of the spiritual heart, designating the "inner consciousness," the deepest part which conceals the delicate realities between God and humans.[761] The term *ḥaqq-ı müṭleq*, Arabic *al-ḥaqq al-muṭlaq* "absolute truth," is another Sufi concept, prominent in the works of the Andalusian sage Muḥyī al-Dīn b. al-ʿArabī and others, which is usually contrasted with *al-ḥaqq al-muqayyad* "delimited truth."[762] These are both terms used to discuss the various gradations of God's unveiling of himself to the mystic or the universe—either in a partial, dependent form, or in his utter reality. It is no accident that this expression is juxtaposed with the infamous monistic ecstatic statement, *enā l-ḥaqq* (I am the truth), a rendering of the same Arabic phrase (*anā al-ḥaqq*) traditionally said to have led the

such figures at all in such a context is in of itself quite important. These two poems are also most certainly not the only time he discusses Persian epic heroes in detail in his poetic corpus. For example, one *mes̲nevî* mentions Rostam, Zāl, Afrāsiyāb, and numerous other *Shāhnāmeh* figures multiple times. See: Ibid, 325-329. As I have discussed above, this connection is a classical claim of many *shuʿūbiyya* groups throughout Islamic history and thus the idea is not insignificant.

[761] Amir-Moezzi also correlates this interpretation of *sirr* to the benedictory formula pronounced over mentions of important worthies, *qaddasa allāhu sirrahu* "may God sanctify his secret." See: Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, "Sirr," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 14 May 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8901>

[762] See: Abū al-ʻIlā ʻAfīfī, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid Dín-Ibnul ʻArabí*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 4. For the comparison with *al-ḥaqq al-muqayyad*, see: Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi. "Translator's Introduction," *The Mystery of Prayer: The Ascension of the Wayfarers and the Prayer of the Gnostics,* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2015), xxxv.

Persian Sufi Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj (d. 922 C.E.) to be executed for heresy (*zandaqa*).[763] These usages by Esmāʿīl reveal not only a very literate understanding of earlier Sufi doctrines, but also suggest a very deliberate appreciation of what they imply. Note that also another poem, 248, uses the term *don* "garment" in collocation with *maẓhar* "manifestation" to suggest that periodic quasi-divine manifestations are akin to something divine light clothes itself with (*ḥaqq'a maẓhar-dürür âdem sücud it uyma şeyṭâne ki âdem donına girmiş xüdâ geldi xüdâ geldi*).[764] This use of *don* in connection with divine manifestation parallels its use as a Gorani loanword with a similar meaning in the Ahl-e Ḥaqq *kalām* as previously mentioned in Chapter Three.[765]

The personal identifications are even more interesting for the specific connections they draw. On a practical level, the identification with Ḥusayn, as we have seen previously, colors much of the poetry; the use of Yazīd as a focus for enmity is certainly intended to be used to encourage identification of enemies of Esmāʿīl with the Shiʿi archvillain. This is a powerful political rallying cry embedded within a religious and literary allusion. At the same time, Esmāʿīl simultaneously identifies himself with Islamic prophets and imams like Jesus, Khiḍr, and Ḥusayn in poem 15, and with Iranian figures like Fereydūn, Jamshīd, and Rostam in poem 195.[766] The comment at the beginning of the same poem, "I am Ḥeydar's son (*ibn-i ḥeyder'em men*)," can be also interpreted two ways: in terms of a straightforward statement that Esmāʿīl is the son of Shaykh Ḥeydar Ṣafavī, but also, since Ḥeydar (literally, "lion") is a well-known name for ʿAlī, it can also be read as implying, "I am the son of ʿAlī," i.e. Ḥusayn, an interpretation which can be

[763] Louis Massignon and L. Gardet, "al-Ḥallād̲j," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 14 May 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0256>
[764] Minorsky, 1039a.
[765] See Chapter Three, Section IX for details.
[766] I cannot explain the identification with Ẕaḥḥāk, who is normally a villainous figure in the *Shāhnāmeh* and related texts; it is possible that Esmāʿīl is either intending to draw on Ẕaḥḥāk's strength and cunning here, or that this is an oblique monistic statement.

confirmed by comparing it to poem 15, where Esmāʿīl claims exactly this. These identifications not only serve a religious purpose, by connecting Esmāʿīl to important Muslim personages, but a political and cultural one as well. By including Iranian epic characters amongst those poems with an explicitly religious and mystical tone, Esmāʿīl is making a clear statement that he considers these two worldviews to not only be compatible and complementary, but also two essential parts of his particular vision of Shiʿism. It is perhaps ironic that he expresses this in Turkish, though there are practical considerations to this which I have previously mentioned. Regardless of this fact, the particular form of the poetry is subservient to its meaning, which is arguably a further Persianization of Shiʿism, as Kāshefī had already done a few decades earlier.

A theme which is less present in the selection above, but still found in several of Esmāʿīl's poems is the trope of him being a manifestation of divine light—though this theme is strongly implied in poem 195 he says "Muḥammad is from light, out of the mystery of ʿAlī (*mühemmed nûrden'dür sırr-ı ʿelî'den*)." In poem 211, he paraphrases a famous *ḥadīth* favored by mystical circles in which God ruminates over creating the world[767] to establish the context as in mythic time, and then refers to himself as the "Light of Muḥammad" (*müḥemmed-nûrî*) who has manifested (*fâş olmağa*) with a red crown (*qırmızı tâj*).[768] In another, poem 249, he describes himself, paralleled by Muḥammad, as having appeared from the light of God (*nûr-i xüdâ geldi*).[769] This particular image of divine light again invokes two specific tropes from both early Islamic mysticism as well as from Iranian legend. In the Islamic sense, this light is *al-nūr al-muḥammadī*, a concept found in many early *aḥādīth* with possible roots in a myth of primordial

[767] The usually wording of this *ḥadīth* reads: *kuntu kanzan makhfiyan fa-aḥbabtu an uʿrifa fa-khaliqtu al-khalq*, "I was a hidden treasure, and I desired to be known so I created the universe." See for example: Al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad Nīsābūrī, *Tafsīr Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān wa-Raghā'ib al-Furqān*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīya, 1996), 3-6: 146.
[768] Minorsky, 1038a, 1048a.
[769] Ibid, 1039a, 1048a.

world of light also found in *ghulat* literature.[770] In the Iranian sense, this is quite clearly related to the idea of *farr* "divine glory," which as I have previously discussed, was visually portrayed as a fiery radiance. The two concepts became deeply intertwined in various Iranian heterodox circles from at least the 9th century.[771]

As far as I am aware, Esmāʿīl does not specifically use the term *farr* in his poetry, he certainly implies it above. However, later historical chronicles from Shāh ʿAbbās I's reign certainly are explicit in attributing *farr* to him:

> During his early years, the adornment of rulership (*āyīn-e jehāndārī*) was apparent on his royal brow and divine glory (*farr-e īzadī*) radiated from his between his temples. His special guard who gave that new shoot adorning the garden of regency (*khelāfat*) succor, notwithstanding his young age, through inspiration derived from secret things, they named him king, and with correct doctrine and complete devotion, called him perfect guide (*morshed-e kāmel*) and emperor (*pādeshāh*).[772]

It is certain from the above that Esmāʿīl is drawing upon some very old influences in constructing his propaganda efforts. Some of these are obvious, such as the references to Ḥallāj, the Iranian heroes, and so on. Others are a bit more oblique, but no less embedded in the texts and ritual atmosphere. As Babayan, Mazzaoui, and others have attested, the 15th-16th centuries were a period of heavy *ghulat* activity; but what sorts of influences were these, and what were they composed of?

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[770] U. Rubin, "Nūr Muḥammadī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 14 May 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_5985>

[771] Patricia Crone, *The Iranian Reception of Islam, Volume 2: The Non-Traditionalist Strands: Collected Studies in Three Volumes*, Islamic History and Civilization 130, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 71-2.

[772] Eskandar Beg Monshī, *Tārīkh-e ʻĀlam'ārā-ye ʻAbbāsī*, (Tehran?: Nashr-e Ṭolūʻ va Sīrūs, 1985), 1: 26.
در مبادی حال آئین جهانداری از ناصیه همایونش ظاهر و فرایزدی از جبین مبینش باهر، ملازمان موکب عالی که آن نونهال چمنآرای خلافت را بزلال حسن اعتقاد پرورش میدادند بالهام غیبی بسمت والای شاهی موسوم ساخته با وجود صغر سن بعقیده درست و اراده شامل مرشد کامل و پادشاه می خواندند.

Khonjī-Eṣfahānī, who I referenced near the beginning of this section, also includes two other statements of interest regarding Esmāʿīl's father Ḥeydar which attests to these syncretic influences: first, he describes Ḥeydar as propagating antinomianism (*ebāḥat*) according to the religious principles of the Khorramdīniyyeh of Bābak, a specifically Persian esoteric-revolutionary movement (*qavāʿed-e sharīʿat-e khorramiyān-e bābakī*), and describes his skill in warcraft as putting legendary figures like Esfandiyār, Rostam, and Afrāsiyāb to shame.[773] Of course, we must take these claims with some grain of salt since Khonjī-Eṣfahānī was associated with political enemies of the Safavids;[774] however, as we see from Esmāʿīl's own words, there seems to be some truth to the claims in part. At the very least, it seems that Esmāʿīl claimed a quasi-divine status for himself or at least that he possessed a portion of divine light, though I do not believe it is correct to say he literally declared he was God.

As per Khonjī-Eṣfahānī's ascription to his father Ḥeydar above, it is possible that some of Esmāʿīl's ideas were drawn from the remnants of the Khorramdīniyyeh, a form of *shuʿūbiyya* which arose during the ʿAbbasid period.[775] Babayan notes how there were many similarities between the Qızılbaş and the Khorramdīniyyeh, including the fact that the latter had long-lasting enclaves in Azarbaijan, down to them also wearing red conspicuously as the Qızılbaş did.[776] The Khorramdīniyyeh were dualists who believed in transmigration and incarnation; they believed that the ancient Iranian kings from Jamshīd on had been Imams and possessors of divine light, which had then later passed to Muḥammad and ʿAlī.[777] Strengthening their affirmed connection

[773] Khonjī-Eṣfahānī, 295.
[774] Gallagher 2018, 367.
[775] The very term *khorramdīn*, possibly from *khorram-dīn* "happy religion," is probably a Persian compound formed on the analogy of words like *behdīn* "[the] good religion," i.e. Zoroastrianism.
[776] Babayan 2002, 269-270. In Persian, the Khorramdīniyyeh were sometimes called *sorkh-jāmegān* "wearers of red," and in Arabic, *muḥammira* "red ones." The latter is used in some medieval heresiographies as a synonym for the Khorramdīniyyeh.
[777]Wilfred Madelung, *Religious Trends in Early Islamic Iran*, Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies; No. 4., (Albany: Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 7, 11.

to Iranian identity was the fact that at least one group explicitly called themselves *pārsīyān* "Persians."[778]

According to some accounts, Bābak, a prominent leader of the Khorramdīniyyeh, was Abū Muslim's maternal grandson.[779] Regardless if there is truth to the idea, Abū Muslim was an enormously important figure to the Khorramdīniyyeh, who believed that he was a prophet or divine figure.[780] The very notion of this legend along with the connection of the Khorramdīniyyeh to both Shiʿism and Zoroastrian-Mazdakite revivalism suggests that it could have been a useful source for constructing Safavid legitimacy as rebels against Sunni authority. I have already noted in Chapters Two and Three above that Abū Muslim was also an important figure for the early Safavids as well, and during their rise, they promoted circulation of Abū Muslim epics; he became a nexus of Shiʿi and pre-Islamic Iranian sentiment. The idea of a transmitted divine light passing from one Imam to the next, for example, which arises quite early in Shiʿi thought and which we also find in the poetry of Esmāʿīl, is argued by Crone to be a retention of the Zoroastrian concept of *xᵛarənah* or *farr*, "divine glory," which we have discussed both in connection to Siyāvash and Ḥusayn in the previous two chapters.[781] At the very least, this movement was a vehicle for various native Persian religious ideas which persisted throughout the Islamic World.

Another possible influence was the related *mukhammisa* or "fivers" sect. This group believed that God manifested in five distinct forms (*ṣūra*), specifically in the persons of Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭima, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn. They also seem to have preserved certain Persian

[778] Ibid, 9.
[779] Ḡ. Ḥ, Yūsofī, "Bābak Ḵorramī," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, III/3, pp. 299-306, 2011, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/babak-korrami (accessed on 10 May 2020).
[780] Wilfred Madelung, "Ḵẖurramiyya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 12 May 2020 <http://dx.doi.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_4341>
[781] Crone 2016, 71-2.

concepts about the reincarnation of Persian kings (i.e. the epic heroes) as messengers or avatars for the Iranians, as compared with the patriarchs and Muḥammad for the Semites. For example, in the *Kitāb al-Firaq wa al-Maqālāt* (The Book of Sects and Doctrines), the Shiʿi *muḥaddith* Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī (fl. 9th century C.E.) describes the *mukhammisa* explicitly as holding to this particular doctrine.[782] Most interestingly for our purposes is this statement:

> They claim that Muḥammad was Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, but did not manifest solely in this way to the Arabs and the Persians; in the same way he was among the Arabs, likewise he manifested himself to the Persians in a form unlike the form amongst the Arabs. He manifested in the form of lords (*akāsira*) and kings (*mulūk*) who had ruled the world; indeed, for them Muḥammad is none other God most high, who is exalted far above that. He has manifested himself to his creation in every age and eon, and that he has presented himself to them as a luminous entity, calling them to affirm his unity.[783]

The word *akāsira*, the plural of *kisrá/kasrá* is chosen on purpose; the word in origin is a deformation of Persian *khosrow*, probably from the perception that it was a royal title. It is typically only used of royalty who are specifically Persian in origin.[784] There are few surviving texts which explicitly self-identify as belonging to the *mukhammisa*; likely this term was an exonym used by critics of their ideas. However, the *Omm al-Ketāb* (The Original Book), a text of uncertain dating, preserves some ideas which may be *mukhammisa* in origin. The book contains references to Zoroastrian figures,[785] along with a long passage which describes the

[782] The *Khorramdīniyyeh* are also mentioned by Qummī, who relates them to the *Kaysāniyya*, another earlier Shiʿi sect associated with the *ghulat*. See: Saʿd b. ʿAbd Allāh Abī Khalaf al-Ashʿarī al-Qummī, *Kitāb al-Firaq wa al-Maqālat*, (Tehran: Moʾassasat Maṭbūʿātī ʿAṭāʾī, 1963), 44.
[783] Ibid, 56.
[784] Refer back, for example, to the discussion attributed to ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb regarding Muʿāwiyaʾs adoption of Persian royal manners by Ibn Khaldūn in Chapter One; the word use here is again *kisrāwiyya*. See above in Chapter One, Section VII.
[785] Pio Filippani-Ronconi, "The Soteriological Cosmology of Central-Asiatic Ismāʿīlism," in *Ismāʿīlī Contributions to Islamic Culture*, (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977), pp. 99-120; 105-6.

fourth Imam, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, appearing to his disciple in the five forms of the *ahl al-bayt*, each one identifying themselves as a manifestation of the Godhead.[786]

Before we turn from Esmāʿīl's mystical doctrines one important point should be highlighted. Esmāʿīl's doctrine, like many *ghulat* and Sufi beliefs, is essentially a kind of qualified monism, where all entities are in their most fundamental nature, merely gradated appearances of the divine, with himself, the Imams, the Iranian kings, etc. as less gradated and more 'pure' appearances, though not as much as ʿAlī.[787] This is arguably a difference between the dualism of Zoroastrianism and other forms of Persian religions and later syncretic Iranian forms of Islam. Having noted this, however, it is important to remember that "official" Zoroastrian creed vis-à-vis the Sassanian orthodox institutions was not the only reflex of Zoroastrianism. Nor indeed was it necessarily the common belief of rural Persian religion—which, we must also remember, was almost certainly the primary vehicle of this 'mixed belief,' not material drawn directly from canonized Avestan or Middle Persian literature. Indeed, there are well-known cases of more monistic forms of Zoroastrianism such as Zurvanism.[788]

It is also arguable that the qualified monism of Esmāʿīl implicitly houses an apparent dualism, a dualism which exists as long as appearances perdure, but dissolves in the essence of God. This qualified monism/apparent dualism is also articulated by the appearance of a dual character for Esmāʿīl in his own poetry. He is at once the *shāh,* God's mystery, one in essence with ʿAlī in particular and the other Imams, but he is also *Khaṭā'ī*, "the sinner," the "sinful slave of the *shah* (*xaṭâyî'yem şâhâ eksüklü qulam*)," which certainly does not seem to be something

[786]Wladimir Ivanow, "Ummu 'l-kitab," *Der Islam; Zeitschrift Für Geschichte Und Kultur Des Islamischen Orients 23* (1936), 1-132; 98-102.
[787] Karamustafa 2016, 608.
[788] Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism: Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule*, Handbuch Det Orientalistik. Erste Abteilung, Nahe Und Der Mittlere Osten; 8. Bd., 1. Abschnitt, Lfg. 2., (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1989), 333.

applicable to the divine—or at least, without considering appearances. Still, it is important to keep this contrast in mind since claiming for direct incorporation of Zoroastrian doctrine is not an argument espoused by this dissertation; indeed, my concept of *memory relics* delineates the modes by which incorporation takes place. They are environmental, evolutionary, and synthetic, not patchwork.

After considering the above, one final point remains. It should not be assumed that just because Esmāʿīl's poetry is littered with allusions to ancient doctrines attributed to the *ghulat* and that the Qızılbaş arguably saw him as a quasi-divine figure, that in all other ways, doctrinally speaking, Esmāʿīl was not a Twelver. Karamustafa is critical of claims that Esmāʿīl poetry should be read with an eye to doctrines of *ḥulūl* (incarnation) or reincarnation (*tanāsukh/naql*) and opines that he is expressing a monistic conception typical of Turkic Sufi poetry.[789] Regarding this, it is important to note that even the well-known attribution of incarnation and reincarnation to *ghulat* sects has been historically overstated when many times the supposed expression of these concepts is itself better understood as qualified monism, emanationism, or Docetism, not the literal incarnation of a divine spirit in a physical body.[790] This being said, I am not convinced that Esmāʿīl was simply adhering to poetic conventions in these verses. [791] Statements like "Know for certain that the one who is divine is Khaṭā'ī," (*yaqın bil kim xüdâyî'dur xaṭâyî*) are hard to pass over as purely metaphorical, especially given the emphatic phrasing Esmāʿīl uses.[792]

[789] Karamustafa 2016, 609.
[790] The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs are one such example of this overstatement of incarnation. See: Friedman 2010, 82.
[791] I do not believe it can be argued that Esmāʿīl's characters of *Khaṭā'ī* and the divine *shāh* (i.e., as manifesting from ʿAlī's light) can be dismissed as a purely literary device of a poetic subject and a poetic interlocutor; the fact that Esmāʿīl consistently uses the same personal pronouns for both when he is speaking with a given voice and no indication that these should be read as anything but statements. Another poem, 101, both clearly separates Esmāʿīl's audience from him by using the first person plural instead for the former, and ends by declaring that indeed, *Khaṭā'ī* is from the same eternal essence (*sırr*) as the *shāh* (*xaṭâyî'yem ezelden sırr-ı ḥeyder*). See: Minorsky, 1034a, 1044a.
[792] Minorsky, 1032a.

The fact that Esmāʿīl references al-Ḥallāj's most infamous statement, "I am the Truth" (*anā al-ḥaqq*) in the original Arabic is telling. Whether he was claiming divine status or not, the practical implications of his quotation of this statement, especially if the poem was indeed read to his Turkic supporters, cannot have escaped Esmāʿīl, a man raised in a Sufi order. Al-Ḥallāj was executed for *zandaqa* and *ḥulūl* with this statement purported as a central charge, so obviously some people took him seriously; his true intent remains controversial. Whether or not al-Ḥallāj or numerous other Sufi shaykhs claimed some sort of divine status for themselves is still hotly debated and subject to a variety of interpretations, so an appeal to Sufi poetic conventions is in of itself not definitive.

I do not think that Esmāʿīl was claiming to be God literally, though I do think that he was attributing a special status to himself, perhaps something akin to some Fatimid formulations which placed members of the clerical hierarchy as physical mirrors or manifestations of celestial intellects (*ʿuqūl, ḥudūd*).[793] Even more simply, one could suggest that he was claiming to possess a portion of divine light, which as I have noted previously, has been a well-known claim in Sufi, Shiʿi, and Iranian theosophical circles. A better question to ask is whether Esmāʿīl was claiming a status similar to an Imam—whose possession of divine light is documented extensively in Twelver *ḥadīth* collections.[794] Thus, here I have used the term 'quasi-divine' rather than 'incarnation' per se.

Confessional identity at this time is a complex topic, and like Kāshefī before him, it is quite possible for Esmāʿīl to have harbored multiple confessional statuses at once, not perceiving

[793] See for example, the hierarchy of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī (fl. 996-1021 C.E.), a Fatimid *dāʿī* (missionary), who describes a celestial hierarchy of ten intellects which corresponds to the hierarchy of religious and clerical figures in the lower world (*al-ḥudūd al-safliyya*). Ḥamīd al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbdullāh al-Kirmānī, *Rāḥat al-ʿAql*, (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus lil-Ṭibāʿa wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzīʿ, 1967), 255. See also: Virani 2007, 76.
[794] Momen 1985, 148-9.

any of them as being separate or in any conflict. At the very least, Twelver Shiʿism was the official form of doctrine that Esmāʿīl intended to establish institutionally. One royal chronicler, Ḥasan-e Rūmlū (b. 1530-1531 C.E.), who was also a cavalryman in Shāh Tahmāsp's army as well as being from the same Rūmlū tribe of the Qızılbaş mentioned by Khonjī-Esfahānī above, specifically notes in his chronicle that:

> In those times, [the Iranians] did not know the precepts of the true form of the Jaʿfarī religion, its fundamentals, and the laws of the Twelve Imams. Because there were no books of Imāmī jurisprudence anywhere to be found. The first volume of the book, "The Fundamentals of Islam," which was from the oeuvre of the sultan of learned scholars, Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn Muṭahhar Ḥillī,[795] was found under the care of Naṣr Allāh Zaytūnī, and they learned religious precepts from him until day by day, the sunlight of truth of the Twelver religion rose and shone down upon all corners of the world with the glittering radiance of the path of realization.[796]

Now, considering that Shāh Ṭahmāsp attempted to 'purify' the Shiʿism of the Safavids from the lingering *ghulat* elements of his father's doctrines, it is tempting to see this as an attempt to whitewash Esmāʿīl's biography and make it more palatable to the current ruler.[797] However, we do know that this particular book of Muṭahhar Ḥillī was very influential in establishing the official form of Shiʿism during Esmāʿīl's period.[798] As such, given that we have already seen that Esmāʿīl's propaganda evokes multiple different strands of Central Asian belief, we should ask why it is not also likely for him to make use of an orthodox text to establish institutional norms. Indeed, this would be just another layer of complexity on the picture of Shāh Esmāʿīl's eclectic understanding of Shiʿism.

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[795] For more details on Muṭahhar, see: Michel M. Mazzaoui, *The Origins of the Ṣafawids; Šīʿism, Ṣūfism, and the Ġulāt*. Freiburger Islamstudien; Bd. 3., (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1972), 27-34.
[796] Charles Norman Seddon, *A Chronicle of the Early Ṣafawīs, Being the Aḥsanu't-tawārīkh of Ḥasan-i-Rūmlū*. Gaekwad's Oriental Series; No. 57, 69, (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1931), 1: 61. My translation; Seddon's can be found in 2: 27.
[797] Babayan 2002, 297.
[798] Mazzaoui 1972; 6, 27.

Now that I have explored the ideological commitments and foregrounding of the Safavid State after Kāshefī's death, I will consider the next important lynchpin in the evolving institutionalization of Shiʿi ritual. In the next section, I will discuss the circulation of Kāshefī's *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*. Doing this will allow us to understand exactly how the evolving Safavid State discussed in this chapter could have become interested in promoting this particular text, using it to set up the next phase of their imperial program.

IV. A Tantalizing Perfume: The Reception of the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*

In the previous section, I gave a detailed overview of Shāh Esmāʿīl's project in beginning the creation of the Safavid state. In particular, I highlighted how, like Kāshefī before him, Esmāʿīl's propagandistic output can be understood as extremely multi-layered, combining a coat of ʿAlid-Twelver orthodoxy, revivals of *ghulat* and *shuʿūbiyya* rebel movements, and elements of Iranian heroic tradition. While thematically this demonstrates some parallels with Kāshefī, albeit in a far more outré idiom and a much thinner shell of basic piety, we must ask the questions of whether Esmāʿīl knew of the *Rowẕat*, when it became truly a 'popular' work, and how the answers to these questions can be demonstrated. While several later religious scholars have argued that it was instantly popularly, the direct evidence to corroborate this assertion from contemporary texts is more difficult to reconstruct.[799]

Unfortunately, there are no truly straightforward answers to these questions. However, I will construct a framework which will provide a better sense of the likely paths to notoriety for

[799] See for example: Ḥusayn Taqī al-Nūrī Ṭabarsī, *Al-Lu'lu' wa-al-Marjān fī Ādāb Ahl al-Minbar*, (Beirut: Dār Al-Balāgha, 2003), 32.

the *Rowẕat.* The two best ways to evaluate the *Rowẕat*'s rising fame from its time of writing are through manuscript circulation and early translation attempts.

Manuscripts of the *Rowẕat* are nearly ubiquitous in Iranian libraries.[800] The earliest known manuscript of the *Rowẕat* was created in 917/1511-1512.[801] This is a very early copy, which postdates Kāshefī by about seven years. It is quite possible that this manuscript could have been copied from a manuscript written in Kāshefī's own hand or compiled from his students' notes. A complete manuscript study is far outside the scope of this dissertation. However, the earliest known manuscripts are as follows:[802]

Figure 1

Manuscript	***Date***	***Place***	***Copyist***	***Source***	***Library***
225	9th/15th c.	Iran?	Unknown	Monavī	ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Mowlavī Collection, Ketābkhāneh-ye Dāneshkadeh-ye Elahiyyāt-e Dāneshgāh Ferdowsī, Mashhad

[800] Jaʿfariyān 1995, 29.

[801] The manuscript is currently housed at the *Ketābkhāneh-o mūzeh-ye mellī-ye Malek* (Malek National Library and Museum) in Tehran. See: Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 93; and: http://malekmuseum.org/artifact/1393.04.03860%2F000/ #واقعه+کربلا++شهیدان+کربلاءروضة+الشهداء

[802] Catalogues cited are: Moṣṭafá Derāyatī, *Fehrestgān: Noskhah'hā-ye Khaṭṭī-e Īrān (Fankhā)*, (Tehran: Sāzmān-e Asnād va Ketābkhāneh-ye Mellī-ye Jomhūrī-ye Eslāmī-ye Īrān, 2011), 17: 147-157; Edgar Blochet, *Catalogue Des Manuscrits Persans*, (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1905), 1: 256-9; E. Denison Ross, John Alexander Chapman, Abdul Muqtadir, Azimuddin Ahmad, Muinuddin Hamid, J. A. Nadwi, Abdul Hamid, and Muinuddin Nadwi, *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipore*, (Calcutta, 1918), 6: 129-132; Felix Tauer. *Les Manuscrits Persans Historiques Des Bibliothèques De Stambul*, (Prague, 1931) 2: 320-2; Edward G. Browne, *A Supplementary Hand-list of the Muḥammadan Manuscripts: Including All Those Written in the Arabic Character, Preserved in the Libraries of the University and Colleges of Cambridge*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 117; Zū 'l-Feqārī mentions several manuscripts in his introduction, all of which come from the Malek National Library. See: Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 92-96. For an overview, see: C. A. Storey and François De Blois, *Persian Literature; a Bio-bibliographical Survey*, (London: Luzac &, 1927), 212-13.

3860	917/1511-12	Iran?	Unknown	Zū ’l-Feqārī, Derāyatī	Malek, Tehran
9065	918/1512-13	Iran?	Unknown, name effaced	Derāyātī	Ketābkhāneh-ye Majles-e Shūrā-ye Eslāmī, Tehran
3222-3 [two copies]	925/1519	Edirne, Turkey	Faẓlullāh al-Bursevī	Tauer	Hagia Sophia, Istanbul
3221	933/1527	Mecca, Saudi Arabia	Abū al-Faḍā’il b. Masʿūd al-Sharīf	Tauer	Hagia Sophia
4368	934/1527-8	Iran?	ʿAbd al-Salām Mashhadī	Tauer	Fatih Camii, Istanbul
Nuruosmaniye 3302	937/1530?	Unknown	Unknown	Tauer	Nuruosmaniye Kütübhanesi, Istanbul
3220	938/1531	Istanbul, Turkey	Unknown	Tauer	Hagia Sophia
19 Tārīkh Fārsī	939/1533	Unknown	Abū al-Ḥasan Afḍal Anṣārī	Monavī	Dar al-Kutub, Cairo
3893	939/1533	Iran?	ʿAbd al-Salām Kāteb	Zū ’l-Feqārī	Malek
21	949/1542-3	Unknown	Unknown	Monavī	Āqā Ḥasanʿalī Ghaffārī, Tehran
A. 3060	954/1547-8	Herat, Afghanistan?	ʿEzz al-Dīn Moḥammad-haravī	Monavī	Topkapı Palace, Istanbul
386	962/1554	al-Ḥillah al-Sayfiyya, Iraq	Mu’ayyad b. Yaḥya al-Mu’ayyadī al-Nīlī	Blochet	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
2200	964/1557	Iran?	Unknown	Zū ’l-Feqārī, Derāyatī	Sāzmān-e Asnād-o Ketābkhāneh-ye Mellī-ye Īrān
387	969/1561	Iran?	Unknown	Blochet	Bibliothèque Nationale
388	970/1562	Iran?	Unknown	Blochet	Bibliothèque Nationale

Or. 417 (10)	973/1565-6	Iran?	Rokn al-Dīn b. Moḥammad Shams al-Dīn Lārī	Browne	Cambridge University Library, Cambridge
3870	Between 934-974/1527-8–1566-1567	Iran?	Mīr Kay b. Aḥmad Shahrābādī	Z̲ū ’l-Feqārī	Malek
Fatih 4342 (Extracts)	974/1567	Unknown	Unknown	Tauer	Fatih Camii
398	976/1568-9	Unknown	Unknown	Monavī	Khudā Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna
418	986/1578	Iran?	ʿAlī b. Moḥammad b. Kheẕr b. Moḥammad Borūjerdī		Ketābkhāneh-ye Āyatollāh Fāẕel Khᵛānsārī, Khansar
PeI31B 2039	998/1589-90	Unknown	Unknown	Monavī	Panjab University, Lahore

The table above gives 22 distinct manuscripts which, with the exception of the copy in the possession of the ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Mowlavī collection, have either explicit dates given or have their dating determined by scholarly analysis. Note that here I have only included early manuscripts dated less than a century after Kāshefī’s death; the number of manuscripts increases even more in the following centuries. All of the manuscripts are dated to the 16th century C.E., roughly falling between the years 1511 to 1590. As such, for 79 years, there was a near constant stream of manuscripts of the *Rowẕat* being produced. Note in addition that in this chart, I have only mentioned manuscripts in published catalogues; it is quite likely that there are many more in smaller collections or which are found in unpublished on-site catalogues.

Unfortunately, the exact provenance of each manuscript is more difficult to determine and would require more detailed codicology and research than can be conducted at this time. Only four distinct manuscripts—*Hagia Sophia 3222-3* (two copies), *Hagia Sophia 3220, Hagia Sophia 3221,* and *Bibliothèque Nationale 386*—give the locations where the text was copied, respectively in Edirne, Istanbul, Mecca, and al-Ḥilla al-Sayfiyya. I have given some tentative suggestions for place of production in several cases, some based on the name of the copyist, and others based on the catalogue description of the scribe's hand (i.e. *nastaʿlīq/taʿlīq-e fārsī*, etc.). These suggestions are highly speculative and should not be taken as definitive.

Despite the lack of clear provenance, this chart enables me to come to some basic conclusions which provide a useful picture of the *Rowẕat*'s circulation. Firstly, based on the fact that the earliest manuscript, *Malek 3860*, is dated to 1511, only seven years after Kāshefī's death and only nine years after the completion of the *Rowẕat,* with a second manuscript, *Majles 9065,* written a year later, followed in eight years in 1519 by the two Edirne copies, *Hagia Sophia 3222-3,* this suggests that the *Rowẕat* experienced a quick popularity with demand for the production of manuscripts. The mid-16th century record bears this out, with six distinct manuscripts created between the years of 1527 to 1533 alone.

Secondly, the circulation of the *Rowẕat* was widespread; from the four distinct manuscripts mentioned above with explicit places of production, we can determine that the *Rowẕat* was circulating from Turkey to Iraq. Keeping in mind the likely supposition that Iran was almost certainly a major site of production for the *Rowẕat* and that copies must have been created in Herat, since Kāshefī lived and produced the majority of his work there, this means that by 1519, the *Rowẕat* had already circulated over 3,900 kilometers/2,400 miles only 15 years after

Kāshefī's death, a distance which would take more than a month to walk on foot. This is a quite short amount of time for a pre-printing book to become so widespread.

Finally, from the chart above, we can see that at least two distinct manuscripts were written within the heart of what would have been the Ottoman Empire, *Hagia Sophia 3222-3* in 1519 and *Hagia Sophia 3220* in 1531. Additionally, *Hagia Sophia 3221*, also created in 1531, was produced in Mecca, which would have become Ottoman territory 14 years earlier, in 1517.[803] This suggests that the *Rowẕat* was popular enough to be copied even in Turkish-speaking regions and Ottoman holdings which would have been mortal enemies of the Safavids. In the next section, we shall see additional evidence supporting this suggestion by turning to the early Turkic translations of the *Rowẕat.*

V. A Stranger in Paradise: Early Translations of the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*

The manuscript circulation of the *Rowẕat* is hardly the only evidence of the book's quick popularity. In 1522 C.E., only eighteen years after Kāshefī's death, the poet Ḥoseyn Nedā'ī Yazdī Nīshābūrī (fl. circa mid-16th century C.E.) composed a versified rendering of the *Rowẕat* in two thousand verses.[804] At least four Turkish different translations of the *Rowẕat* appear to have been composed within less than fifty years of Kāshefī's death: *Ḥadîqat ül-Süʿadâ'* (The Garden of the Happy Ones), *Saʿâdetnâmeh* (The Book of Happiness), *Tercüme-i Ravzatü'ş*

[803] F. E. Peters, *Mecca: A Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 211.
[804] Jaʿfariyān 1995, 29.

Şühedâ (Translation of the Meadow of the Martyrs), and *Şühədanamə* (The Book of the Martyrs).

It was it this climate that the most famous translation, *Ḥadîqat ül-Süʿadâ'*, was composed. The poet Müḥammad Sülaymân Baghdâdî Füẕûlî (d. 1556 C.E.)[805] decided that Turkish speakers needed their own *maqtal,* and Kāshefī's *Rowẕat* was a treasure trove for his purposes:

> According to reports of the Persians, [the most] famous is the book *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, which his lordship, the most eloquent of rhetoricians, Master Hoseyn Vāʿeẓ [Kāshefī], reached the utmost veracity in researching scrupulously the accounts of his narrative; I am [only a person] of shameful intent who has followed on the basis of his *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, as well as other books whose wonderful subtleties I have repeated to the best of my ability. God willing, I will complete it in ten chapters and a conclusion, naming it the *Ḥadîqat ül-Süʿedâ'*.[806]

While he cites other sources, such as Ibn Ṭāwūs, it is clear from of the text itself that Kāshefī was by far his most important source. Kāshefī's structure is unmistakable in Füẕûlî's book; the introduction is again framed as an exegesis of 2:155 and includes discussions such as the suffering of the *ahl al-bayt* and the prophets; the angels of the heavens, earth, and sea mourning over Ḥusayn and repeating the same Arabic phrases in the same order, and so on. [807]

It is not clear from Füẕûlî's introduction whether the translation was requested or whether he simply decided to write it on his own. Espanāqchī reports that he was directed to write a *maqtal* in Turkish by Esmāʿīl, but he does not provide much in the way of supporting evidence.[808]

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[805] Some sources give 1480 as his death date, but since he mentions Kāshefī in his adaptation of the *Rowẕat*, he had to still be alive by 1502. See what follows.

[806] Müḥammad Sülaymân Bağdâdî Füẕûlî, *Ḥadīqat ül-Süʿedā'*, (Istanbul: Tasvîr-i Efkâr, 1870), 8.
وافواه عجمده مشهور اولان كتاب روضة الشهدادر كه حضرت افصح المتكلمين مولانا حسين واعظ تتبع تواريخ و تفاسير ايدوب دقتله يازمغين روايتلرى درجهء صحته يتمش و بن خاكسارڭ نيتى اولدر كه اصل تأليفده روضة الشهدايه اقتدا قيلوب سائر كتبده اولان نكات غريبه لرى ممكن اولدقجه اكّا اعاده قيلم (حديقة السعدا) ايله موسوم ايدوب اون باب و بر خاتمه ده صورت تأليفه اتمام ويرم ان شاء الله تعالى

[807] See: Ibid, 2, 5-6, 7.

[808] Espanāqchī Pāshāzādeh, 271.

Though he was Shiʿi, he felt free to address *qasīda*s to both Sülaymân and Esmāʿīl depending on who was ruling Iraq at the time. His translation seems likely to have been written under Esmāʿīl.

However, as we have seen above, we do know that he mentions both Kāshefī (as Mevlânâ Hüseyn Vâʿeẕ) and the *Rowẕat* by name as his major influence (*ve efvâh-ı ʿacemde meşhûr olan kitâb-ı ravẕat üş-şühedâdur*).[809] As such, given the circumstances, it is quite possible that Füẕûlî was commissioned to write a Turkish *maqtal*. Even if he was not directly asked, the fact that he specifically chose Kāshefī's *maqtal* as his primary influence demonstrates that the book was popular enough at this early period to be singled out for translation. We do not know exactly when Füẕûlî composed his version of the *Rowẕat*, but obviously it had to be before 1556; this means that a Turkish translation, well-known in its own right, was written for the *Rowẕat* only half a century (or probably less) after Kāshefī's death.

