

Karbala of Husayn (as): A Living University of Sacrifice, Faith, Ethics, and Resistance

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Abstract: This paper reflects on the multi-dimensional significance of the tragedy of Karbala and the Shahadat of al-Imam al-Husayn (as), emphasizing its enduring spiritual, ethical, and socio-political lessons for the Muslim Ummah. It argues that rituals, when performed without comprehension or purpose, risk becoming empty forms rather than meaningful acts of devotion. Karbala demonstrates that Ibadah and remembrance must always be connected to justice, Akhlaq, and spiritual growth. The study revisits pivotal moments of Karbala, including the Shahadat of Moula Ali al-Aṣghar (as), whose innocence revealed the depth of Yazid's cruelty, and the steadfast courage of Sayyidah Zaynab (as), who transformed captivity and humiliation into moral authority. The final universal calls of al-Imam al-Husayn (as), particularly "Hal min Naṣirin Yansuruna" are highlighted as timeless appeals to humanity, inviting every generation to stand against Zulm and injustice. Karbala is thus presented not as a closed chapter of history, but as an eternal paradigm of resistance. The responsibilities of those engaged in Azadari are examined: preachers and lecturers who must communicate the ethical and spiritual essence of Karbala; caretakers of gatherings who preserve their sanctity; and the audience who must internalize and apply the lessons. Contemporary risks, such as ritual stagnation, commercialization of devotion, and the danger of hypocrisy are critically analyzed. Rituals such as recitation of Qur'an, Marthiyah, and Matam risk losing their transformative power when detached from their true purpose: pursuit of justice, adherence to Sunnah, and cultivation of Akhlaq. Karbala is described as an "Ideal University" where sacrifice, courage, and divine consciousness are taught through the lived examples of al-Imam al-Husayn (as), his Ahl al-Bayt (as), and his Ashab. The active roles of women, particularly Sayyidah Zaynab (as) and Sayyidah Kulthum (as), in preserving the moral and spiritual legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), are emphasized. Their courage and resilience in the face of oppression demonstrate the indispensable role of women in defending justice. Similarly, the sacrifice of children, especially Moula 'Ali al-Aṣghar (as), underscores the universality of Karbala's message. The paper concludes that Karbala remains a living lesson of Ṣabr, Īm'an, and Jihad against injustice, an eternal call for the 21st-century Muslim community to rise with moral clarity, social responsibility, and divine guidance.

Keywords: al-Husayn (as); Karbala; Azadari; Zaynab (as); Ali al-Aṣghar (as); Commemoration; Justice; Spirituality, Ahl al-Bayt (as), Shia Muharram, Umm'e Kulthum, women; martyrdom,

1. Role of the Ash'ab of Rasulullah (S) in Karbala:

What a moving scene it must have been when, before leaving Madinah, a 70-year-old weak Black man asked Al Imam al-Husayn (as) to let him go with him to Kufa. When Al Imam al-Husayn (as) told him:

"You have already served the Ahl al-Bayt so much. Now you should rest,"

That old man must have replied in a trembling voice:

"I know why you do not want to take me with you - because I am Black."

Then Al Imam al-Husayn (as) stepped forward, kissed his forehead, and held him to his chest. This was Jun ibn Huwayy (ra), the radiant and fragrant martyr of Karbala-a Sahabi of Rasulullah (S) and a loyal follower of Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as). He accepted Islam in Abyssinia, migrated to Madinah, and entered the service of Moula Ali (as). He stayed with Al Imam al-Hasan (as) and Al Imam al-Husayn (as). Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) entrusted him to Abu Dharr (ra), so he remained close to Abu Dharr. He was even exiled with him to Sham, and then once again, because he spoke the truth, he was sent into exile to a mountain town called Jabal al-Amil. Today, the region of Jabal al-Amil in present-day Lebanon is a center of the lovers of Ahl al-Bayt (as). Whenever you see a scholar with the title al-Amili, remember that this is the result of the efforts of Abu Dharr (ra) and Jun (ra). It is as if Jun was the one who, in Karbala, represented not only himself but also his master and friend, Abu Dharr (ra). Jun's connection with Abu Dharr (ra) ended with Abu Dharr's Shahadat. Why was such a great Sahabi of Rasulullah (S) - whose piety Muhammad (S) compared to that of Essa (as) - killed in such an oppressed and lonely way? Now look at the greatness of Jun (ra). He became Muslim in Abyssinia, migrated to Madinah to serve Rasulullah (S), stayed with Ali (as), and traveled with Abu Dharr (ra) through Sham and Jabal al-Amil. Then, in the year 60 AH, he stood once again before Al Imam al-Husayn (as), as if saying:

"My Moula Abu Dharr (ra) has already been Shaheed. Surely I have remained alive only so that I may be martyred with you."

When this 70-year-old man fell from his horse in Karbala, he found his head resting in the lap of Moula al-Husayn (as). This was the same Jun (ra) who had complained in Madinah that perhaps Al Imam al-Husayn (as) did not want to take him because he was Black and because his sweat had an unpleasant smell. Yet in Karbala, that same Jun found his head in Husayn's lap. It was at that moment that Moula al-Husayn (as), with Jun's head in his lap, made that famous Dua:

"O Lord, brighten his face and make his sweat fragrant."

