IN THE SHADOW OF SORROW

The First Urdu Marsiya Composed by Ḥaḍrat Burhānuddīn Jānam

السلام علی الحسین وعلی علی بن الحسین

وعلی اولاد الحسین وعلی اصحاب الحسین

Syed Jaffer Hussain Hamzavi

قُل لَّا أَسۡـَٔلُكُمۡ عَلَيۡهِ أَجۡرًا إِلَّا ٱلۡمَوَدَّةَ فِي ٱلۡقُرۡبَىٰ

Qul lā asalukum ʿalayhi ajran illā al-mawaddata fī al-qurbā

"Say, [O Prophet]: I do not ask you for any reward for it except love for [my] near relatives."

Surah al-Shūrā (42:23)

قطعہ تاریخِ کتاب

یا حسین:

ی یا حسین ابنِ علی یوں آپ سے ہے التجا.

ا اب اِس کتاب مرثیہ پر کیجیے اپنی عطا.

ح حضرتِ جانم کی اس پہ ہوگئی نظرِ کرم،

س سو سید الشہداء کا ماتم ہو گیا ہے آشنا.

ی یہ مرثیے پہ کہہ رہی ہے تاریخِ سال طبع،

ن نور سے لکھ دیجیے تحقیق در تحقیق وا.

١٤٤٧ھ

Qitʿa-e-tārīkh, a traditional verse that carries the year of publication—1447 Hijrī—through the abjad system. Uniquely, the first letters of each line spell "Yā Ḥusayn" (یاحسین), making the poem both a chronogram and a hidden supplication—an offering in the name of Imām Ḥusayn ʿalayhi's-salām.

Preface:

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ
ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِي جَعَلَ ٱلْعِلْمَ نُورًا، وَٱلْمَعْرِفَةَ سَبِيلًا، وَٱتَّخَذَ أَهْلَ ٱلْبَيْتِ مَعْدِنًا لِكِلْتَيْهِمَا
وَٱلصَّلَاةُ وَٱلسَّلَامُ عَلَىٰ سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ ٱلْكِرَامِ ٱلْمُطَهَّرِينَ،
أَمَّا بَعْدُ...

When I first began this journey into the soul of Dakhni Urdu literature, I was not merely exploring a forgotten poetic form — I was treading upon sacred ground. The spark was kindled when I came across the Āyat al-Mawaddah in the Qur'an:

قُل لَّا أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا ٱلْمَوَدَّةَ فِي ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ

"Say, [O Prophet]: I do not ask you for any reward for it except love for [my] near relatives."

This verse echoed in my heart, and as I turned the pages of ḥadīth, I encountered the prophetic legacy preserved in the Ḥadīth al-Thaqalayn:

"I leave behind among you two weighty things: the Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt. If you hold on to both, you will never go astray."
(Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, and others)

From that moment onward, I realized that the path of knowledge that I was being drawn toward was not simply literary or academic. It was a light inherited — a torch passed through the generations, from the heart of the Prophet ﷺ to the chests of the awliyāʾ and the ahl al-maʿrifah.

My name, Jāfar, was given to me by my venerable grandmother out of devotion to Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq ʿalayhi's-salām, and perhaps unknowingly, it became a thread connecting me to the fragrance of that household which is the source of all wisdom. Although I lay no claim to knowledge or insight, I am among those who have been raised under the shadow of prayer, love, and remembrance of the Prophet's holy progeny.

I confess that what I possess is little, but I firmly believe that it is through the duʿā of my noble ancestors — particularly our spiritual patriarch, Sayyid Shāh Kamāluddīn Miyān Shāh Ḥamzah Zaydī, may Allah sanctify his secret — that my hands have been moved to write. He is the lantern of our household, and from his lineage flows a stream of service to ʿilm and maʿrifah. I am merely a small drop in that stream.

The book you now hold in your hands is a reflection of that spiritual yearning — it began several years ago when, amidst my research into the rich terrain of Dakhni literature, I stumbled upon the rare and powerful Marsiya of Ḥaḍrat Burhānuddīn Jānam, a Sufi saint and poet of Bijapur.
This Marsiya, according to many scholars, is the first of its kind in the Urdu language. Unlike the more famous Marsiyas of Lucknow, which emerged centuries later, this piece flows not just with tears, but with theology — not just rhythm, but reality.

As I read it, I felt as though the sorrow of Karbalā was being narrated not from the battlefield, but from the realm of tawḥīd — where the martyrdom of Ḥusayn ʿalayhi's-salām was not an end, but the beginning of spiritual truth. Each verse bore testimony to a heart that was not only broken by love but illuminated by gnosis.

I began writing this work with Bismillāh and ṣalawāt, and with the cry: Labbayk Yā Ḥusayn!
I felt then that this was no longer my work alone, but that Imām Ḥusayn ʿalayhi's-salām had granted me a portion of his divine support.
I pray that this humble contribution is accepted as a small offering in the service of his memory and his mission.
I also admit my limitations — this work is but a beginning. There are many doors left unopened, many sources yet unexamined. If errors have occurred, they are mine alone, and I beg the reader's forbearance and correction wherever needed.

May this book serve as a reminder that Marsiya is not merely poetry — it is devotion, resistance, and remembrance.
It is theology woven into rhyme; it is love bled into verse. It is our literary ʿazā.