The second of these, the *Saʿâdetnâmeh* ("Book of Happiness"), is obscure in Western academic literature. The majority of the research which has been done on this work is in Turkish. It was written by a poet with the common penname of "Câmî-i Rûmî." And gives his death date as 1505 C.E. in Istanbul; given that the *Rowẕat* was completed in 1502 C.E., this means that either Câmî had to have known Kāshefī or moved in common circles with him, or that the book was famous enough to have already reached Turkey with enough time for him to read it, translate it, and complete it before his death.[810] This stretches some credulity. However, according to Okuyucu, this date is an error and a result of a common confusion with other poets' similar pseudonyms, and the author of the *Saʿâdetnâmeh* was alive in 1552-1553 C.E. when he

[809] Füẕūlī, 7.
[810] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 57, and Metin And, "The Muharram Observances in Anatolian Turkey," in *Taʿziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran,* (New York: New York University Press; Soroush Press, 1979), pp. 238-254; 248.

composed the text.[811] The book is an artistic translation which resembles that of Füẕûlî; however, Câmî does not mention Füẕûlî's translation in his own work.[812] The translation appears have been dedicated to Süleyman I (d. 1566 C.E.), who is praised in it under his sobriquet of *Qânûnî* ("lawgiver").[813] As we shall see below, with the Safavid implementation of the *Rowẕat* for their Turkic Qızılbaş supporters at least by the mid-16th century, it is possible that there was an underlying political motivation here, but that is beyond the scope of this dissertation. A manuscript of this translation is available at Ketābkhāneh-ye Majles-e Showrā-ye Eslāmī in Tehran which is dated 23 Rabīʿ al-Awwal, 994 A.H. (March 14, 1586), and attributed to a scribe named Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad.[814]

The third book, *Tercüme-i Ravzatü'ş Şühedâ*, was translated by Pîr Meḥmed (d. 1572 C.E.), usually known as Aşık Çelebi. Çelebi was a famous poet, biographer, and judge noted for his biographical dictionary or memorial volume of poets, the *Meşâirü'ş-Şüʿarâ'* (The Poets' Senses).[815] Like Füẕûlî, at least one motivation for the translation appears to have been to make the elegance of the *Rowẕat* available to Turkish speakers.[816] The book was translated sometime before 1546-1547 C.E., but it is not clear who the book was dedicated to, though Çelebi does praise the ruler of the time (*padişâh*).[817] Given the time and place, i.e. within the Ottoman Empire, it is likely that this means Süleyman I.

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[811] Cihan Okuyucu, "Câmî-İ Rûmî (Misrî) ve Saʿâdetnâne'si," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 21 (Spring 2011): 297–327; 297-8.
[812] Yazar believes that it is nearly unthinkable that he would not know of the work of his famous predecessor and implies that he may have deliberately omitted any mention of Füẕûlî. See: Sadık Yazar, "Andolu Sahası Klâsik Türk Edebiyatında Tercüme ve Şerh Gelenği." PhD diss., (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2011), 903.
[813] Ibid.
[814] Câmî-i Rûmî, *Saʿâdetnâmeh*, MS Majlis 7845, 326 folios; 282b.
[815] Filiz Kılıç, "Âşık Çelebi" In *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*. Brill, March 1, 2017. https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3/ask-celebi-COM_27627?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.cluster.Encyclopaedia+of+Islam&s.q=asik+celebi.
[816] Āṣiḳ Çelebi and Kenan Özçelik, *Ravzatü'ş-şüheda tercümesi: inceleme – metin*, (Istanbul: Doğu Kütüphanesi, 2016), 126.
[817] Yazar, 901-2.

Finally, we come to perhaps the most important translation for the purposes of this dissertation: the *Şühədanamə.* Several post-Safavid historians have argued that either Esmāʿīl or Ṭahmāsp were well-acquainted with the *Rowẕat* and suggest they were using it in their *ʿĀshūrā* rituals.[818] However, in most cases, any sort of detailed citation of how familiar the early Safavids were with the book from a contemporary source is lacking. Most of the time, we are forced to rely on unsourced anecdotes. Some indirect evidence suggests that Esmāʿīl may have had some knowledge of the *Rowẕat*. His son Sām Mīrzā (d. 1566 C.E.), who spent much of his youth as the governor of Herat, discusses Ḥoseyn Nedā'ī Yazdī Nīshābūrī's poetry in his short biographical dictionary of poets *Toḥfeh-ye Sāmī* (Sām's Choice Selections).[819] Within this notation, he mentions the *Rowẕat* by name as one of Nīshābūrī's sources (*dar sheʿr-e ṭabʿesh bad nīst va rowẕat ol-shohadā-rā naẓm kardeh īn maṭlaʿ az ūst*).[820] This reference does not confirm that Esmāʿīl promoted the *Rowẕat*, but it does suggest that he may have been aware of it.

In his history of Shāh Esmāʿīl, Moḥammad ʿĀref Espanāqchī Pāshāzādeh provides a detailed and quite amusing discussion of Esmāʿīl's alleged interest in the *Rowẕat*:

> During Muḥarram, on *ʿĀshūrā*', when a mourning session was held, one of the preachers recited the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* of Ḥosayn Vāʿeẓ Kāshefī from the pulpit. The listeners lamented and wept. Because this book was in Persian, most of the princes, including the soldiers who were Turks and ignorant, did not understand. Jalāl al-Dīn Mīrzā in the third volume of his Book of Kings (*Nāmeh-ye Khosrovān*), illustrated: 'During the mourning session which Shāh Esmāʿīl had assembled, one of the great princes of the Shāmlū tribe was in attendance, and was crying. The Shāh asked him, "Why are you crying?" He answered, "I am not crying for your Ḥusayn; I am crying for our brave Syrians which your Ḥusayn and his companions killed!" When the Shāh heard this answer, he laughed.'[821]

[818] Parvīz Zāreʿ Shāhmarasī, *Tārīkh-e Zabān-e Torkī dar Āẕarbāyjān*, (Tabriz: Nashr-e Akhtar-o Enteshārāt-e Hāshemī-ye Sūdmand, 2006), 49-50.
[819] B. Reinert, "Sām Mīrzā," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, April 24, 2012. https://referenceworks-brillonline-com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/sam-mirza-COM_0990?s.num=0&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.book.encyclopaedia-of-islam-2&s.q=sam+mirza.
[820] Sām Mīrzā, *Toḥfeh-ʿye Sāmī*, (Tehran: Maṭbaʿeh-ye Armaghān, 1935), 150.
[821] Espanāqchī Pāshāzādeh, 271.

This rather irreverent anecdote operates on two points. Firstly, it opines that the "Turks" (here certainly meaning the Qızılbaş) had difficulty in understanding the Persian-language text of the *Rowẕat* and plays with the fact that the *Rowẕat* contains many descriptions of the vast number of Yazīd's forces that Ḥusayn personally defeated. From the previous section, we know that Esmāʿīl composed the vast majority of his religious poetry in a Turkic dialect, suggesting that it may have been for the benefit of his also Turkic-speaking Qızılbaş supporters. As such, that much of the story certainly tracks with what we know of Esmāʿīl. On the other hand, it is hard to judge the veracity of this report, since the statement from Jalīl al-Dīn Mīrzā (d. 1872 C.E.), a Qajar historian, is only traceable back to the reign of Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh Qājār (d. 1896 C.E.). This anecdote does underscore the perception that the Turks under Esmāʿīl's command lacked a clear idea of many ritual and thematic aspects of Shiʿism. However, is there any evidence to show that such anecdotes are based on fact, drawn from historical record?

While it may be uncertain whether or not Esmāʿīl commissioned a Turkish translation of the *Rowẕat*, the final translation I have mentioned, the *Şühədanamə* ("Book of Martyrs"), completed in 1539 C.E., provides us with even more tantalizing evidence.[822] The *Şühədanamə* exists in only one manuscript copy, currently housed at The Institute of Manuscripts named after Mohammad Fuzuli of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences in Baku, Azerbaijan, and written in the hand of its author, Müḥammad b. Ḥüseyn Kâtib Nişâtî (fl. 1543 C.E.).[823] Nişâtî is

در محرم فقط در روز عاشورا مجلس عزایی منعقد کرده، یکی از وعاظ کتاب روضه الشهداء حسین واعظ کاشفی را بر منبر می خواند. سامعین ندبه و گریه می کردند. چون این کتاب فارسی بود، غالب امرا، حتی لشکر که ترک و نادان بودند، نمی فهمیدند. جلال الدین میرزای مرحوم در جلد ثالث نامهٔ خسروان می نگارد: که در مجلس عزایی که شاه اسماعیل حضور داشت، یکی از امرای بزرگ شاملو در آن مجلس بود و گریه می کرد، شاه از او پرسید که، تو چرا گریه می کنی؟ در جواب عرض کرد که از برای حسین شما گریه نمی کنم؛ از برای آن دلیران شام ما گریه می کنم که حسین شما و اصحابش آنها را کشته‌اند. شاه که این جواب را شنید، خندید.

[822] Möhsün Nağısoylu, *XVI əsr Azərbaycan Tərcümə Abidəsi "Şühədanamə": Paleoqrafiya, Orfoqrafiya və Tərcümə Məsələləri*, (Baku: Nurlan, 2003), 41.

[823] Kəmalə Nuriyeva, "Abbasqulu Ağa Bakixanovun "Riyazu-l-Quds" Əsəri Klassik Məqtəl Ənənəsinin Davami Kimi," *Risalə: Elmi araşdırmalar jurnalı*, No. 2, 17 (2019), pp. 106-116; 108 n. 1.

perhaps more famously known as the translator of Ibn Bazzāz's (d. 1391-2 C.E.) hagiography of Shaykh Ṣafī, the *Ṣafvat ol-Ṣafā* ("The Quintessence of Clarity").[824] Nişâtî is a virtually unknown figure in Western scholarship; almost nothing has been written about his life let alone his literary output. However, several Azerbaijani scholars have dedicated research to his work, and the only significant scholarship on Nişâtî is exclusively in Azerbaijani. Very little is known about his life except that he lived in Shiraz, which is where the *Şühədanamə* was written.[825]

The *Şühədanamə,* unlike the *Ḥadīqat ül-Süʿedā',* is comparatively a straight translation from the Persian original into pre-Azerbaijani Turkic. Nağısoylu, one of the foremost Azerbaijani experts on Nişâtî notes the difference in style between the *Ḥadīqat ül-Süʿedā'* and the *Şühədanamə*:

> It should be noted that Füẕûlî's *Ḥadīqat ül-Süʿedā'* is a translation of Kashifi's *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* as is the *Şühədanamə* a translation of the same. However, while *Şühədanamə* is a more literal translation, *Ḥadīqat ül-Süʿedā',* is instead an example of a classical free-translation. Although Füẕûlî kept the thematic content of Kāshefī's work, he rendered the text in his own style as a real creative work in the translation, putting forth an example of a free translation, which is essentially very different from the modern idea of translations. Although Nişâtî's translation of the *Şühədanamə* and Füẕûlî's *Ḥadīqat ül-Süʿedā'* coincide in theme and content, they differ from each other in terms of language and style. Thus, *Ḥadīqat ül-Süʿedā'* was composed in Füẕûlî's highly artistic style, a rather solemn, pompous kind of language, while the *Şühədanamə* was written in simple language, in the style of national speech.[826]

[824] Nağısoylu 41, 43.
[825] Ibid, 53, 56.
[826] Ibid, 58.
Qeyd edək ki, Füzulinin "Hədiqətüs-süəda"sı "Şühədanamə" kimi Kaşifinin "Rövzətüş-şühəda" əsərinin tərcüməsidir. Bununla belə, "Şühədanamə" daha çox hərfi tərcümə təsirini bağışlayırsa, "Hədiqətüs-süəda" isə, əksinə, klassik sərbəst-yaradıcı tərcümə nümunəsidir. Füzuli Kaşifinin əsərinin məzmununu olduğu kimi saxlasa da, tərcümədə əsl yaradıcılıq işi aparmış və mahiyyətcə çağdaş tərcümələrdən çox fərqlənən sərbəst-yaradıcı bir tərcümə nümunəsini ortaya qoymuşdur. Nişatinin "Şühədanamə" tərcüməsi ilə Füzulinin "Hədiqətüs-süəda"sı mövzu və məzmunca nə qədər üst-üstə düşsələr də, dil və üslub özəllikləri baxımından biri digərindən bir o qədər seçilirlər. Belə ki, "Hədiqətüs-süəda" Füzuliyə məxsus yüksək bədii üslubda, təntənəli, təmtəraqlı bir dillə, "Şühədanamə" isə ümumxalq danışıq üslubunda sadə bir dillə qələmə alınmışdır.

Like the *Ḥadīqat ül-Süʿedā'*, the *Şühədanamə* follows the structure of the original Persian version very closely. There are ten chapters and an introduction, with the latter thematically structured around the theme of *balā* (Azerbaijani: *bələ*). However, unlike Füẕûlî, Nişâtî is quite forthcoming about who patronized his translation, not just why he wrote it:

> The Turkic disciples and the Shīʿa among them did not understand Persian speech, so at the behest of Shāh Tahmāsp Ṣafavī Ḥoseynī and the instruction of the ruler of Shiraz, Qāẕī-khān Sārū Sheykhoghlu, he (i.e. Nişâtî) translated the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* from the Persian language into Turkic (*Türk müstəidləri və şiələrinin farsi kəlamını anlamadıqlarını Şah Təhmasib əs-Səfəvi əl-Hüseynin əmrü işaratı və Şiraz hakimi Qazi xan Saru Şeyx oğlunun göstərişi ilə Rövzətüş-şühəda'nı farsi dilindən türkiyə döndərdiyini*).[827]

This notation in the introduction of the *Şühədanamə* is vital because it provides us with two important pieces of information. Firstly, it corroborates the basic premise of the earlier anecdote related by Jalīl al-Dīn Mīrzā as well as Füẕûlî's purported motivation in his own composition; i.e. that in the early days of the Safavid Empire, the Turkic-speaking Qızılbaş were still assimilating to Persian Shiʿism, and were having significant difficulties in understanding the full import of the rituals the Safavid rulers were trying to promote. This note by Nişâtî also provides further clarification as to why Esmāʿīl's religious poetry was composed in a Turkic dialect and not in Persian: if, as I suspect, this poetry was produced at least in part for ritual purposes, then it makes sense that Esmāʿīl would use a language his troops understood.[828]

Secondly, and most importantly, Nişâtî's notation definitively allows me to conclude that not only were the Safavids promoting proto-*rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and proto-*taʿziyeh* as part of their propagation of Shiʿism in Iran, but they were specifically promoting the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* as

[827] Ibid, 59.
[828] It is also worth noting that Nağısoylu opines that Nişâtî was also the copyist responsible for a manuscript of Esmāʿīl's *dīvān* currently housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The manuscript is dated 948/1541. Ibid, 56-7.

the blueprint for these early rituals. As such, while the complete ritualization of the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* ceremony had most likely not totally emerged, along with the full institutional support of the imperial bureaucracy, Nişâtî's statement conclusively proves that the *Rowẕat* was integral to Safavid propaganda efforts from a much earlier period than has been previously described. This book appears to have been the earliest Turkic translation of the *Rowẕat*, which possibly suggests that the latter Turkish translations dedicated directly or obliquely to the Ottoman ruler may have been translated partially as a political countermeasure to the *Şühədanamə*. In the next section, I will expand on this evidence to demonstrate how historical archival evidence shows that the aforementioned institutionalization followed closely after this early support of the text, transforming the *Rowẕat* from a popular ritual text into the basis of Safavid *ʿĀshūrā* ritual itself.

VI. Anything Goes: The Origins of *Rowẕeh-Khᵛānī* and the Instrumentalizing of the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*

Pre-modern historical materials generally do not spend much time considering the attitudes of the average person in their daily lives, whether when doing something average like their workday, or something more elaborate, like participation in annual ritual performances. Regarding the history of crowds, Grehan remarks:

> Crowds have always puzzled historians. As essentially anonymous and spontaneous movements, they often seem to possess a mysterious, irrational, even primal quality. They can form suddenly and unpredictably, unite strangers behind an apparently common cause,

> move through the streets as if acting with a single will, and unexpectedly melt away into the surrounding neighborhoods and markets from which they came.[829]

When discussing the behavior and emotional feelings of a crowd without the benefit of being able to interview these people, as is the persistent problem of historians, one must instead resort to reading between the lines. Inevitably, this means that the historian must rely on the reports of the elite and try to glean what they can. This section works from material which unambiguously comes from elite accounts, namely legal documents, and even farther afield, the travelogues of foreigners. Despite the distance of these accounts, I will use them to demonstrate both the popular appeal of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals to the Iranian public under the Safavids, as well as how the Safavids themselves took advantage of this popular appeal to instrumentalize the *Rowẕat* as a way of creating a consensus and transforming Iran into a Shiʿi state.

In the previous two sections, I discussed how the patterns of manuscript production and translation efforts in the 16th century demonstrate that the *Rowẕat* experienced nearly instant popularity. I also showed how these facts lead us to the unmistakable conclusion that the Safavids were well aware of the importance of this text and were keen to instrumentalize it. Having established these pieces of evidence, the question must now be asked: what was the practical, tangible outcome of this interest in the *Rowẕat*?

In this section, I will primarily examine two sources of evidence: material drawn from *vaqfnāmeh*s, or "endowment deeds" beginning in the 17th century under the reign of Shāh ʿAbbās (d. 1629 C.E.), and excerpts from European travelogues from the 17th and 18th centuries. These documents will serve to illustrate three basic facts: firstly, that the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* rituals

[829] James Grehan, "Street Violence and Social Imagination in Late Mamluk and Ottoman Damascus (c.1500-1800)," *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from below in the Middle East and North Africa*, (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008), 25.

originated in this period and derive from the *Rowẕat*; secondly, that the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* ritual enjoyed official imperial patronage which can be documented by reference to legal texts; and thirdly, that the details of the ritual practice continually evolved, becoming progressively more elaborate, which eventually lead to the carnivalesque performances under the Qajars.

While some scholars, such as Jaʿfariyān, have suggested that *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*-like rituals predate the Safavids, and points to the abundance of Persian poetry from other authors mourning Ḥusayn quoted by Kāshefī, there is no tangible evidence to suggest anywhere near the elaborate levels of ritualism seen under the Safavids in the historical record before their rise.[830] The fact that only fragments of pre-Kāshefī Persian *maqātil* survive—and often in quotation by Kāshefī himself—suggests that while the practice of mourning Ḥusayn, accompanied by *marthiya* recitation, is well-established from at least the Buyid period in the 10th century, it was not truly institutionalized nor as organized as it would become under the Safavids. What recitation of *maqātil* may have existed prior to the development of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* probably would have consisted mostly of passages from Arabic *maqātil*, which were in the vast majority at the time, accompanied by vernacular and professionally composed Persian *marāthī*.

Previously, I mentioned that under Shāh Tahmāsp, the definitively Iranian elements of Esmāʿīl's messianic Shiʿism were de-emphasized in favor of a more 'mainstream' Twelver paradigm.[831] Indeed, many years before, Esmāʿīl had himself exhorted his listeners to observe the Iranian festival of Nowrūz (*nevruz edin*).[832] The same pattern was not rigorously adhered to by Ṭahmāsp's grandson, ʿAbbās, who seemed quite interested in both displays of Iranian heritage as well as encouraging grand observances of *ʿĀshūrā'*. Indeed, some of Shāh ʿAbbās'

[830] Jaʿfariyān 1995, 37.
[831] Babayan 2002, 297.
[832] Minorsky, 1032a.

decrees (*fermān*) were quite interesting in that they seemed to encourage identifications of these elements when possible. For example, in 1611 C.E., twenty-three years into his reign as the Safavid emperor, Muḥarram and the Iranian month of Farvardīn coincided. This in of itself was not particularly notable, since they had coincided for several years beforehand. However, in 1609, ʿAbbās had promoted celebrating the *cherāghānī* (light festival) during Muḥarram—in fact, it was he who reintroduced the practice of the *cherāghānī*, after a period when it was no longer officially observed.[833] More interestingly, in 1611, Nowrūz, the first day of Farvardīn, fell in Muḥarram. Nowrūz was itself a festival long associated with the *cherāghānī*.[834] That year, not only did Nowrūz coincide with Muḥarram, it also coincided with the sixth day of Muḥarram, i.e. the sixth day of *ʿĀshūrā'*. The Turkman historian Eskandar Beg Monshī's (d. 1632 C.E.) relates that:

> Nowrūz this year was auspicious and happy; it fell upon Friday, the sixth day of holy Muḥarram, at the beginning of the Hijrī year 1020 and the first day of the Iranian month of Farvardīn… Because it was *ʿĀshūrā*', during which Shīʿa and the allies of the *ahl al-bayt* in *taʿziyeh* for the Lord of Martyrs, fifth member of the people of the cloak, dressed in clothes of mourning, and their thoughts were occupied with sorrow and discontent, the necessary preparations for Nowrūz, the celebration and rejoicing of that happy day, were not observed. The unspoken attitude of the young and old, the youth and the aged at this time, was like an adage. This was adage which the most eloquent of contemporary poets, revered Moḥtashām Kāshī, who having happened upon a *marthiya* about Ḥusayn, recited: "Oh, that gyre of negligence, such injustice you have committed, in this tyranny what things have you cultivated out of vengeance? You have recreated the deed of Yazīd by killing of Ḥusayn! Look closely, oh you who are contented at this murder!"
>
> After the conclusion of *taʿziyeh* rituals and mourning, when the freshness of the spring season and Favardīn provided endless greenery to that paradisiacal city, and which wafted around the ambergris-scented blossoms and flowers into the nostrils of the people,

[833] Jean Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power II: the Consolidation of Safavid Shiʿism: Folklore and Popular Religion," *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, (London: New York: I.B. Tauris; Distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1996), 148.
[834] Mahmoud Omidsalar, "Čerāḡānī," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, V/3, pp. 264-265, available online at https://iranicaonline.org/articles/ceragani-also-ceragan-ceragbani-ceragbaran-the-decoration-of-buildings-and-open-spaces-with-lights-during-f (accessed on 20 August 2020).

> cheerfulness of the spirit and joy rose within everyone's heart, uplifting them; so leave was given for celebration in the garden of Naqsh-e Jahān by imperial order to set up a grand celebration attended by grandees, high-ranking officials, ministers, intimates of the court, persons of importance, nobles, and lords who were present at the foot of the imperial throne, together with merchants and various classes at the direction of the nobles, each one they seated at their appropriate place for the celebration. Having spread out gilded tents, satin canopies with brocade and floral embroidery, they arranged paradisiac parties, and set up lights (*cherāghān*) equidistantly within four cupolas in each party setting with exotic workings adorning them. The gates of happiness and joy were opened on the people, and in the parties, the pages passed around silver goblets of wine-dregs filtered through cheerfulness to the ever-increasing party-goers. For so many days did they provide such happiness![835]

Apparently, Shāh ʿAbbās declared that Nowrūz would be celebrated alongside *ʿĀshūrā'* mourning. From Monshī's contemporary chronicle of Shāh ʿAbbās' reign, it is not entirely clear whether he means that Shāh ʿAbbās simply waited until after mourning rituals ended to begin the celebration of Nowrūz or whether he postponed it for four days until 11 Muḥarram. Sharīʿatī, for his part, interpreted this as ʿAbbās observing *ʿĀshūrā'* one day, and Nowrūz the next (*ānchonān keh yeksāl nowrūz-o ʿashūrā dar yek rūz oftād va pādshāh-e ṣafavī, ān rūz-rā ʿāshūrā gereft va rūz baʿd-rā nowrūz*).[836] He observed that this was due to Nowrūz uniting the national as well as religious sentiment of Iranians. Regardless, we know from the commentary of Shaykh Bahā'ī

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[835] Eskandar Beg Monshī, *Tārīkh-e 'Ālam-ārā-ye 'Abbāsī*, (Tehran: Amīr Kābīr, 1971), 2:830.
نوروز اين سال فرخ فال بفيروزى و فرخندگى در روز جمعه ششم شهر محرم الحرام كه آغاز عشرين و الف هجري و اول فروردين ...و بجهت ايام عاشورا كه شيعيان و مواليان اهلبيت در تعزيه سيد الشهداء خامس آل عباء لباس سوگواري پوشيده اندوه و ملال بر ضماير مستولى بود بلوازم نوروز و جشن و سرور آن روز فيروز قيام ننمودند و زبان حال صغير و كبير و برنا و پير در آن ايام ملالت فرجام بمضمون اين مقال كه افصح الشعراء المتاخرين مولانا محتشم كاشى در مرثيه آن حضرت الفاء نموده مترنم بود:

محتشم اى چرخ غافلى كه چه بيداد كرده اى و ز كين چها درين ستم آباد كرده اى كام يزيد داده اى از كشتن حسين بنگر كرا بقتل كه دلشاد كرده اى

بعد از فراغ خاطر از لوازم تعزيه و سوگواري كه طراوت فصل بهار و ايام فروردين نزهت آثار آن بلده جنت نشان را خضرت و نضارت بخشيد و عنبرين بوي شكوفه و ازهار در دماغ روزگار پيچيده مسرت بخش دلها و خرمى افزاي خاطر همگنان گرديد بدستور معهود در باغ نقش جهان امر قضا نفاذ بترتيب جشن عالى بصدور پيوست و امراء عاليقدر و وزراء و مقربان درگاه والا و اهالى و اعيان قلمرو همايون كه در پايه سرير سلطنت مصير حاضر بودند مع تجار و طبقات اصناف بر حسب اشاره همايون هر يک در محلى مناسب طرح جشن عالى انداختند و خيام زرنگار و سايبانهاى اطلس و ديباي ختايى افراخته مجالس بهشت نشان ترتيب دادند و چهار طاقها در برابر هر مجلسى بفنون غريبه آراسته چراغان كردند بر روى خلق ابواب بهجت و خرمى گشوده گشت و در مجالس، ساقيان سيمين ساق به جرعه‌هاى رواق نشاط افزاى مجلسيان گشته، چند روز داد خرمى دادند.

[836] ʿAlī Sharīʿatī, *Kavīr*, (Tehran: Chāpkhāneh-e Ṭūs, 1970), 264.

regarding the celebration of *cherāghānī* during Muḥarram two years prior that this decision was probably controversial with the clergy.[837] Many years later, Majlesī would also consider Nowrūz controversial—not for its content, but instead because he couldn't decide on which day it should fall![838]

The juxtaposition of these observances is a truly unusual idea, since *ʿĀshūrā'* is a time of mourning, while Nowrūz, the Iranian New Year, is most decidedly not. This is a point which is amply highlighted by Monshī. However, if we consider some of the conclusions from the previous chapter, specifically how Narshakhī related that mourning and the sacrifice of a rooster was conducted on Nowrūz in commemoration for Siyāvash, then this practice takes on a whole new light.[839] Nowrūz and Siyāvash have strong connections—both thematic, as I have discussed in the previous chapter, as well as practical, since this is when the people of Bukhara commemorated Siyāvash's death with ritualized mourning, the singing of *nowḥat*s, and animal sacrifice.

Along with the juxtaposition of Iranian festivals with *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals, this anecdote sets the scene for a pattern of formal *ʿĀshūrā'* observances under the Safavids. Before ʿAbbās, the references to official patronage of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals under the Safavids are sparse and lacking much detail, beyond what we have previously seen in the earlier sections of this chapter.[840] However, it is during ʿAbbās' reign that we not only observe the return of Iranian elements, but most importantly, documentary evidence that the Safavids formally patronized the rituals, in particular, the emerging *rowẓeh-khᵛānī*. ʿAbbās' motivations for encouraging public large-scale

[837] Calmard 1996, 148.
[838] John Walbridge, "A Persian Gulf in the Sea of Lights: The Chapter on Naw-Rūz in the "Biḥār Al-Anwār"," *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 35 (1997): 83-92; 90.
[839] For details, see Section VII in Chapter Three.
[840] Calmard 1996, 142-3.

ʿĀshūrā' rituals can only be guessed at, but Calmard suggests that they were a way for him to channel socio-political problems arising from clashes between different economic, ethnic, and political groups into a unified group catharsis, and thus control social tensions in the empire.[841] Obviously, this explanation would suit both the Safavids stated goal of creating a Shiʿi state through public consensus, as well as siphoning off social stress, thus creating an ordered environment.

The very earliest mention of the terms *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* (the practice of chanting the *Rowẕat*) or rather, *rowẕeh-khᵛān* (the performer of chanting the *Rowẕat*), occurs in a list of yearly expenses (*maṣraf-e masjed*) for the Shāh Mosque of Esfahan (*masjed-e shāh-e ʿatīq-e eṣfahān*) in Naqsh-e Jahān Square, in 1614 C.E., five years after the previously mentioned conjunction of *ʿĀshūrā'* and *Farvardīn*: "As for the gratuity (*enʿām*) for the *Rowzat* reciters (*rowẕeh-khᵛān*), they [the *vāqef*] have agreed upon the sum of one toman and two thousand tabrīzī dinars."[842] Here, the term *enʿām* usually denotes a gift, almost always monetary, which is bestowed by a superior to an inferior, often someone of a lower class employed for a particular service.[843] The use of this term—which does not appear in later *vaqfnāmeh*s discussed in this chapter—suggests that while the *rowẕeh-khᵛān* was a recognized job, in this early period it may have been less a formally trained profession than the equivalent of a seasonal position. Later *vaqfnāmeh*s use terms like *ojrat* "wages."[844]

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[841] Ibid, 142-5.

[842] ʿAbd al-Ḥoseyn Sepantā, *Tārīkhcheh-ye Owqāf-e Eṣfahān*, (Esfahan: Enteshārāt-e Edāreh-e Koll-e Owqāf, Mentaqeh-ye Esfahān, 1967), 58.
انعام در وجه روضه خوان مبلغ یکتومان و ۲۰۰۰ دینار تبریزی مقرر دارند.

[843] Edward Granville Browne, *A Year Amongst the Persians: Impressions as to the Life, Character & Thought of the People of Persia, Received During Twelve Months' Residence in That Country in the Years 1887-1888*, (London; New York: Century; Hippocrene Books, 1984), 75.

[844] See a 1711 C.E. *vaqfnāmeh* discussed below, from: Sepantā, 241-2.

Overall, this notation, while brief, is extremely important for three reasons. Firstly, it allows us to date the occurrence of the Persian word *rowẕeh-khᵛān* to 1614 C.E. Secondly, it demonstrates that the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s were a formal category by this time, who were hired by religious institutions sanctioned by the government to provide a specific service. Thirdly, this pushes the date for the earliest known mention of the term back from 1627-8 C.E., the date cited by Calmard[845] via Morton from an inscription at the Ardabil Shrine,[846] dating its mention at least thirteen or fourteen years earlier. This expense list also allows us to further revise Calmard's assertation in the same article that "…it is difficult to know whether it [i.e. Muḥarram rituals] entailed any official initiative or patronage…"[847] This is clear evidence to demonstrate that Muḥarram rituals not only enjoyed official, formal patronage under ʿAbbās as early as 1614, but moreover, this evidence shows that *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* in particular enjoyed official patronage.

Now that we can date the earliest known mention of the term *rowẕeh-khᵛān* or *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, it is worth considering another terminological point which has implications on how we can understand the evolution of these rituals from the *Rowẕat* itself. Throughout this dissertation, and indeed, in the wider field of academic study of *ʿĀshūrā'*, scholars have long considered the term *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* to be intimately tied to the *Rowẕat* of Kāshefī. Obviously, the lexical resemblance (*rowẕeh* is simply the Persian pronunciation of Arabic *rawḍa*, and *rowẕat* is the construct form for an Arabic title) and the fact that the text's main topic is mourning for Ḥusayn are strong connections to draw. However, the question has always remained whether there is a direct, linguistic and historical connection between *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and Kāshefī's text. Calmard, citing Dekhoda's *Loghatnāmeh*, suggests the theory that, "A conjectural *Raużat al-shuhadā-*

[845] Calmard 1996, 155.
[846] A.H. Morton, "The Ardabīl Shrine in the Reign of Shāh Ṭahmāsp I," *Iran* 12, no. 1 (1974): 31-64; 55.
[847] Calmard 1996, 149.

khwān, later abridged to *Rauża-khwān* has been proposed."[848] In this understanding, *rowẕat ol-shohadā-khᵛān* is thus a transitional form which is later simplified into *rowẕeh-khᵛān*. This reading makes sense, and seems likely, but until now, it has been theoretical, since the transitional form was previously unattested.

Further research into the *vaqfnāmeh*s (endowment deeds), a genre left more or less untouched by earlier academic treatments of *ʿĀshūrā'* has enabled me to revise this statement as well and move the transitional form from unattested to certain. I have identified two statements, of nearly identical wording, from the reign of Shāh ʿAbbās II (d. 1666 C.E.). The first is from the *vaqf* of the Mosque and School of Mamnābād in Esfahan: "Regarding [the use of] expenses for the ten days of *ʿĀshūrā'* and the Twenty-first of the blessed month of Ramaḍān, during which, every year in the aforementioned school, the *Rowẕat al-Shohadā'* is to be recited (*rowẕat ol-shohadā' khᵛāndeh shavad*) under the watchful care of a *qāri'* (professional reciter) and the gathering of the congregation, and the required rituals for it should be observed in every detail."[849] This text is dated to Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1064 A.H. (1653 C.E.), authorized by the *vāqef* Moḥammad Shafīʿā Mīrzā b. Moḥammad Akhvazāniyā. A second attestation comes from an inscription on a wall panel of southern portico at the Shafīʿiyyeh School of Esfahan: "[In] the blessed month of Ramaḍān, during which, every year in the aforementioned school, the *Rowzat al-Shohadā'* should be recited (*rowẕat ol-shohadā' khᵛāndeh shavad*) under the watchful care of a *qāri'* and the gathering of the congregation, and great care should be taken in performed the

[848] Ibid, 155.

[849] Ṣādeq Ḥoseynī al-Eshkavarī, *Asnād-e Mowqūfāt-e Eṣfahān*, (Qom: Majmaʿ-e Ẕakhā'er-e Eslāmī, 2009), 4:20.
و اخراجات ده یوم عاشورا و روز بیست و یکم شهر مبارک رمضان که هر ساله در مدرسه مذکوره، روضه الشهداء خوانده شود از رعایت قاری و اسراج مجمع و لوازم آن به همه جهت نموده.

required rituals for it."[850] This second inscription is dated to 1069 A.H. (1658 C.E.) and attributed to one Moḥammadrezā al-Emāmī al-Eṣfahānī.

These texts are dated within five years of each other, and the wording for both is extremely similar, differing only in that the second inscription is missing the text prior to mentioning Ramaḍān, uses *māh* (month) instead of *shahr*, *mazbūreh* (aforementioned) instead of *maẕkūreh* (also aforementioned), and uses *āncheh shodeh shavad* (how it was performed) at the end instead of *namūdeh* (performed). These similarities suggest that this may have been a formulaic expression for establishing these guidelines at mosques and schools in Esfahan at the time. It seems likely that recitation of the *Rowẓat* had become so popular that it had spread to being performed during Ramaḍān as well—though in later periods, this was de-emphasized in favor of greater attention to *ʿĀshūrā'*. Regardless, the attestation of the same expression in both texts, the compound verb *rowẓat ol-shohadā' khᵛāndan* (chanting the *Meadow of the Martyrs*) in the passive, allows me to conclude that not only did this previously conjectural form definitely exist, but its usage, while perhaps not common, was a known, probably formal term.

These two inscriptions are the earliest example of two specific incidents: firstly, it is the first known specific mention of the *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'* in an internal, explicit, formal, institutional context, and secondly, it is the first known specific usage of the form *rowẓat ol-shohadā'-khᵛāndan*. What these inscriptions do is that they verify the usage of a particular text, namely the *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'* in an institutional context—it cannot be informal, even ignoring the fact that the note is engraved on the wall of the school, because the inscription tells us that this recitation is to be done under the supervision of a professional reciter (*qārī*—a term usually

[850] Sepantā, 353-4.
ماه مبارک رمضان که همه ساله در مدرسه مزبوره روضه‌الشهداء خوانده شود از رعایت قاری و اسراج مجمع و لوازم آن بهمه جهت آنچه شده شود.

reserved for reciters of the Qur'ān), which requires formal institutional oversight by its very nature. Secondly, it this inscription proves a long-postulated theory—namely, that *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* is an abbreviation for the previously unattested theoretical form, *rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛānī/ rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛāndan*; this inscription demonstrates that this form did indeed exist, and was almost certainly the original full version of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*.

One may ask, "what if this refers not to Kāshefī's *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, but some other book with the same title?" This postulation is extremely unlikely because of the previously presented discussion of the reception of the *Rowẕat*. This was not an obscure text; I have already shown that for the 16th century alone, we have fifteen dated manuscripts of the *Rowẕat*; eleven of which are less than fifty years after Kāshefī's death. Manuscripts of this book were circulating at least a far as from Edirne, Turkey to Ḥilla, Iraq, or likely as far as Herat.[851] In addition to that, there are at least four translations of the *Rowẕat* into Turkish authored again, less than fifty years after Kāshefī's death, two of which some scholars have argued were translated at the behest of a Safavid ruler. There are no other known extant works from this period which both have the same title and the same verifiable prestige. Thus, with an extremely tiny margin for error, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* mentioned in the Mamnābād and Madraseh-ye Shafiʿiyeh inscriptions must be Kāshefī's *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*.