It is said that as soon as the Dua ended, Jun's body became filled with fragrance and his face shone with Noor. This was the radiant and fragrant Shaheed of Karbala, who came all the way from Abyssinia to Karbala so that his blood could be joined with the blood of Husayn (as). Buried in Ganj al-Shuhada, directly in front of the grave of Moula al-Husayn (as).

Karbala is a best example in history to demonstrate Haq against the Batil by All Ages and Groups. The ideology of Karbala spreads without discrimination across the globe because its participants represented every segment of society. Infant like Moula Ali al-Asghar (as), six months old, and children like Aun (as) and Muhammad (as) stood as symbols of purity and pure sacrifice. Youngster like Ali al-Akbar (as) embodied courage, valor, and loyalty. Thus, for every human being, child, youngster, woman, or elder, Karbala presents an ideal role model. Some Ash'ab al-Nabi (S) remained loyal to Al Imam al-Husayn (as), while others tragically stood with Yazid (L). Habib ibn Mazahir (ra), a close friend of Al Imam al-Husayn (as) and a respected elder

of Kufa; he was among the earliest to join Moula al-Husayn (as) in Karbala and fought bravely until Shahadat. Muslim ibn Awsaja (ra), one of the oldest Ash'ab, he fought courageously despite his ripe age, fulfilling his Ahd of loyalty to Al Imam al-Husayn. Zuhair ibn Qayn (ra), initially hesitant, he eventually chose to join Husayn (as) and became one of his most loyal and brave Ash'ab. Burair ibn Khudair (ra), a Qur'an reciter and devout Muslim who defended Al Imam al-Husayn (as) with valor. Nafi' ibn Hilal (ra), a brave warrior who inflicted heavy losses on Yazid's army before being captured and finally got honour of Shahadat. Hur ibn Yazid al-Riyahi (ra), a commander from Yazid's army who joined to Al Imam al-Husayn's side on the day of Aashurah after realizing the injustice being committed. His Taubah and Istaghfar and sacrifice are among the most inspiring episodes of Karbala. Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi (ra), remains one of the unique figures of Karbala. He gives a lasting answer to those Nasibis who call Karbala merely an accident or a struggle for power. His life declares that Karbala was a universal battle between truth and falsehood - and that to have one's name included in it was such an honor that he migrated from Abyssinia to Karbala for it. Wahab ibn Abdullah al-Kalbi (ra), a newly wed Christian who, along with his wife, embraced Islam on the day of Aashurah and selected Shahadat with Moula al-Husayn (as).

The Ash'ab of Husayn (as) have played a central and heroic role in the tragedy of Karbala in 680 CE. They were a small group of devoted men who stood by Imam Husayn ibn Ali (as), the grandson of Muhammad (S), in his stand against tyranny and injustice under Yazid ibn Muawiyah's rule. Despite being vastly outnumbered by Yazid's army, these Ash'ab displayed unshakable loyalty, courage, and faith. They stayed with Moula al-Husayn (as) even after being given the option to leave when it became clear that the battle would end in Shahadat. On the day of Aashurah, one by one, they fought bravely to defend Al Imam al-Husayn (as), his family, and the values of Islam, sacrificing their lives for truth, justice, and the preservation of the Nabawi Talim. Their role is remembered as a symbol of selflessness, steadfastness, and ultimate devotion to Allah. They demonstrated that standing for truth, even in the face of certain death, is a timeless act of honor and faith. These Ash'ab, along with Al Imam al-Husayn's own Ahl al-Bayt, fought not for worldly gain but to defend the Kalimah, justice, and for the dignity of Islam. Their names are honored every year during Muharram and Safar as examples of loyalty, courage, and sacrifice. Sayyiduna Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari (ra), a senior Sahabi, was the first to perform the Ziyarah of Al Imam al-Husayn's grave and conveyed the Salaam to Al Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as), which was an Amanah of Rasulullah (S).

2. The Legacy of The Shuhada of Ahl al-Bayt (as) in Karbala al-Muqaddasah:

On the day of Aashurah, by the side of Moula al-Husayn (as) were stood the noble family of Rasulullah (S), each embracing Shahadat with courage. The eldest son of Husayn (as), the reflection of Rasulullah(S) in character and appearance, Ali al-Akbar (as), fought valiantly and fell in the battleground. From the children of his brother, Al Imam al-Hasan (as), the young Qasim ibn Hasan (as) fought like a lion despite his young age and the child Abdullah ibn al-Hasan (as) gave their lives defending their uncle al-Husayn (as). From the children of Sayyidah Zaynab (as), her sons Aun and Muhammad (as) answered her call to defend their uncle and were embraced Shahadat. From Amir al-Mumineen Ali's other sons, the noble brothers of Husayn (as), Sayyidi Abal-Fadl al-Abbas (as), Jafar (as), Uthman (as), Abu Bakr (as), and

Abdullah (as) stood firm. Among them, Moula Abal-Fadl al-Abbas (as), the flag-bearer of Husayn's army, became the very embodiment of loyalty and sacrifice as he fell while trying to bring water for the children. Each Shaheed of Ahl al-Bayt (as) in Karbala represented a dimension of sacrifice: the courage of youth, the devotion of brothers, the goodness of children, and the unwavering loyalty of Ash'ab. Collectively, their role was to defend Islam from distortion, to show that the family of Rasulullah (S) would never bow to tyranny, and to prove that truth is more precious than life itself. Their Shahadat turned Karbala into a timeless lesson for humanity: that faith, justice, and dignity must be upheld even at the cost of the greatest sacrifices. Karbala is more than a historical battlefield. It is an everlasting University where every participant, young or old, male or female, taught timeless lessons of morality, courage, and responsibility. The sacrifices made on the plains of Karbala continue to guide humanity on how to live with dignity and stand against oppression. Every soul in Karbala represents a faculty of learning.

