
An Analysis of Ta'ziyyah Majlis of Imamzadeh Sultan Ali ibn Muhammad Baqir (AS)

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

Although Ta'ziyyah is an art form that originated in Ashura, the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, it was not limited to its historical form and redeployed by diversity of the composers and included many historical, religious, cultural, mythological, mystical topics. Therefore, the number of Ta'ziyyah versions and backgrounds has increased. Among the topics this folk art covers are the narrations of the lives of the descendants of the Imams in different regions of Iran, including that of Imamzadeh Sultan Ali Ibn Muhammad Baqir (AS) buried in Ardahal, Kashan. This study examines a version of Sultan Ali's (AS) Ta'ziyyah, a poem written by Mir'Aza'i Kashani, the special sanctity of the land of Ardehal, the similarities of Ardehal incident to Ashura incident, a textual analysis of Sultan Ali's Ta'ziyyah, and some features of this Ta'ziyyah. It aims to provide the reasons for the continuity and dependence of Sultan Ali's Ta'ziyyah on Iranian mythological sources and to address the extent to which this Ta'ziyyah assembly has benefited from the narratives of Tazkirahs and Ta'ziyyah assembly's cooking. It also seeks to explore whether this assembly has any connection with the other Ta'ziyyah assemblies, especially those of Ta'ziyyahs of Imamzadehs.

Materials and Methods

There are references to the significance of the personality of Imamzadeh Sultan Ali and his tomb and shrine. However, in the last century, Mulla Abdul Rasool Madani published a biography of Hazrat Sultan Ali, which provided a more detailed account of the migration and three-year life of this Imamzadeh in the Kashan region. This biography was published in 2004 by Mursal Publications under the title of *Biography and Martyrdom of Hazrat Sultan Ali bin Muhammad Baqir*. In the last four decades, books have been published on the life and martyrdom of Shahid Ardahal, including the collections written by Majid Zajaji.

Substantial studies have been conducted by Iranologists and religious scholars about the traditional and religious ritual of carpet washing, which is held every year in commemoration of the martyrdom of this Imamzadeh in Ardehal. Although numerous books and articles have been written on the subject of Ta'ziyyah and various versions, no specific research has been done on the Ta'ziyyah of Imamzadeh Sultan Ali, except one by Samaneh Kazemi, in her book *Mir Ezzai Kashani; The Territory of Ta'ziyyah* (2007). In this book, Kazemi investigates about this Imamzadeh through interviews she conducted with the people of Ardehal.

This research is a library study and qualitative in method, studying the printed version of the Ta'ziyyah of Hazrat Sultan Ali in Mir Ezzai Kashani's book *The Territory of Ta'ziyyah*. Of course, before Samaneh Kazemi, Jaber El-Ounayyah wrote about elements of Ta'ziyyah in his book *Ta'ziyyah; The play Mourning* (1935)

published a version of Sultan Ali's Majlis Ta'ziyya, entitled *A Meeting in Mourning Imamzadeh Sultan Ali*. The basis of this story is the same as the version printed in the book *Mir'Aza in the Realm of Ta'ziyya*, although there are some differences in the characterizations and the arrangement of the version and the poems.

Research Findings

The life stories of many Imamzadehs in all parts of Iran have been the subject of Ta'ziyyah gatherings. Ta'ziyyah is an Iranian art that narrates the life stories of great figures of Islam and Iran, including the lives of prophets and imams as well as historical and mythological figures. The event of Karbala is the core subjects of Ta'ziyyah poems, and other historical events are described as the pre-event or the post-event of Karbala. This art form, which is derived from the intersection of poetry, music, and drama has undergone a historical transition like any other cultural and social phenomenon. This transition begun from the mourning rituals of Siavash and Yadgar Zariran in pre-Islamic times, proceeded in the mourning caravans during the Buyid era, the Ashura elegies of the Safavid and Zand dynasties, and Ta'ziyyah manuscript writers in the Qajar era, especially the Tekye of Nasser's government, and continued up to this day.

In this direction, numerous Ta'ziyeh-namehs have been composed, numbering several hundred Majles. Among them, *Ta'ziyeh Majles*, related to the prominent martyrs of Ashura, are read more often as they include complete and mature poetry, vocal styles, and dramatic spacing and to which the desire and attention of the founders and listeners of the Ta'ziyeh are more attracted. However, the rest of Ta'ziyeh-namehs are performed on the occasion of proximity in place or time or on the request of Ta'ziyeh reciters and Majles.

Iranian Imamzadehs, who often have a Tazkirah or biography in sources and memoirs or in popular traditions, also have Ta'ziyeh-nameh (commentary books). There, the dramatic story of their lives is composed by the poets of Ta'ziyeh gatherings; these Ta'ziyehs are recited from time to time, at least at Imamzadeh's burial site or in the surrounding areas.

The mourning assembly of Ali ibn Muhammad Baqir (AS), the son of the fifth Imam of the Shiites, known as Sultan Ali (a.s.), is also among these mourning letters. This Imamzadeh is one of the well-known and trusted Imamzadehs buried in Iran, who, along with Hazrat Masoumeh (a.s.), Ahmad ibn Musa (a.s.), and Abdul Azim Hassani (a.s.), are mentioned as the four prominent Imamzadehs of Iran. In ancient sources such as *Al-Naqz* by Abdul Jalil Qazvini and *The Divan of Abul Reza Rawandi*, Mashhad Ardahal is mentioned as Mashhad "Barkersuf" and "Barkers" and Mashhad Imamzadeh Ali (AS).

Conclusion

The mourning assembly of Sultan Ali ibn Muhammad Baqir (AS), buried in Mashhad Ardahal, Kashan, has the same motifs, archetypes, roots, and approaches that can be seen in many similar mourning assemblies. This assembly is the narrative of the invitation and migration of the son of Imam Baqir (AS) from Medina to the Kashan region. Mir Ezzai Kashani, the copyist of this mourning assembly, has combined limited historical sources with legends, myths, and folk beliefs in the usual way of a copyist to compose this assembly, expanding and detailing the narrative of the martyrdom of the Imamzadeh. However, the value of this mourning assembly lies in the expression of traditions, culture, and beliefs in this Imamzadeh. People gather at the shrine of this Imamzadeh every day of the year, especially on the second and third

Fridays of Mehr, along with the traditional ritual of carpet washers on the Friday of Finis and mourning for that Imamzadeh on the Friday of Nashalji. Every year, on the Friday of Nashalji, they perform the mourning ceremony for Sultan Ali next to the shrine of Shahzadeh Hossein, in the neighborhood of the shrine of Hazrat Sultan Ali. In this ceremony, the sanctity of the land of Ardehal, the escape to the event of Ashura, the historical, social, and geographical characteristics of the surrounding areas of the Imamzadeh's tomb, the evil taint of the Imam's murderers, the Imam's exile, and the perverse behavior of the times, Imamzadeh's knowledge of his future and destiny, the similarities of the characters with mythological characters, are mentioned in a simple and understandable narrative.

Keywords: Ta'zīyeh, popular Literature, Imamzadehs, Sultan Ali ibn Muhammad Baqir (peace be upon him), Ardehal