The second earliest known *vaqfnāmeh* discussing *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* is dated to Rajab 1035 A.H./1626 C.E. This text is housed at the Āstān-e Qods-e Raẕavī archives in Mashhad, and was written to provide legal guidelines for the management of the shrine of the eighth Imam, ʿAlī al-

[851] Circulation from Herat is implied in two ways: firstly, the text was authored in Herat, so it is undeniable that some manuscripts must have existed there; and secondary, that the scribe of A. 3060 was named ʿEzz al-Dīn Moḥammad-haravī, suggesting an origin in Herat. Obviously, the second is far weaker than the first, since it is quite conceivable that ʿEzz al-Dīn Moḥammad-haravī never actually lived in Herat and his father merely came from there; but it is still worth considering as a possible minor supporting point for manuscript production of the *Rowẕat* in Herat.

Riḍā.[852] The text is written in *shekasteh* style, with a total of 19 lines on the page.[853] This *vaqfnāmeh* contains the earliest known specific use of the exact lexeme *rowẕeh-khᵛānī,* in the sense of the abstract noun, rather than the verb (*rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛāndan/ rowẕeh-khᵛāndan*), or the occupational noun (*rowẕeh-khᵛān*), both mentioned above:

> In the same manner, for *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* of the holy, blessed shrine (*rowẕeh*), in reference to the aforementioned, we determine that during the days of *ʿĀshūrā',* the ritual (*amr*) of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī,* should be observed. It is necessary that for this aforementioned ritual, it should be established perpetually with watchful care and attention (*reʿāyat-o morāqabat*). On this point, they (i.e. the shrine administrators) will not cease carrying out this command with careful solicitude (*qadghan-e dānesteh*), and they see no need to renew this order every year.[854]

The exact amount to be paid to the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s is not specified in the *vaqfnāmeh*; the text details that the superintendent (*motavallī*) and head clerk (*mostavafī*) receive a yearly gratuity (*mowhebat*) out of the usual sum of four thousand dinars and produce dedicated to support the *vaqf*. This extract seems to indicate that the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s would also receive some sort of gratuity out of this amount as well. Regardless of the payment, the document is very clear in its indication that it is officially establishing a recognized practice for formal observance during a specific time of year, and that it is ongoing. It is also worth noting that the vast majority of our documentary sources on *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* come from the Safavid capital of the time, Esfahan. This

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[852] This *vaqfnāmeh* came to my attention after reading the article "Religious Policies of the Safavids and its Outcome in the Development of the Endowments of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza" (*Siyāsat-e Maẕhabī-ye Ṣafaviyān-o Piyāmad-e Ān bar Towsaʿeh-ye Mowqūfāt-e Ḥaram-e Emām Reẓā*) by Zahra Talaee. I am grateful to her for providing me with the manuscript and further information on this text during our correspondence. See: Zahra Talaee, "Siyāsat-e Maẕhabī-ye Ṣafaviyān-o Piyāmad-e Ān bar Towsaʿeh-ye Mowqūfāt-e Ḥaram-e Emām Reẓā," *Pazhūhesh'hā-ye Tārīkhī* Vol. 10, Issue 1 (Spring 2018), 129-152; 145.

[853] I am indebted to my colleague Shahrad Shahvand for providing me with an electronic copy of the manuscript, as well as graciously aiding me in transcribing the text, without which this discussion could not have been completed.

[854] *Towjīhāt-o Moqarrarāt; Towījhāt-o Taḥṣīlāt; Vaẓāyef-e Ḥoffāẓ; Pardākht-e Vaẓīfeh-o Moqarrarī beh Mo'ezzanān-e Āstān-e Qods*, Manuscript, Manuscript Number 31969, (Mashhad: Āstān-e Qods-e Raẓavī), 5, lines 17-19.

و همچنین روضه‌خوانی روضه مقدسه متبرکه را بمشار الیه رجوع فرمودیم که در ایام عاشورا بامر روضه‌خوانی قیام نماید. باید که بدواٴ امر مزبور را بدو متعلق ساخته رعایت و مراقبت نمایند(؟). درین باب قدغن دانسته از فرموده درنگذرند و هر ساله حکم مجدد طلب ندارند.

is one of the few known sources which lays out a formalization for *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* imperial support in a different city, Mashhad—though it is quite likely that similar documents for other cities exist, but still languish in obscurity.

Several other *vaqfnāmeh*s from slightly later dates exist which further verify that the ritual of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* received imperial institutional support, for example, a 1711 C.E. *vaqfnāmeh* for the Imperial School of Esfahan (*Madraseh-ye Solṭānī*):

> During the aforementioned days [i.e. *ʿĀshūrā'*] they [the *vāqef*] have set the sum of the expenses for *taʿziyeh* and other such things at 341 riyals during the ten days at the beginning of the month of Muḥarram, each year in the aforementioned blessed school, for the *taʿziyeh* ceremonies of his eminence, the Imam who consented to God's decree, the eternally pure lord of the martyrs, the fifth of the companions of the cloak, the master of the two weighty things, blessings upon him, upon his pure ancestors and descendants, setting the sum of the expenses for the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*(s), those who sit at the foot of the pulpit, the ritual disavower (*tabarrā'ī*),[855] candles, lamps, food, and the rest of the concomitants and necessities for the aforementioned *taʿziyeh* as they have deemed appropriate and prudent at 30 tomans which, during the time of *ʿĀshūrā'* , the cost for Muharram foods, sweets, bread, according to need, demand, and other such things, they grant [the requisition] of 101 riyals.[856]

This *vaqfnāmeh* provides us with a list of specific monetary fund to be granted for *ʿĀshūrā'* ceremonies, a total of 30 tomans and 101 riyals, maximum expenditure. Unlike the mosque expenses listed for 1614 C.E., almost a century earlier, this *vaqfnāmeh* does not tell us exactly how much the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s made, but with a hundred years of inflation, we can expect it to be more than one toman and two thousand dinars out of 30 tomans. Based on the mentioning of varied food and equipment requirements, we could also expect that these ceremonies drew large

[855] Misspelled *batrā'ī* in the text.

[856] Sepantā, 164-5.

که در ایام مزبوره صرف اخراجات تعزیه و غیره نمایند ۳۴۱ ریال در ده روز اول ماه محرم هر سال در مدرسه مبارکه مزبوره بمراسم تعزیه حضرت امام ابرار و الدائمه اطهار سید الشهداء خامس اصحاب العباء مولی الثقلین صلوات علیه و علی آبائه و اولاده الطاهرین قیام نموده صرف اخراجات تعزیه ازاجرت روضه خوان و پای منبری و بترائی و شمع و چراغ و اطعام و سایر لواحق و ضروریات تعزیه مزبوره بحسب مناسبت و مصلحت نمایند ۳۰ تومان که در عصر روز عاشورا صرف حلیم و حلوا و نان نموده بارباب احتیاج از طلبه و غیرهم رسانند ۱۰۱ ریال.

crowds; the mentioning of candles (*shamʿ*) and lamps (*cherāgh*) also suggests that these were drawn-out affairs that went on into the night.

Another *vaqfnāmeh*, from five years later in 1716 C.E. for the Maryam Beygom School of Esfahan, provides similar details, but unlike the previous *vaqfnāmeh*, gives us a specific amount paid to the officiants, four tomans:

> The previously mentioned honorable viceroy (*nawwāb*) has deemed it appropriate to dedicate the per annum sum of four tabrīzī tomans out of the revenue and income of the aforementioned *waqf* after the aforementioned operating costs for the *rowẓeh-khᵛān*s and the persons who sit at the foot of the pulpit at the mourning rituals (*marāsem-e taʿziyeh*) for the martyrs of Karbalā during *ʿĀshūrā'* in the aforementioned school; the remainder of the revenue and income which some years is seven tomans, some years six tomans, and possibly more, is required for food expenses during the holy month of Ramaḍān.[857]

Both of these *vaqfnāmeh*s are significant because they expand considerably the rather brief mentions in the previous three texts from the 17th century, which were more interesting for the linguistic and documentary evidence they provided. These two 18th century *vaqfnāmeh* on the other hand, provide more details on what sorts of tangible concerns had to be dealt with by officials, particularly monetary concerns. For example, from the second *vaqfnāmeh*, we know that ritual officiants were probably being paid around four tomans, probably less outside the city. The previous references solely to the *rowẓeh-khᵛān*s has now been expanded in these two documents to include a specific group of mourners (*jamʿī keh dar pā-ye menbar*). Given their close association in the *vaqfnāmeh*, the role of "those who are at the foot of the pulpit" must have been to respond to the *rowẓeh-khᵛān* sitting at the pulpit; i.e. the *rowẓeh-khᵛān* would recite a

[857] Sepantā, 304-5.
و نواب علیه عالیه واقفه موفقه معظمه معززه مشارالیها چنین مناسب دانستند که هر ساله مبلغ چهار تومان تبریزي از حاصل و مداخل وقف مزبور بعد از وضع موضوعات مزبوره در وجه روضه خوان و جمعي که در پاي منبر به مراسم تعزیه شهداي کربلا در ایام عاشورا در مدرسه مزبوره اشتغال نمایند و بقیه حاصل و مداخل که در بعضي از سنوات هفت تومان و در بعضي از سنوات شش تومان و گاه باشد که زیاده بوده باشد در مصرف اطعام ماه مبارک رمضان بر این موجب داده شود

section from a text, probably including his own personal interpolations or poetic couplets, and the group gathered around would respond to them by weeping, beating their chests (*sīneh-zanī*), tearing their clothes, and generally encouraging the gathered crowd to participate in the ritual. Perhaps most interestingly, by now, we can see that *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* is being performed within the context of *taʿziyeh* rituals specifically, whereas previously, it was mentioned alone, and the term *taʿziyeh* was not mentioned at all.

Generally, *vaqfnāmehs* are not really known for concerning themselves much with emotional issues, but when it comes to later descriptions of *ʿĀshūrā'*, they do indeed receive mention. One *vaqfnāmeh* from 1711 C.E. provides us will some detailed commentary about the appropriate attitude of mourners:

> After the sum has been paid, the leftover should remain [to be used] every year on the first day of the month of Muḥarram, [as] the cost of expenses for the commemoration (*taʿziyeh*) of his lordship—the holy Imam, the eternally pure prisoner of sorrow and torment, the unfortunate one[858] upon the land of Karbalā, the lord of the martyrs and fifth member of the people of the cloak who the angels of earth and heaven wept for (*alladhī bakatihu malā'ikat ul-arḍi wa al-samā'i*), the master of the two weighty matters, blessings and peace be upon him, and on his pure forebearers and descendants—to hire the *rowẕeh-khᵛān* (*az ojrat-e rowẕeh-khᵛān*), the person(s) who sit(s) at the foot of the pulpit, *marthiya* reciter(s), and ritual disavower (*tabarra'ī*), [to provide] food for their work and service, and other such things, along with candles[859] and any other necessities required for the aforementioned commemoration should be paid; the congregation for the commemoration should not try to dress richly; rather they should try to focus on the one who evokes weeping (*bāʿeṣ-e gerīstan*), making others weep (*geryānīdan*), inciting distress (*garmānīdan*)[860] and sorrow. As is possible, they should set up the aforementioned commemoration in the Jāmeʿ-e Jadīd-e ʿAbbāsī Mosque, without any frivolity wherever the faithful mostly intend to be and

[858] This is a different usage of *gharīb* "stranger," foreshadowing its semantic shift from its original Arabic meaning to "poor, unfortunate," as is its common meaning in Urdu.
[859] The actual term used is *rowshanā'ī*, which just generically means a light-source; I surmise that it probably means candles and/or lamps based on the previous mention of *shamʿ* and *cherāgh* in the 1711 C.E. *vaqfnāmeh* from the Madraseh-ye Solṭānī.
[860] This word is rather unusual; in form it appears to be a causative of the verb *garmīdan* "to be hot." Essentially, the verb probably is intended to reference the usual poetic trope comparing the hearts of lovers as being "roasted" (*kebāb*) or "grilled" (*beryān*) with the fervor of their devotion.

> assemble. It will be appropriate for them to observe the ceremonies (*marāsem*) of the aforementioned commemoration.[861]

This *vaqfnāmeh* is notable for several reasons. Like the previous *vaqfnāmeh*, it includes mentions of *taʿziyeh* and *marāsem* (ceremonies or rituals) as specific, discrete entities. It also includes the mourners, or the people who sit at the foot of the pulpit, but this time, *marṣiya-khᵛānṣ* (professional reciters of *marāthī*) are also mentioned. This gives us a hint about a much more elaborate set-up for the *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals beyond *rowzeh-khᵛānī*, though the *rowẕeh-khᵛāns* still get first mention. We also get a snapshot of the general attitude of the rituals; the *vaqfnāmeh* actually includes instructions on how the mourners are supposed to act and once again underlines the fact that weeping and causing others to weep over Ḥusayn is the central important feature of these rituals. Another point worth mentioning is the fact that the *vaqfnāmeh* contains what might be a direct allusion to the *Rowẕat* itself: the "angels of the earth and heaven" weeping over Ḥusayn quite possibly refers back to the same image repeated several times throughout the *Rowẕat*.[862]

Out of all the *vaqfnāmeh*s I examined, this is also the only one which really gives us any sense of the emotional state of the participants. Given the explicit funerial nature of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals as well as the explicit recommendation to "make others cry" (*geryānīdan*, the causative of *gerīstan* "cry"), it is difficult to ascertain how much of the sentiment of the crowd was manufactured and how much was genuine. This being said, if we go all the way back to Chapter

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[861] Sepantā, 241-2.
و بعد از وضع مبلغ مزبور آنچه باقی بماند هر سال در روز اول ماه محرم صرف اخراجات تعزیه حضرت امام ابرار و الدائمه اطهار اسیر کرب و بلا غریب ارض کربلا سید الشهدا و خامس اصحاب العباء الذي بکته ملائکه الأرض والسماء مولی الثقلین صلوات و سلامه علیه و علی آبائه و اولاده الطاهرین از اجرت روضه خوان و پای منبری و مرثیه خران و تبرائی و اطعام عمله وخدمه و غیرهم و روشنائی و سایر ضروریات متعلقه بتعزیه مزبوره نمایند وسعی در زینت آن مجمع تعزیه ننمایند بلکه در آنچه باعث گریستن و گریانیدن و گرمانیدن و حزن باشد سعی و اهتمام نمایند و تا ممکن باشد تعزیه مزبوره را در مسجدجامع جدید عباسی قرار دهند و با عدم تیسر در هرجا که مؤمنان بیشتر راغب باشند و اجتماع نمایند و مناسب باشد بمراسم تعزیه مزبوره قیام نمایند.

[862] See Chapter Two for more details.

One, considering the discussion of Ḥusayn's appeal to persons seeking a cathartic identification and Weiss' concept of *destrudo* as fundamental drive in human psychology, I would argue that the line is so thin between the manufacture of emotion and 'real' emotion in this context as to be nearly nonexistent.

This text also specifically mentions the ritual of *tabarrá* "disavowal," which was previously seen in the *vaqfnāmeh* for the Imperial School of Esfahan in the same year.[863] *Tabarrá* in the Twelver theological sense usually means the disavowal of the enemies of the Imams (the first three caliphs, Yazīd, Shimr, etc.) and the policy of separation from those who support their enemies (i.e. Sunnis). Under the Safavids, the concept evolved into an elaborate society of ritual cursing.[864] The *tabarrā'iyyān* were a group who functioned both as ritual performers of cursing the Imams' enemies as well as spies who enforced public compliance with the Safavids' Twelver policies.[865] Evidence suggests that this group had their origins during Esmāʿīl's reign, since during the conquest of Herat in 1512 C.E., the Qızılbaş recited ritual curses in the form of a list and forced their conquered subjects to recite it as well.[866] The ritual however probably became incorporated as an actual group during Ṭahmāsp's reign.[867] These two 1711 *vaqfnāmeh*s demonstrate that this group was present during Safavid *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals and were closely associated with *rowẕeh-khᵛānī.*

Another *vaqfnāmeh* dated from Muḥarram 1716 C.E. provides further verifications on the rituals performed, as well as more details both on who performs them as well as payment patterns:

[863] Sepantā, 164-5.
[864] The practice itself (i.e. *laʿna*), however, predates the Safavids and began centuries earlier. See: Stanfield-Johnson 2004, 51-2.
[865] Ibid, 48.
[866] Ibid, 50, 54.
[867] Ibid, 60-1.

> Every year during the blessed month in Faraḥābād, the congregation will hold commemoration (*ta ʿziyeh*) for his highness the lord of martyrs, and they will prosper from its merit…his lordship, the magnificent shining master and administrator, along with the mighty minister, is the official who should take utmost care in performing the specific calculation and verification of the revenue of each year, and in putting down in writing the revised version of the aforementioned endowment, and [allocating] the remaining eight tenths (*hasht ʿoshr*) of the aforementioned endowments' revenue every year during the ten days of *'Āshūrā'*, the 21st day of the month of blessed Ramaḍān, and the fortieth day after *ʿĀshūrā'*, [which is] the sum of the expenses of *ta ʿziyeh* for his eminence the lord of the martyrs, the third of the Imams, the true guidance within the nacre of the pearl ornaments of the Merciful One's throne.
>
> In this way, they [the *vāqef*] have directed that the student (*ṭāleb-e ʿelm*), the one knowledgeable about the *aḥādīth* of the pure Imams, peace be upon all of them, the *aḥādīth* which occur in the *ta ʿziyeh* of the infallible, unjustly treated martyr and the *marāthī* of that selfsame Imam, exalted be his station, and the most meritorious of blessings and peace be upon him, [that student] should relate [them] (*bayān konad*) in the blessed city of Faraḥābād, and should perform *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* (*rowẕeh bekhᵛānad*). A group of male and female believers, who should be in attendance at that gathering, should occupy themselves with *ta ʿziyeh*, and to the degree which they think it appropriate, they should provide [donations] to that student, along with supplementary Muḥarram food during *ʿĀshūrā'* evenings, during the aforementioned days, along with wheat bread, and the requisite foods which are necessary.[868]

It is unclear whether this *vaqfnāmeh* was written for the endowments enclosed within Shāh Ḥoseyn's (d. 1722 C.E.) palatial estate outside Esfahan, probably built around 1700 C.E., sixteen years before the *vaqfnāmeh* is dated, or for a garden in the Faraḥābād district in Esfahan; the latter is more likely.[869]

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[868] Sepantā, 292-293.

هرسال در شهر مبارک فرح آباد جمعی بتعزیه حضرت سید الشهداء اشتغال و از ثواب آن بهره مند گردند... شوکتها زاهرة للظهور صاحب و خلیفة با وزیر جلیل القدر آن سرکار است که در تشخیص محسبه و تحقیق حاصل هر سال و قلمی نمودن نسخه منقحهٔ وقف مزبور نهایت اهتمام نماید و هشت عشر بقیهٔ حاصل موقوفات مزبوره را هرسال در دههٔ ایام عاشورا و روز بیست یکم شهر رمضان المبارک و روز اربعین صرف اخراجات تعزیهٔ «حضرت سید الشهداء ثالث ائمه هدی در صدف امکان گوشوارهٔ عرش رحمن».

باین منحو نمایند که طالب علم عارف باحادیث ائمه طاهرین سلام علیهم اجمعین احادیثی که در باب تعزیه آن امام معصوم شهید مظلوم واقع شده و مراثی آن امام عالیمقام علیه افضل الصلوه والسلام را در شهر مبارک فرح آباد بیان کند و روضه بخواند و جمعی از مؤمنین ومؤمنات که در آن مجمع حاضر باشند بتعزیه مشغول گردند و قدری که مناسب دانند بآن طالب علم دهند و تتمه را طبخ حلیم در شب عاشورا و در ایام مزبوره و نان گندم و سایر مأکولاتی که ضرور باشد.

[869] Jean-Do Brignoli, "The royal gardens of Farahābād and the fall of Shah Sultan Husayn revisited," in *Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity: Questions, Methods and Resources in a Multicultural Perspective*,

The Faraḥābād *vaqfnāmeh* is slightly different from the previous ones we have seen for two reasons. Firstly, it does not specify that the officiant should be directly paid out of the funds set aside for *ʿĀshūrā'* expenses, but just generally notes that eight-tenths of leftover funds from the rest of the endowment are dedicated to the whole proceedings, as well as for the 21st of Ramaḍān and *Arbaʿīn.* The only direct mention of paying the officiant is from donations from the crowd; no money amount is specified, only that they should "give" (*beh-ān ṭāleb-e ʿelm dehand*), and that they should donate food. Based on the previously mentioned *vaqfnāmeh* of Maryam Beygom School, also from 1716 C.E. in Esfahan, it seems likely that the pay would have been around four tomans.[870] Secondly, this is the first *vaqfnāmeh* which provides more details on the qualifications of a proper officiant. In this case, it seems unlikely that the term "student" (*ṭāleb-e ʿelm*) simply means a current enrollee at a *ḥawza* (seminary); particularly if this was for Shāh Ḥoseyn's pleasure palace, it would be unlikely to request a freshman in *ḥadīth* studies! Rather, here it likely means specifically someone, i.e. an *ʿālim* (scholar) who specializes in particular areas germane to these rituals. The *vaqfnāmeh* essentially tells us that this person should be a *muḥaddith* (*ḥadīth* scholar), well-acquainted with poetry and *maqtal* literature.

Additionally, this *vaqfnāmeh* gives us a rough outline of the components of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals, consisting of four parts: the recitation of *aḥādīth* (traditions) of the Imams, probably drawn from collections dealing with the suffering of the *ahl al-bayt* rather than necessarily the four canonical books (*al-kutub al-arbaʿa*);[871] secondly, the recitation of *rithā'* poetry, most likely in Persian; thirdly, the recitation of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*; and finally, the performance of *taʿziyeh*. It is

(Washington, D.C.: Cambridge: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection; Spacemaker Press; Distributed by Harvard University Press, 2007), 139-158; 139, 141.

[870] Sepantā, 304-5.

[871] I extrapolate this point based on the fact that three of the four canonical Shiʿi *ḥadīth* collections are almost entirely concerned with legal judgements, to the point that one of them is even titled *Man lā yaḥḍuruhu al-faqīh* "for the one who does not have a judge at hand." Texts like *ʿUyūn al-Muʿjizāt*, previously mentioned in Chapter Three, focus more specifically on the miracles and sufferings of the *ahl al-bayt*.

not entirely clear from this *vaqfnāmeh* whether *taʿziyeh* is considered a separate ritual or simply the name for the entire proceedings. It is possible that it may be both, since the *vaqfnāmeh* both seems to refer to the rituals as *taʿziyeh* in the first paragraph (*jamʿī be-taʿziyeh-ye ḥazrat-e sayyad ol-shohadā' eshteghāl…gardand*), however, the rest of the *vaqfnāmeh* contrasts the recitation by the ritual officiant with the rituals performed by the congregation very specifically by grammatically marking the actions of the officiant in the singular and the crowd in the plural (cf. *bayān konad* versus *ḥāẕer bāshand*). As such, in this case *taʿziyeh* probably means the commemoration rituals as a whole as well as the accompanying rituals; from the 1711 C.E. *vaqfnāmeh* from the Jāmeʿ-e Jadīd-e ʿAbbāsī Mosque, it seems likely that these rituals where probably ritualized weeping at the very least (cf. the references to *gerīstan*, *geryānīdan, garmānīdan*).[872]

Unfortunately, any further details about specific contents of the group rituals are not mentioned in any of the *vaqfnāmeh*s which I have presently located. As we shall see, however, more clarification is provided by European travel accounts, which were obviously less interested with the legalities of the services rather than the spectacle of them. As such, let us now turn to some of these accounts.

The earliest account of any *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals conducted under Safavid rule in Iran comes from the travelogue of Michele Membré, who we previously met in Section III when discussing Shāh Tahmāsp's initiation rituals for the Qızılbaş. In May of the same year, in Tabriz in 1540 C.E., he provides us with a relatively detailed account of what occurred during *ʿĀshūrā'*:

> In the month of May they perform the passion of a son of ʿAli, wherefore they call him Imām Husain, who fought with a certain race which they call Yazid, and had his head cut off; for that martyrdom they perform the passion for ten days, and for it they all wear black, black turban - cloths and black clothes. For those ten days the Shah does not come forth from his house. From evening to one hour of the night the companies go round through the

[872] Sepantā, 241-2.

> city and through the mosques chanting in Persian the passion of the said Imam Husain. This they call *ʿĀshūrā'*, that is ακιουρ. And that began on 1 May, up to the tenth. I saw young men make their bodies black and go naked on the earth. I saw another thing on the square which they call after the Begum, someone make a hole underground like a well, and put himself in it naked and leave only his head out, with all the rest in the hole, packed in with earth up to the throat; and that was to perform that passion. This I saw with my own eyes. In the evening all the ladies betake themselves to their mosques and a preacher preaches the passion of the said son of ʿAli, and the ladies weep bitterly.[873]

This account does not contain any explicit reference to either the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā* or *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*. However, it does mention some useful points which suggest it. For one, Membré notes that a "passion of the said son of ʿAlī" is preached in a mosque, and that women weep along with it. There is no way to know for certain, but given the prior evidence presented in the previous section, it is quite possible that this "passion" was the *Rowẕat*, particularly since earlier in the extract Membré notes that this was done in Persian. There are no extant well-known Persian *maqātil* besides the *Rowẕat* from this period, and we already know that Shāh Tahmāsp was aware of the text and commissioned a translation into Turkic. Regardless, the narrative does confirm that not only were specific observances for *ʿĀshūrā'* performed in the mosques, but that the Shāh himself was observing *ʿĀshūrā'*. We can also note the performance of specific mortifications during the commemoration, including men painting themselves black—compare for example Christian traditions of wearing sackcloth and ashes for a similar mortification—as well as burying themselves up to the neck in the ground.

Another account comes from Sir Thomas Herbert, 1st Baronet (d. 1682 C.E.), an English nobleman who was appointed ambassador to Persia in 1627. A year later, while located in Esfahan, he recorded these observations on *ʿĀshūrā'*:

> The Id al-Hassan [sic] was observed when we were in Isfahan. They have a tradition that Hassan, Ali's son, was lost in a wilderness, where thirst or rather Muʿawiya the Caliph

[873] Membré 43.

> killed him. Nine days they wander up and down, all that while having neither hair nor beard nor seeming joyful, but incessantly beating their breasts; some tear their garments, and crying out "Hassan! Hassan!" in a melancholy note so long, so fiercely that many can neither howl longer nor for a month's space recover their voices. The tenth day they find an imaginary Hassan, the Mohammedan tetragrammaton" that "*nunquamque satis quaesitus Adonis*,"[874] whom they echo forth in stentorian clamours till they bring him to his grave, where they let him sleep quietly until the next year's zeal fetch him out (*semper enim perdunt semper et inveniunt*) and force him again to accompany their devotion, parallel to which is that in Ovid's Metamorphoses: "Our sorrow's monument shall ever last; / Adonis, thy death's image every year / Shall in our solemnised complaints appear,"[875] and may be in imitation of that annual custom which was observed by the Egyptians howling in like manner for their lost Osiris as the idolatrous Jews did for Tammuz, mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel 8 and 14[876] and first celebrated by the Phoenicians.[877]

As we can obviously see, there are some factual errors in Herbert's account, including stating that Ḥasan (d. 670 C.E.) rather than Ḥusayn was being mourned, and that he had been killed by Muʿāwiya (d. 680 C.E.). This is a probable confusion with the long-held belief that Ḥasan was poisoned by his wife Jaʿda at the instigation of Muʿāwiya.[878] Regardless of the factual errors, the account has some interesting material. Firstly, it provides some detail regarding early Safavid mourning practices for Ḥusayn, including *sīneh-zanī*, semi-organized weeping, the tearing of garments, and the shaving of all hair. These are relatively common funerary rituals throughout the Middle East. More interesting however, is Herbert's observation on the similarities of

[874] This is actually a misquote, it should read *nunquamgue satis quaesitus Osiris.* That being said, the actual import here is the fact that Herbert recognizes a similar mythological structure, rather than the accuracy of his memory of Ovid.
[875] This quotation is accurate; the original Latin reads: "*Luctus monimenta manebunt semper, Adoni, mei, repetitaque mortis imago annua plangoris peraget simulamina nostri.*"
[876] This should be Ezekiel 8:14: *wa-yāḇē' oṯī el-peṯaḥ šaʿar bēṯ YHWH âšer el-haṣ-ṣāp̄ōnāh wə-hinnēh šām han-nāšīm yošəḇōṯ məḇakkōṯ eṯ-hat-tammūz.* "Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz."
[877] Thomas Herbert, *Sir Thomas Herbert, Bart.: Travels in Africa, Persia, and Asia the Great: Some Years Travels into Africa and Asia the Great, Especially Describing the Famous Empires of Persia and Hindustan, as Also Divers Other Kingdoms in the Oriental Indies, 1627-30, the 1677 Version*, (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 724.
[878] Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 381.

mourning for Ḥusayn with other early Middle Eastern cultic rituals, notably that of Tammūz/Adonis. As I discussed in detail in Chapter Three, several motifs that occur throughout the *Rowẕat* have similarities with the story of Tammūz/Adonis, an observation which is strengthened by the fact that Kāshefī was familiar with the writings of Ibn Waḥshiyya, who brought one of the most detailed descriptions of the cult of Tammūz extant in Arabic.[879] Herbert's notation of this similarity demonstrates that it was noted from the Safavid period itself, only a little over a century after Kāshefī's death. Herbert's quotation of the line from Ovid also demonstrates that he was aware of the idea of ritual performance as a revivification of the memory of the slain figure as well.

The earliest explicit mention I have found of the recital of the *Rowẕat* explicitly as a part of official Safavid *ʿĀshūrā'* ritual appears in a foreign travelogue, the *Amoenitatum Exoticarum Politico-physico-medicarum* (Regarding Exotic Political, Physical, and Medical Attractions) of the German explorer Engelbert Kämpfer (d. 1716 C.E.). Composed in post-Classical Latin, the travelogue contains a fascinating etic contemporary description of Safavid *ʿĀshūrā'* commemoration during the reign of Shāh Ṣoleymān (d. 1694 C.E.), around 1684-5 C.E. Note that this extract predates most of the *vaqfnāmeh*s listed above from 18th century by at least 26 and 31 years, suggesting that it is quite possible that the 18th century rituals were even more elaborate:

> The first month, *Muḥarram*, requires the first ten days to be mournful and sad for the murder of Ḥusayn, the son of ʿAlī, which occurred on the 10th day of the month. That hero from the city of Kūfa, set in the Arabian desert, was summoned to appear in front of Yazīd, the ruling prince of Damascus, by means of a messenger sent among reinforcements, because he was jealous of the Omeriani regions. Therefore, while he [Ḥusayn] journeyed

[879] See Section VIII in Chapter Three for details.

on the path with altogether 70 men towards those bearing support, and was warned about the issue with Yazīd there, he [Yazīd's forces] blockaded the city with 700 armed men sent out hastily from the city [keeping them] from aid, water, and all supplies. Then, Ḥusayn, defeated by thirst and hunger, finally, while throwing himself into the midst of the enemies with desperate daring, was murdered with every one of his companions, and he was thrown away as food for beasts. Many Persians observe the event of the murder with annual ceremonies. Evidently, they listen with great devotion, gathered together before noon in the streets and public places, to some mullah reading one chapter each day from the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* (*Rusehtusi Sehhdi*),[880] or from a history of the martyrs who died for the faith; indeed, it is divided into ten chapters for the number of days of mourning, of which the last contains the story of the death of Ḥusayn. At evening they once again disorderly assemble in inns, squares, and public areas, and they build fires with gathered firewood and tinder, around which they perform *parentalia*.[881] Without pause, they begin dancing,[882] constantly shouting Ḥusayn's name in a voice neither sad nor mournful but resembling wrath, alternating as if in a chorus: then in a ring according to the rhythm of these sounds, almost as if driven by the meter, they violently beat their chests with their fists and the ground with their feet. Someone who didn't know better might believe he was hearing the barking of a pack of dogs, or even that he was actually seeing a fight with raging fury; truly they rampage in vengeance with their faces and movements. The scene goes on for many hours, until the late hour may allow the exhausted to rest. Finally, they finish the ten days of mourning with funeral rites, with citizens appearing in the streets, and leading the coffin of the slain one (which, with an open lid, shows a view of a man made to appear wounded and bloodstained to represent the cadaver of the boy) through the city surrounded by a crowd, while everywhere a shifting crowd of women and commoners wail. The funeral officials in other towns arrange for a skull recently shorn by a razor, indeed one [with a] circular wound around the head, and two on the top of the head made in opposite directions, in order to bring back the wicked murder for a live and grieving performance. These ten days of holiday are called *ʿĀshūrā'*.[883]

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[880] The terms are obviously quite foreign to Kämpfer, who has significant difficulty transliterating them into Latin: *Rusehtusi Sehhdi* (*Rowzat ol-Shohadā'*), *Asiuur* (*ʿĀshūrā'*), *Iesid* (*Yazīd*), etc.

[881] Kämpfer apparently compares this part of the *taʿziyeh* with the Roman festival of the *dies parentales* (ancestral days), a nine-day observance rooted in the *paterfamilias* traditions of early Roman religion. This festival was clear ancestor worship, honoring the *di manes*, in comparison to the formal cults of the imperial deities, such as Jupiter. For more details, see: J. Bert Lott, "No more than one candle, torch, or wreath: private citizens and the commemoration of L. Caesar at Pisa," in *Gods, Objects, and Ritual Practice*, (Atlanta, GA: Lockwood Press, 2017), 119-128; 121-3.

[882] The word *tripudiāre*, the present active infinitive of *tripudiō* "I beat the ground with my feet in a dance." This is a particular ritual dance in triple time which was performed to honor the god Mars. By selecting this word specifically, Kämpfer is likely trying to highlight what he saw as the martial overtones of the ritual. See: Ruurd R. Nauta, and Annette Harder, *Catullus' Poem on Attis: Text and Contexts*, (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 140.

[883] Engelbert Kaempfer. *Amoenitatum Exoticarum Politico-physico-medicarum Fasciculi V: quibus Continentur Variae Relationes, Observationes & Descriptiones Rerum Persicarum & Ulterioris Asiae : Multâ Attentione, in Peregrinationibus per Universum Orientem*. Western Books on Asia. Japan. Unit 11 ; Fiches 10,850-10,860. Lemgo, Germany: Typis & Impensis Henrici Wilhelmi Meyeri, 1712. 158-9.

This account is notable for many reasons, not the least of which is its intensely graphic and vivid nature. Leaving aside Kämpfer's more obviously xenophobic comments comparing the Iranian public to dogs, several important features stand out. The most obvious one is the fact that this account explicitly verifies that the *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'* was an integral and central part of these rituals. He describes it in such a way that I can conclude that this is almost certainly Kāshefī's *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*, as well as the fact that whether or not Kāshefī explicitly intended for one chapter to be recited per day of *ʿĀshūrā'*—as I suspect he did—this is indeed what ended up happening.

From this account as well as several earlier ones, we also now can establish that specific practices, namely *sīneh-zanī* (chest-beating), mortifications, the display of mock corpses, and so on are actually quite early, and did not originate during the Qajar period.[884] It is also interesting that Kämpfer choses to interpret these ceremonies through the lens of the Roman religious

Primus mensis, "Muhharrem," dies primores denos esse lugubres & nefastos jubet, ob Hosseinii, filii Aali, trucidationem, factam hujus Mensis die decimo. Heros ille à civitate Kofi, sitâ in Arabia deserta, quòd partibus invideret Omerianis, per missum nuncium in subsidium vocabatur contra Jesid, regnantem in Damasco Principem. Ad ferendas igitur suppetias dum iter cum septuaginta omnino viris ingreditur, commonitus eâ de re Iesidus, emissa 700 armatorum manu, approperantem, ab urbe, auxiliis, aquâ & omni commeatu intercludit. Siti igitur & fame confectus Hosseinius, tandem in medios hostes dum se desperato ausu praecipitat, cum sociis ad unum omnibus trucidatur, & in escam belluarum projicitur. Praecipitem Persae tanti sideris occasum anniversariis prosequuntur justis. Nimirum ante meridiem in plateis & locis publicis concurrentes, magnâ devotione audiunt Molam aliquem, praelegentem quotidie caput unicum ex Rusehtusi Sehhdi, sive Historiâ Martyrum, qui pro fide occubuerunt; ea enim ad numerum dierum lugubrium divisa est in decem capita, quorum ultimum continet Relationem de morte Hosseinii. Sub vesperam denuo in diversoria, compita pita & areas publicas tumultuose confluunt, & congestis cremiis ac lucis materiâ, ignes construunt, quos circa choreas instituant parentales. Nec morâ, tripudiare incipiunt, subinde Hosseinii nomen, voce non tristi aut ejulante, sed indignantium simili, exclamant, alternè & quasi per choros: dum ad numerum hujus soni in gyrum velut metro acti, pectus pugnô, terramque pede importunè quatiunt, Credat rei inscius, se audire latratus canini agminis, vel cominus etiam videre salientes furias; adeo in vindictam vultibus gestibusque ferociunt. Durat scena pluribus horis, donec lassatos adulta nox ad requiem invitet. Tandem lugubre decendium exequiis claudunt, civibus vicatim comparentibus, & occisi sarcophagum (qui emisso operculo contuendum exhibet saucium quasi & cruentatum pueri cadaver) populoso ambitu ducentibus per urbem, dum ubique adgemiscit mobilis foeminarum ac vulgi turba. Comites funeris in aliis urbibus curant sibi novaculâ sauciari rasam recenter calvariam, uno quidem orbiculari vulnere per ambitum capitis, & duobus in vertice per transversum ductis, ut necem nefariam vivo & dolente spectaculo referant. Justitii hujus decendium vocatur Asjuur.
Note that in the Latin, I have made some minor alterations in standardizing the text, i.e. replacing the archaic "long s" ſ with *s*. I am indebted to Amanda Propst for her assistance with some of the more difficult Latin in this extract.

[884] Calmard 1996, 178-9.

practices of *parentalia*, essentially as ancestor worship, and compares them to rituals honoring Mars. The Roman *parentatio* rituals also drew heavily from Ancient Greek Hero cults,[885] which is typologically interesting, since as I have already shown in Chapter Three, the cult of Siyāvash originated as a *frauuaṣi*-hero cult.[886] At the very least, since the Safavids did claim descent from Ḥusayn, thus setting him up as a kind of 'imperial ancestor,' and that the rituals do indeed commemorate a battle, the comparisons are quite tantalizing.