3. Faculty of Purity, Ali al-Asghar (as) in the Living University of Karbala:

Nearly all of Moula al-Husayn's Ash'ab and Ahl al-Bayt had been Shaheed, he was left almost alone on the battlefield, facing thousands of enemy soldiers. At that point, Moula al-Husayn called out "Hal Min Nasirin Yansuruna?" Is there anyone to help us? "Hal Min Zabbin Yazubbu 'an Haram Rasulillah?" - Is there anyone to defend the sanctity of Rasulullah's (S) household? "Hal Min Nasirin Yansuruna", is a final universal call, not only to those present on the battlefield, but also symbolically to all of humanity, across time, asking: Who will rise to defend truth, justice, and the family of Rasulullah (S)? Even Al Imam 'Ali Zayn al-'Abideen (as), though ill, attempted to answer, but was restrained to ensure the continuity of leadership and moral guidance. These moments underscore that Karbala was not merely a battle, but a Hujjah (divine proof) against oppression. It is a call to every believer to confront injustice actively rather than remain silent. The final call of Al Imam al-Husayn (as) in Karbala - "Hal Min Nasirin Yansuruna?" - invites active moral participation from humanity. The absence of a response from bystanders reinforces the duty of every believer to oppose injustice actively. His offer of migration to enemies as an act of mercy exemplifies ethical engagement that transcends personal risk, emphasizing moral responsibility over mere survival.

According to some traditions, after saying this, even the women and children in his camp wept, and Ali al-Asghar, the infant, responded with his cry, which led Husayn to take him out and ask for water for the baby. The six-month-old Ali al-Asghar (as), known as Abdullah, teaches us that Al Imam al-Husayn (as) did not march for war. His taking a newborn child proves his intention was never worldly conflict. Among the most powerful lessons is the Shahadat of Moula 'Ali al-Asghar (as), the six-month-old son of Moula al-Husayn (as), his sacrifice represents both innocence and the extreme cruelty of tyranny. When Al Imam al-Husayn (as) carried his thirsty infant baby to the battlefield, he asked only for a few drops of water. This moment showed clearly that his mission was not to fight for power, but to defend truth, justice, and human dignity. The refusal of army of Yazid Malun to grant water to an infant remains one of history's darkest examples of moral corruption. His infant son, Ali al-Asghar (as), was struck by an arrow of three pronged as he lay in his father's arms, showing the cruelty of the enemy. Yet, Al Imam al-Husayn (as), even in this moment of unbearable grief, remained composed and patient. His

endurance shows the highest form of spiritual resistance remaining faithful to the command of Allah and standing firm for justice despite unimaginable suffering. Husayn (as) took blood of his son Ali al-Asghar (as) in his palm and witnessing the slaying of his infant, Moula cried out to his Rabb:

"O Allah! Be a judge between us and those who invited us, having promised assistance, but instead killed us."

He also said:

"O Allah! I complain to You regarding how they have treated me, my brothers, my sons, and my family."

Al Imam al-Husayn further said:

"O Allah The Shahadat of this infant is not less important than the slaughter of the Camel of Salih (as) before You! So if today, You have prevented us from the victory, assign better things for us!"

Moula Ali al-Asghar (as) is symbol of Ultimate Sacrifice "Be Zibhin Azim" of Surah al-Saffat 37:107. The tragedy of Karbala is not only about the Shahadat of great warriors but also about the role of children who became part of this divine mission. Al Imam al-Husayn (as), filled with pain but firm in faith, looked toward the heavens and recited the words:

"Inna Lillah'e wa Inna 'ilayh'e Raji'un"- "Surely we belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return."

With his own hands, he buried Ali al-Asghar (as) beside his mother, Sayyidah Rubab (as) was witnessing. This heart-wrenching moment shows the depth of Al Imam al-Husayn's (as) sacrifice and his complete trust in Allah's will. The Shahadat of Ali al-Asghar (as) highlights the spiritual essence of Karbala. Even the infant became part of the struggle for divine justice. Through the narration of Ali al-Asghar (as), we learn that Karbala was not only about battlefield courage but also about patience, compassion, and submission to Allah. His sacrifice continues to remind us that faith is not measured by age or strength, but by sincerity and devotion. The infant Shaheed of Karbala remains an eternal symbol of purity and the ultimate expression of sacrifice in the path of truth.