Like the 1711 C.E. Jāmeʿ-e Jadīd-e ʿAbbāsī Mosque *vaqfnāmeh*, this extract also provides us with a brief snapshot into the emotional state of the mourners. The characterization here though is somewhat different from that of the *vaqfnāmeh*. While mourning and sadness is of course emphasized, Kämpfer makes a point of mentioning that the tone of the chanting of Ḥusayn's name is not really mournful, but rather almost wrathful (*voce non tristi aut ejulante, sed indignantium simili, exclamant*). The amount of emotion, and the wide-ranging mixture of it, from sadness to mourning to wrath to near giddiness also reaffirms my suggestions that one of the primary emotional motivations of the crowds is the catharsis through the identification of one's own suffering with Ḥusayn's, with the upshot being that the rage is channeled into the misfortunes of the participants' own lives. Kämpfer also provides us with a rather neat identification of the performance as a recapitulation of sacred time, that the mourners are "bringing back the memory of the battle of Karbalā' to life" (*ut necem nefariam vivo & dolente spectaculo referant*). This observation also recapitulates Herbert's earlier one regarding the preservation of memory for the martyr.

[885] Lott, 122.
[886] See Section VII in Chapter Three.

One final travelogue account is worth mentioning, that of Thomas Salmons and Matthias Van Goch, German travelers who visited Iran in 1737 C.E., during the reign of Nāder Shāh (d. 1747 C.E.), the Afsharid ruler who overthrew the Safavids:

> Outstanding in the large public processions are the big theatrically arranged wagons showing scenes of his life and his deeds, his battles, and his death. These wagons are often pulled about accompanied by people, in armor, flags, and emblems of war of victory, depicting some of Hussein's deeds. For example, a wagon representing the death of Hussein has a deck-like cover coated with sand to represent the arid battlefield. Underneath people are lying thrusting their heads, arms and hands through holes in the cover so they will lie on the sand above to appear as dismembered limbs sprinkled with blood or red paint and colored with a deathly pallor so as to look most natural. Hussein, pallid and bloody, is lying on the other wagon. Several living doves sit on his body, while others are nesting in his blood. After a while, the men under the cover release their bonds, two at a time, so that they can 'fly to Medina' to announce Hussein's death to his sister. Wherever this wagon passes, the people set up such a wailing to show their grief in so many ways and with such conviction, imitation, and naturalistic representations that one wonders at their capacity to give vent to such appropriate signs of suffering so realistically. Their spirit shows through plainly in this impersonation, nor do they spare their bodies: in zeal or desperation, they shed their blood, wound themselves, or are wounded in fights with others; they carry out their intentions with such zeal that it sometimes leads to their own death. It is not possible to tell the difference between feigned dizziness, fainting, and the real thing. One must consider what the stricken people on these tragic wagons endure while presenting their limbs, decapitated heads, hands, and legs in such an uncomfortable position while lying there as if they were dead themselves. [They do this] in all kinds of weather during the processions. Still they suffer rather than move or do something which would disturb that verisimilitude which might be lost.[887]

The most striking feature of this account is the fact that it presents evidence of a shift in the nature of the ritual performance during *ʿĀshūrā'*. Previous accounts give us hints of events resembling re-enactments, but this is one of the first eyewitness reports that describe in detail the fact that participants were beginning to re-enact actual scenes from Ḥusayn's life and the Karbalā' narrative, almost certainly scenes which derive ultimately from either the *Rowẕat* or one of its later

[887] Quoted in: Peter Chelkowski, "Narrative Painting and Painting Recitation in Qajar Iran," *Muqarnas* 6 (1989): 98-111; 99-100

imitators. This account marks the first step showing a definite development from *ʿĀshūrā'* ritual practices to what would eventually become a dramatic tradition in the form of *taʿziyeh*.

Based on the above cited *vaqfnāmeh*s and travelogues, several conclusions can be reached about the nature and evolution of both *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals under the Safavids in general. Firstly, the term *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* is likely in origin an abbreviation of *rowẕat ol-shohadā-khᵛānī* based on documentary evidence. This supports Calmard and Dehkhoda's theory that the two terms are related. Likewise, based on the fact that Kämpfer tells us that the *Rowẕat* was still being used in *ʿĀshūrā'* ceremonies in 1684-5 C.E. and the wide distribution and translation of Kāshefī's book in the 16th century, I can establish with the smallest margin for error that *rowẕat ol-shohadā-khᵛānī* refers specifically to chanting Kāshefī's book. Notations on the celebration of Nowrūz and the *cherāghānī* from chronicles during Shāh ʿAbbās' time also suggest that the Iranian elements of the *Rowẕat* were still encouraged at least until after his reign.

Secondly, based on the fact that a profession called *rowẕeh-khᵛān* existed at least as early as 1614 C.E., is mentioned in a legal documents and furnished with a specific amount of payment to be provided (one toman and two thousand dinars), that by the early 17th century, the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* ritual was already receiving imperial support and recognized as a legitimate ritual. Unlike the mourning conducted under say, the Buyids as mentioned in Chapter One, these performances had an institutional framework and were no longer completely *ad hoc*.

Thirdly, using these sources, I can draw an outline of the development of *taʿziyeh* practices from *rowẕeh-khᵛānī.* During the reign of the early Safavids, the book was recited during mourning rituals which were probably rather simple and consisted mostly of just the recitation and weeping. Accompanying *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals certainly existed, as documented from European travelogues

brought by Calmard, but it is unlikely that much of a framework existed for them.[888] Under Shāh ʿAbbās, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* had already become a formal ritual, officiated by a specific profession, and they received payment for their services. Accompanying rituals became more elaborate, featuring (possible) ritual fights, self-injury (*khanjar-zanī* etc.), camel sacrifice, burning in effigy of ʿUmar, and other practices.[889] *Taʿziyeh* however apparently is not explicitly connected as a formal term to these rituals, and still has the generic meaning of "condolence." By Shāh Soleymān's reign, all of these aforementioned rituals are attested being performed together with the recitation of the *Rowẕat,* and seemingly exist as part of the same ritual continuum; the term *taʿziyeh* is now being employed (at least before 1678 C.E.) as a general term for *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals (i.e. *marāsem-e taʿziyeh-o mātam*); the term still has the sense of "condolences," but when paired with *marāsem*, it specifically referring to mourning rituals for the martyrs of Karbalā'.[890]

By the reign of Shāh Ḥoseyn, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* has become part of what are generically termed *marāsem-e taʿziyeh*. These rituals almost certainly include the aforementioned rituals from ʿAbbās' time but expanded. *Taʿziyeh* now includes *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, mourning, weeping, processions, recitation of *aḥādīth*, recitation of *marāthī*, ample food to feed great crowds including bread, sweets, and foods specific to *ʿĀshūrā'* (*ḥalīm*), and usage of candles and lamps. The presence of all of these can be demonstrated from documentary legal evidence. The explosion of a multitude of rituals where previously *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* had been the only named ritual receiving institutional support suggests that the *Rowẕat* was not only instrumental in creating a space for the development of more and more elaborate rituals which eventually became *taʿziyeh*, but also sets

[888] Calmard 1996, 178-9.
[889] Ibid.
[890] Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesī, *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn: Tārīkh Chahārdah Maʿṣūm*, (Qom: Enteshārāt-e Sorūr, 2006-2007), 693, 751.

the stage for the next stage in the development of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals and the transformation of *taʿziyeh* into the "passion play."

This section has dealt primarily with very specific kinds of elite documents. The majority of them have been from a legal or outsider perspective. However, it is worth considering how other types of elites reacted to the *Rowẕat* and how they contributed to the Safavid program of imperial consolidation. In the next section, I will briefly discuss how the clerics (*ʿulamā'*), primarily Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesī (d. 1699 C.E.) expanded the influence of the *Rowẕat* and *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals through their own works.

VII. A Little Priest: ʿAllāma Majlesī and Post-Kāshefī *Maqātil*

Now that we have seen how the *Rowẕat* affected Persian society through the lenses of manuscript circulation, legal documents, and travelogue accounts, it is worth considering one other facet in order to give a clearer picture of the developing influence of the text. While Kāshefī was a trained cleric, with a wide-ranging education that enabled him to compose texts ranging from Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*) to the occult sciences, as we have seen in Chapter Two, his status as a popular preacher enabled him to blur the lines between elite and public popularity. However, we must be careful not to lose sight of the important role the elite clerical institutions played in the conversion of Iran.

When Esmāʿīl began his program of the creation of a Shiʿi empire, at first he relied on military might and popular appeal. Indeed, as we have seen in Section III of this chapter, his continuation of the cult of personality which surrounded his Sufi ancestors and cultivation of his own religious authority was a vital point in ensuring the loyalty of his Qızılbaş supporters. Esmāʿīl probably had little to no formal religious training; however, as we have seen, the religious formulas

present in his poetry display a keen awareness of Sufi literature and popular Persian/Central Asian mythopoeia which had been circulating for centuries in hybrid Shiʿi-Zoroastrian messianic groups like the Shuʿūbiyya movements.[891] Upon the consolidation of his state, he must have realized that he needed to set up formal religious institutions to legitimize Safavid rule. I have already mentioned the adoption of Muṭahhar Ḥillī's text in order to create a formal framework for Shiʿi legal Islam.[892] However, he needed individuals who could actually teach texts like this. As a result, he was keen to invite trained Arabic Shiʿi scholars to his court in order to establish such institutions.[893]

Another formal early issue was the Shiʿitization of the Friday Prayer and the Friday sermon, during which Esmāʿīl was determined to establish his legitimacy as ruler of the new state.[894] One such scholar who played an instrumental role in the creation of this religious apparatus was the Iraqi cleric from the well-known ʿĀmilī family, ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAbd al-ʿĀlī al-Karakī al-Jabal ʿĀmilī (d. 1534 C.E.). Al-Karakī was one of the scholars who authorized the use of the Friday Prayer and Sermon for the promulgation of Safavid Shiʿism, while other scholars were more split on the matter.[895]

The development of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* was a different matter, however. As I have amply demonstrated, while mourning for Ḥusayn began with the Arab *tawwābūn,* its popularity in the Persian-speaking world was intricately linked with Kāshefī's text and his clear attempt to unite the Karbalā' narrative with Persian mythological symbols. As such, the origin of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* lies in a matrix of popular legendary narratives embedded within an elite genre; the ritual context which

[891] Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire*, (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 10.
[892] Mazzaoui 1972, 27-34.
[893] Ibid.
[894] Abisaab, 21.
[895] Ibid.

the text promotes is at its core part of the popular mythos of Ḥusayn and inherited Persian elements. Given the pedigree of Esmāʿīl's religious ideas, this would have been no problem initially, but with the need for a formal institutional framework to support and promulgate Safavid propaganda efforts, the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* eventually had to be 'tamed' and incorporated into the same framework. We have already seen how the *vaqfnāmeh*s created formal sanction for the practice. However, how did the *ʿulamā'* try to 'streamline' it within their own vision of 'Orthodox' Shiʿism?

Even though the *Rowẕat* achieved a fast popularity and within at least 112 years of its completion, was part of the imperial program of Shiʿi institutionalization, the text did not seem to produce many imitators until much later. Certainly, besides the aforementioned Turkic translations, there were no Persian copycat *maqātil* of any note or at any that are still extant until the late 17th century. The first of these appears to be *Nowḥat ol-Aḥzān* (The Wail of Sorrows) by Yūsof b. Āqā Beyg Dehkhᵛāraqānī.[896] The text was composed in 1658-9 C.E., apparently for Shāh ʿAbbās II.[897] Certainly, we know that there were abridgements of the *Rowẕat* produced, such as *Montakhab-e Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* (Selection from the Meadow of the Martyrs) as early as 1588 C.E. at least, though there must have been earlier, possibility entirely oral abridgements.[898] The reason for this dearth of material is not clear; however, it is quite possible that the *Rowẕat* was simply viewed as the standard version for *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals and no great need beyond an abridgement was thought required.

This state of affairs changed in 1678 C.E., when Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesī II completed his massive *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn* (The Adornment of the Eyes). The influence of Majlesī on Iranian

[896] Another Turkic *maqtal*, titled *Maqtal-ı Ḥüseyin* by Lâmiî Çelebi (d. 1531 C.E.) was written sometime during the early 16th century; I did not have access to this title, but it does not seem likely that it is a translation of the *Rowẕat* and may be based on Abū Mikhnaf's *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* instead. See: And, 248.
[897] Storey 215. This text only exists as a manuscript housed at the Āstān-e Qods-e Raẕavī in Mashhad. I was unable to consult it as of the writing of this chapter.
[898] Ibid, 212.

Shiʿism, and Shiʿism as whole after his lifetime cannot be overstated. Both his admirers and critics commented on his fame, importance, Twelver orthodoxy, and his massive oeuvre.[899] Critics have characterized his version of Shiʿism as *dīn-e majlesī* (Majlesī's religion),[900] and Sharīʿatī derisively refers to him as the "thirteenth Imam" (*emām-e sīzdahom-e shīʿeh*).[901]

Majlesī came from a scholarly family; his great-great-great grandfather, Shaykh Ḥasan was one of the scholars involved in the initial Safavid promulgation of Twelver Shiʿism, and his great-great-grandfather studied under al-Karakī and was supposedly one of the first scholars to make Twelver *aḥādīth* available to the Esfahani population.[902] His father, Moḥammad Taqī Majlesī (d. 1659-60 C.E.), was a famous scholar who produced commentaries on a wide range of Arabic and Persian works, so it is safe to say that Majlesī's earliest experiences acclimated him to a scholarly lifestyle.[903] He was appointed the *qāḍī* of Esfahan by Shāh Solaymān, and then in 1687 C.E. at the age of 61, the Shāh made him *shaykh al-islām* of Esfahan, essentially the highest clerical office in the empire.[904]

Majlesī was immensely popular with the public, and unflinchingly supportive of the Shāh, so this appointment is not that surprising. He also was a firm believer in the superiority of *manqūl* (traditional knowledge i.e. *ḥadīth* sciences) over *maʿqūl* (rational sciences and mysticism), and the text for which he is most well-known—the 100+ volume *ḥadīth* collection in Arabic, *Biḥār al-*

[899] Turner calculates that at the height of his output, he was writing an average of 67 lines of text per day; later exaggerations put the average at 1000 lines per day! See: Colin Turner, *Islam without Allah?: The Rise of Religious Externalism in Safavid Iran*, (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), 148, 166.
[900] Ibid, 150.
[901] ʿAlī Sharīʿatī, *Majmūʿeh-e Āṯār*, (Tehran: Ḥoseynīyeh-e Ershād, 1977), 1:9.
[902] Turner, 151-2.
[903] Ibid, 152-4.
[904] Ibid, 162-3.

Anwār (Oceans of Lights)—amply demonstrates that point.[905] Of his works, it is *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn* and *Biḥār al-Anwār* which are most relevant to our present discussion.

While *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn* is rather clearly a *maqtal-manāqib* work in the same genre as that of Kāshefī's *Rowẕat*, surprisingly, Majlesī never mentions Kāshefī or the *Rowẕat* in his text. Rahnema opines that the reason for this glaring omission was Majlesī's suspicion that Kāshefī was not Shiʿi, and thus his *Rowẕat* was doctrinally suspect:[906]

> That which some persons have elaborated, both in Arabic and Persian, on this topic, is either deficient or incomplete (*nāqeṣ-o nātamān ast*). They have taken some accounts from the biographical books and reports of the oppositions, so that their reliability (*eʿtemād*) is not recommended (*nemī shāyad*); many may be that which causes great harm for those people who do not have a firm foundation in correct knowledge and may cause confusion in their creedal faith.[907]

While this excerpt does not mention Kāshefī by name, the fact that his name is missing anywhere else in the book—nor does he ever quote the book which I have already established as by far the most important in Persian text at this time on the topic of mourning for Ḥusayn—this omission is significant. Majlesī then gives his justification for writing the book:

> I have recounted what pertains to these noble events in several volumes; in the book *Biḥār al-Anwār,* and in portion in the book *Ḥayāt al-Qolūb* as well, most of them have

[905] Majlesī and the Akhbarī establishment which he led were criticized without naming names by the philosopher/biographer Qoṭb al-Dīn Moḥammad b. ʿAlī Eshkavarī al-Deylamī Lāhījī (d. 1684/1685), who in his biography of the Illuminationist philosopher Shehāb al-Dīn Yaḥyá Sohrevardī (d. 1191/1192 C.E.), states, "They slandered his [Sohrevardī's] learned stature and education, like the many of the bearers of jurisprudential judgments and the confronters of fatwas and legal rulings, occurring amongst the people of our time. They call for the repudiation of the intellectual sciences (i.e. reason), issue legal judgments for the prohibition of the rational discussion of it, and charge the learning of it as disbelief. They are heedless of the fact that not one of them deserves to be called a jurist." See: Qoṭb al-Dīn Moḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Eshkavarī Lāhījī, *Maḥbūb al-Qulūb*, (Tehran: Mīrās-e Maktūb, 2000), 2:345-79.

[906] Ali Rahnema, *Superstition as Ideology in Iranian Politics: Majlesi to Ahmadinejad,* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 285.

[907] Majlesī, *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn,* 22.
و آنچه در این باب، به عربی و فارسی، در سلک تعریف در آورده اند بعضی ناقص و ناتمام است، و بعضی را از کتب سیر و اخبار مخالفان اخذ نموده اند که اعتماد را نمی شاید و بسا باشد که براي جمعی که مایه وافري از علم نداشته باشند ضرر عظیم نماید و موجب خلل در عقاید ایمانی ایشان گردد.

> been mentioned briefly. Since the first book is not very useful for the common people, and the study of the second book is complex for most people, therefore, this lack of options is due to the confusion of the events, the abundance of distraction, the onslaught of pain, unexpected events, and diseases, it came to this humble soul that he should compose a laconic book on this topic in Persian. This is so that there would be a short description on the account of the birth and martyrdom of his eminence, the lord of the messengers and the pure Imams, blessing of God be upon them all, written in a way that benefits all the people.[908]

As such, it seems clear that Majlesī intends his book as a replacement for the *Rowẕat*, and a distillation of the same topic which he had already detailed throughout his other books. Notably, Majlesī never uses the term *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, instead opting for *marāsem-e taʿziyeh-o mātam* (the ceremonies of condolence and funeral), or a variation of this.[909] Two reasons probably exist for this: firstly, as I have already discussed in the previous section, *marāsem-e taʿziyeh* had become the general term for all the rituals concerning *ʿĀshūrā'* mourning, or was in the process of solidifying as this; the change was complete by Shāh Ḥoseyn's rule, wherein the *vaqfnāmeh*s of his time clearly associate *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* as a subset of *taʿziyeh*. Secondly, since as I have again demonstrated, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* is a term derived specifically from *rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛāndan*, Majlesī may have desired to de-emphasize Kāshefī's role in the creation of the tradition and seen *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* as a vulgar name for the rituals. Indeed, it is quite possible that it was Majlesī and other associated Akhbarī clerics who encouraged the general term *marāsem-e taʿziyeh* in the first place.

There is also a difference in attitude towards the audience; for Kāshefī, his belief was that his audience simply did not understand the *maqātil* literature because they were in a different

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[908] Ibid.
آنچه که متعلّق به احوال شریفه ایشان است در چندین مجلد استیفا کرده ام، و در کتاب « بحار الانوار » و این شکسته در کتاب حیات القلوب نیز اکثر آنها بر وجه اختصار مذکور شده است. و چون از کتاب اوّل، عوام را چندان انتفاعی نیست، و تحصیل کتاب دوّم بر اکثر مردم متعسّر است، لهذا این قلیل البضاعه با اختلال احوال و وفور اشتغال و هجوم هموم و آلام و طریان عوارض و اسقام به خاطر فاتر رسید که کتاب وجیزي در این باب به لغت فارسی تألیف نماید که مقصور بر ذکر ولادت و شهادت حضرت سیّد المرسلین و ائمّه طاهرین صلوات اللّه علیهم اجمعین بوده باشد، بر وجهی نوشته شود که همه خلق را از آن بهره اي بوده باشد.

[909] Ibid, 693, 751.

language—Arabic. Majlesī's attitude is that his audience is uneducated and thus needs something simple to understand. It is worth noting that while the syntax and sentence complexity of the *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn* is definitely simpler than the *Rowẓat*, at the same time, it contains significantly more Arabic than the latter text. Majlesī says he is not interested in producing a text with elaborate wording and elegant turns of phrase (*va beh tarjomeh-ye alfāẓ-e ravāyāt-e moʿtabereh eqteṣār namūdeh, mofayyed beh ḥasan-e ʿebārāt-o tanavvaʿ-e esteʿārāt nagardad*),[910] but out of the fifteen words in this sentence, ten are Arabic, and all the remaining words are grammatical morphemes, a participle, and a verb. Thus, for a certain value of 'not complex or elaborate,' Majlesī substitutes a plethora of Arabic words in place of Kāshefī's complicated Persian syntax.

Majlesī's text at the very least has some significant structural differences from the *Rowẓat*. For one thing, the book has fourteen chapters instead of ten, and deals with all twelve of the Imams, along with the usual five members of the *ahl al-bayt*. The book also contains no poetry, which is a significant break from the *Rowẓat*; this is probably because despite his learning, Majlesī was not known for his literary talents, in contrast to Kāshefī. The thematic tone of the book is the same as Kāshefī, with the requisite statement that the suffering of the Prophet and the Imams is greater than all others, and that weeping over this or causing others to weep is the greatest of religious acts.[911] In this, Majlesī and Kāshefī are definitely on the same page.

Despite Majlesī's apparent distaste for Kāshefī, much of his vision of Shiʿism ended up emphasizing the same sorts of mythological ideas, albeit stripped of their most overt Persian connections. Rahnema notes that,

> …[W]hat had come to be known as the Shiʿi religion as propagated by Majlesi had overshadowed all previous readings of Shiʿism and that Majlesi's variant was dramatically different from that of the Shiʿi luminaries such as Mofid, Sharif Morteza and Tusi. By

[910] Ibid. If *va* is taken as deriving from Arabic *wa* rather than Middle Persian *ud*, and *beh* as an inseparable prepositional morpheme, then there are only *two* full words of Persian origin in this sentence!
[911] Ibid, 21-2.

> reintegrating and popularizing abandoned supernatural reports into the main body of Shiʿi hadith literature, Majlesi promoted the resurfacing of extremist ideas in all domains of the faith.[912]

One of the significant upshots of this attitude is that Majlesī's book is still filled with miracles, angels, jinn, and emphasizes the quasi-divine nature of Ḥusayn, but that he totally replaces all the Persian symbolism, at least in name. The story of the sun being blotted out and the skies weeping shows up again, as does the story of the magical regenerating pomegranate, quince, and apple.[913] The story of Fuṭrus appears, since it predates Kāshefī, but is much abbreviated; notably, this version does not mention the garrison of 70,000 angels being led by Fuṭrus in perpetual *taʿziyeh* for Ḥusayn.[914] The story of Zaʿfar on the other hand, is missing, and while the jinn do appear to Ḥusayn, there is no mention of a "leader of the fairies" (*mehtār-e pariyān*). This suggests that Majlesī viewed it as an unorthodox intrusion. Likewise, there are no mentions whatsoever of Rostam, Jamshīd, Sorūsh, or any other figures from Persian epic literature which occur in the *Rowẓat.*[915]

At the same time, Majlesī is perhaps keen to replace Persian mythological imagery with imagery from Christianity. Mention of Jesus is far more plentiful in the *Jalā' al-ʿOyūn,* as well as the *Biḥār al-Anwār.* They are often compared, and Fāṭima is repeatedly equated with Mary, with one example from the *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn* declaring that Fāṭima had an experience similar to Mary's annunciation.[916] One very short story which occurs in the *Biḥār al-Anwār* (but not *Jalā' al-ʿOyūn*) is as an exegesis of the Qur'anic verse 19:22 "Then she conceived, then withdrew with

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[912] Rahnema, 187.
[913] Majlesī, *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn,* 491, 756.
[914] Ibid, 477.
[915] The *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn* contains a dig at the Zoroastrians, stating: "God became very angry at the Magi when they worshipped fire rather than him" (*shadīd shod ghaẓb khodā bar majūs dar vaqtī keh ātash parestīdand beh gheyr az khodā*). See: Ibid, 658. The accusation of fire-worship, is of course, a long-standing misunderstanding of how Zoroastrian religious rituals work.
[916] Mary is mentioned only ten times in Kāshefī's book, as opposed to forty-five times in *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn*.

him to a remote place," (*fa-ḥamalat-hu fa-'ntabadhat bihi makānan qaṣiyyan*), states, "She [Mary] went out from Damascus until she came to Karbalā' then she gave birth to him [Jesus] upon the place [which would be] the tomb of Ḥusayn, then she returned within that night."[917] Later *maqtal* authors would further emphasize this connection, with much later scholars like Jowharī (d. 1873/1874 C.E.) going so far as to title a chapter in his *maqtal*, "The arrival of a Christian in order [to see] the murder of the second Messiah, to become honored with the glory of Islam, and to be martyred" (*āmadan-e naṣrānī beh qaṣd-e qatl-e ān masīḥ-e s̲ānī-o beh sharaf-e eslām mosharraf gardīdan-o shahīd shodan*).[918]

Overall, while both Kāshefī and Majlesī endeavor to craft an image of a cosmic Ḥusayn and elevate *ʿĀshūrā'* as a defining moment of Persian Shiʿi collective memory, their aims and methodology are quite different. Kāshefī was living in a period where the idea of a truly Persian commemoration of Ḥusayn was in its infancy, and indeed, this is something he more or less created himself. There was no institutional framework for formalizing *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals, and *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* simply did not exist yet, so no bureaucracy was in place to regulate it. As such, Kāshefī drew his understanding of the construction of Persian *ʿĀshūrā'* ritual from a complex interplay of elite textual sources, popular religious practice, and folk oral traditions of storytellers. Majlesī and those who followed him, on the other hand, already had a vast institutional framework in place, one which had been growing steadily for over a century. Their task was to interpret *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, not create it, and interpret it in such a manner that it not only reinforced the imperial religious orthodoxy, but continually legitimized Safavid rule.

[917] Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Wafā', 1983), 14: 212.
خرجت من دمشق حتى أتت كربلاء فوضعته في موضع قبر الحسين ثم رجعت من ليلتها.
[918] Mīrzā Moḥammad Ebrāhīm Marvazī Jowharī, *Ṭūfān ol-Bokā' dar Maṣā'eb-e A'emmeh-ye Aṭhār bekhoṣūṣ-e Sayyed ol-Shohadā,* (Qom: Ṭūbā-ye Moḥabbat, 2016-2017), 606.

In view of the gradual process of streamlining the Safavid understanding of what 'orthodox' Twelver Shiʿism was, beginning slowly under the rule of Esmāʿīl, it is not surprising that Majlesī would have a very different view of what *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* should be than Kāshefī would have. Kāshefī's text still endured, however. This fact can be observed based on Kämpfer's testimony that it was still being used in the capital six years after the completion of *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn*, and that characters popularized by Kāshefī such as Zaʿfar but omitted by Majlesī were still being referenced two centuries later in post-Mughal Urdu literature.[919] Despite Majlesī's best efforts, however, the *Rowẕat* continued to enjoy significant popularity as the foundational text of the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*. In the next section, I will briefly describe the next step in the development of the *Rowẕat*'s incorporation into the Iranian public consciousness: the transformation of *taʿziyeh* into a dramatic art form, otherwise known as a "passion play."

VIII. Let the Spectacle Astound You: *Taʿziyeh* Passion Plays and *Rowẕeh-Khᵛānī*

In 1859 C.E., while serving as Secretary of Legation at the Court of Persia, Sir Lewis Pelly (d. 1892 C.E.) witnessed a performance of dramatic *taʿziyeh* first-hand. He was so struck by both the play and the atmosphere of mourning surrounding it that in the preface to his collected edition of the play, he was compelled to remark, "If the success of a drama is to be measured by the effects which it produces upon the people for whom it is composed, or upon the audiences before whom it is represented, no play has ever surpassed the tragedy known in the Mussulman world as that of Hasan and Husain."[920]

[919] Mīr Anīs,*33 ghayr maṭbūʿah marsiye*, (Markazī Anīs Ṣadī Kamīṭī: New Dehli, 1990), 174.
[920] Lewis Pelly and Arthur N. Wollaston, *The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain: Collected from Oral Tradition,* (London: W. H. Allen, 1879), a.

Before European dramatic forms became popular in Iran after continued contact, native Iranian theatre consisted primarily of two forms: *taqlīd*, literally "imitation," essentially a type of slapstick improvised comedic routine purely for entertainment, and *taʿziyeh*, which at least in theory, is the complete opposite of the former in every way.[921] These two genres are close to the Western genres of comedy and tragedy, but there are some important typological differences. Dayani further notes that until the 1920s, in Iran theatre (*teʾātr*) was a term used almost exclusively for Western plays, which employed Western conventions of drama ultimately derived from Classical Greek poetics.[922] On the other hand, native Iranian dramatic performances were termed *namāyesh*, literally "performance," derived from the verb *namūdan* "to display or appear." *Namāyesh* is a versatile word which can also mean "appearance, vision, apparition, etc.," and could easily be used (as it is in Modern Persian), for say, an art exhibition. It is unsurprising that a foreign, French word is used to describe a foreign concept of drama, while a native Persian word is used to describe the native form.

As we have seen above from a careful overview of the relevant legal documents and travelogue data, there is no evidence that *taʿziyeh* during the Safavid period meant anything but 1) originally, generalized offering of condolence, and 2) later, a short form for *marāsem-e taʿziyeh*, which covered everything from *rowẕeh-khᵛānī,* sermons, recitation of *marāthī,* chanting and martial "dancing," mock battles, *sīneh-zanī* and related flagellations or mortifications, to processions complete with recreations of cadavers and other activities. There are no records of

[921] Sheida Dayani, "Juggling Revolutionaries: A Theatrical History of Indigenous Theatre and Early Playwriting in Iran," PhD diss., (New York University, 2018), 33-4, 40. Dayani also notes that perhaps paradoxically, there exists a "hybrid" form of comedic *taʿziyeh*, *taʿziyeh moẓḥek,* which did not have to deal intimately with the events of Karbalā', but usually refers to it in some form or another, but may feature a romantic legend, such as Leylī and Majnūn, or an adaptation of a Qur'anic story.
[922] Ibid, 5.

dramatic *taʿziyeh* being performed in this period.[923] The oldest poetry similar to that found in *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s (passion play libretto) proper is found in the *Dīvān* (Poetic Collection) of Ṣabāhī Bedgolī (d. 1802 C.E), and no known extant *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s predate it. Dramatic *taʿziyeh* reached its heights during the Qajar period. At least 1,055 plays from this period survive in the Cerulli collection, the vast majority of which have never been studied or translated into any Western language.[924] Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh (d. 1896 C.E), the fourth Qajar ruler of Iran, was one of the most prolific royal supporters of *taʿziyeh*. In 1856 C.E., he built the Takiyeh-ye Dowlat (Imperial Theatre), primarily to host such performances.[925]

In view of the evidence, dramatic *taʿziyeh* probably evolved from a combination of these practices. In Section V, the *vaqfnāmeh*s provide us with evidence, strongly suggesting by the gradual inclusion of the term *taʿziyeh* in the context of the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* ritual that the former evolved from the latter, at least in part. This is the overall suggestion given by Shahīdī, who states:

> It is true that *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* was one of the original elements and fundamental to *taʿziyeh*; at the beginning of the appearance and formation of *taʿziyeh,* usually a *rowẕeh-khᵛān* chanted from the book, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, before the start of *taʿziyeh* [proper]; and after that *taʿziyeh* and the silent panorama (*shabīh*) was performed. Gradually, however, *taʿziyeh* became a distinct, independent, and well-established religious play (*namāyesh-e mazhabī*), then Iranian *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*s decreased. [926]

[923] Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub, "The Effect of European Theatre And the Influence of Its Theatrical Methods Upon Ta'ziyeh," In *Ta'ziyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran*, 137–53, New York University Studies in Near Eastern Civilization 7. (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 138-139.
[924] Chelkowski 1989, 100.
[925] Jean Calmard, "Le Patronage des Taʿziyeh: Eléments pour une Etude Globale," *Taʿziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran*, (New York: New York University Press; Soroush Press, 1979), pp.121-136; 124.
[926] 'Enāyat Allāh Shahīdī, and ʿAlī Bolūkbāshī, *Pazhūheshī dar Ta'zīyeh-o Ta'zīyeh-khᵛānī: az Āghāz tā Pāyān-e Dawreh-ye Qājār dar Tehrān*, (Tehran: Daftar-e Pazhūheshhā-ye Farhangī: Komīsiyūn- e Millī-e Yūniskū dar Īrān, 1979), 135.
درست است که روضه‌خوانی یکی از عناصر اصلی و عمدهٔ تعزیه بود، و در ابتدای پیدایش و شکل‌گیری تعزیه، معمولاً یک روضه‌خوان پیش از شروع تعزیه از روی کتاب روضة‌الشهداء روضه می خواند و پس از آن تعزیه و شبیه به نمایش در می آمد؛ لیکن به تدریج که تعزیه به صورت یک نمایش مذهبی مشخص و مستقل و جاافتاده در آمد، روضه‌خوانیهای ایران آن حذف شد.

Over time, several of the different performative rituals which accompanied *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* gradually were incorporated into it. The processions (*dasteh*), with wagons displaying recreated cadavers and the spoken-word chanting of the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*—by virtue of its origins in a narrative genre with an essentially pre-made script, designed to evoke an emotional reaction— became the perfect vehicle for dramatization. These elements were probably slowly combined into a re-enactment of selected scenes from commonly memorized parts of the *Rowẕat* or later imitators, eventually inspiring full-length plays.

Overall, the theory of dramatic *taʿziyeh* deriving from this mix of rituals is supported by Chelkowski, who suggests the mid-18th century as the period when this combination took place:

> The story lines of *rowza-khani* were converted into the dramatic texts of the *taʿziya*. The movement of the parade was changed into the motions of the actors; the parade costumes became stage costumes. In the beginning the passion play was nothing more than a short playlet integrated into the procession and performed at street corners. Soon, however, it was separated from the parade and became an independent event performed in the open, in the courtyard of caravanserais, private houses, and special buildings called *tekiya* or husseiniya.[927]

As Chelkowski points out in the same article, the 1737 travelogue account of Salmons and Van Goch, which I previously quoted in Section VI, contains vivid descriptions of nascent re-enactments of scenes from the Karbalā' narrative. He does caution, however, that the scenes are closer to pantomime rather than drama with a script or speech of any kind beyond weeping or chanting.[928]

In this context, the *dasteh* and *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* were still separate rituals under the general banner of *marāsem-e taʿziyeh*. As such, it was the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* which provided the 'lines,' separately, which would later give the faithful the context for the scenes they were viewing. This

[927] Chelkowski 1989, 99-100.
[928] Ibid, 104.

being said, it is not that far of a stretch to see these two practices, already a part of the same ritual complex, drifting closer and closer until they became integrated into dramatic *taʿziyeh*. Likewise, the integration of these performances was helped by professional storytellers (*naqqāl*), who would have provided a way for the static pantomimed scenes and the proto-'script' of the *rowẓeh-khᵛānī* to be integrated in a proper narrative fashion.[929] This bears some similarity with how, as I have shown in Chapter Two, Kāshefī borrowed oral storytelling techniques from the *qeṣṣeh-khᵛān*s.

The beginnings of this fusion can be observed in the travelogue of William Francklin (d. 1839 C.E.), a 24-year-old British ensign, who traveled from Bengal to Iran in 1786-7, and during his two-month visit in Shiraz, observed local performances of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals. In the travelogue, he describes what he calls *al Wakàa* (*vāqeʿeh* "[calamitous] event"), *"*...a recital of the life and actions of Ali, and his sons Hussun (sic) and Hossein."[930] this ritual seems pretty clearly to be *rowẓeh-khᵛānī*; it is described as being chanted in a "slow, solemn tone, and is really affecting to hear, being written with all the pathetic elegance the Persian language is capable of expressing…[o]ther parts of the Wakàa are in verse, which are sung in cadence to a doleful tune." The recitation is accompanying by weeping, *sīneh-zanī*, and exclamations of *yā Ḥusayn*. Francklin describes the performance of *shabīh*, noting the carrying of effigies, the selection of particular persons to represent parts, and so on. It is not entirely clear whether actual dialogue is used in most of these scenes. One scene stands out though, in that it does not appear to have been stationary, but rather represents some action occurring, and at least accompanying eulogies:

[929] Sheida Dayani, personal electronic correspondence with the author, June 16, 2020.
[930] William, Francklin, *Observations Made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia, in the Years 1786-7; with a Short Account of the Remains of the Celebrated Palace of Persepolis: And Other Interesting Events. By William Francklin, Ensign on the Hon. Company's Bengal Establishment: Lately Returned from Persia*, (Calcutta: Stuart and Cooper, 1788); 100.

> Among the most affecting representations, is the marriage of young Casim, the son of Hussun (sic.), and the nephew of Hossein, with his daughter; but this was never consummated, as Casim was killed in a skirmish on the banks of the Euphrates, on the 7th of Mohurrum. On this occasion, a boy represents the bride, decorated in her wedding garments, and attended by the females of the family chanting a mournful elegy, in which is related the circumstance of her betrothed husband being cut off by infidels (for such is the term by which the Sheias speak of the Sunnies). The parting between her and her husband is also represented, when on his going to the field she takes an affectionate leave of him; and, on his quitting her, presents him with a burial vest, which she puts round his neck: at this sight the people break out into most passionate exclamations of grief and distress, and execrate the most bitter curses upon Yezzeed, and all those who had any concern in destroying the family of their Imaum.[931]

Chelkowski refers to this particular scene as, "The break-through in Muharram ceremonies, where ritual observance became ritual drama."[932] The connection of dramatic *taʿziyeh* to *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and probable evolution from the latter is supported by the fact that *taʿziyeh* plays will paraphrase sections from the *Rowẕat* or even adapt sections with minor alterations in phrasing and context.[933] Indeed, it is interesting to suggest that in the context of dramatic *taʿziyeh*, the role of the *rowẕeh-khᵛān* has been largely been split, primarily residing in the director (*moʿīn ol-bokā'/taʿziyeh-gerdān*) who controls the performances, while the lines have been transferred to the actors, formerly the "people at the foot of the pulpit." The actors became termed *shabīh* (likeness), or *naqsh-khᵛān* (picture-reader), reflecting both the role that the silent panoramas and the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s played in the merging of the two rituals.[934]

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[931] Ibid, 100-101.
[932] Peter Chelkowski, 'Bibliographical Spectrum', in *Taʿziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran,* (New York: New York University Press; Soroush Press, 1979), pp. 255-268; 258.
[933] L.P. Elwell-Sutton, "The Literary Sources of the Taʿziyeh," *Taʿziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran,* (New York: New York University Press; Soroush Press, 1979), pp. 167-181; 177-8.
[934] Ingvild Flaskerud, *Visualizing Belief and Piety in Iranian Shiism*, (London; New York: Continuum, 2010), 87; and Mohd Nasir Hashim and Farideh Alizadeh, "A Comparative Study: The Principles of the Distancing Effect in Brechtian Theater and Ta'ziyeh," *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 7, no. 1 (2020); 1-19; 3.

From a technical and comparative standpoint, it is also worth noting that there is a curious fact of structure in *taʿziyeh* performances, where the actors are divided into specific "parties," conventionally antagonists (*ashqiyā'*, "scoundrels") and protagonists (*owliyā'*, "saints" or "friends"), in whom the audience often becomes very emotionally invested.[935] This bears a resemblance to the structure of local dramatizations of the *Siyāvashān* among tribal Iranians (especially ethnic Kurds and Qashqais), also described as *taʿziyeh'hā-ye namāyeshī* (dramatic *taʿziyeh*s), wherein the performers were also divided into two groups: the partisans of Siyāvash (*ṭarafdārān-e siyavash*) and the partisans of Sūdābeh and Afrāsiyāb (*ṭarafdārān-e sūdābeh-o afrāsiyāb*).[936] This sort of *taʿziyeh* also included a narrator (*rāvī*) and one or two readers (*sarkhᵛān*). The dialogue was conveyed in the form of poetry. It is difficult to tell which form influenced which; however, the useful take-away is that even in the narrative performances, the representation of the stories of Ḥusayn and Siyāvash share notable structural connections. It is even possible that the emerging popularity of the *rowẓeh-khᵛānī* under the Safavids and then *taʿziyeh* in the Qajar period influenced remnants of the *Siyāvashān* so that the practitioners developed their own performances on the model of those rituals.

We do not know what the oldest *taʿziyeh-nāmeh* (passion play libretto) is; however, it is likely that the earliest written *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s—meaning those which had actual scripts meant to be memorized rather than improvised or cobbled together *ad hoc* from folk or professional poetry and *maqātil* references—were probably composed around the reign of the last Zand ruler, Loṭfʿalī Khān (d. 1794 C.E.).[937] If so, this would mean that the first scripts were either already

[935] Hashim and Alizadeh 3-4.
[936] Ḥoṣūrī 108-9.
[937] Unfortunately, these *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s were not available to me during the writing of this dissertation. See: E. Lucy Deacon, "The Curious Addition of Non-Religious Characters to The Martyrdom of Imam Husain," *Iranian Studies* (2020), pp. 193–220; 196, and: Dāvūd Fathʿalī Beygī and Mehdī Daryāī, *Daftar-e taʿziyeh 11*, (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Namāyesh, 2011–12).

composed or would be composed not that long after Francklin's stay in Shiraz. However, the oldest major collection to be researched was composed under the reign of the second Qajar ruler Fatḥʿalī Shāh (d. 1834 C.E.), between 1797-1834 C.E.[938] This collection of *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s is extant in a manuscript collecting thirty-three *majāles* (sessions) of *taʿziyeh*. This collection was obtained by the Polish Iranologist Aleksander Chodźko (d. 1891 C.E.) during his posting as a Russian diplomat in Iran between 1833-1840.[939] The collection thus must predate 1840. During this period, he also witnessed live *taʿziyeh* performances, so his knowledge of the genre was not abstract.

The content of the currently published edition (one volume so far) of the collection covers six major events: 1) Gabriel's prophecy at the birth of Ḥusayn that Ḥasan will be poisoned and Ḥusayn will die at Karbalā'; 2) the death of the Prophet; 3) the Fadak controversy; 4) the death of Fāṭima; 5) the death of ʿAlī; and 6) the martyrdom of Ḥusayn.[940] The majority of the material in this volume is composed in poetic form; the lexical nature of it is simple and relatively straight-forward, nowhere near as complex as Kāshefī's style. A variety of poetic meters are employed. I have not identified any material which is directly quoted from the *Rowẕat*; however, the thematic and plot content bears a strong similarity. The major themes of the *taʿziyeh-nāmeh* are again *balā* (torment), *gerīstan* (weeping), and the promise of intercession for the Shiʿa (*shafāʿat*).[941]

امام حسین به امام حسن عرض کند:

فدای جان تو ، ای نور چشم پیغمبر
چرا شهید شدن ننگ و عار ما باشد
نجات شیعه چو موقوف برشهادت ماست

من و تو چون که بزادیم از یکی مادر
که موجب شرف و اعتبار ما باشد
اگر رضا نشویم این نه ازسعادت ماست

[938] Moḥammad Ja'far Maḥjūb, *Jang-e Shahādat: Majmū'eh-e 33 Majles-e Ta'ziyeh*, (Tehran: Sorūsh, 1976); 13.
[939] Ibid, 11-12.
[940] Ibid, 7.
[941] See Chapter Two, Section VIII: *Tragic Torment in the Rowẕat* for more details.

چه می شود که کند شرط با من ایزدپاک که چون چکد زگلوخون من به صفحه خاک
به این بریده سر خویش رحم فرماید گناه شیعه ما را به ما ببخشاید

Imam Ḥusayn says to Imam Ḥasan:

May I be your sacrifice, O light of the Prophet's eye
Since you and I were born of one mother
Why should becoming martyrs be a cause of disgrace and shame for us?
Rather it will be cause of honor and esteem
Because the salvation (*najāt*) of the Shiʿa is dependent upon our martyrdom
Though this may not mollify us, our happiness is not important
What can be done, this is my compact with God, most holy
That when the blood drips from my throat unto the dusty ground
Through this cutting of my head, God will bestow mercy
Through us, he will absolve the sin of our Shiʿa.[942]

This statement is a rather stronger articulation of salvation (*najāt*) than what is found in Kāshefī's *Rowẕat*. Therein, Ḥusayn and the *ahl al-bayt* are called a cause (*mowjab*) of salvation and the key (*kelīd*) to salvation. Here, the *taʿziyeh-nāmeh* composer ups the stakes and says that the salvation of the Shiʿa depends on their martyrdom (*mowqūf bar shahādat-e mā*). It is difficult to know exactly what the author intended by this hemistich; does it mean that salvation for the Shiʿa originates with martyrdom, as in it is a cosmic truth from pre-eternity? Or that all salvation for the Shiʿa requires the intercession of Ḥusayn? *Taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s are not theological texts, they are intended for popular performance, so it is likely that the author was less interested with the implications than Kāshefī would have been. Still, it is a fascinating look into the changing conceptions of the eschatological role of Ḥusayn and the *ahl al-bayt* in the post-Safavid period.

Thematic similarities are not the only possible connection with the *Rowẕat*. Characters which either appear to first appear in the *Rowẕat* or were greatly popularized by it are also present. For instance, both Fuṭrus and Zaʿfar show up. Zaʿfar here is clearly called a jinn and

[942] Maḥjūb, 34.

described as the emperor of the jinn (*pādshāh-e jinniyān*) rather than the leader of the fairies (*mehtar-e pariyān*).[943] ʿAlī's battle against the jinn at *Bi'r Dhāt al-ʿAlam* from the *Rowẕat* is also mentioned.[944] The overall content of Zaʿfar and Ḥusayn's discussion is basically an expanded version of their conversation in the *Rowẕat*; one piece of dialogic poetry spoken by Ḥusayn illustrates this point:

امام گوید:

خوشا به حال تو ای زعفر نکو منظر — تویی ز جمله محبان آل پیغمبر
در این مجادله ای نیک بخت معذورید — شما جماعت جن از دو دیده مستورید
دم قتال نبینندتان گروه دغا — چنین مجادله دور است از طریق وفا
به کشتگان ره دوست شرط همت نیست — چنین قتال به این قوم از مروت نیست

The Imam says:

Hail to you, O Zaʿfar, handsome-faced one
You are from among the lovers of the Prophet's family
Please excuse yourself from this conflict, O fortunate one!
You jinn-folk are veiled from both human eyes
In the heat of the fight, they will not see you, shrouded in deceit
Such a conflict will be beyond the pale of fair play
The path of friendship is not a matter of ambition to the slain
Such a fight is unchivalrous for these people.[945]

Here we see the same themes of chivalry (*morovvat*) and fairness (*vafā*) mentioned as we saw in the *Rowẕat*, with the justification being that human beings cannot see the jinn in their natural forms. The wording is different, and the phrasing is more awkward—the sudden shift from the second person singular to address Zaʿfar to the second person plural in the second verse

[943] Ibid, 176, 178.
[944] Ibid, 176.
[945] Ibid, 176-7.

without much signposting, for example, is rather obviously intended to fit the meter—but the thematic content is the same.

Still, several details show an evolution of anecdotal content since the writing of the *Rowẕat*. The appearance of Fuṭrus is at odds with his appearance in the *Rowẕat*; while Fuṭrus discusses his fall, his appearance at Ḥusayn's birth and the healing of his wings in the *taʿziyeh-nāmeh* very similarly as Kāshefī described in the *Rowẕat*,[946] the angel says this during a conversation with Ḥusayn at Karbalā'. In the *Rowẕat*, Fuṭrus is described as missing Ḥusayn's martyrdom, a fact which causes him much grief.[947] Here, he appears to Ḥusayn and offers his aid in battle. His physical appearance is probably presented for dramatic effect to mirror the appearance of Zaʿfar earlier on in the same section.

Fatḥʿalī Beygī further opines that the three major *maqātil* which served as literary sources for *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s were the *Rowẕat*, the *Ṭūfān ol-Bokā'* of Jowharī, and the *Ṭarīq ol-Bokā'* of Shahrābī (d. 1885-6 C.E.); the poetry found in some *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s is so close to that found in these books that they are nearly the same. He refers to a sample of the Zaʿfar narrative taken from one much later *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*, *Taʿziyeh-e Darkhᵛor* (Respectable Commemoration), as an example of this closeness to these sources.[948] The selection gives Zaʿfar's introduction, his offer of troops, the mention of the battle of *Bi'r Dhāt al-ʿAlam*, his proclaiming Ḥusayn the lord of the jinn and the promise to become a martyr for Ḥusayn. Referring back to Francklin's account mentioned above, this is not surprising, since he witnessed a reenactment of the Marriage of Qāsem, which as I have already noted in Chapter Two, is considered one of the staple narratives inherited from the *Rowẕat*.

[946] Ibid, 197-200.
[947] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 391.
[948] Dāvūd Fatḥʿalī Beygī, "Manābeʿ-e Adabī-o Namāyeshī-ye Taʿziyeh-Nāmeh'hā," *Te'āter*, no. 49 (Summer 2012): 37–52; 40-1.

Now that I have shown the connection between *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and dramatic *taʿziyeh*, a point remains: is dramatic *taʿziyeh* actually theatre? Calmard, at least, believed that it didn't qualify as theatre at all, but rather simply another more elaborate religious ritual:

> Il va sans dire que les arguments en faveur de l'"invention" d'un théâtre religieux en milieu islamique (iranien ou non-iranien) sont très fragiles et, selon nous, peu convaincants. Mais tout dépend ici de la définition que l'on donne au mot "théâtre," car si les éléments dramatiques contenus dans les cérémonies de deuil (processions, séances de lamentations, pénitences, etc.) ne peuvent etre considérés comme de l'art dramatique selon la définition d'Aristote ou de nos dramaturges classiques, elles n'en constituent pas moins un spectacle et même une dramaturgie au sens où l'entendent certains sociologues et théoriciens du théâtre moderne.[949]

I do not consider this to be a very convincing argument because it depends far too much on what the canon of Western drama considers to be "theatre." I have already noted in the previous chapter that the understanding of Ḥusayn and Siyāvash as tragic protagonists must be revised and moved beyond an Aristotelian standard of drama and poetics. The lack of a traditional fatal flaw in Ḥusayn and Siyāvash is simply not relevant because they represent very different cosmological and ethical values than the heroes of Greek drama—which exerts a strong influence on Shakespearean and other European dramatic conventions.

In fact, the Greek conventions of drama have far more in common with the warrior-poets of pre-Islamic Arabia. Like them, their virtues and flaws do not emerge out of a standardized, ethicized, and theologized script of proper behavior. This is not to say that the ancient Arabs or Greek had no moral standards of exemplary behavior, but the difference is that ancient Persian heroes must conform to a theological paradigm which was promulgated in institutionalized, universalized religion since the 16th-11th century B.C.E. A Zoroastrian would point to say, the

[949] Jean Calmard, "Le culte de l'Imām Husayn: étude sur la commémoration du drame de Karbalā dans l'Iran pré-safavide," PhD diss., Ecole pratique des hautes études, 1975, 420.

Videvdat or the *Denkard* to validate the heroic qualities of these figures, canonized texts of religious legalism. The Greeks and pre-Islamic Arabs could not do this because they had no such texts; their religions separated legal proceedings from religious practice. The fundamental struggles of human versus either himself or versus destiny are still very much present, but they are articulated in a manner which corresponds with Zoroastrian—and then Shiʿi—values. An accurate understanding of the multiple worldwide realizations of 'drama' cannot depend solely on how they measure up to Western dramatic conventions any more than 'philosophy' or 'science' only come into existence when discovered by the West. To say otherwise ignores not only history but also places one firmly in the field of old-style Orientalism.

Regardless of whether or not dramatic *taʿziyeh* qualifies as 'true drama' by Western standards, it is important to note that there are typological differences. Dramatic *taʿziyeh* maintains a certain crucial distance between the portrayers and the portrayed, a method which is strongly discouraged in most Western drama, where actors are encouraged to identify as much as possible with their subject (i.e. 'method acting').[950] Acting in dramatic *taʿziyeh* is closer to impersonating or assuming the identity of the religious figure as an act of piety (i.e. *shabīh,* "resemblance"); a human actor can never become them. Mamnoun quotes an improvised ode from an actor playing the role of ʿAbbās, recited during the performance:

I am not Abbas; neither is this Kerbela.

[950] See however, Brecht and the "distancing effect," for an alternate form of Western dramatic method. Hashim and Alizadeh's article, referenced above, notes the similarity between the two, but conclude that they have very different purposes: "The Brechtian/Western theater audience usually has no information about the story and the performance in advance. They watch the story unfold and see its attractions and then understand the inner meaning via decoding. These esoteric meanings, however, are the point of interaction between the audience and performance in Ta'ziyeh. The audience has already dealt with the content before the performance ever begins. The story has been told again and again. In reminding the audience of the story, Ta'ziyeh refers to concepts beyond the story, and in the process of performance, puts them before the audience's eyes. In Western theater, this is not recommended and is in fact disfavored. In Brechtian theater, for the purpose of separation of the writer and the audience, the writer can impose his ideas on the audience. Writers and audiences are distinguished as individuals. For this reason, they form dissimilar individual ideologies. Dialogue is created in light of such individual ideas, but in Ta'ziyeh, religious ritual is the principal characteristic of the performance and everything is simulated, including events that are accompanied by divine intervention." See: Hashim and Alizadeh, 16-17.

I am Sulaimani, the slave of the king of heavenly power.[951]

Taʿziyeh is not meant to be realistic, at least in terms of its details or historical accuracy; it is meant to be larger-than-life, and in a sense, intentionally unrealistic. As should be an obvious point of this dissertation from the beginning, whether or not Ḥusayn actually met the king of the fairies, or his death blotted out the sun is immaterial to both the audience and the performance. Rather, the importance is manifested in the spiritual and psychological realities of the event—once again, in a return to 'sacred time.' In the final section, I will revisit some of these ideas in order to tie all these elements together and conclude this chapter.

IX. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with a wide variety of issues, from Shāh Esmāʿīl's claims of quasi-divinity to textual transmission to legal texts authorizing *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals. Despite the wide-ranging topics discussed here, the common thread between all these topics has continually been the development of Kāshefī's *Rowẕat* from a text into a mainstream, governmentally sanctioned ritual, and their use as part of the Safavid program for nation-building. Based on the evidence I have presented throughout this chapter, it cannot be questioned that the Safavids identified the book as useful, made it a central part of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals, which they used to spread Twelver Shiʿism, and thus set it on the path to becoming the basis for much of the modern Shiʿi interpretation of Ḥusayn's martyrdom.

[951] Parviz Mamnoun, "Taʿziyeh from the Viewpoint of Western Theatre," *Taʿziyeh: Ritual and Drama in Iran,* (New York: New York University Press; Soroush Press, 1979), pp. 154-166; 158.

To summarize as follows, the beginning of the Safavid program has its origins in Shāh Esmāʿīl's ascent to becoming the ruler of Iran. Originally, Esmāʿīl relied on his personal charisma and his knowledge of a complex of mystical beliefs informed by Sufi tradition and Central Asian/Iranian messianic movements to create an army loyal to his vision. Upon consolidating his domain after conquest, he realized that personal charisma wasn't enough to build a functioning state. Thus, he imported Arab Shiʿi scholars to begin crafting a workable form of official state religion. So much for the institutional framework, but what about winning over the populace? While using *ʿĀshūrā'* as a focal point for creating Shiʿi consensus may have occurred to Esmāʿīl, we don't know for certain if he ever officially sanctioned it.

Instead, the beginning of the institutionalization of *ʿĀshūrā'* emerges under his son, Tahmāsp, who is the first Safavid ruler to give his stamp of approval to a very popular book which had already been circulating between Iran and Turkey. Tahmāsp commissions a translation of this book, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* of Kāshefī, because it reflects the Shiʿi values of the Safavids, regardless of the confessional status of its composer. Even more so, he needs a 'guidebook' to teach the importance of *ʿĀshūrā'* to his Turkic-speaking Qızılbaş supporters. By the time of his grandson, Shāh ʿAbbās, *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals were well-known, and ʿAbbās decides to start officially patronizing persons, either storytellers, clerics, or both, who have been reciting the same book that his grandfather ordered a translation of, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*. These reciters are known as *rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛān*s, or colloquially, *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s. This is the start of the institutionalization of the *Rowẕat* as the basic text of one particular *ʿĀshūrā'* ritual, as well as the origin of the terms *rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛānī/rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and their related forms. ʿAbbās encourages these rituals because they serve both to reinforce Safavid legitimacy as the

successors of Ḥusayn, but also because they are a pressure valve enabling him better control over dissipating social strife.

Under ʿAbbās' great-great-great grandson, Soleymān, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* was an established part of Safavid ritual. The *Rowẕat* was so ubiquitous, that challengers to the title of foundational text of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* were inevitable. The powerful cleric and *shaykh al-islām* Moḥammad Bāqer Majlesī disapproved of the *Rowẕat* due to its questionable sectarian origins, as well as a desire to reinforce his particular understanding of Shiʿi legalism and *ḥadīth*-centric ideology, the Akhbarī school. As a result, he wrote the *Jalā' ol-ʿOyūn* as a replacement for the *Rowẕat*; it is a more traditional *maqtal*, without any poetry, but many of its narratives are drawn from the same traditional sources as Kāshefī. It didn't take, but it did jump-start the trend of new Persian *maqātil*, which would reach its height under the Qajars. By this time, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* had become understood one ritual part of a much larger ritual complex, now called *marāsem-e taʿziyeh*, derived from the common notion of mourners offering condolences to the family of the deceased; now however, it had an additional, more specific meaning of the collection of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals.

By the time of Soleymān's son, Shāh Ḥoseyn, the *marāsem-e taʿziyeh* were becoming more and more elaborate. Ḥoseyn and his proxies commission many *vaqf*s to provide for the employment of different kinds of ritual experts, including *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s, *marṣiyeh- khᵛān*s, and professional mourners who respond to these experts during performances and lead the audiences in mourning. The processions or *dasteh* which accompany the rest of the rituals feature the beginnings of pantomimed scenes, derived from sections of the *Rowẕat*, its imitators, or improvised pieces from the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s.

This pattern continues under later rulers after the fall of the Safavids. Eventually, by the mid-18th century, the pantomimed scenes have been merged with recitations from the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s along with inspiration from the *naqqāl*s. These merged rituals then have the readings taken over by specific speakers, who then begin to resemble actors in a more traditional sense. Initially, these performances are playlets; the 'actors' read their lines, and the scenes are short. Under later Qajar rulers like Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh, the merging is complete, the playlets have become full-fledged plays, and the performances involve artisans from many guilds in the production. Now, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī,* while still occasionally performed separately, has essentially evolved into the dramatic *taʿziyeh* passion plays.

In total, this is the basic path that I put forward as to how one particular book, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* became one of the cornerstones of Safavid religious institutionalization. When the Safavids fell, the *Rowẕat* and the tradition it created were so integrated into the Iranian public consciousness and a part of collective memory, that they could neither be removed from it, nor did most of the rulers succeeding the Safavids feel the need to do so.

As a massive memory relic, the *Rowẕat* now had specific form—in the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, then as the driving force of the *marāsem-e taʿziyeh,* then as part of the original core of dramatic *taʿziyeh*. Its function was multivalent; it supported imperial legitimacy, created a space for dissent without any actual dissent, and was a gel holding together the Shiʿi consensus of the state at a public level. Its meaning was essential; the *Rowẕat* encapsulated the Persian sentiments of the population by drawing on ancient Persian epic literature, local legends, and rituals, while still being based on one of the most foundational—if not the most foundational—narratives of Shiʿi belief. As such, it reaffirmed the public's perception of their identity as fundamentally Persian, without divorcing them from the Arab legacy of Shiʿi Islam. At a perhaps even deeper level, the

story of the suffering of Ḥusayn and his family appealed to the public on rawer, more emotional, more personal plane. Ḥusayn represented the paragon of humanity, who still had to deal with unspeakable anguish at the hands of a cruel oppressor. The idea of superhuman person being faced with such human sorrows was deeply comforting, and yet liberating at the same time, since it became an emblem of hope, that no matter how horrific one's torment in this world was, at the end was a moment of final triumph of good over evil.

Conclusion: With His Last Ounce of Courage

اما حکیم،
بر پرده سیاهی شب چشم کرده تنگ،
ز اندیشه ای، به گفتن پاسخ
دارد دمی درنگ.
گردنده نقش هاست به پیش نظر، ورا
بر پهنه ی خیالش
دریای آتش است.
شعله ست و دود و اسب و سیاهی
در شعله های سرخ و
سوارش سیاوش است...
آنگاه، بارگاه
افراسیاب و دشت.
طشت طلا و خون،
سر شهزاده واژگون...

However the sage,
Had shut tight his eyes on night's black curtain
From the very thought of speaking an answer
He holds his breath.
Flashing visions in front of his mind
In the depths of his imagination
Is a sea of fire.
Flame and smoke and horses and deep dark
In crimson flames and
His rider is Siyāvash...
Then, the royal court
Afrāsiyāb and the wide plain.
A sun-gold basin and blood,
With the prince's overturned head on it...[952]

Near the end of the novel *Savūshūn*, Zarī's husband Yūsof is assassinated during a trip back to his home village as a result of his political convictions. Heartbroken, Zarī disobeys the local authorities and sets up a funeral procession (*dasteh*) in his honor. However, the procession is interrupted when upon attempting to turn onto a main street towards the Shāh Cherāgh shrine

[952] Siyāvash Kasrā'ī , "Mohreh-ye Sorkh," *Az Khūn-e Siyāvash: Montakhab-e Sīzdah Daftar-e She'r*, (Tehran: Sokhan, 1999), 413-14.

in order to perform chest-beating (*sīneh-zanī*) and flagellations (*zanjīr-zanī*), the police confront the mourning party:

> This time, Māshā'allāh, the village strongman, came forward, saying: "Sir, you are aware of my reputation. When I say something, I stand by it. We don't intend to cause an uproar. We are mourning our neighbor. Suppose that this place is Karbalā' and today is *ʿĀshūrā'*; you don't want to become Shimr, do you?" Someone said, "*O Ḥusayn!*" and the gathered people cried out in protracted chant, "*O Ḥusayn!"*
> Zarī bitterly thought, "Or suppose that these are the Siyāvash ceremonies, and we are mourning for Siyāvash."[953]

As the beginning and end of the novel symbolically recapitulates the narratives of Ḥusayn and Siyāvash, here at the conclusion of this dissertation, it seems appropriate to bookend the topic in a similar fashion. Dāneshvar's novel presents many of the basic contentions of this dissertation in popular narrative form, and in doing so, reiterates my argument of how these figures come to reside in the collective memory of the Iranian community.

This dissertation has sought to answer one general question and three related, specific ones. Generally, how does a historical person become elevated out of the realm of pious historical narrative and transformed into a mythic character embodying a set of abstract values and cultural concerns? I propose that it is not so simple as just the production of hagiographical literature focused on that person. The literature serves as an anchoring point for the creation of *memory relics*, which allow the construction of a ritual paradigm combining form, function, and meaning. These paradigms must be malleable in order to survive and become popular. In particular, a deterritorialized cultural artifact must be introduced through a *point* or *person of contact*, in the case of this dissertation topic, Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, at a *place of contact*, meaning into

[953] Sīmīn Dāneshvar, *Savūshūn*, (Tehran: Sherkat-e Sehāmī-e Enteshārāt-e Khvārazmī, 1969), 297.
این‌بار ماشاءالله قری جلد آمد و گفت: «سرکار، داشت را که می شناسی. وقتی حرفی زد روی حرفش می ایستد. ما قصد آشوب که نداریم. عزای همشهریمان را گرفته‌ایم. انگار کن، اینجا کربلاست و امروز عاشوراست. تو که نمی خواهی شمر باشی. »
کسی گفت: «یا حسین.» و جمعیت با آهنگ کشداری فریاد بر آورد: «یا حسین! »
زری به‌تلخی اندیشید: «یا انگار کن سووشون است و سوگ سیاوش را گرفته‌ایم. »

the Persian public consciousness by Ḥoseyn Kāshefī in the form of the *maqtal*, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, filtered into the *substratum of contact*, meaning that the Ḥusayn narrative interacted with Persian collective memory which continued to value the heritage of epic Persian literature particularly exemplified in the *Shāhnāmeh* and local storytelling/ritual practices. *ʿĀshūrā'* displaces or absorbs earlier Iranian heroic mourning rituals which have manifested a "low frequency" of usage after the coming of Islam, it becomes a "homonym" by incorporating similar values of the glorification of the innocent martyr and creates a "need for synonyms" by matching elements of the native tradition into its superstructure.[954]

Thus, using the levels of *memory relics*, the form for the narratives of both Ḥusayn and Siyāvash, as well as other influential narratives like those of Tammūz and Zarīr, is one of communal mourning rituals informed by the transmission of written texts. The function of these rituals is manifold, but on the personal level, they are a venue for cathartic action, the channeling of personal grievances and sorrow into an action which is interpreted as a cosmic rehearsal, and thus magnified.[955] On a communal level, the rituals provide a rallying point for realizing the individual's place in the community, they build and reinforce the sense of the community as sharing a particular identity: as Iranian Twelver Shiʿa. On a political level, these rituals legitimize government rule, by invoking a direct ancestor to be venerated in the case of the Safavids. Additionally, the carnivalesque nature of these rituals often acted as a 'pressure valve;' by temporarily suspending the usual rules of everyday society and compressing 'chaos' (i.e. the open outpouring of emotion, mourning, fighting, etc.) into a delineated timeframe of ten days

[954] Uriel Weinreich, *Languages in Contact*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1979), 57-8.
[955] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 111.

which dissolves the differences between classes and disparate groups, the ruling powers enable the perpetual reconstruction of their rule outside of this 'amok time.'[956]

Finally, the meaning of these rituals is both flexible and yet nearly constant. They invoke a perception of Iranian-Persian identity which is not historically stable but is still conceived of as stretching back into the mythic past, into moments of sacred time. In this sacred time, being Persian becomes identified with mourning within the confines of ritual space and is thus performed externally to continually renew it.[957]

Here the polyvalence of mourning in a Persian context is useful to understand. Obviously, not all Iranians are Shiʿi or even Muslim. However, the universality of the meaning within *ʿĀshūrā'* ends up being subtextually invoked through its resonance with the *Siyāvashān*. Siyāvash, through the medium of the *Shāhnāmeh*, has become unmoored from his original context as a 'Zoroastrian' heroic ***frauuaṣ̌ī*** (guardian spirit). In Iran, both Muslims and non-Muslims alike tend to view the *Shāhnāmeh* and the heroes therein as a totemic representation of their Persian-ness; thus a gesture towards it, as Kāshefī proves, calls upon that cultural memory to transform the death of an Arab religious-political figure in the 7th century into something also understood as Persian. However, as the four centuries of Iranian practice of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and *taʿziyeh* demonstrate, the legacy of Kāshefī's book and its important place in the Persian collective consciousness show how enduring this Karbalā' narrative has been.

On another level of meaning, this mourning also invokes a deeper consciousness which is beyond notions of ethnic, national, religious, or historical solidarities. The rituals invoke fundamentally human concerns about the fear of death, the loss of loved ones, and the hope for transcendence over death. When Sharīʿatī says Ḥusayn has taught humanity "how to die"

[956] See Chapter Four, Sections VI and VIII for more details.
[957] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 111.

(*chegūneh bāyad mord*), he is referencing a powerful need in humanity to understand and conquer death.[958] Mourning is thus an act of resistance against the inexorable power of fate, but also an acknowledgement of the need to face it and deal with it.

I. Findings

In terms of the specific arguments of this dissertation, I have offered three particular leads. Firstly, that Kāshefī's *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā*' is a major specific instance of the aforementioned transformation of a historical person into a mythic character, and by virtue of its influence, it is one of the most significant books in Twelver Shiʿi history. Secondly, that the *Rowẕat* imports *memory relics* from earlier Persian literature in order to Persianize the Ḥusayn narrative both linguistically and thematically. Finally, that the *Rowẕat* became the basis for the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* and *taʿziyeh* and was thus a significant element in the Safavid effort to legitimize their rule and create a Persian Twelver Shiʿi state.

In Chapter One, I have outlined the basics of the *maqtal* genre as a development of the *sīra* (biography), *ḥadīth* (prophetic tradition), *manāqib* (hagiography), *maghāzī* (conquest narratives), and poetry, particularly *rithā'* (elegy). I also considered the archetype of the hero as articulated in pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poetry. When examined in contrast with the developing Arabic *maqtal* genre and the story of Ḥusayn, I found that while tropes of the early Arabic warrior-poet do appear in the Arabic *maqātil* descriptions of Ḥusayn, such as the emphasis on the tribal values of *ḥasab wa nasab* (esteem and descent). However, they are de-emphasized in the *Rowẕat.* These values are reinterpreted to fit with Islamic concerns; i.e. *nasab*

[958] Alī Sharīʿatī, *Ḥoseyn: Vāreṯ-e ādam*, ed. *Majmūʿeh-ye Āṯār /ʿAlī Sharīʿatī* (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Qalam, 1983), 19: 204.

in the case of Ḥusayn means his descent from the Prophet Muḥammad, not noble birth per se. The theme of fatalism (*dahr*) is still an active concern in the Arabic *maqātil*,[959] which forms an important contrast with the Persian view of destiny, where it is not a cruel force, but an expression of the natural order and divine will.[960]

In Chapter Two, we turned to the central subject text of the dissertation, the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā*', one of the earliest known *maqātil* composed in Persian, and certainly the best-known of the early Persian *maqātil.* The *Rowẕat*'s author, Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥoseyn b. ʿAlī Beyhaqī Kāshefī, was a complex person. His oeuvre is large and covers many genres, including rhetoric, literary theory, chivalry, the occult, exegesis, and poetry. Likewise, his sectarian commitments are equally complex; in concordance with Zū 'l-Feqārī's analysis, I conclude that while he outwardly professed to be Sunni, his confessional status really laid somewhere in between Sunni and Shiʿi: a Sunni of the Twelve Imams (*sonnī-ye davāzdah emāmī*).[961]

The *Rowẕat* reflects these complex commitments in more ways than Kāshefī's confessional status. The book uses the basic structural principles of the *maqtal* genre it derives from in that it draws from Qur'anic exegesis and *ḥadith* literature for it sourcing. However, these are just Kāshefī's starting points and his appeal to the traditional conventions of the genre. In three separate instances, Kāshefī tells his audience that the book is intended for Persian speakers, and that he has deliberately toned down or translated any Arabic material where possible.[962] This intent is also thematically obvious in that he includes citations from the *Shāhnāmeh* and references characters from Persian epic literature directly and indirectly throughout the book.

[959] Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. Jaʿfar b. Hibat Allāh b. Namā al-Ḥillī, *Muthīr al-Aḥzān wa Munīr Subul al-Ashjān,* (Qom: Manshūrāt al-Maktaba al-Ḥaydariyya, 2013), 76.
[960] L.E. Goodman, "Time in Islam," *Religion and Time*. (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1993), pp. 138-162; 138.
[961] Ḥasan Zū 'l-Feqārī, "*Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'-o Mo'allef-e Ān*," *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, (Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Moʿīn : Markaz-e Taḥqīqāt-e Zabān va Adabīyāt-e Fārsī, 2011), 15.
[962] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 112, 483, 516.

These sorts of references are nearly unheard of in *maqātil* composed before Kāshefī, even in those Arabic texts written by Persian authors. Furthermore, the large amount of supernatural material suffusing the narrative, including narratives that appear for the first known instances—such as the story of Zaʿfar—serve to elevate Ḥusayn from the realm of a historical religious person to the level of a Persian epic hero. The conception of fate (*bakht*) manifested as *balā* (torment) in the *Rowẕat* is closer to a Persian idea of divine destiny as presented in the *Shāhnāmeh* than the blindly destructive, amoral fate (*dahr*) found in Arabic literature. In contrast with the tribal values implicit in earlier *maqātil*, Ḥusayn is instead transformed into a tragic hero, whose death is not merely fated, but intrinsically tied to cosmic reality.

Through its main theme of the cosmic significance of torment (*balā*), and the connected, subsidiary themes of weeping (*gerīstan*) and intercession (*shafāʿat*), Kāshefī also suggests the construction of a ritual complex with his book implicitly at the center.[963] These three thematic elements can be metatextually linked to the methodological paradigm of *memory relics*: weeping is the form of the ritual, its mooring in space and time; intercession is the function, the goal which the audience believes they will obtain through ritual performance; and torment is the meaning, the internal logic invoked through the narrative which connects the mourners with the subject of their mourning, creating a community. Overall, in Chapter Two I conclude that the *Rowẕat* is an effort to transform and deterritorialize the narrative of Ḥusayn from its origin in the Arab milieu and reterritorialize it into one which is essentially Persian. This is a movement of minor literature for Iranians, first in claiming a genre from the language of the elites (Arabic) and writing it in that language, then in reterritorializing it into a Persian genre using Persian themes. This effort results in the *Rowẕat* becoming its own *memory relic*, one which is then suffused into

[963] Ibid, 636-8.

Persian collective memory through the ritualization of the text as performance. It is both a *memory relic* as layers of form, function, and meaning, which are recapitulated throughout later *taʿziyeh* ritualism, but also a literal relic as the transformation of the body of Ḥusayn into a body of his stories.

Chapter Three examines further the pre-Islamic, primarily Persian elements invoked by the *Rowẕat*. Through an analysis of three figures, focusing on Siyāvash but including Zarīr and Tammūz, I conclude that their stories exerted a literary and thematic influence on Kāshefī's composition. I compare the various attributes, symbolic elements, narrative structure, and values manifested by Ḥusayn in the *Rowẕat* with those manifested by Siyāvash, Zarīr, and Tammūz in the sources Kāshefī would have had access to (the *Shāhnāmeh* and the writings of Ibn Waḥshiyya), and I conclude that dismissing any influence simply does not hold water because of the amount of explicit references to Iranian epic literature, the large amount of thematic convergences, and the fact that Kāshefī demonstrably had access to these sources. Furthermore, the fact that groups like the Ahl-e Ḥaqq, which were active in the region during Kāshefī's lifetime and allegedly had dealings with the early Safavid order,[964] specifically connected Ḥusayn to Siyāvash means that the comparison between Ḥusayn—particularly in the *Rowẕat*—and Siyāvash, is not merely a construction of later scholarly analysis but was a contemporary phenomenon.[965]

In and of itself, the suggestion that the stories of these mythic figures influenced Persian mourning rituals for Ḥusayn has already been proposed by scholars such as Meskūb[966] and

[964] Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat Sects*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 217-18.
[965] Māshā'llāh Sūrī, *Sorūd'hā-ye Dīnī-ye Yāresān,* (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr/Ketābhā-ye Sīmorgh, 1965), 102.
[966] Shāhrokh Meskūb, *Sūg-e Siyāvash: Dar Marg va Rastākhīz*, (Tehran: Khvārazmī, 1972), 82.