4. Farewell of Moula al-Husayn (as) and His Trust in Sayyidah Zaynab (as):

Before departing for the battlefield, Al Imam al-Husayn (as) entrusted the care of the women, children, and elderly members of his camp to his beloved sister, Sayyidah Zaynab (as). He instructed her to preserve their honor, protect the vulnerable, and maintain patience and fortitude in the face of oppression. He said:

"Our camp will be plundered and set on fire. After I am slain, calamities will befall you. Bear every trial with patience and fortitude, and safeguard the orphans, especially Sakinah (as)."

These instructions emphasized the strategic and moral role of women in preserving the Ahl al-Bayt's (as) spiritual and ethical mission. Sayyidah Zaynab (as) was given the responsibility of ensuring that the legacy of Karbala would continue beyond the battlefield. During the battle, Moula al-Husayn (as) positioned himself close to the tents of the women and children. This decision served two purposes: it restrained the enemy from directly attacking the vulnerable, and it assured the women of his protection and presence. His nearness gave them courage, while his movements and calls from the battlefield strengthened their resolve. Through this, Al Imam al-Husayn (as) demonstrated that true leadership combines courage with compassion and

responsibility. He showed that defending truth and justice also requires protecting the weak and ensuring the dignity of one's family, even in the face of certain tragedy.

5. The Courageous Women of Karbala: Wisdom and Voices Transformed History:

The women of Karbala, led by Sayyidah Zaynab (as), were central to preserving and spreading the message of Al Imam al-Husayn (as). Their role was not secondary but decisive. Moula al-Husayn (as) entrusted them with safeguarding Islam through patience, resilience, and eloquence. Despite facing captivity, humiliation, and public shaming, they transformed suffering into a platform of strength. Sayyidah Zaynab's (as) powerful sermons in Kufa and Shaam exposed the injustice of Yazid's rule and ensured that the truth of Karbala could never be erased. The grief of young Sayyidah Sakinah (as) reminds us that Karbala was deeply human. Her tears for her father and fear of being an orphan reflect the personal and family sacrifices that gave Karbala its moral and spiritual power. Through such endurance, the women of Karbala showed that courage is not only physical, but also emotional, intellectual, and spiritual.

Sayyidah Zaynab (as), Sayyidah Umm'e Kulthum (as), Sayyidah Rubab (as), Sayyidah Sakinah (as), Sayyidah Shahar'e Banu (as) and other noble ladies embodied patience, strength, and moral clarity. Their role highlights that women are vital in carrying forward values, protecting faith, and guiding communities. They were not silent bystanders but active leaders in ensuring that the message of Moula al-Husayn (as) reached future generations. Following the Shahadat of Al Imam al-Husayn (as), Sayyidah Zaynab (as) emerged as a symbol of courage and wisdom. She guided the surviving members of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) and spoke fearlessly in the courts of Ibn Ziyad (L) and Yazid (L). Her leadership showed that moral authority does not depend on physical power but on conviction, faith, and truth.

Other women of Karbala also played crucial roles. Mother Fizzah (ra), a former princess of Abyssinia who devoted herself to serving the Ahl al-Bayt (as), represents selfless dedication. By abandoning worldly privilege, she demonstrated that true honor lies in service to faith and living by the values of Qur'an. Together, these women displayed courage, wisdom, and ethical guidance under the harshest persecution. Their legacy teaches several lasting lessons:

Maintaining dignity and composure in extreme hardship

Safeguarding the weak and preserving moral and spiritual values

Speaking truth to power and exposing injustice

Teaching future generations the principles of courage and justice

The tragedy of Karbala is often remembered for the bravery of Moula al-Husayn (as) and his companions. Yet, without the sacrifices of the women, the message could have been silenced. Their strength ensured that Karbala became a living lesson for all time.

The women of Karbala showed that standing against tyranny is both a spiritual and social duty. Their example proves that faith, moral clarity, and ethical action can confront even the strongest injustice. Thus, the commemoration of Karbala is more than mourning. It is a source of education, a call to action, and a guide for ethical living. Every believer - man, woman, or child - is invited to carry forward this legacy by embodying justice, courage, and steadfastness in daily life. When the swords fell silent on Aashurah, it seemed the tragedy of Karbala would end with

the Shahadat of Al Imam al-Husayn (as) and his Ash'ab. But Allah had decreed that the mission of Karbala would continue through the courage, eloquence, and leadership of Sayyidah Zaynab (as), the daughter of Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) and Sayyidah Fatimah (as), and sister of Moula al-Husayn (as).

i. Guardian of the Survivors: After the massacre, Sayyidah Zaynab (as) became the protector of the remaining family, especially the ill Imam Ali Zayn al-Abideen (as). She safeguarded the women and children during captivity, ensuring their dignity was not destroyed by the Yazid's soldiers. Her composure and strength prevented despair and preserved the mission of Moula al-Husayn (as).

ii. The Voice of Karbala al-Muqaddasah: Zaynab (as) transformed from a grieving sister into the voice of the revolution. In Kufa and later in Shaam, she delivered powerful sermons that shook the very foundations of Yazid's rule. In Kufa, she confronted the people who had invited Husayn (as) but failed to support him, reminding them of their betrayal and exposing the brutality of the Umayyads. In Yazid's court in Shaam, she stood fearlessly before the tyrant himself, declaring:

"I see nothing but beauty in what Allah decreed."

She exposed Yazid's crimes, shamed his court, and turned what he intended as humiliation into a platform of truth. Sayyidah Zaynab's role after Karbala was the continuation of Husayn's mission. While Husayn (as) embodied sacrifice on the battlefield, Zaynab (as) carried that sacrifice into history through her sermons, leadership, and patience. She transformed tragedy into revolution, and her voice turned the pain of Karbala into a movement of truth that still inspires Muslims and all seekers of justice around the world. In short: If Husayn (as) saved Islam with his blood, Zaynab (sa) saved it with her words.

iii. Preserving the Message of Husayn (as): While the Shuhada gave their lives to defend Islam, Sayyidah Zaynab (as) gave her voice and endurance to ensure their sacrifice would not be forgotten. She turned captivity into a pulpit, narrating the story of Karbala wherever she was taken. Without her, the tragedy might have been buried under Yazid's propaganda.

iv. Revolutionary Impact: The sermons of Sayyidah Zaynab (as) had immediate and long-term effects. They exposed Yazid's tyranny to the public, transforming what was supposed to be his victory parade into a political disaster for him. They awakened the Muslim community, stirring feelings of guilt, grief, and anger that later fueled uprisings like the Tawwabin (the Penitents) and the revolt of Mukhtar al-Thaqafi. They ensured that Karbala became a living memory, not just an event inspiring generations to resist injustice.

6. The Legacy of Al Imam Zayn al-Abideen (as) and Şahifah Sajjadiyyah:

After Karbala, the continuation of the Imamate rested with Imam Zayn al-Abideen (as). Despite illness and captivity, he preserved Islam through his Sahifah Sajjadiyyah, which became a spiritual weapon against tyranny. This masterpiece of prayers combines theology, ethics, and social justice, making it second only to the Qur'an in authenticity and spiritual influence. The

Imam Ali Zayn al-Abideen (as) lived during a period of immense political turmoil following the tragedy of Karbala. The oppressive Umayyad rulers restricted him from openly teaching Islam or directly challenging their authority. In this environment, the Imam chose a unique and profound method to preserve and spread the message of Islam: through his Dua. His famous collection of Adiyah, the *Ṣaḥifah Sajjadiyyah*, is regarded as one of the most important spiritual and intellectual treasures of Islam.

i. Spiritual Communication with Allah: Through his Dua, Al Imam Zayn al-Abideen exemplified the deepest form of servitude to Allah. His Adiyah were filled with humility, awe, and love for Allah, teaching Muslims how to maintain a constant connection with their Creator. This not only guided individuals in personal Ibadah but also demonstrated that true strength lies in submission to Allah alone, not to worldly powers.

ii. Moral and Ethical Education: Many Adiyah in the *Ṣaḥifah* emphasize virtues such as patience, gratitude, forgiveness, compassion, justice, and sincerity. For example, his Dua Makarim al-Akhlaq (For Noble Morals) serves as a moral charter, guiding believers to refine their character and deal with others in accordance with Islamic ethics. By embedding these lessons within prayers, the Imam provided practical spiritual training for everyday life.

iii. Social and Community Guidance: Al Imam Zayn al-Abideen's Adiyah addressed the responsibilities of Muslims toward family, neighbors, the poor, orphans, and even towards enemies. He emphasized social justice, the importance of caring for the oppressed, and living in harmony within society. In an era when social injustice and tyranny prevailed, his Adiyah reminded Muslims of their true duties toward one another.

iv. Subtle Political Resistance: Although the Imam could not openly confront the Umayyad rulers, his Adiyah carried powerful messages of resistance. By highlighting the values of truth, justice, and the remembrance of the Nabawi family, his Adiyah preserved the spirit of Karbala. In this way, his words became a silent yet enduring protest against oppression and a reminder of the legitimacy of the Ahl al-Bayt's leadership.

v. Sahifah, Reflection of the Qur'an: The language, imagery, and themes of *Ṣaḥifah Sajjadiyyah* are deeply rooted in the Qur'an. Every Dua reflects teachings of Qur'an, turning the Ayah into lived experiences. This method reinforced the centrality of the Qur'an in Muslim life and reminded believers that Dua itself is an act of Ibadah.

vi. A Timeless Legacy: Through his Adiyah, Al Imam Ali Zayn al-Abideen (as) created a spiritual encyclopedia of Islam. His words continue to inspire Muslims across generations, offering guidance not only for Ibadah but also for moral conduct, social responsibility, and resilience against injustice. The *Ṣaḥifah Sajjadiyyah* thus stands as both a devotional text and a comprehensive manual for Islamic living. Al Imam Ali Zayn al-Abideen (as) communicated the message of Islam through his Adiyah by turning Dua into a teaching tool. At a time when open preaching was impossible, his Adiyah became a silent revolution of the heart, nurturing faith, morality, and resistance against tyranny.