Yarshater.[967] As we have seen throughout this dissertation, this theory is also a central narrative point for Dāneshvar's novel. However, through the medium of the *Rowẕat* as a repository of the *memory relics* necessary to advance this theory, I have concluded that the connection is not merely thematic but tangible. As highlighted previously in my discussion of Kāshefī's divergences from the Arabic template of the *maqtal*, the *Shāhnāmeh* is the proximate source for both the thematic and textual connections to the literary Persian past. In making these connections through literary mediums, Kāshefī also ends up connecting them to the ritual past, specifically to pre-Islamic mourning rituals such as remnants of the *Siyāvashān*. Insofar as the *Shāhnāmeh* itself is not merely a book, but also itself a nexus of performance rituals, i.e. *shāhnāmeh-khᵛānī* (chanting of the *Shāhnāmeh*), this text also represents a layer of implied ritual transference.[968] The *Shāhnāmeh* is itself a *memory relic*, which perpetuates the chain textually as source for reference, and ritually, as a text for performance, like the *Rowẕat.*

In Chapter Four, I have analyzed sources from archival records to widen the evidence regarding the importance of the *Rowẕat* from the literary to the performative. Several conclusions emerge from this evidence. Firstly, the manuscript circulation of the *Rowẕat* shows that there are at least 22 distinct manuscripts by the end of the 16th century C.E., with the earliest being created around 1511-1512 C.E., only seven years after Kāshefī's death in 1504 C.E. Furthermore, there are at least four different Turkic translations of the text by the middle of the 16th century. This demonstrates that the *Rowẕat* quickly became a popular *maqtal* throughout the Persianate and Turkic world. One translation in particular, the *Şühədanamə* of Müḥammad b. Ḥüseyn Kâtib Nişâtî (fl. 1543 C.E.), completed in 1539 C.E., attests that the translation was conducted at the

[967] Ehsan Yarshater, "Taʿziyeh and Pre-Islamic Mourning Rites in Iran," *Taʿziyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran*, (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 88-94; 93.
[968] Kumiko Yamamoto. *The Oral Background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and Poetry*. Brill Studies in Middle Eastern Literatures; v. 26. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003. 58.

behest of Shāh Ṭahmāsp (d. 1576 C.E.).[969] This fact demonstrates that the *Rowẕat* had been recognized by the Safavid empire as an important source for spreading their religious and political vision.

This recognition is amplified under Ṭahmāsp's grandson, ʿAbbās I (d. 1629 C.E.), when the earliest known reference to the ritual *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* appears in a list of yearly expenses for the Shāh Mosque of Esfahan in 1614 C.E..[970] This notation not only pushes the earliest known reference to the term back from 1627-8 C.E., but due to its inclusion in an official *vaqfnāmeh* and the stipulation of payment for the *rowẕeh-khᵛān*s, proves that *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* was a governmentally sanctioned ritual by ʿAbbās' reign. Two later official texts from ʿAbbās II's reign (d. 1666 C.E.), from the Mosque and School of Mamnābād in Esfahan in 1653 C.E. and the Shafīʿiyyeh School of Esfahan in 1658 C.E. shed further light on the origin of the term *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*. As proposed by Calmard and Dehkhodā, but not conclusively proven until now,[971] these texts contain the term *rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛāndeh shavad*, the passive of the compound verb *rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛāndan* "to recite the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*."[972] This evidence allows me to conclude that the origin of the term *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* is indeed an abbreviation of *rowẕat ol-shohadā'-khᵛānī*, meaning that the ritual specifically derives from the oral performance of the *Rowẕat*.

Later *vaqfnāmeh*s demonstrate the evolution of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals under the Safavids and their continual patronage. As time goes by, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* is increasingly associated with the

[969] Möhsün Nağısoylu, *XVI əsr Azärbaycan Tərcümə Abidəsi "Şühədanamə": Paleoqrafiya, Orfoqrafiya və Tərcümə Məsələləri*, (Baku: Nurlan, 2003), 59.
[970] ʿAbd al-Ḥoseyn Sepantā, *Tārīkhcheh-e Owqāf-e Eṣfahān*, (Esfahan: Enteshārāt-e Edāreh-e Koll-e Owqāf, Mentaqeh-ye Esfahān, 1967), 58.
[971] Jean Calmard, "Shiʿi Rituals and Power II: the Consolidation of Safavid Shiʿism: Folklore and Popular Religion," *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, (London: New York: I.B. Tauris; Distributed by St. Martin's Press, 1996), 149.
[972] Ṣādeq Ḥoseynī al-Eshkavarī, *Asnād-e Mowqūfāt-e Eṣfahān*, (Qpm: Majmaʿ-e Ẕakhā'er-e Eslāmī, 2009), 4:20; and Sepantā 353-4.

term *marāsem-e taʿziyeh* (*taʿziyeh* rituals), until the phrase becomes the umbrella term for the majority of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals under the Safavids. Descriptions of the specifics of the rituals are provide by a variety of European travelers to Iran; in particular, the account provided by the German visitor Kämpfer (d. 1716 C.E.) around 1684-5 C.E. during the reign of Ṣoleymān (d. 1694 C.E.) demonstrates that the *Rowẕat* was still a central part of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals almost two hundred years after its composition.[973] Finally, details of both the rituals conducted during *ʿĀshūrā'*, specifically the *dasteh* (procession) and *shabīh* (silent panorama) together with the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, lead us to the conclusion, supported by Chelkowski, that 'dramatic *taʿziyeh*' gradually took shape from the combination of these rituals.[974]

Overall, from the evidence presented in Chapter Four, I conclude that the *Rowẕat* became a popular text for *ʿĀshūrā'* very soon after its composition. Furthermore, the fact that it is demonstrably the source of *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, a ritual which enjoyed imperial patronage as early as 1614 C.E. and perhaps earlier, shows that the Safavids recognized its importance and actively promoted it. Based on this evidence, I conclude that the *Rowẕat* and the rituals which developed out of it, the *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, and *taʿziyeh*, were instrumentalized by the Safavids in order to affirm their legitimacy as rulers of Iran through their claimed ancestor, Ḥusayn, and to create a cultural consensus of Persian Twelver Shiʿism.

Based on the sum total of these findings, I think it is appropriate to consider them in relation to the thesis statements. Firstly, the fact that Kāshefī's book has had such a demonstratable effect on the religious, political, and economic history of Iran since the Safavids

[973] Engelbert Kaempfer. *Amoenitatum Exoticarum Politico-physico-medicarum Fasciculi V: quibus Continentur Variae Relationes, Observationes & Descriptiones Rerum Persicarum & Ulterioris Asiae : Multâ Attentione, in Peregrinationibus per Universum Orientem*. Western Books on Asia. Japan. Unit 11 ; Fiches 10,850-10,860. Lemgo, Germany: Typis & Impensis Henrici Wilhelmi Meyeri, 1712. 158-9.
[974] Peter Chelkowski, "Narrative Painting and Painting Recitation in Qajar Iran," *Muqarnas* 6 (1989): 98-111; 99-100.

and continues to do so through its ritual manifestations in *taʿziyeh* shows how important it has been for Twelver Shiʿism, particularly in Iran. Secondly, Kāshefī's choice of Persian as the language of his *maqtal,* breaking with the Arabic origins of genre and his invoking of Persian epic legend through the medium of the *Shāhnāmeh* validate the idea that this text was composed to Persianize the Karbalā' narrative. Thirdly, the evidence derived from *vaqfnāmeh*s, travelogues, and other sources demonstrate that the *Rowẕat* and the rituals which evolved out of its performance became an important tool of Safavid propaganda. Finally, on the general level, Kāshefī's effort to present a specific, heroic interpretation of Ḥusayn, and his use of Persian epic literature to support this interpretation, results in a conception of Ḥusayn which is quite different from the earlier *maqātil*. Instead, we are presented with a character who is larger-than-life, who embodies mythic archetypes and enacts a story which is no longer confined to the realm of historical action but resides in an eternal sacred time which is continually revived in every reenactment of his narrative.

II. Contributions

Overall, this dissertation offers three primary contributions. Firstly, it demonstrates the crucial role the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'* had in the development of a distinctly Persian form of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals. Secondly, it shows the connection between pre-Islamic texts and rituals with later Iranian Muslim ones while problematizing the critical issue of a direct versus codependent, gradual, and intertwined influence between them. Finally, this dissertation offers a new methodological framework to analyze moments of interaction between religious communities in the form of *memory relics*, intended to provide a more precise alternative to syncretism.

Throughout the history of academic treatments of *ʿĀshūrā'* in Iran, many scholars have referred, usually in passing, to the importance of *Rowẕat* and *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* in the development of *taʿziyeh* and Iranian modern observance of rituals for Ḥusayn in general. However, the vast majority of these discussions in non-Iranian academia have been cursory at best; only Calmard's 1975 unpublished dissertation[975] and Amanat's 2003 article[976] have dedicated central space to Kāshefī's book. The book has never been translated into a Western language besides a few lengthy excerpts in Calmard's dissertation, and the assertation that the *Rowẕat* and *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* are related has been treated as a simple axiom. In addition to providing the first extensive translations into English of the *Rowẕat*, in this dissertation, I have demonstrated that not only are the *Rowẕat* and *rowẕeh-khᵛānī* certainly connected, but that it is the ultimate origin of both ritual and dramatic *taʿziyeh* as well. This argument can be shown conclusively through reference to Safavid-era *vaqfnāmeh*s, European travelogues, the manuscript circulation of the *Rowẕat*, and the fact that several translations of the book into Turkic languages were conducted in the first five decades after Kāshefī's death and the completion of the *Rowẕat*—one of which was commissioned by the second Safavid emperor, Ṭahmāsp.

All of this evidence, which has not to my knowledge been examined before, especially in collation together, allows us to have a far clearer idea of the development of *taʿziyeh* rituals and the massive importance the *Rowẕat* exerted in their proliferation. Now, the assertation of the connection between the *Rowẕat*, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, *taʿziyeh*, and Safavid consensus building is no longer an axiomatic assumption based on useful inferences; rather, it is a fact supported by textual evidence. Given this connection, we can now establish the fact that the Safavids

[975] Jean Calmard, "Le culte de l'Imām Husayn: étude sur la commémoration du drame de Karbalā dans l'Iran pré-safavide," PhD diss., (Paris: Ecole pratique des hautes études), 1975.
[976] Abbas Amanat, "Meadow of the Martyrs: Kāshifi's Persianization of the Shi'i Martyrdom Narrative in the Late Tīmūrid Herat," in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam*, (London: Tauris, 2003), 250-75.

instrumentalized the *Rowẕat* in the creation of their vision of a Persian Shiʿi state. While Kāshefī successfully Persianized the Ḥusayn narrative in the *Rowẕat*, regardless of Kāshefī's alleged 'Sunni' confessional status, the Safavids easily Shiʿitized the *Rowẕat* to provide a central text for their own ancestral hero-cult.

Secondly, this offers a full discussion of the complex relationship between layered inheritances of Persian culture. Some perspectives in academia imply that we should sequester the pre-Islamic and Islamic history and culture of Iran into two distinct categories. In this dissertation, I have demonstrated that the literary inheritance—both from Islamic era texts which are ostensibly secular epic literature such as the *Shāhnāmeh*, as well as others that are clearly religious in orientation, such as the *Rowẕat*—paints a much more complex picture. Here, we should conceptualize the texts as products of a long continuum of Persian cultural heritage, one which can potentially incorporate symbols conventionally designated as 'Zoroastrian' or 'Muslim.' This contribution offers a textured, nuanced reading of Persian history and literature. We do not need to appeal to syncretism as an excuse for such a reading; rather, the intertwined symbolic, thematic, and textual elements are a product of a long literary tradition which regularly implemented material from older sources to reinforce cultural values residing in collective memory.

In relation to this topic, this dissertation offers the most complete analysis of the proposed connections between mourning for Ḥusayn and mourning for Siyāvash. This topic has been previously discussed by Yarshater,[977] Meskūb,[978] Dāneshvar,[979] and many others especially in Persian academic literature. However, this dissertation offers a comprehensive critical

[977] Meskūb 1972.
[978] Yarshater 1979.
[979] Dāneshvar 1969.

evaluation and comparison of the literary and ritual material which demonstrates this connection, as well as critique of the differences and complexities involved in this proposal. Thus, while I do not argue that the rituals themselves like the *Siyāvashān* directly influenced *taʿziyeh* or that the practitioners of these commemorations consciously decided to 'mix' them together, I do point out that there is sufficient evidence to propose that they manifested through an appeal to Persian collective memory within a traceable genealogy of textual inheritance and influence.

Finally, this dissertation offers a new paradigm, that of *memory relics*, to analyze socio-religious interactions which have previously been categorized as 'syncretic phenomena.' While the methodological paradigm and theory of *memory relics* was constructed in order to analyze the development as well as interaction of text, ritual, and collective memory in the context of Iranian Shiʿism, it is important to note that it is not confined to this context. As I have discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation, I believe that the concept of syncretism and how we understand the phenomenon of religious interaction needs to be overhauled. Syncretism is both too imprecise as well as too embedded in Western Orientalist and Colonialist discourses to be used as anything but an overarching principle. In terms of comprehensive analysis, a more detailed, robust theory which centers both cultural actors as the makers of syncretic actions—or rather, ritual actions with polythetic sources—is needed. Religions by themselves are abstract collections of concepts; like language, they need mediators in order to meaningfully manifest. As such, the agency of the actors must be stressed. Through its tripartite structure, *memory relics* allow us to pinpoint which elements occurring in a moment of religious interaction are abstract and which are performed by persons.

At the same time, the moment of religious action for which *memory relics* may be deployed as an explanatory tool suggests subconscious influences drawn from collective memory

(i.e. residing in the *substratum of contact*). This means that practitioners may view influences from supposedly disparate sources, such as Siyāvash and Ḥusayn (the *points of contact*), both as equally authentically Persian narratives and invoke one to inform the articulation of the other. However, because the context itself (i.e. the *place of contact*) is understood as Persian, this is not mixing, though it is polythetic.[980] Indeed, as I suggested in Chapter Four when discussing the structural elements of *taʿziyeh-namāyesh* for Siyāvash, the notion that this influencing is one-sided, from the 'authentically Persian' to the 'imported Arabic' is probably mistaken, and the observers of the *Siyāvashān* may have been just as influenced by the devotees of *ʿĀshūrā'*.[981] Indeed, it is likely that there was significant overlap between them, and observers of the *Siyāvashān* probably participated in *ʿĀshūrā'*. It is worth considering whether it is even meaningful to consider them separate groups at all.[982] Therein, it may be useful to think of the shared notions surrounding these mourning rituals as 'ecumenical spaces of experience' created by a common literary inheritance.[983]

Because of these concerns, my theory of *memory relics* is intended to be broadly applicable as a theoretical construct, wherein individual moments of religious or cultural interaction can be mapped onto the paradigm. For example, outside of this particular topic, I have applied *memory relics* in my research on the Nizārī Ismāʿīlī Shiʿi and Satpanthī literary

[980] Taking a similar example of South Asian Sufism in connection with yoga, and arguing for a polythetic approach, Ernst notes, "While there seems to be a clear recognition among Sufis of the existence of the Nath Yogis as a sociological group, and of their practices as distinctive, the discursive tradition of Sufi teaching was powerful enough to make the independent existence of something called yoga irrelevant precisely because yogic practices could be assimilated into a Sufi perspective without much effort. In short, there is no Sufi concept of yoga as a completely separate system. It would probably be safe to say that there was likewise no hatha yoga concept of Sufism as a separate entity." See: Carl W. Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 15, no. 1 (2005): 15-43; 42.
[981] See Chapter Four, Section VIII for more details.
[982] As I discussed in my narrative preface to this dissertation, in India, many sacred spaces conventionally understood as 'Muslim' are often visited by self-described Hindus, including *imāmbāṛā*s, *dargāh*s, and *rauẓa*s. No particular contradiction is seen in their visiting these spaces and even in some cases, participating in the rituals.
[983] I am grateful to Dr. Asani for providing this elegant suggestion of a phrase to tie these groups together.

corpus of the *ginan*s. The *ginan*s are liturgical hymns written primarily in Medieval Gujarati, Sindhi, and Urdu intended to be sung during services at a *jamāʿat-khānah* (prayer hall).[984] They deal with a wide variety of themes, including theology, imamology, exegesis, hagiography, and ritual practice, among many other issues. As texts arguably written to interpret Ismāʿīlī Muslim beliefs for a South Asian audience, many of these texts make use of concepts supposedly perceived as distinctly 'Hindu,'[985] or rather, 'Indic,' i.e. stating that believers will receive their reward in Vaikuṇṭha, the celestial realm of Viṣṇu.[986] *Memory relics* would allow us to analyze occurrences like this in terms of the pragmatic function and why they would be meaningful to a particular audience, instead of Orientalist paradigms of 'pure' versus 'impure' religions.

As a point of contrast to consider how important the native cultural context is in determining the outcome of a *memory relic* from a less proximate origin, consider the concept of *taʿziya* in South Asian Shiʿi Islam. As I have previously mentioned in the Introduction to this dissertation, in South Asia, *taʿziya* does not mean "passion play," or even "*ʿĀshūrā'* ritual."

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[984] Ali Asani, *Ecstasy and Enlightenment: The Ismaili Devotional Literature of South Asian*, (London, New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2002), 25.

[985] Or at least, perceived as 'Hindu' enough for the 1975 Ismailia Conference in Paris to propose a division of the *ginan*s into three categories: "Category 'A': Ginans with no Hindu element, Category 'B': Ginans with peripheral Hindu element, Category 'C': Ginans which are rich in Hindu element." See: Eqbal Rupani, "Report of the Ismailia Association Conference," (Paris: Ismailia Association, 1975), 46. When I read selected *ginan*s together with my Gujarati language instructor, a practicing Hindu, she expressed astonishment that these terms were showing up in texts identified as 'Muslim.' As noted by Asani, the concept of 'Hinduism' as a cohesive entity is to a degree an invention of the 19th century and even in the face of modern political hegemonic movements like *Hindutva* (a pseudo-Sanskrit construction meaning "Hindu-ness"), is subject to massive local variation. Indeed, even the common word *hindū* in Indo-Aryan languages is a Persian borrowing originally referring to the region around the Indus river (Sanskrit: *sindhu*). See: Asani 5. It is thus perhaps more useful, in the context of the *ginan*s, to refer to a substrate of Vaiṣṇava (Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa devotion) and Śaiva (Śiva devotion) elements. Steward also argues that groups need to be studied in terms of individual interactions, i.e. of localized sects and individual persons rather than vague generalizing constructions of "Muslim" and "Hindu;" I argue the same is true for Persian manifestations of religion. See: Tony K. Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim-Hindu Encounter through Translation Theory," *History of Religions* 40, no. 3 (2001): 260–87; 262-3.

[986] See for example, in the thirteenth verse of the *ginān*, *Alakh Ached Abhed Aparampar* (Formless, Inseparable, Indivisible, Infinite One): "O, you [should) consider the *ginān*s as salvation for souls, so brother, how can one reach heaven without the True Guide? (*Ejī ginān vicāro jīvḍā nistāro bhāi satgur vīnā vaīkuṇṭh kem karī laie*)." Pīr Ṣadr al-Dīn, *Mahān Ismāīlī Sant Pīr Sadardīn Racit Gīnāno no Saṃgrah*, (Mumbai: Ismailia Association for India, 1969), 1:105.

Instead, a *taʿziya* is a kind of parade float, a smaller-scale reproduction of Ḥusayn's tomb manufactured out of bamboo, paper, metal, and other materials. Since we know that Safavid and early Qajar-era processions included effigies, wagons, and stationary panoramas, it seems likely that this sense of *taʿziya* as a parade float might originate from interactions between Shiʿi groups in Iran and South Asia before the emergence of the *taʿziyeh-nāmeh*s, though more investigation on this issue is required.

However, it is clear that *taʿziya* in South Asia encodes different cultural sensibilities than it does in Iran, though there are similarities. For one, in South Asia, the *taʿziya*s are ritually bathed (*ṭhaṇḍā karnā*) on the 10th of Muḥarram following the main observances.[987] This practice is distinctly Indic and draws more than a passing similarity to the lustration of a *mūrti* or deity image (*abhiṣeka*) practiced in various Indic religions, and even more so to the immersion of idols (*visarjana*, "dispersal") for *Gaṇeśa Caturthī* (Gaṇeśa's birthday).[988] Likewise, while the *Rowẕat* is known and has been translated into South Asian languages, it does not seem to have had nearly the same impact on South Asian *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals—possibly because of how deeply culturally Persian it is.[989]

III. Larger Concerns: Iran, Identity, and the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*

In the 1960s, the English film and theater director Peter Brook went to Iran and observed a performance of *taʿziyeh*. The experience affected him deeply, and he later remarked:

[987] Karen G. Ruffle, "Presence in Absence: The Formation of Reliquary Shiʿism in Qutb Shahi Hyderabad," *Material Religion* 13, no. 3 (2017): 329–53; 342-3.
[988] Jennifer D. Ortegren, "Gaṇeśa Caturthī and the Making of the Aspirational Middle Classes in Rajasthan," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 23, no. 1 (2019): 61–77; 71.
[989] The book was translated into Urdu by Faẓl-e ʿAlī Khān Faẓlī (fl. circa 1710-1758 C.E.) under the title of *Karbal Kathā* (The Karbalā' Narrative). See: Indranātha Caudhurī and Sahitya Akademi. *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2009), 2:1266.

> I saw in a remote Iranian village one of the strongest things I have ever seen in theatre: a group of 400 villagers, the entire population of the place, sitting under the tree and passing from roars of laughter to outright sobbing—although they knew perfectly well the end of the story—as they saw Hussein in danger of being killed, and then fooling his enemies, and then being martyred. And when he was martyred, the theatre form became truth: there was no difference between past and present. An event that was told as remembered in history 1,300 years ago, actually became a reality in that moment.[990]

Brook's reaction to *taʿziyeh*—from an outsider to the culture no less—reflects the profound capacity for history to be transformed into a dramatic narrative of raw emotion. It is history as art, history become storytelling and performance. In addition to that, it demonstrates the power of ritual to recapitulate the past within the confines of the present: the rehearsal becomes a sacred reality, no less real to those experiencing it than their everyday lives. The truth value of whether 'this really happened' as it is portrayed is unimportant; what is truly important is the reality it holds to those to whom it holds an essential meaning. In a similar way, the story of Siyāvash may be a legend, but its continual reverberance and revival means that the story endures throughout the Persian collective consciousness. Both the stories of Ḥusayn and Siyāvash are experienced by many Iranians as an essential part of their history and their identity.

During my conversations with some Iranians regarding *ʿĀshūrā'*, *taʿziyeh* is sometimes stereotyped as a phenomenon of the lower class, abetted at the hands of powerful government forces and religious propaganda. However, it would be a mistake to assume that *taʿziyeh* is only meaningful to the lower classes; the emphasis of *ʿĀshūrā'* on family—represented by the *ahl al-bayt* in the context of the rituals—and its potential use as a medium for catharsis is arguably a key component in the practices which are not bound by class.

[990] Peter Brook, "Leaning on the Moment: A Conversation with Peter Brook. 'The Brilliant and Controversial Director Discusses His Aim in Theater and Film,'" *Parabola (Mt. Kisco)* 4, no. 2 (1979): 42-59; 52.

Perhaps one of the most interesting contemporary statements about the importance of *ʿĀshūrā'* rituals in Iran and their deep meaning came from a conversation I had with Kimia Ramezani. Ramezani, who is in her early 30s, grew up in Iran, in Tehran, and lived there until she was 18. She comes from a middle-class, religious Twelver Shiʿi Iranian family, and comes from an educated background; her mother studied *fiqh* at one point in Iran. Her memories of *ʿĀshūrā'* are first-hand experiences of her and her families' observances as she was growing up in Iran. Ramezani expressed that she had mixed feelings about the connection between clerical emphasis on weeping as a manifestation of post-revolutionary government control, seeing them as "…being manipulated by patriarchy and government propaganda." However, for her, the rituals themselves evoked strong feelings of connection to family and Iranian identity:

> The rituals certainly connect me to my identity as an Iranian and as a Shiʿa. The majority of the *ʿĀshūrā'* events and rituals I've observed are tied into the culture, they're tied into food, they're tied into good times with family and relatives, much like Christmas or Easter. Thinking back, they almost feel like celebrations vs. quote-on-quote 'mourning.' In my memory these are events where we gathered, and I got to play with all my cousins and kids in the family. Ramaḍān and Muḥarram is when we would always see our extended family and friends. We would all gather at my great-grandmother's big house, all of us kids would play tag in the yard to the point of exhaustion, women would be chit-chatting and preparing the feast, and men would be talking business in their corner. We would all then gather around a colorful spread of food served in a traditional manner on the floor versus dining tables.
>
> There were *ʿĀshūrā'* banners everywhere, and the prayers would be recited, but the general feel of the event was not that of mourning but rather socializing and joy, even though there were tears shed here and there. A lot of families and organizations cook meals in bulk and distribute to the disadvantaged, and lemonade type stands can be seen all over town during Muḥarram.
>
> Even some of the rituals that may seem extreme to those unfamiliar with the culture are beautiful and exciting in their own way. For instance, chest beating (*sīneh-zanī*) is always portrayed as extreme in Western media, but what I remember of this ritual are the organized parades with drums rolling down the streets in Tehran, and people rushing to watch them; young girls giggling while they checked out the boys in the *dasteh*, and the boys trying to show off. During all my years of living in Tehran, I don't remember a single instance of self-harm or hysteria during any of these events.
>
> I'm an expressive person and I love the *dasteh*s and *sīneh-zanī*. It's pretty much performative art. When I was younger, I was mad that girls couldn't be in the *dasteh*s or the parades for *ʿĀshūrā'*. They are so fun to watch. Years later with the popularization of

> trauma healing, I learned about the practice of EMDR, where the repeated tapping of your chest while recalling traumatic events will help release the stored trauma in your brain.[991] This practice immediately reminded me of *sīneh-zanī*, and how that must be the science behind it.
>
> Despite how Muharram is portrayed in the Western world, and despite how it's manipulated by politicians, at its core it's a set of events and rituals that bring people together around a common cause. The cause being that of standing up to tyrants and injustice while remembering the story of Ḥusayn and how he and his family sacrificed themselves to set a precedent for future Muslims. It's turned into a cultural phenomenon for Shiʿa Muslims that's undeniably tied to our cultural and religious identity.[992]

This testimony brings many of the concerns of this dissertation full circle. Ultimately, while the *Rowẕat*, *rowẕeh-khᵛānī*, and *taʿziyeh* have been instrumentalized to promote the agendas of various governments, the reason for their continued importance is not fundamentally based on this. Rather, this ritual complex appeals on multiple different level to Iranian Shiʿa—personal, familial, and cultural. It is a phenomenon that both evokes a deep sense of Persian-ness in many, both due to Ḥusayn himself and his believed connection to Iran, and through a collective memory which summons associations tied into the mytho-historical Persian past. At the same time, as per the reference to therapeutic techniques referenced above, this ritual complex allows the channeling of emotional turmoil. Ḥusayn becomes the hero-martyr not just as a symbol of cultural identity, but also as a metaphor for the reality of human suffering and the hope for triumph over death.

[991] Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing; this is a type of psychotherapy developed by Francine Shapiro that directs the patient to engage in bilateral movements, such as hand-tapping while recalling distressing mental images. It is designed to help a patient deal with unprocessed memories and the negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors they trigger. EMDR is typically used as a treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. See: Francine Shapiro and Margot Silk Forrest, *EMDR: The Breakthrough Therapy for Overcoming Anxiety, Stress, and Trauma*, (New York, NY: BasicBooks, 1997), 4-6.

[992] Kimia Ramezani in discussion with the author, January 2021.

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Annex: Translation of Selections from the *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*

Kāshefī's Introduction to the Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'[993]

In the name of God:

Oh, the nectar of your torment is the balm for our hearts,

The affliction of your pain is a gift for our hearts

Through the recitation of your praise, our hearts are healed

And through your beloved name, our hearts are purified.

His lordship, the tirelessly patient, unceasingly gracious one, *whose gifts are universal, who sorrows have been mollified*, has stated to the party of those whose torment has arrived at the battlefield of love, and have tasted the trials of the battle of adversity, in the holy book whose word must be glorified, through exalted[994] and glorious discourse which tugs at the heartstrings that: "*and we indeed will test you all…*"[995] and [in Persian]: "in every customary way, we will test you," meaning we will act with you as testers act; indeed, none of your circumstances are concealed from us. However, we desire for the standard and weight of everyone to appear through the measure of tribulation, and for mortals to know what sort of result derives from pure and sincere devotion and hardship.

It would be good would that one come to experience a test

Until it becomes a woeful day where whomever in it would faint[996]

[993] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 105-114.
[994] *mo'azzaz*, corrected from *mo'arraz*
[995] Qur'ān 2:155
[996] Ḥāfeẓ, Ghazal 159

The divine test occurs in this verse in these ways: "*by means of fear…*", or through a fear which would be either the fear of the Lord, or fear of enemies. "*And hunger*," through hunger which is either famine, want, or fasting. "*And poverty*," [through] the loss of goods to plunder, whims of fortune, or paying the alms tax and tithe. "*And lives*," through the loss of life which may occur [from] sickness, weakness, infirmity, or want and poverty. "*And fruits*," through the loss of fruits, the destruction of produce through natural disasters and acts of God, or death of children who are the apple and light of the eye and the products of [one's] parents. "*…so announce to the forbearing…*" [meaning: give] the good news to those who practice patience during these tribulations, who advance on the path of forbearance and suppress the habit of sorrow, fright, and complaint:

> They drink [from] the cup of trials and do not hesitate
>
> They do not travel except on the path of faithfulness
>
> They would burn brightly whilst in calamity,
>
> Like fragrant wood (*'ūd*), from which no smoke issues

"*Those who…*" [meaning] those patient ones who deserve good tidings are those who are, at divine decree and the order of the emperor "*…whenever it happens for them,*" [meaning] when it occurs to them, "*disaster…*" [meaning] a disaster and a calamity and a tragedy, "*they say,*" [meaning] they sincerely say, specifically that "*…unto God we belong…*"[997] [meaning], truly, we are God's, and we are bound to obey him.[998]

So whatever comes from the master to the slave and from the owner to the one owned becomes real, excepting surrender and submission to the judgment of fate. "*And indeed we to him*" [meaning] we owe requite and recompense to him, "*…return,*" we are the ones who return

[997] Qur'ān 2:156
[998] Literally, "we are bound by the rope of worshipping which is his due."

[to him], meaning that our return will be to his presence, and he will grant us the due recompense of [our] actions. If we were content with [following] his decree, then we would deserve an eternal reward. If we have transgressed against his intention, then we deserve eternal torment:

The crown should bow in compliance and the neck in obedience
For whatever the ruler commands justly, is right[999]

The sense of this sufficient verse of guidance is as a direction on the subject of torment: the criterion for discernment of mortals, and the measure of the vicissitudes upon human beings is such that whoever claims to love, they should cast the raw material of one's soul into the crucible of torment, the kiln of affliction within the fire of tests and tribulations, so that it becomes purified and chastened of the flighty vice of the base soul and the deceit of desire's ignoble nature, to emerge unsullied through the test's redemption and the solicitude of one's minter. This shall forge the soul into coin in the mint of guidance. If one is adulterated and blemished and has been marked by a burning brand in the fires of separation, that one will be cast out, wandering forever. In one of the divine scriptures, it is mentioned that, "*Whoever loves or is loved, he will have torment imposed upon him.*" Meaning that anyone who pleads for God's friendship and devotion to him, should knock upon the door of love. Whoever, God, the Real, praise be to him, clothes with the royal robe of amiability, or gives to drink the draught of agreeability, then drop by drop, the rain of torment from the cloud of inquisition and affliction will fall upon his head. Happiness, joy, tranquility, and comfort will vanish from him. "*Loyalty is characterized by torment as gold is characterized by flame.*" The translation of this quotation is given in Rūmī's Spiritual Couplets in this manner:

Friendship is like gold, torment is like fire

[999] Saʿadī, Qaṣīda 6.

In the heart of fire, pure gold is refined.[1000]

In that way, the import of the preceding quotation is understood, which is that the loyal ones face torment and inquisition. It is attached to those possessed of love; wherever they have created love, [there] they have [also] opened the channel of inquisition. In every field which they have hoisted up the banner of loyalty, [there] they have [also] assembled a legion of torment under that flag. Whoever God, the Real, may he be praised and exalted, loves, he overtakes with torment, puts them to the test. This is confirmed by the meaning of the *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad, blessings and peace of God be upon him, where he stated: "*Indeed, if God loves a people, then he will afflict them with tribulations,*" meaning that, in truth, God, may he be exalted, when he loves a people, will set armies of torment and grief upon them and ordain that the inquisition be commensurate with [their] love, and torment in proportion to devotion. Whoever is on the path of friendship with God, the Real, is ahead of all [other] travelers; indeed their hardship and misfortune is more extreme than anyone else.

Whoever is more inclined to love[1001]

Their chest will be more sensitive to the heat of inquisition

They asked his Lordship, the Master of Creation: "*Which people have the most intense torment,*" [meaning in Persian] for which kind of human beings is life more intense and painful due to torment? Meaning, the torment of which group among human beings is deeper and more painful, and the inquisition of which types of people is more difficult and more sorrowful? He said: "*The prophets,*" [meaning in Persian] the messengers, who are the ones declared sacred by scripture and the holy possessors of glory, their torment is deeper than the torment of all the rest of mankind, and the inquisitions which they face on a daily basis are more extreme than those of all

[1000] *Maṯnavī*: Book 2, Section 29: Returning to the Story of Ẕū l-Nūn (*rojū'-e ḥekāyat-e ẕū ol-nūn*)
[1001] *ẕowq-e moḥabbat*, literally, "has the taste of love."

others. *"Then those most like them* (the prophets), *then those most like them* (those like the prophets)*,"* after the prophets, the torment of the group which is more akin to them, it is also difficult for them upon the path of love and the waystations within the secrets of gnosis (*maʿrefat*). "*Then those most like them*," [meaning in Persian], then those who have greater resemblance to this group, and by the same analogy, whoever is on the threshold of closeness to God, is closer, and their torment and affliction is more intense and more difficult.

In this banquet, whoever is closer to God
They give him a greater cup of torment
And the one who gets a special glance from the Beloved
They will place the heat of affliction upon his heart[1002]

As for torment, it is not a sweet drink which they give to postulants of the path. Rather, it is a goblet of deadly poison which is given to those who are mature. One of the shaykhs used to say that:

Our habit is to consume the dregs of wine at the tavern
Our drink is that more valuable cupful

From this viewpoint, whatever torment is more valuable, that is what God has given to the blessed hearts of the prophets, and whatever gift of inquisition is stronger, that is what God has sent to the saints and chosen ones. It is mentioned in *The Spirit of Spirits* that it is necessary for anyone who is at the rank of the friends of God and the footsteps of lovers of God—they must not take even a single step towards their own wish and must not breathe out a single breath of their heart's desire.

If you are in love, you deserve to be punished

[1002] Literally, "liver."

And if you are not in love, you deserve to be expelled from the path of love

On his path of tribulation, there are thousands upon thousands of hearts, burning out of grief and there are a thousand eyes, filled with tears due to struggling with inquisition. In every desert, there is a victim, fallen out of the grief of love, and in every corner,[1003] there is one dying, burning from the awesome presence of his grandeur, who has given up their life. What saint has not seen his body melted amongst the tongues of flame of his torment? What prophet has not had his heart become the target for the target for the arrow of his tribulation? Last of all, consider the sighing of Adam the pure; the mourning of Noah the confidant of God; the burning torment of the magnificent Abraham; the sacrifice made of noble Ishmael; the weeping of Jacob in the House of Sorrows because of the calamity of Joseph in the pit, in prison, and while tending his flocks; the wandering of Moses the spokesman of God; the sickness and neglect of ailing Job; the hacksaw upon the head of Zechariah the oppressed; the tempered lethal sword upon the throat of innocent John the Baptist; the bodily suffering[1004] of the master of the prophets; the torn-out liver of Ḥamza, the lord of martyrs; the trials of the family of the Prophet; and the disasters of the infallible and inviolate family; the painful tears of the virginal maiden Fāṭima;[1005] the bloodstained head of ʻAlī Murtaḍá, the poisoning of the light of Fāṭima's eyes,[1006] the blood-smeared face of Ḥusayn, the martyr of Karbalā', and other such spans of prolonged suffering of this community and those high-minded persons who face trials. All those who have been tossed into the depths of sorrow within a furnace of sorrow and pain are burned from head to toe.

[1003] The term *zāviyeh* can also refer to an ascetic's cell.
[1004] Literally, the pain of the master of the prophet's lip and teeth.
[1005] Fāṭima; the use of *'adhrā'* and *batūl* in reference to Fāṭima is complex and is not tied to the same interpretation of the "cult of virginity" in Christianity, though it is definitely intended to be an allusion to Mary, especially since Fāṭima is sometimes called *al-maryam al-kubrá*, "the greater Mary." The issue of virginity here is probably related to *aḥādīth* which state that Fāṭima never menstruated, i.e., she never entered a state of ritual impurity typically associated with women.
[1006] Meaning Ḥasan.

The world is a place of trials due to the suffering of the friend

And fate of every heart is to experience these trials and suffering

I see this everywhere I look on your path

There is a heart suffering from the burning shedding of blood

O dearly beloved, they have not strewn the degree of thorns of torment on any path like that of the Prophet, nor have they sifted the degree of dust of tribulation upon the head of any messenger like that which was sifted upon the head of that lord, just as it was stated in this context: *"No prophet has suffered as what I have suffered,"* meaning [in Persian], no such suffering has not happened to any prophet as that which has tormented me." In the same manner, with regard to the *Ahl al-Bayt*, [their suffering is] unlike the prophet. They[1007] did not oppress the master of the world, blessings and peace of God be upon him, as they did the *Ahl al-Bayt*. Among the grievous events which befell the martyrs[1008] of Karbalā', no eye has seen a disaster of this kind on earth ever before, nor has any ear heard of a calamity of this type at any time from any tongue:

None has seen up until this age an event more difficult

Whoever has received news of this incident, has not seen the like

The gaze of time, within any ream of stories

Has not fallen upon any fierier situation than that of Ḥusayn and Ḥasan[1009]

Iman Yāfi'ī, may God have mercy on him, in his book *The Mirror of the Gardens* has mentioned that Ibn 'Abd al-Barr has transmitted from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, blessed be his memory, that during the events at Karbalā', sixteen people from the *Ahl al-Bayt* tasted the drink of martyrdom with Abū 'Abdullāh al-Ḥusayn who had no likeness or rival on that day in that place. In *The Lamps of*

[1007] Meaning the enemies of the *ahl al-bayt*.
[1008] Corrected from شهه
[1009] Referred to in this verse as *Shubayr* and *Shabar*.