7. Azadari as Responsibility: The Duty of Zakireen, Management, and Mumineen:

Commemoration of Al Imam al-Husayn (as) is an active responsibility, distributed among three groups:

i. Preachers and Lecturers: They must convey the message with sincerity, balance intellect and emotion, and protect it from misrepresentation. They should challenge distortions of Islam that seek to strip it of its moral and spiritual depth. Not spend time in money minting on the name of Moula al-Husayn (as).

ii. Caretakers of Gatherings: They ensure that events are inclusive, accessible, and meaningful, connecting mourning with ethical reflection, education, and social reform.

iii. Audience and Participants: True engagement requires sincerity, reflection, and application. Mourning should inspire moral action, not social prestige or ritualistic habit. Only when all three groups fulfill their responsibilities can Azadari retain its soul and continue to shape ethical, spiritual, and social consciousness.

iv. Sincerity of Intention: Participation in the gatherings of Al Imam Husayn (as) must stem from genuine intention to attain nearness to Allah. Attendees are encouraged to avoid external influences such as social expectation, flattery, reputation, or criticism. The central purpose is spiritual growth and alignment with divine guidance.

v. Identification of Purpose: Attendance is ideally guided by two objectives, express grief for the tragedy of Karbala and share in the sorrow of Imam al-Zaman for the Shahadat of Sayyid al-Shuhada (as). Acquire 'ilm and moral insight from the life and sacrifice of Al Imam al-Husayn (as), thereby advancing in spiritual and ethical understanding.

8. Tears as Spiritual Resistance: Transforming Grief into Strength:

The tears shed for Imam Husayn (as) hold deep spiritual meaning. According to traditions, Sayyidah Fatimah (as) gathers these tears as testimony for Najaat. Mourning is therefore not a sign of weakness, but an act of spiritual resistance against injustice. Each tear becomes a declaration of loyalty, a commitment to moral awareness, and a step toward divine closeness. Grief for Karbala transforms personal sorrow into collective moral responsibility. It connects the temporal world to the eternal message of Imam Husayn (as), turning remembrance into a source of ethical and spiritual strength. Mourning in this way helps believers resist oppression and commit to justice in their daily lives.

Tears shed for Moula al-Husayn (as) and his family create a spiritual bond with the tragedy of Karbala. This bond generates an energy of faith and collective growth, reminding believers of their duty to uphold truth. Replicas of shrines and graves strengthen this connection, serving as physical reminders of Karbala's message - without ever becoming objects of 'ibadah. It is narrated that on the Day of Judgment, tears shed in remembrance of Moula al-Husayn (as) will be presented as testimony in favor of the mourner, carried by Sayyidah Fatimah (as). Practices such as keeping earth from Karbala for burial or preserving a handkerchief used in mourning also hold spiritual value. They symbolize devotion and may serve as means of intercession and

divine favor even after death. Through these acts of remembrance, mourning is transformed into a spiritual protest, a living connection to Karbala, and a source of strength that guides believers toward justice, sacrifice, and nearness to Allah.

9. Lessons for the Modern Era, Moral Courage and Social Responsibility:

The Universality of Karbala lies in its timeless lessons: silence in the face of oppression is itself a form of complicity. The sacrifices of children, women, and elders show that responsibility spans generations, age, and social status. Al Imam al-Husayn's (as) declaration that remaining silent against tyranny is itself participation in injustice resonates today as Muslims confront oppression, corruption, and moral crises worldwide. Karbala offers a blueprint for ethical action, social justice, and spiritual resilience, guiding believers to embody courage, integrity, and compassion in every era. Over thirteen centuries after Ashurah, Karbala continues to shape Muslim identity, ethics, and spiritual consciousness. Rituals without understanding are hollow; mourning without action is hypocrisy. When remembrance is paired with reflection, ethical commitment, and moral courage, it becomes a source of light, hope, and guidance. Karbala is not just a history of sacrifice; it is a living university, teaching justice, courage, and divine proximity. Al Imam al-Husayn (as) calls upon every generation: will you side with tyranny, or will you embody the Husayni path of truth, courage, and justice?

10. Rituals with Soul, Avoiding Empty Gestures:

Engaging in rituals without understanding their true meaning can reduce 'ibadah to empty gestures. When rituals lose their purpose, they risk becoming like idolatry. For example, reading the Qur'an without reflection, praising Muhammad Rasulullah (S) without following his Sunnah, chanting "Ya Ali" without adopting the character of Moula Ali (as), or performing Azadari without understanding the sacrifice of Al Imam al-Husayn (as) all turn 'ibadah into mere formality. Rituals are important because they give structure to our faith. But rituals are the "body," while goals and values are the "Ruh." If the soul is missing, the body becomes lifeless. Performing acts of worship without commitment to justice, sacrifice, and moral action is like talking to an idol -outward activity without real spiritual connection.

The tragedy of Karbala highlights this truth. What is the value of rituals if their essence is forgotten? History shows that many Muslims recited the Qur'an or offered prayers without reflecting on their deeper meaning. Some praised Rasulullah (S) yet ignored his Sirah in daily life. Others called upon Amir al-Mumineen Ali (as) but failed to follow his Adl, courage, and Rahmah. In the same way, the rituals of Azadari risk losing their meaning if reduced to custom, culture, or performance. Mourning without reflection becomes powerless. The call of Al Imam al-Husayn (as), "Hal Min Nasirin Yansuruna?" (Is there anyone to help us?). This voice is still echoes today. It is not just a cry of the past but a question for every generation: Will we stand against injustice, or remain silent? Karbala teaches that rituals must be joined with reflection, ethical action, and commitment to justice. The true essence of Azadari lies not in repeating words or symbols, but in internalising the message of sacrifice and living it in daily life. Rituals too are outward in form, while their purpose is the soul. What use is a ritual stripped of its purpose if not hidden idolatry? Are we still caught in this idolatry of empty customs?

Azadari today risks becoming a lifeless tradition. It contains everything we desire, but not what Imam al-Husayn (as) desired when he called out for help as a Hujjah. Muharram is not a festival. It is a mirror for every generation to distinguish between the Yazidi and the Husayni of their own time.

11. The Message of Karbala al-Muqaddasah:

Commemorating the tragedy of Karbala is not only about mourning but also about upholding justice and morality. Moula al-Husayn (as) taught that silence in the face of oppression is the same as supporting it. The women of Karbala showed that moral courage is necessary for reform. They proved that every person, regardless of age or gender, has a role in standing against tyranny. Attendees should support the organizers through both moral and material assistance. This includes removing barriers to participation, encouraging community involvement, and spreading knowledge of Islam. Following the guidance of grand religious scholars ensures that these gatherings remain within Islamic teachings. Karbala also provides guidance for dealing with today's challenges. The commemoration of Muharram should raise awareness of injustice, encourage civic participation, and inspire believers to defend moral and ethical principles in all parts of life. In the court of Yazid (L), Sayyidah Zaynab (as) fearlessly declared the injustice of the regime. Her words shattered the false victory of Yazid (L), making her the first defender of truth in the aftermath of Karbala. This demonstrates that women, too, are central to resistance.

At times, communities show strong support for oppressed people abroad but neglect justice and compassion in their own neighborhoods. Believers may protest against tyranny in other countries while ignoring the struggles of their neighbors or family. This contradiction is similar to the hypocrisy condemned in the Qur'an (Surah al-Munafiqun). True loyalty to Imam Husayn (as) means practicing justice both locally and globally. One cannot sincerely mourn Aashurah while continuing injustice, envy, gossip, or oppression in their own surroundings. Even 1374 years after Aashurah, Karbala remains alive as a moral compass. It shows that rituals without purpose are hollow and mourning without action is hypocrisy. True tears for Moula al-Husayn (as) are meaningful only when they inspire commitment to justice, mercy, and courage. The mission of Moula al-Husayn (as) continues to call every generation to choose: to be Yazidi or to be Husayni. The commemoration of Karbala is multidimensional. It requires personal sincerity, collective responsibility, and participation from men, women, children, and elders. Mourning should cultivate empathy, inspire moral action, and strengthen the fight against oppression. The tragedy of Karbala is not just history; it is a school of justice, resistance, and spiritual growth. True remembrance of Al Imam al-Husayn (as) is not found in rituals alone but in practice.

12. The Burial Place of the Shuhada of Karbala al-Muqaddasah:

Today, the area of the graves of the Shuhada of Karbala seems to be no more than about 6 meters. Therefore how could so many Shuhada have been buried in such a small space? And what is the proof for this? This question comes in mind. From the words of the learned compiler of Maqatil (accounts of Karbala) and historians, it appears that besides the graves of Moula al-Abbas (as) and Al Imam al-Husayn (as), the rest of the Shuhada were buried together in one place near the feet of the Imam. In other words, each Shaheed did not necessarily have a

separate visible grave. However, there is a difference of opinion about how they were buried together. One view says that one large grave was prepared, and all of them were buried in it together, after which the ground above was leveled. A second view says that more than one grave was made, and that Banu Hashim were buried in a separate grave near the feet of Al Imam al-Husayn (as).

(al-Irshad, vol. 2, p. 114, al-Muntakhab, vol. 1, p. 37, Batal al-Alqami, vol. 3, p. 258)

The Qadr al-Mutiyaqqan (minimum certain conclusion) is this:

The Shuhada were buried together, and they were buried near the feet of Al Imam al-Husayn (as). The Ha'yr al-Husayni was later formed around that area. Also, their exact physical bodies are not clearly identified for us in detail today. That is why it is mentioned in the texts of Ziyarah that the Zair should send Salaam to them while facing the ground near the feet of Al Imam al-Husayn (as). Therefore, based on the narrations, this much is certain regarding the manner of their burial. As for the exact size of their burial place, nothing can be said with certainty. For example, it is possible that the grave was very deep. If that was the case, then a very large surface area would not be necessary later for making a Zarih (grave enclosure). It is also possible that the Zarih over the grave was made only as a sign or symbol so that people may perform Ziyarah there, while some of the Shuhada graves may actually lie outside the present enclosure. For this reason, some leading Ulama of Karbala and Najaf avoid walking in the space between the Zarih of Al Imam al-Husayn (as) and the Zarih of the Shuhada, because it is possible that this area may include the burial place of some of the Shuhada.

Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin writes in al-Majalis al-Sunniyyah, vol. 1, p. 128, that a grave was made for the Shuhada of Karbala at the lower end, near the feet of Al Imam al-Husayn (as), and all of them were buried there together. Then the soil above was leveled. For this reason, people of spiritual awareness avoid stepping into the area near the Imam's feet, so that they do not walk over the graves of the Shuhada. The strongest conclusion is that most of the Shuhada of Karbala were buried together near the feet of Al Imam al-Husayn (as), not in clearly separate individual graves. The small size seen today does not create a problem, because:

They may have been buried in a single large or deep grave,

The present Zarih may only mark the place symbolically,

And some burial spots may extend outside the currently visible structure.

13. Spiritual Significance of the Turbah, Khak'e Shifa of Karbala al-Muqaddasah:

Rasulullah (S) had even foretold Umm'e Salama (ra) about Karbala, handing her dust from the land which later turned red on Aashurah. Shi'a Muslims revere the Turbah of Karbala due to its sacred association with Moula al-Husayn (as). It is customary for Mumin to bury themselves with this Khak'e Shifa or incorporate it into their shrouds. Bury the handkerchief, on which he/she stored tears on Husayn (as) for Barakah. This highlights the spiritual energy and Barakah believed to be attached to Turbah of Karbala, serving as both as Shafaah and a shield in the afterlife. There are Imami Traditions that a small amount of Karbala soil, when used respectfully, may serve as a means of Shifa' by the permission of Allah. Karbala becomes a spiritual axis, a locus of Rahmah. The soil itself is believed to have absorbed Barakah through the Shahadat of Moula al-Husain, as a Cosmic Event. The Shahadat is not simply a historical

tragedy but a metaphysical turning point, the Imam's suffering is seen as a Hijab through which deeper realities of Haqaiq manifest. Ismailis view physical symbols - Zahir as gateways to hidden truths, Baṭīn. The Turbah, then, is a Zahiri representation of Baṭīni realities - namely, the eternal presence and suffering of the Imam as the Hujjah of Allah. In Tayyibi cosmology, the Imam is the source of spiritual nourishment and Shafaah. The Shifa attributed to the Turbah of Karbala symbolically refers to the spiritual healing one attains through Walayah to the Imam of the Time. The earth of Karbala becomes a reminder that material creation itself participates in cycles of sacrifice and redemption - it is a tangible witness of the divine drama of guidance. However, Shia Ithna Ashar emphasize its ritual usage as Sajdah-Gah, rosary and Tabarruk, while Ismailis focus more on the esoteric symbolism, the Turbah as a veil pointing toward higher realities, where healing is ultimately a matter of recognizing and aligning with the Noor of Imam. The Turbah of Karbala is holy in itself as it has absorbed the blood of the Mustaqar Imam, who is the Qiblah of the Hearts of Mumineen, thus carrying the vibration of Asrar 'ilahiyyah. Karbala is that Maqam on earth that serve as channel for Rahmah and Naymah. In Ismaili Daw'ah Philosophy, sacred history and geography are often understood not just literally but esoterically - Baṭīn, meaning events and places carry inner meanings about the soul's journey to Rabb.

When someone says:

"Karbala is one of the most potent of these, akin to Makkah (for the body) and Karbala (for the heart)."

It reflects the idea that different sacred places correspond to different dimensions of human existence: Makkah is tied to the Zahir, the outward, physical dimension. Hajj and Umrah is a physical journey, it involves the body, movement, and rituals. It represents external obedience and the unity of Muslims in outward practice. Karbala, by contrast, symbolizes the Baṭīn (the inward, spiritual dimension). The tragedy of Karbala, the Shahadat of Al Imam al-Husayn (as) is understood not only as a historical event but as a living reality in the heart. It calls for inner transformation, a movement of the heart from worldly attachment toward truth, justice, and divine love. Thus, the comparison says:

Makkah corresponds to the body's orientation toward Rabb (law, ritual, external devotion). Karbala corresponds to the heart's orientation toward Rabb (love, sacrifice, spiritual awakening). In the Ismaili Daw'ah Tradition, particularly in its esoteric interpretation, true Ziyarah is ultimately internal: moving from the material to the spiritual, from outer form - Shariah to inner meaning - Haqaiq. Karbala becomes a spiritual station, an inner state, where seeker Mumin experiences deep devotion, courage, and willingness to sacrifice the lower self - Nafs in pursuit of the eternal truth embodied by the Imam. In other words:

Makkah = external unity: symbolizes the body aligning with divine law.

Karbala = inner transformation: symbolizes the heart aligning with divine love and truth.

14. Karbala al-Muqaddasah as a Global University:

Karbala was not about ritual, it was about purpose. Imam Husayn (as) did not call us merely to weep but to respond, to live, and to act against tyranny in every age. Today, our Azadari must move beyond lamentation. It must become action, in society, in justice, in solidarity, and in faithfulness to the mission of Husayn (as). Otherwise, are we not just Kufans, crying without

practicing the call? Karbala is not just history, it is philosophy, ideology, and a timeless school for humanity. It teaches:

Courage like Ali al-Akbar.

Patience like Zaynab.

Sacrifice of infant like Ali al-Asghar.

Loyalty like Habib ibn Mazahir.

Spiritual resilience like Al Imam Ali Zayn al-Abideen.

Therefore, Karbala remains a University for all ages, inspiring Muslims and non-Muslims alike to rise for justice, resist tyranny, and dedicate life to truth.

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