Hearts, it is mentioned that one day Kaʿb al-Aḥbār informed inhabitants of Medina about the battles and conflicts which had been mentioned in several books. During his speech, he said that: "During the most portentous event and greatest battle, the murder of Ḥusayn would happen. Likewise, I have related that on the day that they made Ḥusayn a martyr, the seven heavens wept blood." They said: "Oh Abū Isḥāq, we have not heard that the heavens wept blood for any person." He said, "*Woe unto you, for the murder of Ḥusayn is a terrible matter*," [which means in Persian,] "Woe unto you, for surely the killing of Ḥusayn is a grievous deed and a difficult matter. He is the offspring of the seal of the prophets, the grandson of the final messenger of the age, the fragrant flower[1010] of the lord of the messengers, the son of the lord of the trustees of the Prophet, one of the five of the People of the Cloak, the light of radiant Fāṭima's eye. Through God, [1011] who holds the life of Kaʿb in the palm of his hand, I have thus related that, on the day which they made him a martyr, a group of angels stood over his tomb and wept and until the Day of Resurrection they will weep ceaselessly. Each Friday night, seventy thousand angels come and lament over his grave until morning comes, [when] they return to their places of worship, the heavenly beings chant for him, saying "Abū ʿAbdullāh the murdered," the angels on earth say, "Abu ʿAbdullāh the slaughtered," the angels of the sea say, "Ḥusayn, the wronged," and the angels of the air say, "Ḥusayn, the martyr."

Regarding the murder of Ḥusayn, the heavens and the earth weep
From the heights of the Divine Throne to the depths of the earth they weep.
Even the fish in water and the birds in the air
Weep over the funeral procession of the King of Karbalā'

[1010] May also be a reference to Fāṭima.
[1011] The edition has a mistyped break here, text supplied from the 1873 Newal Kishor edition, page 5:
بدان خدایی که جان کعب به دست اوست که چنین خوانده ام که آن روز که وی را شهید کنند گروهی از فرشتگان بسر روضه وی بایستند و مـگویند تا قیامت.

Weeping over this funeral procession is required to obtain divine favor and the way to enter the Everlasting Gardens, as is related in the narration [from *The Refinement of the Laws*]: "*Whosoever weeps for al-Ḥusayn or encourages another to weep deserves paradise.*" Meaning [in Persian]: Anyone who weeps over Ḥusayn or takes the careful ceremonial observation of weeping upon themselves becomes worthy of being conducted to Heaven. The shaykh Jārullāh ʻAllāma states that anyone who weeps for Ḥusayn, indeed he deserves heaven, as well as whoever exhibits weeping himself, because: "*Whoever resembles a people, he is one of them*." According to the promise, "*He deserves paradise*," he shall enter [therein].

Imam Raẓī Bukhārī has mentioned that, "Oh dearly beloved, the earth of Karbalā' is earth which they have planted therein the seed of martyrdom, and it is requesting tears from the eyes of the friends and devotees of the *ahl al-bayt*, for "*Whoever weeps for Ḥusayn*," thus whoever delivers tears from the rivers of their eyes to the earth of Karbalā', undoubtably will nurture the seeds of happiness watered with their tears, which they have planted out of love for the people of martyrdom, in the planting field of satisfaction. When it was revealed that, "*the world is the planting field for the afterlife*," the outcome of that will be the delights of paradise and the fragrance of heavenly exaltation. "*He has merited Paradise*;" and this is because every year, when the month of Muḥarram comes around, those who love the *ahl al-bayt* will re-enact[1012] the tragedy of the martyrs and will devote themselves to the commemoration of the descendants of the Prophet.[1013] Their hearts, inflamed with fiery zeal, will weep for all [of the martyrs]:

Those whose hearts are rent with grief over this funeral
The flowing tears of the eyes will become heart's blood

[1012] *tāzeh sāzand*
[1013] *be ta'ziyat-e awlād-e ḥaẓrat-e resālat pardāzand*

The narrations of the martyrs' stories, which are written down and described in books, should be reiterated. They should wash away the dust of fatigue from the surface of [their] breasts with tears. This is written in every book of this type. Although the story of the martyrs is full of ornamentation,[1014] it however lacks discussion of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn's virtues and the details of their lives. For this reason, the best demonstration of the greatest prince's high station, dominion, rank, leadership, merit, authority, and dignity, the purity of the kings of the nations, the luminous sunlight of good fortune, the bright moon of the crystal sphere of sovereignty, the honor of the progeny of the Prophet, the glory of the heavenly sect particular to Ḥasan's lineage and proper to the esteem of Ḥusayn, possessed of the knowledge of Jamshīd and Fereydūn, whose countenance is like glory (*farr*) of the sun, the purest of all the children of renowned rulers, the purity of the grandchildren of the emperors of highest rank, [is]:

The one whose aspiration is to ascend upon the august stairs
And with his light the storm-clouds are cleared away
The king of kings, like constellations
Has planted rosebushes in the nine meadows of paradise
The great lord whose flag is of Bahrām's rank
Valiant [like] Mehr, the miracle dwelling in the vault of heaven
The righteous judge of noble hearts
The efficacious prince of dignified pedigree

Such is his august merit which is the eminence of the gate of virtues, the ascension to the threshold of dignities and its degrees within such a degree, that no itinerant of farsighted

[1014] *Khālī* should be read as *ḥālī.*

conjecture can hover on the border of the pavilions of its interpretation, nor can even a swimmer of serene intellect pass through even a bit of its explanation's sandy seaside:

The degree of his merit exceeds that
Which I am able to express
Rather, one cannot even in a hundred thousand languages
Describe a tenth of his attributes

He is the delight of the eye of lordship and leadership, the crest of the brow of domination and nobility:

The willow of the rose garden, the one who possesses the two weighty things
The delight of the eye, the master of the two worlds

[According to] the one who is abundant in his gifts, overflowing with useful things, the shaykh of the age, the community, and religion, ʻAbdullāh, commonly known as Sayyed Mīrzā: "The sky of his dominion is constantly adorned with the stars of majesty and glory, and the signs of his splendor upon the pages of created things are made evident by fortune and perfection," which in spite of his august lineage in lordship, is just a small part of what will be written at the end of the book. He is also adorned with sublime rank regarding dominion: both lordship in lineage, and also sovereignty in noble esteem proceed from it, which this miserable wretch, Ḥoseyn Kāshefī, assisted by mysterious grace, has labored in composing a complete text wherein the events which befell the tormented ones among the prophets, the chosen ones, the martyrs, the rest of those afflicted with tribulation, and the lives of the people of the cloak, [are described] as previously mentioned in detail. The verses of Arabic poetry which should be necessarily mentioned are provided with a translation. Regarding the Persian poetry, it is well-suited to the notions of today's audience in its method of providing explanation:

It should be explained in an eloquent way

One should wear words as garment anew

Making old coin from new

Words should be adorned with ornaments

Even this writer is humble and without value, not deserving of much comment, and through the ravages of old age and other such limitations in not being able to raise the banner of eloquence in the arena of rhetoric, however, submitting to the magnificent command of the lord is necessary. This composition, called "The Meadow of the Martyrs," has been arranged in this order: it is composed of ten chapters and a conclusion. The index of chapters of this book is as follows:

Chapter One: Regarding the tribulation of some of the prophets: regarding our prophet, blessings and peace be upon them;

Chapter Two: Regarding the Cruelty of the Quraysh to the Prophet, and the martyrdom of Ḥamza and Jaʿfar Ṭayyār;

Chapter Three: Regarding the Death of his Lordship, the master of the messengers, upon him be the most excellent blessings of the pious;

Chapter Four: Regarding the Events in the Life of her Ladyship Fāṭimah, from the time of her birth until that of her death

Chapter Five: Regarding the Events in the Life of Murtaḍā ʿAlī from the time of his birth until that of his martyrdom;

Chapter Six: Regarding the Exposition of the Virtues of Imam al-Ḥasan and some of the events in his life from his birth until his martyrdom;

Chapter Seven: Regarding the hagiography of Imam al-Ḥusayn, and his birth, and the events after the death of his brother;

Chapter Eight: Regarding the Martyrdom of Muslim b. ʿAqīl b. Abī Ṭālib, and the murder of some of his children;

Chapter Nine: Regarding the Arrival of Imam al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā' and his battle with his enemies and the martyrdom of his lordship and children and relatives and the rest of the martyrs;

Chapter Ten: Regarding the Events after the Battle of Karbalā' which befell the Ahl al-Bayt, and the punishments of the opposition who were the agents waging that battle;

Conclusion: Mention of the descendants of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and the connections of their lineage to them.

Hopefully, through divine providence, it will be certain at end of this work that it will provide abundant aid and success, and that it will bring the blessings of these narratives and stories of the final fate of his excellency the noble prince – and may God, exalted until the end of the world, aid him. Through chanting and writing down this book, he will grant the common folk among the Muslims and all the faithful countless rewards, for "He is the generous, he who dispenses favor freely."

Kāshefī's Discussion of Intercession in Chapter One[1015]

Shaykh Sahl b. ʿAbdullāh—God have mercy on him—has said, "I wept on the day of ʿĀshūrā', and said to myself, 'Though I was not present on that day, so that they might shed my blood for the sake of the martyr-prince, today in regret for that, I will shed several teardrops of my own. I saw his excellency the Messenger, blessings and peace of God be upon him, saying to

[1015] Kāshefī, *Rowẓat ol-Shohadā'*, 146-7.

me [in a dream] regarding that event, 'O Sahl, by the might of the Lord of Majesty, even one of your teardrops over my beloved child's disaster does not go to waste. Through that weeping which you performed today, tomorrow God will provide you with such merit that the account-keepers of the earth and the celestial spheres could not execute the total sum of its merit.

Weep in memory of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī

For from this weeping honor will rise

All of those books in which sins are printed black

Through that weeping can be washed clean.

Ḥusayn will enter the heavenly courts on the Day of Judgement with a face smeared with blood, and will say: *Lord, grant me intercession for whosoever weeps over my tragedy*; [meaning in Persian] O God, give me the power of intercession(*shafāʿat*) on behalf of anyone who has wept over my tragedy; all those on earth who have cried over my martyrdom, my alienation, my deprivation, my oppression, my abandonment, my thirst, and my hunger, grant their absolution to me. The intercession of his lordship was granted; God bestowed permission for salvation (*najāt*)[1016] upon Ḥusayn's mourners.

If they shed tears in weeping for the martyrs,

Through the king of the martyrs, God will absolve your sins.

Chapter Seven of the Rowẕat ol-Shohadā': The Hagiography of Imam Ḥusayn: His Birth and Some of the Events After the Death of His Brother[1017]

[1016] Another manuscript has *avordeh-ye behesht* "going to heaven" instead of *najāt*.
[1017] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 387-416.

In the *Testimonies,* it is related that Ḥusayn was the third imam from among the imams of the *ahl al-bayt,* and father of the [other] imams. His *kunya* was "Abū ʿAbdullāh" and his nickname was pure one, martyr, lord, and grandson. He was born in Medina, on Tuesday the 4th of Shaʿbān. It is said that it was in the fifth month, in the year 4 A.H. It is said that the duration of Fāṭima's pregnancy with him was six months and no child was born in six months and still lived except him and John the Baptist, peace be upon him. There were fifteen days between the birth of Imām Ḥasan and Fāṭima's conception of Ḥusayn. Though Prince Ḥusayn was seven months and twenty days younger than his older brother, he was wiser. When the young shoot of the garden of guardianship (*walāya*), by divine will grew beside the banks of "the son is his father's secret," and the rosebud of the meadow of guidance bloomed through holy intention in the rose garden of infallibility and eternal purity, perfumed by the breeze of "*give unto me, through your grace, an heir,*"[1018] the perfumes of contentment blew upon the pure soul of Murtaḍá. The glad tidings and exultation reached the depths of Muṣṭafá's heart.

Through divine aid it rose from out of the perfect conjunction of the zodiac
A moon of holy countenance and a star of blessed horoscope
The rose garden of religion emerged anew from this noble shoot
Such that the petals of the rose freshly bloom from the northern wind

The news of his arrival having reached his highness, the lord of the world, the most excellent of blessings be upon him, Ḥusayn arrived at the home of Fāṭima, and Asmā', daughter of ʿUmays wrapped him in a white patched garment, then put him down next to the Prophet. The lord of the world, peace and blessings of God be upon him, with the call to prayer and its proper form echoing in his right and left ears, spoke, saying, "O ʿAlī, what name have you given this

[1018] *walī*; Qur'ān 19:5.

boy?" ʿAlī said, "It would be impetuous of me to rush before you, lord; he has no name. However, it has occurred to me that I might name him Ḥarb, or I had promised to name a son after my brother, Jaʿfar.

The Prophet said, "I will also not rush in front of God, praise be to him most high, in naming him. At that instant, Gabriel, peace be upon him, appeared, saying: "Oh Messenger of God, you have given one son the name of one of the Prophet Aaron's sons.[1019] This child should also have the same name as another one of Aaron's sons." The Prophet asked, "What name did the second son of Aaron have?" Gabriel said: "Shubayr." The Prophet said, "Oh Gabriel, this word is Hebrew, and God, praise be to him, has clearly granted the Arabic language a special status for me; for what reason should I give my child a name in another language?"[1020] Gabriel said: "Oh messenger of God, the meaning of 'Shubayr' is 'Ḥusayn' in Arabic." Then the Prophet named him Ḥusayn. On the seventh day, he performed the *ʿaqīqa* ceremony sacrificing two sheep, as he had done for his brother. He said that he should shave Ḥusayn's head and dispense alms of silver equal to its weight. They have related that when Ḥusayn was born, God, praise be to him, sent Gabriel, saying: "Go, congratulate our beloved one, and after delivering that news, inform him of Ḥusayn's murder and commemoration to be conducted for him."

When Gabriel came, Ḥusayn was next to the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him, and the Prophet was kissing Ḥusayn's throat. Then Gabriel congratulated him and began to deliver condolences for Ḥusayn. The Prophet knowing the reason for these congratulations, asked: "what is the reason for these condolences?" Gabriel said, "Oh messenger

[1019] I.e., *shabīr*–Ḥasan.

[1020] Technically, this is a form of Aramaic *šappīr* "beautiful," which has had the Arabic diminutive pattern *fuʿayl* interpolated into it – this is very easy to do, since the Aramaic already has a long *ī* present in the lexeme, and the interpolation would have sounded extremely close to the original. The Aramaic form was later borrowed into Hebrew, though it seems more likely that the Prophet interpreted the Aramaic as Hebrew given how closely the languages resemble each other. The Arabic cognate is present, though marginally, in the forms *safara* "to rise [of the sun]" and *asfara* "to shine," cognate with the Syriac verb *špār* "be bright, beautiful." See: Lane 1370-1.

of God, this place on his throat, upon which you have kissed, after the passing of his mother, the martyrdom of his father by treacherous blade, [some evildoers] will sever it. Hey delivered unto the master a glimpse of the events at Karbalā'. The Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him, wept. Murtaḍá ʿAlī was there, saying: "Oh Lord of the Messengers, what is the cause of these tears?" The Prophet repeated the words of Gabriel to him and ʿAlī, peace be upon him, also let loose a deluge of bloody tears from the fountains of his eyes. Weeping and grieving like that, he entered Fāṭima's chambers. When Fāṭima saw ʿAlī weeping, she said, "Oh cousin, delight of my sorrowful heart, today is a day of happiness and joy; it is not a time for concern, trial, and weeping. If you are crying from happiness, tell me, or if it is out of sorrow, then let me know the cause. Murtaḍá ʿAlī said, "Oh Fāṭima, my weeping is out of sorrow for Ḥusayn, the news of his murder which your esteemed father gave on the authority of Gabriel. When Fāṭima heard these words, she wailed and tearing down the veil of protection,[1021] she ran into her father's chambers. She cried out, "Oh father, ʿAlī has told me that you have confirmed the report from Gabriel that a group of oppressors of the community, merciless and ungrateful people, will slit that radiant throat of Ḥusayn that we have kissed with the sword of oppression. The Prophet, peace be upon him, said: yes, Gabriel has said this. Fāṭima began to wail, "My own Ḥusayn, what sin could you commit that such injustice could fall upon you in your childhood?" The Prophet said, "Oh Fāṭima, this situation will not occur in his childhood or youth; rather, when it happens, neither you nor I nor ʿAlī nor his brother Ḥasan will be alive." Fāṭima again wailed, "Oh, mother's unjustly treated son, oh mother's martyr, oh mother's orphan! How can it be that your father, mother, and brother won't be alive when your tragedy happens? How will the correct rites of commemoration be accomplished? Would that I were alive then, so that I could observe the

[1021] *Chādor-e ʿeṣmat*

ceremonies commemorating your tragedy!" The narrator related that a voice from somewhere called out, "Until the end of time, each year when the appointed season comes around, those who have suffered tragedy will hold his funerary ceremony in order to acknowledge him as a martyr. They will commemorate him anew and recount the circumstances of his tragedy, rain down tears of penitence from their eyes, and breath deep burning sighs from their breasts:

Brands shall burn upon our breasts because of this tragedy

A hundred sorrowful torches shall roast our hearts because of this lament

Shaykh Mufīd has related that when Gabriel appeared to deliver congratulations on the birth of Ḥusayn, he saw an angel who had fallen to earth crying out in great pain. Aware that his name was Fuṭrus, and that he was an angel of the third heaven in charge of 70,000 angels, Gabriel approached him. Gabriel said, "Oh Fuṭrus, what is this state I find you in?" Fuṭrus said, "Oh faithful spirit, God, praise be to him, order me to perform an action, and I reacted with some indifference. A lightning bolt of anger flashed, then my feathers and wings burst into flame. Yesterday I was at the peak of my glory, but today I am on the precipice of ruin:

Yesterday, none could equal my beauty

Today, none can equal my disgrace

"O Gabriel, where are you going?" Gabriel said, "God has sent me to attend to the lord of the world, blessings and peace of God be upon him, in order to congratulate him on the birth which has occurred." Fuṭrus cried out, "Can you take me with you? Perhaps the Prophet might intercede on my behalf, and my wings might be restored, then I may return to my place in heaven." Gabriel brought Fuṭrus with him, and after greeting and congratulating the Prophet, presented Fuṭrus' situation to him. Ḥusayn was in that very place next to the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him. The Prophet said, "Oh Fuṭrus, come and touch your hand upon

my Ḥusayn." Fuṭrus approached and touched the blessed form of Ḥusayn, and discovering that his glorious feathers and prestigious wings[1022] had returned,[1023] he took flight and returned to his cloistered worship.[1024] After the martyrdom of Ḥusayn, when Fuṭrus learned what had happened, he said: "Oh God, were it so that I had known, might I have gone down to earth with my companions and fought with his enemies?" God responded: "Although that has already happened, go straightaway with 70,000 angels who should follow you, then perform the rites over his tomb. Weep over his tomb day and night, and with the recompense of your own tears, beg pardon of those who wept for him during this tragedy." Fuṭrus descended to Karbalā' and performed what God had commanded:

The eyes of the angels weep because of this event

The core of the sun in the heavens itself is roasted because of this sorrow.

In the *Testimonies*, it is related that Imam Ḥusayn was possessed of such beauty that when he sat in darkness, his face and brow lit up with a bright white light, so much that with it, he could find his way [in the dark]. From chest to his feet he resembled the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him and his family, while from the part of his hair he more resembled Ḥasan than the Prophet.

In the *Traditions of Tirmidhī*, according to the narration of ʿAlī b. Marra, may God be pleased with him, it is mentioned that, "I heard from the Messenger of God that he had said, "Ḥusayn is from me and I am from Ḥusayn. God loves that person who also loves Ḥusayn." The Prophet greatly loved Ḥusayn and whoever loved Ḥusayn, the Prophet also loved. Thus, it is narrated that one day, the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him, was passing by an

[1022] *par-e farr o bāl-e eqbāl*
[1023] Reading with the alternate *khod bāz yafteh*.
[1024] *ṣowmʿeh-ye ʿebādat-e khod*

alleyway with a group of his companions and came upon a group of children playing. He picked upon one of the children and kissed the child on the forehead, and then set the child down. Some of his companions said, "O Messenger of God, we don't know who this child is, who has been honored with the fortune of your tenderness, or what his circumstances are." The Prophet said, "My companions, do not rebuke me so, for one day I saw this child playing with Ḥusayn. He took some dust from under his feet and rubbed it on his eyes. From that day on, I have loved him. In the future, I will intercede on his behalf and on the behalf of his father and mother." Sanā'ī (the Divine sage) says:

The son of ʿAlī Murtaḍá is Imām Ḥusayn
Who none is like in the two worlds
The Prophet, Muṣṭafá, embraced him closely
He was nurtured by ʿAlī in his embrace
His intellect tied to his covenants
And it was Gabriel who rocked his cradle

Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn b. al-Khashshāb related, and also present in the *Testimonies* that one day Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were wrestling in the presence of the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, and Fāṭima was also present. The Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, said to Ḥasan, "Grab him, Ḥasan!" Fāṭima said: "O Messenger of God, you are egging on the larger to defeat the younger?!" The Prophet said, "This is because Gabriel is egging Ḥusayn on, telling him to grab Ḥasan!"

In the *Eyes of Riḍā,* it is related, from Ḥusayn, that "One day, I went to visit my esteemed grandfather, and Abū b. Kaʿb was sitting near him. The Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, said to me, '*Welcome, Abū ʿAbdullāh, O adornment of the heavens and the earth*,' which in

Persian means, ‘Welcome, O ornament of the skies and land.’ Abū b. Kaʿb said, ‘Messenger of God, ‘How can someone besides you be the ornament of the skies and land?’ The Prophet said, ‘Oh Abū b. Kaʿb, God, who has raised me up truly as a prophet, he is the one who has said Ḥusayn is greater in the heavens than that which is upon the earth, and has written his name upon the right side of his throne: the lamp of guidance and the ark of salvation” The remainder of the *ḥadīth* concerns the description of Ḥusayn’s children, their names, and their prayers. Ibn Khashshāb, in his *isnād* on the authority of Abū ʿAwāna, transmits that the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, said Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are the two earrings of the throne. When God most high created paradise, he addressed it, saying: you are the abode of the poor and miserable.” Heaven answered, saying: “*O Lord, why have you made me the abode of the unfortunate?*” [meaning in Persian], “O Omnipotent One, why have you made me into an abode for the unfortunate and a dwelling for the indigent?” The call came back, “Are you not satisfied that I have ornamented your columns with Ḥasan and Ḥusayn?” Heaven was filled with pride, and boasted, saying “I am indeed satisfied!”[Meaning in Persian:] “I am content and pleased.” If this is Heaven, then its columns are ornamented with Ḥasan and Ḥusayn; if the throne is magnificent, then its earrings are Ḥasan and Ḥusayn; if a heart is faithful, then it is brightened with the love of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. One of the grandees of this community said:

> My heart is made radiant with the two grandsons of the Messenger of God
> The love of them blossoms in the seedling of the heart
> My chest is brightened with both grandsons of the Prophet
> The love for them has taken root in my heart.
> [There are] two pearls in the chest of grace, two moons in the constellation of perfection
> Two moons at the zenith of guidance, two cores of the pillars of religion

The celestial spheres obey this one and the angels eulogize that one

The world is made radiant by that one and time is adorned by this one

In the *Treasure of Wonders*, it is related that a Bedouin came to the Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, and said: "O Messenger of God, I have captured a gazelle calf, and have brought it as a gift for you." The lord of the world, blessings and peace of God be upon him, accepted it. Suddenly, Ḥasan, son of ʿAlī, peace be upon both, entered the mosque, saw the calf, and loved it. The Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him, gave the calf to Ḥasan. Sometime later, Ḥusayn arrived, saw that his brother had the calf, and played with it. He said, "Brother, where did you get this calf from?" Ḥasan said, "Grandfather gave it to me." Ḥusayn ran to the mosque, saying: "Grandfather, you gave my brother a calf and didn't give me one," and kept on pestering him. The Messenger of God, blessings and peace be upon him, consoled him and endeavored to soothe his mind until the effort made him weep. Ḥusayn also wanted to cry, when suddenly a loud noise came from inside mosque. They looked and saw a doe which came racing in with a calf by her side. She drove the calf on until she approached right in front of his highness, saying eloquently: "O Messenger of God, I had two calves. Someone captured one and brought it to you, while one remained with me. This made me happy, and while I was suckling it, I received a call to present my calf with all haste and deliver it into the care of the lord of the world, in front of whom Ḥusayn stands, about to cry over that fawn. The angels came out of their obedient sequestering to watch over him. If he cried, all of those angels crowded around him responded by weeping and crying out, 'Hurry, before he sheds a tear from his blessed face, bring his fawn to him.' O messenger of God, I cut short my long wandering, and it seemed that then the angels folded up the earth, so that I might get here quickly. Praise be to God

that not a single tear has yet rolled down his face." A clamor arose from the companions of the Prophet, and bringing the fawn, they entered the chamber together with his brother.

They narrated the incident to Fatima. O dear angels and relatives of the Lord of the Worlds, they did not want tears to flow on Hussein's face. They then related to Fāṭima the details of the incident, [saying], "O dear one, neither the angels nearest to God nor the Messenger of the Lord of the Two World wanted to let a tear roll down Ḥusayn's face. As for those who caused drops of blood to stream down from his blessed head upon his cheeks, what sort of punishment will they face?

The face that king of the prophets would kiss
How is it proper for it to fall hidden in dirt and blood?
Someone for who the spring of Kawthar is a gift of his grandfather
How is it that in grip of sorrow and torment his lips would be parched?
Is it proper that the most cherished of God's messenger
Would fall decapitated in a pool of blood?

The praiseworthy virtues and admirable qualities of Imam Ḥusayn are to the degree that the power of the eloquent pen cannot accurately circumscribe them in writing, nor can the intercession of frivolous imagination assist in laying out the account of his deeds:

The pen of fancy endeavored to write down
The nature of his praise on a page of eloquence
As for his wisdom, it said that it is the foundation of his noble turban
You should understand: how will you make sense [of his glory]?

Ḥusayn's munificence exceeded the example of Ḥātim, as described in the accounts of his life, and his courage exceeded that which is transmitted in the story of Rostam the Great. Some of this

will be described in the battle of Karbalā', in the accounts mentioned therein. The fire of his wrath like the blazing spark of a lightning bolt, the accounts of his reaping the lives of his humiliated enemies was like that of a divine smiter, and the water springing from his graciousness, appear like a gentle rains, and he will erase the grime of sins from the pages detailing them. Regarding his utter mildness and esteemed disposition, Imam Najm al-Dīn Nasafī, may God have mercy on him, in the *Facilitation of Exegesis* related that when the meaning of the verse "*...[a paradise] prepared for the pious*,"[1025] meaning in Persian, "Heaven is made ready for the virtuous. "Those who donate…", meaning those who maintain [others], "…in the best of times and the worst of times…," meaning in easy times and difficult times or in wealth and in poverty, "…and those who control their anger…", meaning those who quell their rage, "…and those who pardon others," meaning those who forgive people, "…indeed, God loves those who act with goodness…" (3:134), meaning God loves the righteous. The significance of this narration refers to a day when those first fruit of the gardens of guardianship (*walāya*) and guidance (*hadāya*), the grandson of the Prophet and the palmtree of the guardian (*walī*) [of God]; meaning Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, was sitting speaking with a group of guests from among the nobility of the Arabs and people of great learning and culture. His servant came into the gathering with a bowl of hot stew, and to his utter horror, his leg hit the edge of the table, and the bowl fell on the prince's head, breaking, and spilling the stew all over his blessed head and face. The prince looked at the servant with gentle chastisement rather than rage or punishment. The servant was stricken and stupefied with fear when suddenly Ḥusayn exclaimed "…and those who control their anger…, and thus I have quelled my rage." The servant said "…and those who pardon others." Ḥusayn answered, "I have forgiven [you]." The servant recited the remainder of

[1025] Qur'ān 3:133

the verse to him, "…indeed, God loves those who act with goodness…" In response, the grandson of the Messenger said, "I give you your freedom with my own money, and entrust you with provisions for your livelihood with my compliments:

When in him there was good character

He was a man among men

The goodness of men is not good-naturedness itself,

A good nature is the essence of goodness

Amazed at his character and temperament, those present at the gathering exclaimed, "Indeed, God knows where he would create his message," meaning, God knows what should be given and to whom it should be given. His excellency, Master Muḥammad Pārsā in his *Conclusive Judgement* likewise has related the tradition, saying that the virtues of those persons who are scions of the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him, and God most high, has said they are, "…God only desires to remove impurity from you, O *ahl al-bayt*, and purify you utterly."[1026] So, let us conclude that since the sea has no apparent edges, and since it is the intention of all these pages to attest to some of the circumstances of Ḥusayn's life, herein the discussion of his laudable qualities and virtues will be abbreviated to some extent. Some others will be mentioned in their appropriate place.

It is related that when Prince Ḥasan, son of ʿAlī was drawn from these ephemeral realms to the delightful palace of eternity:

That lord took hold of the territory (boundary) of *walāya*

He went from this realm to one better than this.

[1026] Qur'ān 33:33

The governor of Syria wanted to make his son heir-apparent. After the people of Syria and Iraq pledged allegiance to him, he petitioned the nobles of the Ḥijāz as well with that intention that they agree. The people of Medina and Mecca delayed, and strange events occurred in this place, the details of which can be found in an extensive number of books. In a word, it became necessary for the ruler of Syria to come himself to Medina, to mollify them and include them in the register of the pledge of allegiance. However, four people refused to do so. One was Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, the second was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Abī Bakr, the third was ʿAbdullāh ʿUmar, and the fourth was ʿAbdullāh b. al-Zubayr. How much so ever they tried through violence and hostility, or by way of grace, kindness, and gentleness, it did not work. The four companions left blessed Medina and set down in holy Mecca, "May God increase their glory and honor," and the governor of Syria followed them to Mecca, and there as well he did not find the situation with the pledge of allegiance resolved and the state of affairs was the same, until the governor of Syria tasted the final sip from the chalice of sorrow, "every soul tastes death" (3:185), leaving the rubbish-heap of the earthly realm and drawn into the world of recompense. Leadership of his house fell to another. The nobles of Yazīd's state gathered and placed him on the throne. They sent out the royal announcement to the ears of the elites and common people of Iraq and Syria. Meanwhile, a group of his elites, seeking his goodwill, said: "If you wish the kingdom and the riches of government to be under your sway, then you must stand firm. Those four notables of Ḥijāz who during your father's life refused to pledge allegiance to you. Since they have not bowed their heads to your leadership and dominion, bring every kind of force to bear [to compel them] to your pledge of allegiance. If they remain obstinate and fight, with you must drive them off with greatest effort. Yazīd upon accepting this advice, wrote a letter to al-Walīd b. ʿUtba, who at this time was the governor of Medina. The contents of this [stated] that is the caliph upon

the earth upon bidding farewell to the ephemeral world, went to the everlasting palace. Now, in this present life, I have been made caliph, but I am afraid of the courage of the children of ʿAlī and spilling their blood old and young alike. It is necessary that when you understand the contents of this letter, take the pledge of allegiance to me from the people of Medina, and this other letter should indicate that you will take my pledge of allegiance from Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Abū Bakr, and ʿAbdullāh b. al-Zubayr. In this matter, do not neglect [to mention] that this is not the time for procrastination or delay.

It is the opportunity for plunder, so open the gate of war

When time is fleeting, one cannot wait for the opportunity to arrive

For when the opportunity has passed, and nothing comes of it

How many will bite the back of their hands in regret?

"If they refuse my pledge of allegiance, send their heads to the Imperial Palace in Syria." However, when the letter got to Walīd, and he understood its contents, he said, "*Indeed we are God's and to God we will return;* what do I do with Fāṭima's son?" For fear of rebellion, with great haste he summoned Marwān, who was living in Medina at that time, and informing him of the current situation, he consulted with him. Marwān said: "Summon all four of them right now and oblige them to pledge allegiance; if they obediently pledge allegiance, then the goal is achieved. If not, then carry out your judgement upon them with sharp sword. Do not tarry, especially in the case of Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr. Before the death of the governor of Syria is revealed, take your assurance of those two people's allegiance to the caliphate of Yazīd." Walīd sent someone after Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr, who were conversing with another person in the Mosque of Medina. Walīd's messenger said: "The commander summons you, respond!" They said: "Go, we will follow in your wake." The messenger turned back, and ʿAbdullāh al-Zubayr

asked Ḥusayn, “Do you have any idea what Walīd wants of us?” Ḥusayn said, “It has occurred to me that the ruler of Syria has died; last night I saw in dream that his pulpit was tipped over, and the fire had faded from his palace. Now that this news has arrived, they are summoning us to take a pledge of allegiance to Yazīd.” Ibn al-Zubayr said, “If this is the case, what will you do?” Ḥusayn said, “I heard he is a drunkard and an adulterer; while we are the remnants of the Prophet’s family. How is it permissible for us to swear obedience to such a person?” They were in the midst of this conversation when Walīd’s messenger returned, [saying] “The commander is waiting for you.” Ḥusayn rebuffed him, [saying] “What’s the rush? If no one comes, I will come by myself.” The messenger returned and reported the incident to Walīd. Marwān said: “O Walīd, Ḥusayn will demonstrate his treachery and will not come.” Walīd said, “Be silent; Ḥusayn is not a traitor. Every promise he makes, he surely keeps.”

If there is an angel in human form,

It is he, who from head to toe is human

The crown of loyalty is a diadem upon his head

His diadem is higher than the zenith of the heavens

They have related that Walīd was a god-fearing man and respected the untouchability of the *ahl al-bayt*. When he reiterated the loyalty and pure nature of Ḥusayn, Marwān fell silent. However, when Walīd’s messenger returned, Ḥusayn, peace be upon him, he faced his house and organized thirty armed members of his servants and clients, saying, “Come with me to the imperial palace, and stay at the gates of Walīd’s palace. If you hear me cry out in a loud voice, then enter fearlessly, and in case it is not clear to you that they intend to kill me, do not attack anyone.” Then his excellency took the staff of the Prophet of God, blessings and peace of God be

upon him, in his hand and went out until he reached Walīd's house. Then, having reiterated his last will and testament to his clients, he went inside the house.

He saw Walīd sitting with Marwān. When the prince arrived, they saluted him, and Ḥusayn took his seat, saying: "For what reason have you sought me out?" They described the situation regarding the death of Muʿāwiya, and the pledge of allegiance to Yazīd in full. Ḥusayn answered that, "It is not appropriate for someone like me to pledge allegiance in secret. Tomorrow, when this news is revealed and the Muslim masses gather, whatever is for the common good (*maṣlaḥat*) will be given precedence." Walīd said: "O Abū ʿAbdullāh, you have said some weighty words, return in satisfaction, and tomorrow, bestow your august presence [upon us]." Marwān said, "O commander, do not let Ḥusayn slip from your grasp, for if you allow him [to leave], you will not have any power over him; imprison him until he pledges allegiance, and if he refuses, let him be beheaded." Ḥusayn looked at Marwān with anger, saying: "O Ibn al-Zarqā', one who has such boldness to behave like this towards me deludes himself. You have commanded that they behead me; whoever has this design for me, I will paint his blood upon the earth." Then he addressed Walīd: "You know that we are the *ahl al-bayt* of prophethood and the mine of the message; our house is the dwelling of mercy and the place where angels have come. Yazīd—who drinks wine and is notorious for the immorality which flows forth from him—for what reason should we pledge allegiance? Tomorrow, when the meeting is convened, we will say what we should say, and we will see who is the most deserving and best for the caliphate." When Ḥusayn's voice became loud, the people who were at the gates of palace wanted to step into the palace and fight. His lordship, knowing what that would mean, hastily rushed out of the house and barred his clients from entering the house. Marwān said to Walīd: "O commander, you did not do as I said, and so Ḥusayn has slipped from your grasp. By

God I swear that your judgement on him will no longer be in force." Walīd said: "Come on, Marwān! You are asking me to kill Ḥusayn? Were they to give the east and west of the world to me, I could not seek his blood. O Marwān, on the day following the Day of Judgement, the scales of the deeds of Ḥusayn's killer will be empty of good deeds, as will he whose scales are ever so light. Certainly God, munificent and magnificent *"on the day when judgement comes to pass*,"[1027] will not cast his gaze of mercy upon them, and theirs will be painful torture and a grievous punishment, he will cause them to be tormented and punished."

On the Day of Judgement, the killer of the Prophet's child

Surely is fit for the deepest pits of hell

He who seeks to overcome him is blind-hearted

For he is the light of the eye of the lord of Adam's children

After listening to these words, Marwān fell silent, and Walīd sent someone in search of ʿAbdullān b.al-Zubayr, but he procrastinated in going until night fell. He set out for Mecca with a group of his elite troops on a private road. Some people went after him, but did not catch up with him, so they returned. Walīd wrote to Yazīd about the situation, and the reply arrived that, "The rebels should be again called [to pledge allegiance]; ʿAbdullāh b. al-Zubayr should be left alone, since our anger will follow him wherever he goes. The head of Ḥusayn should be sent along with the reply, and with our compliments, we hope to bestow generous dignities upon he [who accomplishes this]." When the letter came to Walīd, he said: "Alas, *There is no power nor strength except in God, the lofty, the almighty!* Even if Yazīd gives me a whole residence, I will not seek the blood of the children of the Prophet of God. I am not afraid of any harm that may come to me from opposing Yazīd. They have narrated that Walīd, through a confident, wrote a

[1027] Qur'ān 14:41

letter detailing this and sent it to Ḥusayn. The message stated, "O son of the Prophet of God, time after time, Yazīd sends me message after message bidding me to kill you; in this situation, I am bewildered and utterly confounded:

I am disquieted and melancholy regarding my situation

I don't know how to get out of my difficulty

When Imam Ḥusayn became aware of this situation, he waited patiently until night fell, and having gone to the tomb (*rowzeh*) of Muḥammad, blessings and peace of God be upon him, paid him homage, saying: "O Messenger of God, I am indeed the child of Fāṭima, your grandson, the person who, at the time of your death, you entrusted your community to my care and honored your descendants through your statement, *'I call God to your mind through my ahl al-bayt,'* but they consider your command "*as though it were not.*" They have made me lost, bereft, destitute, and abandoned. That was the majority of these oppressors' faithlessness of which I spoke; when I meet with you, I will recount these events in detail." Then he wept bitterly, and afterward, occupied himself with prayer. After the sun rose, he returned to his house. On another night, he again visited the sacred ground and holy sepulcher of the Prophet: "[May] a thousand precious souls be the ransom for his tomb." After finishing his silent prayer and observing the necessary rituals, breaking down in tears, he rested his head on the most holy grave and fell asleep. Therein, he saw the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him, appear together with a great troop of angels. Placing his hand on his chest, he kissed Ḥusayn's brow, saying: "O Ḥusayn, it seems that I will see that soon, my community will kill you at Karbalā'. Therein, you will suffer thirst, and they will not give you any water. Despite this conduct, they will hope for my intercession. But on the Day of Judgement, they will be deprived of my intercession. O Ḥusayn, your father, mother, and brother have come to me heartsick and sad, yearning to see

you. You too will come to me disquieted and grief-stricken. You are but a step away from heaven, for you cannot achieve it without martyrdom." The Commander of the Faithful, Ḥusayn, said in this dream: "O grandfather, I have no need to return to the material world. Take me away and bring me with you inside your grave." The Prophet said: "You have no recourse except to return to the material world so that you may achieve martyrdom and receive great merit."

Ḥusayn awoke, with the vision of his honorable grandfather's magnificence in his vision and the news of his martyrdom and arrival at the highest ranks of heaven in his ears. He hurried to the sacred dwelling, and with a heavy heart prepared himself for the journey to Mecca from Medina. Having gathered his *ahl al-bayt*, he explained the current events. His relatives and loved ones became sad and grief-stricken. One other night, Ḥusayn went to visit his brother Ḥasan[']s tomb], peace be upon him, at the cemetery of Baqīʿ. Bidding his brother farewell, he came to the gravesite of his honorable mother, saying: "*Peace be upon you, mother*; it is Ḥusayn who has come to bid you farewell. This is the final visit." From above the tomb, he heard a voice, "Peace be upon you, O oppressed son of this mother, O martyred son of this mother." There, Ḥusayn wept for some time, and said farewell. In the middle of the night, he came to the sacred tomb of the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him, in order to perform his farewell. When he said his greetings, circumambulated the tomb, and prayed, sleep overcame him, and once again he saw his excellency Muṣṭafá in a dream. When he approached, he clasped Ḥusayn's head to himself. Ḥusayn said: "O Messenger of God, I have become despondent due to the oppression of the community. I have stayed deprived of visiting you by necessity, and thus, I realize that I will not [be able to] visit you again. The Prophet bade him approach, [saying]: "You come to me, and I see…you have fallen in the dust of Karbalā', thirsty and hungry. Your precious body has been wounded, and your blessed headed has been cleft from your body. O Ḥusayn, be patient, and be

courageous in your actions; and it will not be long before you reach me like your aggrieved father, like your oppressed brother, and like your despondent mother. You will with me on the throne of heaven and will gather delightful fruits from the green shoots of the Creator's favor."

Ḥusayn narrates that: "In the meanwhile, I saw that the Prophet's, blessings and peace of God be upon him, pomegranate-flower colored face had become saffron in hue; his musk and ambergris scented hair became full of dirt and dust. I was afraid and said: "O Messenger of God, what is happening for you to appear like this?" He said: "O light of my eyes and beloved child, this is a trace of dirt from Karbalā'." Then Ḥusayn awoke from the dream, and was certain of his martyrdom. He firmly set his sights on the sanctuary of Mecca, and on Friday night of the 4th of Shaʿbān in the year 60 A.H., he left Medina using a straight path on the greatest road towards Mecca. Remembering the distress of Moses, the spokesman of God, his flight from Egypt, his fear of Pharaoh, and the intent of the Egyptians, he recited this verse: "Then he left it fearfully, looking cautiously, he said, '*Lord, deliver me from the people who oppress [me]*.'"[1028]Then a group of his clients and devotees said: "O son of the Messenger of God, where are you going, from the tomb of your grandfather, this garden of heaven, where exists the sublime provisions of eternity, and why are you going?" He answered: "I do not go of my own accord:"

The heartsick lover did not go leave these realms willingly
For one does not leave the garden of heaven by choice
The words that the prince spoke on therein, are rendered in sense in three verses:
I do not leave the tomb of the Prophet by my heart's desire
Know that I will not go bound to any particular place
Though they bring me treasures of rubies and topazes

[1028] Qur'ān 28:21

I do not go valuing those rubies and topazes over my grandfather's legacy

But due to the oppression of my enemies, from such a place as this

I must go, but in my heart I will not go

At some of the stopovers, ʿAbdullāh Maṭīʿ who was coming from Mecca to serve Ḥusayn, arrived, saying: "O son of the Messenger of God:"

You have resolved to journey, may God's grace be upon your friends

May the grace of God be your guardian against all misfortunes

"Glad tidings; where are you going, and what is your intention?" Ḥusayn said, "O ʿAbdullāh, right now, I have fled my city, from the grasp of my oppressors. I have said farewell to home and country, and my heart has left behind the company of loved ones and companions. I am headed towards the sanctuary "*and the one who has entered it is safe,*" where every day sorrow and sadness and every hour tribulation and pain will come to me."

Heavenly destiny has set down all the causes of my sorrow

This will not be transferred from me to another

I will be thrown far from the earth of my grandfather's tomb

When the wind whips around the earth of my world.

"Currently, I am set on Mecca, and when I get there, when the time is right, I will act appropriately." ʿAbdullāh said: "May health, peace, the light of comfort and generosity be upon the servants of his excellency:

May prosperity, peace, and fortune be your friend

May success be the companion of your tranquil days!

"Something came to into my mind; if you give me leave, I will show the proper way to deal with them." Ḥusayn said: "You are a friend of mine, and the words of friends should be listened to.

Speak, and I will listen." He said: "O son of the Messenger of God, today you are sovereign of the world, leader, and best of the sons of Adam. Go and sit within the sanctuary of Mecca so that the people of the sanctuary do not choose another instead of you and protection according to the word of the Kufans. Do not be deceived and do not be tricked by their flattery; for they made your father taste the drink of martyrdom in this land and were treacherous with your brother. They visited upon him many kinds of tribulation. I know what they will request of you. If you go, they will leave you alone, but they will not keep to any kind of loyalty or a true covenant, for chivalry is not in the nature of these Kufans."

Ḥusayn agreed with his words. Praying for his safety, he bid him farewell. When Ḥusayn reached the end of his journey and his eyes fell upon the hills of Mecca, he was also reminded of the arrival of Moses, peace be upon him, at Midian, reciting this verse: "*And when he came towards Midian, he said, 'I trust my Lord will guide me on to the correct way."*[1029] When the people of Mecca heard of his blessed arrival, they hastened to greet him with honor and dignity. Rejoicing at his beloved visit, they expressed their joy, and their expression conveyed the melody of these exclamations to the ears and mind of the lord:

We discovered the fortune of meeting you through God's grace
Through the path of purity, we found your way to the Kaʿba
Every morning with total sincerity due to honesty
We extended our hands and found you
The arch of your brow, which is the *qibla* of those longing for you
At every turn, we found the *miḥrāb* for prayer

[1029] Qur'ān 28:22

In the place where had come to rest, troops upon troops arrived to wait on him. When the news of Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, peace be upon them both, and Ibn al-Zubayr's departure reached Yazīd, he dismissed Walīd from governorship of Media on the charge of dereliction of duty in capturing them. He then made Ibn al-Ashdaq the governor. The governor of Mecca was Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ, and he was the *mu'adhdhin* of Ḥusayn who five times a day, cried out the call to prayer in a loud voice, and a great many people prayed with him. Saʿīd was afraid that since it was Ḥajj season, people would unexpectedly gather from all over in devotion to Ḥusayn and kill him. So he fled from Mecca and went to Medina. He wrote a letter to Yazīd, mentioning how Ḥusayn had come to Mecca and the affection of the people there for him. But when the people of Kufa heard that the ruler of Syria had died, and Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī had refused to give the oath of allegiance to Yazīd, so that his residence in Medina had become untenable, and he had fled to blessed Mecca, may God magnify its greatness, to set up residence there, the devotees of the Commander of the Faither, ʿAlī, peace be upon him, gathered in the house of Sulaymān b. Ṣurd Khuzāʿī. Sulaymān said, "Friends, Yazīd has called upon Ḥusayn to give the oath of allegiance to him. He has refused, and out of necessity he has left his homeland and gone to Mecca. You all are his supporters[1030] and the supporters of his father. Give him your loyalty so that truth may be firmly established. Then, seventy people from among the notables of Kufa, such as Musayyib al-Fazārī, Rifāʿa b. Shaddād, Ḥabīb b. Muẓāhir, Muḥammad Kathīr, Riqā' ʿĀzib, Muḥammad al-Ashʿath, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mukhsif, ʿAbdullāh ʿAfīf, Tāriq al-Aʿmash, al-Aʿmash Tāriq, al-Mukhtār b. ʿUbayd, ʿUmr b. Saʿd, and other such people swore by Shurayḥ al-Qāḍī that they would not desist from their devotion to the family of ʿAlī, and held to the Imamate of Ḥusayn; they would sacrifice their wealth and lives for him. Then they wrote a letter in a supplicatory tone. Its

[1030] Literally, "you are his *shīʿa*."

contents are as follows: “To so-and-so, we send our endless compliments and salutations. It is said that the son of your father's enemy wants to become the head of the government without consulting the people. We, who are your friends and the supporters of your father, do not consent to his Imamate and caliphate. We pledge that we will fight your enemies in your footsteps and make our souls and wealth protection for your irreplaceable self. Thus in the spirit of acceptance, incline toward us, with gladness, joy, delight, and happiness, for you are the true Imam, the rightly-guided hero, the lord to who obedience is required, the caliph who must be followed, the present guide. Our governor is Nuʿmān b. Bashīr; he is a weak and detestable man. No grandee from among the people of Kufa attends his gatherings, nor do any indigents listen to his speeches. He just sits in the Imperial Palace and any day other than Eids or Fridays, the doors of the palace are closed. If you deign process and set your gracious steps our way, we shall expel Nuʿmān from Kufa and bring him to Syria with a ready army.”

Through you, the flag of fortune will be raised,
Through us, an army without limit will be assembled
An army, confounded like drunken elephants
All with spears, maces, and daggers in hand
They carry a tune of blood when with swords,
They proceed from stone, water, and fire
When they loose arrows from bows in ambush
They will overturn the heavens upon the earth

“Whoever from the utmost obstinacy, does not bend down in obedience to his excellency, then like the nail of his tent, has thrown a noose around his neck, and we will cast him down underfoot. Whoever, like the pen says, does not fasten the belt of service to the commander of

the army of victory's refuge on the path of sincerity around their souls, tears will pour from the well of their eyes and we will cleave them in twain."

There where the necks of the world arise

But for the resplendent sword, you are not the master of that neck

If the enemy who has no question except the battle

Then there is no answer for them other than the language of the arrow

On the whole, they insisted strongly in the pages of that letter, declaring their eloquent affection for the integrity of the prince:

O desire of eye, my heart is within your love

Souls are the prisoners of your musk-like chains

We have submitted our soul to the ransom of your dagger

Whether you want to take it or not, it is your choice

Then they gave that letter to ʿUbaydullāh b. Salʿ al-Hamadānī and ʿAbdullāh b. Musammiʿ al-Bakrī and entrusted them into the service of his excellency. When Ḥusayn read the letter, he did not answer yes or no to the messengers and did not write a response to the letter. Because of that, the messengers were late in returning. The notables and leaders of Kufa sent Mushhir al-Ṣaydāwī and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUbayd al-Arḥabī to Imam Ḥusayn, along with around fifty letters which the important persons of that region had sent out. The *Light of the Imams* of Khᵛarazmī has related that the people of Kufa sent one hundred and twenty letters to Ḥusayn, and he did not answer any of them. The other Kufans once again sent Hānī b. Hānī al-Sabīʿī and Saʿīd b. ʿAbdullāh al-Khathʿamī with many letters to Mecca. After the attention of this group, Shīth b. Rabiʿī, ʿArwa b. Qays, ʿAmr b. al-Ḥajjāj and other groups who had full authority in Kufa in concert, having written a letter in association with Saʿīd b. ʿAbdullāh al-

Thaqafī, sent it to Mecca. This group, following each other's example in submitting their salutations and honors, acknowledged the letter. The contents of all these letters were close to the contents of the first letter. Abū al-Mufākhir Rāzī in his *maqtal*, related some of its verses of poetry from the people of Kufa. Two verses from that letter are as follows:

There is no path for us except unity in friendship with you

There is no lock of hair for us, except the ringlets of your tresses

Let loose your ambush on your enemies, and seek support from your allies

O indeed, God most high has place victory in your hands

When the messages of the Kufans arrived in great excess, Ḥusayn, the Commander of the Faithful wrote in answer to them that, "Your letters have arrived and I was informed about their contents, which included expressing love and suffused with traces of your affection for me, the depths of your desire to join me, and your long-standing waiting to meet with me. It has become clear that you should know that I will not allow negligence and delay in the desired relief and fulfillment of your purpose. Now, I have sent the brother and son of my uncle, Muslim b. ʿAqīl, for the fulfillment of this purpose, so that the details of the situation and the veracity of your words may be known. If you are true to your previous word, pledge allegiance to him and he will inform me of your pledge, so that I may quickly direct my attention to it. It is incumbent upon you to help Muslim and to not leave his side; for the Imam who should act according to the Book of God and should be knowledgeable and just is not the same as the ruler who has been the source of immorality and oppression.

It has been related ʿAbdullāh ʿAbbās thus met with Ḥusayn and spoke about the people of Kufa. Ḥusayn said, "O ʿAbbās, you know that I am the son of the Prophet's daughter." Ibn ʿAbbās said, "*Indeed, yes*. I know of no one else on the face of the earth but you who is the son

of the Prophet of God's daughter, blessings and peace of God be upon him. The son of the Prophet's daughter was your brother as well, and now there is no man other than you on the face of the earth who is the Prophet's grandson. Supporting and aiding you is a duty for the community." Ḥusayn said, "O Ibn ʿAbbās, what do you have to say about the right of the community to cast me out from my home, possession, and the place of my birth, and to bar from visiting my grandfather's tomb, blessings and peace of God be upon him? They are intending to kill me so that they may not have anything to fear from any quarter." Ibn ʿAbbās recited this verse to its end: "*They seek to deceive God, but he has deceived them*."[1031] Then he said, "O son of the Prophet, you are among the people of piety and the clan of the most excellent; I attest that I heard the Prophet of God, blessings and peace of God be upon him, saying that: 'Through the God who holds the life of Muḥammad in his grasp, they will not kill my child amongst any people while they are still able to help him, and if they do not, it will be because God set dissent between their hearts and tongues. O Ḥusayn, whoever opposes you, in this world, they will have neither luck nor fortune." Ḥusayn said, "*Indeed it is so*, [meaning], by God, I attest to this." Ibn ʿAbbās said: "I would sacrifice my life for you. Your words suggest that you are informing me of your death, making me aware of the event that will befall you, and requesting my support and aid. I swear by God that I will wield a sword in your defense until both of my hands are cut off. I have still not given up on your rights, and now I turn my attention towards Medina. I beg you to come and stand by the tomb of your noble grandfather, blessings and peace of God be upon him." Ḥusayn said, "When will my enemies let me be? If I could be there, then I would never quit it, and I would not have left the enclosure of communion with my grandfather to face the house of tribulation:

[1031] Qur'ān 4:142

For the brokenhearted, there is no path to the happy place of communion

After this, there is only us, desolation, and the tract of the wasteland

If our home and possessions were destroyed, thanks to the good care of our friend

We shall still have a house of tribulation, above the summit of torment

Ibn ʿAbbās said, "O Ḥusayn, since you resist our plea to turn your attention to Medina, at least do not be deceived in dealing with the messages and messengers of the Kufans, and do not leave the sacred precincts because of their false promises." Ḥusayn acted in accordance with Ibn ʿAbbās' opinion and sent Muslim b. ʿAqīl to Kufa straightaway. Notwithstanding ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbbās' stressing of the issue, he did not get anywhere due to the power of fate, which drew his excellency with his *ahl al-bayt* toward the ultimate purpose of martyrdom.

Fate cannot be dispensed with

Destiny cannot be evaded

All the doors which may be opened by destiny

Will not come to pass save through that door

Then the narrator said that when the governor of Mecca fled to Medina, he sent a letter to Syria, informing Yazīd of the arrival of Ḥusayn to Mecca and the return of the people to his side. The primary and secondary source of his enmity towards Ḥusayn stirred, put all his effort and entire determination into repelling the Commander of the Faithful, Ḥusayn, and consulted with his political advisors in that regard.

In the *Treasure of Wonders*, it is related that the reason for Yazīd's enmity with Ḥusayn was of two types: extrinsic (formal) and intrinsic (spiritual). The intrinsic lies in the mutual ignorance of the primeval spirits on the Day of the Covenant (*rūz-e mīs̲āq*). The extrinsic is of two types, primary (original) and secondary (derivative). In reality, the secondary derivates

follow from the primary principles, as forms follow concepts. Through the mutual ignorance of the spirits, difference arose between the phantoms. The gist of this is that the spirits of the prophets, the saints, the faithful, the obedient, and the righteous are manifestations of the grace and mercy of God, the truth, according to the disparity of their ranks. The spirits of the infidels, the sinners, the polytheists, the hypocrites, and the wicked are the manifestations of the severity and wrath of God, the truth, according to the difference of their perceptions. The inclination for each group is to their own origin, according to the idea of "*Everything returns to its origin*." So, the spirits which are manifestations of grace and have a spiritual connection to each other, such as the spirits of the prophets, the saints, and the faithful, to degree of that they recognized one another and concorded amongst themselves in proximity on the Day of Covenant. Thus, in this world, intimacy appears amongst their phantoms, and they are familiar with one another. But as for the spirits which are manifestations of severity and their proportional proximity, which they had on the Day of Covenant, their phantoms instead do not have the degree of mutual recognition of their spirits' intimacy and familiarity with each other, for "*those who are acquainted with each other are inclined to each other."* So, because amongst the spirits of the prophets and those who follow them from among the faithful, and amongst the spirits of the infidels, the heretics, and profligates, neither proximity nor connection exists. Consequently, on the Day of Covenant, they were not aware of each other. In accordance with their present mutual ignorance amongst themselves, difference has arisen so that they are opposed to one another: "*Those who are ignorant of each other differ from each other.*" That which within each of these groups is concealed in their relationship to each other they have caused to manifest, as is noted in these couplets:

Friendship and enmity are allocated to all

Due to their difference which occurred on the Day of Covenant

When all of creation was bound together

Every kind was joined within every other

Greeks sought for Greeks,

Ethiopians also watched over Ethiopians

And thus, those kinds which were not together from the beginning

In the present day find themselves as enemies

So as for the opposition of the infidels with the prophets, the recalcitrance of the wicked with the virtuous, and the conflict of the sinners with the righteous, all arose from there. This enmity always persists, so consequently, Yazīd sat in the seat of authority, and took power. When the opportunity presented itself to oppose Ḥusayn, he did so. It has been said that the extrinsic opposition follows from the intrinsic opposition; again, this extrinsic opposition was of two kinds, primary and secondary. The primary is that which existed between the Banū Hāshim and the Banū Umayya. The summary of this situation is that ʿAbd al-Manāf had four sons. Two of his two sons, Hāshim and ʿAbd al-Shams, were 'twins,' meaning that both were born from the same womb. Their foreheads were stuck together, and although they tried to separate them, it was only when a sword was drawn that their heads were separated. This account reached a person among the Arab wise men, who said: "They should be separated in another way, because that is why there will always be enmity between their children, and the sword of their mutual opposition will never be at peace." Therein, the essence of this account is correctly realized. Thus what happened between Banū Hāshim and Banū Umayya, whose son was ʿAbd al-Shams, regarding pilgrimage goods, who Hāshim expelled from Mecca, what arose from the quarrel between ʿAbd al-Muṭalllib and Harb, what happened between Abū Sufyān and the Prophet, what

emerged due to the fighting between Mu'āwiya and Murtaḍá ʿAlī, and what Yazīd did about Ḥusayn was all the result of that primary extrinsic enmity. However, the secondary enmity of Yazīd with Ḥusayn was of two causes. The first of these was that Ḥusayn refused to pledge allegiance to him, neither signing over his obedience to him during his father's lifetime, nor speaking the pledge of allegiance for him to hear after his father's death. The second of these reasons was that ʿAbdullāh b. al-Zubayr had a wife who was greatly famed in her time for her beauty, and when the news of her beauty reached Yazīd, without seeing her, his heart was entranced with love for her. He imagined her in his mind, expressing it in words:

Through hearing of you, I adore your beauty

Consequently, I seek to meet with you

On the whole, he constructed many kinds of tricks and set out stratagems so that Ibn al-Zubayr divorced his wife for no reason. A document of authorization was sent to Abū Mūsá from Syria, saying that Yazīd wanted the divorced wife of Ibn al-Zubayr for himself. On the day when Abū Mūsá was going to that woman on the order of Yazīd's authorization, he encountered ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar on the road, who asked: "Where are you going?" He said, "I am going to the divorced wife of Ibn al-Zubayr to present a matrimonial offer. In this marriage proposal, I have legal representation and direct authority; I do not know which one she will accept." ʿAbdullāh asked, "Whose legal representation, and what does 'direct authority' mean?" He said, "legal representation on my part if she accepts, and direct authority from Yazid if she approves and is satisfied." Ibn ʿUmar said, "Speak on my behalf and if it is accepted, propose marriage to her for me." He said, "I will do so." On the road, Ḥusayn, Commander of the Faithful, encountered Abū Mūsá, and upon being informed of the situation, he said, "I also give you my authorization, so that you may propose marriage on my behalf." Thereupon, Abū Mūsá arrived in that woman's

presence, and after the appropriate salutations and questions, he spoke mysteriously and in metaphors. The lady said, “Put aside the metaphors and get to your point; speak plainly.” Abū Mūsá pulled aside the curtain, saying: “Four men desire you, and I have come so that I may propose marriage to you on behalf of whichever one you like and are satisfied with.” She asked, “Who are these four persons?” He said, “The first is me, if you accept, the second is Yazīd, the third is ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar, and the fourth is his excellency, Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him and ʿAlī.” The lady said, “I am a woman who has my youth and much wealth; however you are an old and aged man, while I am young and fresh. Such an arrangement between us is not appropriate. Divest yourself of your covetousness for me and be disinterested so that I may consult with you.” Abū Mūsá said, “What you say is true; I have put this passion out of my head and have ceased dwelling on this phantasy. I am not up to par to join with you.” The woman said: “Now show me the way and tell me: which of these three is more deserving?” Abū Mūsá said: “I will tell you the consequences of their actions, so that you may you know whoever you choose.” She said: “Tell me.” He said: “If you want wealth and power, desire high station and glory, and your wish is for obtaining pleasure and social alliances, then choose Yazīd. If you want a devout youth, a man possessed of beauty, good looks, and piety, Ibn ʿUmar is the appropriate one. If in this world you seek beauty, virtue, and a graceful disposition, and in the hereafter, salvation from the fires of hell, reaching the ranks of heaven, and the companionship of Fāṭima and the rest of the *ahl al-bayt* in the meadow of Paradise, then behold, it is Ḥusayn of whom I have heard the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him, say: ‘every woman who comes into Ḥusayn’s net and experiences his touch, will be exempt from the fires of hell.’ If you want to be a bride like Fāṭima and the magnificent Khadīja, then become a lady of Ḥusayn’s apartments.” The lady of the age thought, and said, “Indeed, the riches and rank

of this world are ephemeral; that which God has given me is enough for the rest of my life. If these gifts are youth and beauty, then these will vanish with age and sickness. However, service to the *ahl al-bayt* is the cause of endless fortune and eternal happiness." Then Abū Mūsá by virtue of his power of authority, contracted the marriage between her and Ḥusayn, and that fortunate woman of this world and the hereafter chose the service of the prince of the two worlds:

The servant who has chosen his service
God has enriched them in both worlds

When this news arrived in Syria, the enmity for Ḥusayn grew strong in Yazīd's heart. He said, "We did so many tricks so that this woman could emerge from Ibn al-Zubayr's net, and then Ḥusayn married her anyway; our harem does not have her!" Because of these secondary enmities, in addition to the main animosity, he made it the backbone of his effort to destroy Ḥusayn, endeavoring in his plans until the fruitful green shoots of garden of the Prophet withered in thirst in the desert of Karbalā', and even now he seeks tears from the eyes of the friends of Ḥusayn.

The tears flow continuously from the rivers of our eyes
Upon every thirsty green shoot of Karbalā's desert
O heart, cry out for the misfortune that has befallen
The prince of the two realms in the tumult of Karbalā'

The Story of the Three Magical Fruits in Chapter Nine[1032]

[1032] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 470-1.

In the *Lamps of Hearts*, it is related that Gabriel brought a pomegranate (*anār*), an apple (*sīb*), and a quince (*beh*) from heaven and gave them to the *ahl al-bayt*. They were pleased by this, and his excellency the Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, said [to Ḥusayn], "Take these fruits to your father and mother, and eat them together, but leave some from each of them. They did this. The next day, they found that the fruits had become whole and had returned to their original state. Whenever they ate a bit from the fruits and left a bit remaining, the next day, they would be whole, until it happened that Fāṭima died, and the pomegranate disappeared. When they (the Kharijites) martyred ʿAlī, the quince also disappeared, but the apple remained with Ḥusayn. Ḥusayn kept it with him when he was overcome with thirst at Karbalā', the sweet smell of the apple lessened his thirst. When they martyred Ḥusayn, the apple also disappeared, but they smelled the apple's perfume from the holy ground [upon which he died]. Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn related that every sincere believer who made a pilgrimage to Ḥusayn's tomb during the proper season, would smell the scent of that apple from the same ground. The scent of his excellency's grave is a thousand times more fragrant than musk, and better than the perfume of ambergris; *"peace be upon the earth which encloses his body.*"

The Story of the Turkish Slave in Chapter Nine[1033]

Afterwards, the Turkish slave, who had memorized the Qur'ān and could recite it, arrived in Ḥusayn's presence, with a face glowing like the moon and shining like the sun, knelt on the ground in front of him, saying, "*Let me be your ransom*," [meaning] "May my life be the ransom for yours, O son of God's Messenger! Since I realize that from among our army, not a one will

[1033] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā'*, 562-565.

remain alive, give me leave so that I may also sacrifice myself for you and acquaint myself with the world close to God and those who are nearest to the source of truth." Ḥusayn said, "I purchased you for my son Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, and you were given to him, so seek permission from him."

The narrator says that on this day, Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn was ill and resting in his tent. The slave went in and said, "O my lord, I asked permission from his excellency, your father, to join the battle. He said, 'You are the light of my eye. He has authority over you.' Now I have brought myself to the threshold of your august presence, and I am hoping that you will not reject me, but rather you will give me leave to fight." Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn said, "I set you free to be upon the path of God, thus you well know." The Turk, virtuous, pure, well-intentioned, and good-hearted, went out to the surrounding tents, and asked for forgiveness from all of the gathered retinue. He said, "My wish is that on the day after resurrection, you seek me out. However often I have fallen short in service, please do not forget me."

A loud cry rose from the *ahl al-bayt*. Once again, he went to pay his respects to Ḥusayn, and informed him of the state of affairs. He then asked for permission from Ḥusayn to offer his life on the battlefields. News reached Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn that the slave was on his way to the field, so he said, "Lift up the tent-flap so that I may observe the fighting ability of this Turk." They lifted up the tent-flap, and the prince observed that Turk standing in the midst of both two columns with cheeks like a blossoming rose and face like a mid-month moon, a sword like a burning-bright bolt of lightning, like a comet-flame, fighting like a demon scattering fire to and fro upon the unfortunate faces of those soldiers, tossing them aside as he sought battle. Sometimes, he recited verses in Arabic, sometimes he uttered some words in Turkish. Abū al-Mufākhir has given a translation of some of the verses, which are:

O Ḥusayn, O holy jewel

The exemplar of blessed dignity

I am that Turk who would become king

If you call me the Indian of his excellency

Due to your miraculous power, the sword in my hand

Will act as a dragon upon the enemy

What will happen, if your beautiful face

Is stained blood-red, [what will happen] to me for eternity?

Rest your face against mine in sadness

Because I will soon leave this ephemeral realm

A warrior went forth and was killed at his hands, until many enemies lay dead before the Turk. Overcome with thirst, he turned back, and once again came to the tent of his lordship Imam Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn. The son of Ḥusayn praised him and approved of his actions in battle. He applauded him, greeting him happily with glad tidings like a draught from the river Kawthar,[1034] joy, and blessings *from God*. That honest, pure-hearted Turk, having kissed the hand and feet of Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, requested permission to retire from the inner chambers of the sinless and pure. He cried out bitterly from the pain of separation from him, then having faced the battlefield, stirred up feelings of torment and cast curses amongst the cloudy-faced warriors. The reward of Sorūsh, from the hidden world, calling out upon that final battlefield the cry of "*return to your Lord!*" delivered itself to the ears of his noble soul. From the plane of nearness to the Lord of all servants, the excellent words, "*enter into my paradise*" firmly entered the ears of the intellect of that pure Turk.

[1034] A famous mystical river believed to flow through paradise.

He gave up his soul, smiling, to the heavenly garden

Earning a mansion within the blessed gardens

In most books it is mentioned that the Turk was grievously wounded and collapsed. Ḥusayn came towards him and brought him to Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn's tent. Upon getting down from his mount, he placed the Turk's head in his arms, and turned his head to face him. Despite his illness, Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn stood above the Turk's bed while the eyes of the slave opened. He saw his own head in Ḥusayn's arms and observed Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn below him. Smiling at father and son, he greeted them, and then departed for the garden of Paradise.

The Story of Zaʿfar the Leader of the Fairies in Chapter Nine[1035]

The prince wanted to attack when suddenly, a cloud of dust appeared, however, no one else saw anyone at all. Soon after, a terrifying individual with a strange visage [appeared] sitting on a mount. His head and hands had the form of a horse, and his feet resembled a lion. He came before Ḥusayn and greeted him with the words, "Peace be upon you, and upon your grandfather, your father, and your mother." Ḥusayn returned his greeting and said, "Who are you, O fortunate one, who greets mistreated wretches and wandering strangers at such a time?" He said, "O son of God's messenger, I am the master of the fairies (*mehtar-e paryān*), the client of the lord of the end of my age, the servant of the king of mankind. They call me "Zaʿfar the Ascetic," and my army is within this desert. Your father, when he arrived at the pit of *Biʾr Dhāt al-ʿAlam*, made the demons (*dīv*) into Muslims with the stroke of his sword *Dhū l-Fiqār*. He gave my father the rank of a prince

[1035] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadāʾ*, 619-20.

amongst them, and after my father's death, they were at my command. I have given leave so that I might come with my army and accept the plea from these people gathered here.

By God's grace, I would gladden my companions
And trample these perverse tyrants underfoot

Ḥusayn said, "Oh Za'far, may God reward you with his beneficence; it is not your right to kill human beings, since you have subtle bodies; they will not see you, but you will see them and this is unfair. The angels had desired to come to my grandfather's aid at the Battle of Badr to fight the infidels; this was at God's command. You should turn back and return home. Za'far said, "Oh lord, we will appear to them in human form and do battle; if they kill some of our people, then we would then be on your martyr's path. Ḥusayn stated, "Many thanks, O Za'far, but I am satisfied with my life, and I have seen the future. Today, I will meet God the omnipotent himself. For my sake, please turn back and do not hinder these people. Za'far turned back, and at that very moment, the cloud of dust disappeared.

The Discussion of ʿĀshūrā' and Its Rituals in Chapter Ten[1036]

It should be known that in all of time, there is no story more heartrending than the story of the martyrs of the *ahl al-bayt*. No tale in any age among the centuries and eras is more filled with woe that the event of Karbalā'. It is due to the wonder of this event, which from the day of Ḥusayn's martyrdom up until the date of the composition of this book, being around eight hundred forty-seven years, that whenever the month of Muḥarram returns anew, the sign of this funeral's renewal

[1036] Kāshefī, *Rowẕat ol-Shohadā',* 634-637, 638.

upon the pages of the hearts of Muslims and the devotees of the lord of mankind's *ahl al-bayt*, blessings and peace be upon him, will be inscribed. This cry regarding the disaster-stricken ones of the *ahl al-bayt* will be heard [coming] from the tongue of the invisible speaker, the undoubtable, all-knowing announcer:

O dearly beloved, lament over the sorrow of the Prophet's grandson
Enflame your chests with burning passion (*sūz*) for the king of Karbalā'
Let loose your tears upon the earth for his thirsty lips
During your weeping, smile over the memory of those lips
Because when you remember the earth and his blood, O friends,
The memory will harden; weep as the clouds with eyes raining bloody tears
Water the palm-tree of his stature with streams of tears
At the very hour it occurred, make [it into] a bed of roses and a garden
Through yearning for his visage, see it as rose-petals in the meadow
Lament like the nightingales with a heart full of woe
Even if the scent of fresh hyacinths wafts through your nose
Remember the memory of those black ringlets and hair perfumed with musk

An eminent person said that although the month of Muḥarram was a venerable month, and Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī was an honorable king, those ignorant obstinate ones and stonehearted haughty ones, neither observed the sanctity of this month nor observed deference for its king. The month of Muḥarram is one of the sacrosanct months, and the day of *ʿAshūrā'* is a venerable day, and Friday is the lord of the days. The time of Friday prayer is a place for the answering of requests, and the presentation of pleas and wishes. In such a month, they intended to make a king, and on *ʿAshura*, they brought tumult to the *ahl al-bayt*. On such a day, they stained a delightful face with

blood. At such a time, they overthrew the rightful place of the ruler. How strange that a day when the souls of the prophets and messengers, the assembly of the angels nearest to God, in sympathy with the lord of the first and the last, wept due to that event. The houris of heaven and the pure-eyed maidens concorded with the holy virgin Fāṭima in suffering, sorrow, mourning, and pain. On that day, the family flag was overturned, with uncountable desolation, rage, adversity, and tribulation, the earth cried out that today is the day of *ʿAshūrā'*! Time roared that the day was one of conflict, tumult, and evil.

Come and see, *ʿAshūrā'* is today

The world is dark and lightless today

Ḥusayn who is the light of the Prophet's eye

Today is overcome in the clutches of the enemy

With a cut throat, dry lips, and heart's blood

Today his head is cast far from his body

With a face like the sun, O woe!

Today is veiled with a storm of swords

On that day, Shimr the accursed, placed the dagger of vengeance to the beloved throat of the prince. On that day, his perfumed locks that his excellency the Prophet, blessings and peace of God be upon him – would be seized and thrown in dirt and blood. On that day, the dogs of the encampment of error and the pigs of the desert of ignorance were satiated, and the lion-cubs of the forests of Imamate and munificence suffered anguish due to parching thirst. On the Tenth of Muḥarram, that honorable one was struck with arrow-wounds all around, and they broke his sword. On the Tenth of the month, the blessed head of the king was plucked, and they threw his body in the dust of Karbalā':

On the day of ʿĀshūrā', remove the crown of magnificence from your head

In the time of the funeral procession, put the cloth of submission on your neck

Tear the beating heart from the sorrow of the king of the martyrs

Scatter drops of blood from the stream of tears upon your robe

On this day, the devotees of the *ahl al-bayt* should push happiness and companionship to the margins of their lives and throw open the doors of sorrow and tribulation in their burning hearts. They should shed tears of repentance from their eyes during this time, and at this moment, and heave plaintive sighs from their chests. In the *Eyes of Riḍā*, it is mentioned that they have said on the day of *ʿĀshūrā'*, you should cry, considering this day as your own day of tribulation and calamity, leaving the concerns of everyday life aside. You should observe the ceremonies of calamity, so that whosoever puts aside worldly affairs on the day of *ʿĀshūrā'*, God, may he be praised, will provide for their needs in this world and the next. Whosoever considers this day as their own day of sorrow and pain, God, most high, will make the Day of Judgement their day of rejoicing and happiness. Their eyes will shine with the glory of the *ahl al-bayt* in the gardens of heaven. Also in the *Eyes*, in the *ḥadīth* of Rayyān b. Shabīb, it is related that, "O Ibn Shabīb, if you desire to be in the highest heaven at the highest station with us, then be sorrowful over our sorrow, be aggrieved at our grief, and then our friendship will be upon you, for all those who are loved will be gathered. O Ibn Shabīb, if you weep for Ḥusayn, to the extent that even some teardrops flow down your face, then God, most high, will forgive your sins, the trivial and the serious, both few and many. O Ibn Shabīb, if you wish to reach God and be free of all sin, then make a pilgrimage to Ḥusayn's tomb above all else. If you wish to dwell in the mansions of heaven, then cast your curses upon the murderers of Ḥusayn. If you are happy with your fate, then remember the reward of those who became martyrs in service to Ḥusayn; whenever you remember

the events of Karbalā', meditate to yourself, "Would that I were present at that battlefield, so that I could sacrifice my life for the unjustly treated king."

I would have sacrificed my life for the right of God

If I had been there at the time of Ḥusayn

Also in the *Eyes of Riḍā*, he says that whoever remembers our disaster, meaning the tale of Karbalā', then cries and makes someone else cry, their eyes will not shed tears on the day when all other eyes weep. Whoever sets up a mourning session where one brings our memory to life, their soul will not die even when all other souls are dying in terror. So then, dearly beloved, strive until the final days of adversity to pour teardrops from your eyes, and you will not consider those tears to be lost or of no avail; your offering on *the day wherein neither wealth nor children will be of use*[1037] will be your tears and burning chest.

[1037] Qur'ān 26:88

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