In the court of Imām Ḥusayn ʿalayhi's-salām, I offer this small tribute.
If it is accepted, then it is the greatest success of both my dīn and dunyā.
And if anything within displeases Him or His family, may He forgive me and allow me to begin anew.

اللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِمَّنْ يَتَعَلَّمُ عِلْمَهُمْ، وَيَسْلُكُ سَبِيلَهُمْ، وَيَمُوتُ عَلَىٰ وَلَايَتِهِمْ

SYED JAFFER HUSSAIN HAMZAVI

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Introduction:

The marsiya, a form of elegiac poetry rooted in the lamentation of loss, represents one of the most poignant and spiritually charged expressions within Islamic literature. While the term marsiya in its literal sense denotes mourning or lament, the genre itself transcends conventional poetic bounds and becomes an act of theological, historical, and metaphysical engagement. Particularly in the context of Indo-Islamic literary tradition, the marsiya stands not merely as a literary form but as a mirror to the collective grief of a community and a testament to its unwavering devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt (ʿalayhim al-salām).

The foundation of marsiya literature lies in the unparalleled event of Karbalāʾ, where Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi al-salām) and his companions offered the ultimate sacrifice in defense of truth, justice, and the integrity of Islam.
This tragedy, while historical, became existential for the Muslim ummah.
In mourning Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi al-salām), the believer does not merely recollect an event from the past; he participates in a perennial grief that reshapes spiritual identity and reaffirms allegiance to divine truth.
This is not a grief of worldly defeat but a grief born of fidelity to the Divine, a grief that regenerates moral consciousness across centuries.

Marsiya, therefore, is not passive remembrance. It is a dynamic, living, breathing ritual of love and resistance. It engages with the Qur'ānic imperative of al-mawaddah fī al-qurbā —

"Say: I do not ask of you any reward except love for my near kin"
(Sūrat al-Shūrā, 42:23).

Through poetic articulation, marsiya transforms this love into language, and language into lamentation, and lamentation into liturgy.
It becomes both an intellectual and emotional offering in the remembrance of the martyrs of Karbalāʾ, enshrining within it the noble values of sacrifice, honor, and spiritual defiance against tyranny.

In the Islamic world, poetry has always been an esteemed medium of sacred expression. The Qur'ān itself, while not a poem, is deeply rhythmic and often poetic in form and style. Across cultures, Islamic poetry has been employed to express the ineffable — Divine love, awe, sorrow, joy, and ultimately, the yearning for nearness to Allah. Within this wider tradition, marsiya holds a unique place. It is not simply about death; it is about purposeful martyrdom. It is not simply about grief; it is about a grief that gives birth to meaning and identity. In the memory of Karbalāʾ, a new spiritual vocabulary was born, and marsiya became its foremost language.

While the Lucknow school of marsiya writing in the 18th and 19th centuries — represented by poets such as Mīr Anīs and Mīrzā Dabīr — has garnered widespread literary acclaim, it is imperative to trace the roots of marsiya further back, to the Dakhni literary tradition of the Deccan.
Here, in a linguistic environment shaped by Persian, Arabic, and regional vernaculars, a mystical and deeply devotional form of marsiya emerged.
This tradition was nourished by the presence of great Sufi saints, particularly those who belonged to the Chishtī and Qādirī orders, whose shrines in Gulbarga, Bijapur, and Hyderabad became centers of both spiritual instruction and literary creativity.
It is within this fertile terrain that we encounter the earliest known marsiya in Urdu, attributed to the eminent Sufi saint, poet, and thinker, Ḥaḍrat Burhānuddīn Jānam (raḥmatullāhi ʿalayh).

Ḥaḍrat Jānam's spiritual lineage can be traced to the revered Khwāja Bandah Nawāz Gīsū Darāz (raḥimahu'Llāh), one of the leading figures in the spread of Sufism in the Deccan.
Jānam was not merely a poet; he was a mystic, a theologian, and a thinker whose worldview was shaped by the teachings of waḥdat al-wujūd (Unity of Being), tawḥīd (Divine Unity), and maʿrifah (gnosis).
In his poetry, these themes are not abstract ideas but living experiences, woven seamlessly into the events of Karbalāʾ.
His marsiya is not merely a poetic narration; it is a metaphysical commentary, a theological meditation, and a mystical discourse.

Residing in Bijapur, a city renowned for its cultural synthesis and Sufi vibrancy, Ḥaḍrat Jānam composed his marsiya not only as poetic homage but as a vessel of metaphysical truths. His verses are imbued with the terminology of ḥaqīqah, infused with the philosophy of tawḥīd, and enriched by the cosmological schema of the ʿālam al-malakūt and ʿālam al-jabarūt.
In reading his marsiya, one does not simply traverse through poetic description; one ascends through the spiritual hierarchies that underlie Islamic metaphysics.

What sets this marsiya apart is its synthesis of gnosis and grief. The sacrifice of Karbalāʾ is not merely recounted as tragedy but interpreted as a theophanic event — a divine manifestation in the realm of martyrdom. The language, though modest in meter and structure when compared to the ornate forms of later Urdu marsiyas, is resplendent with spiritual intensity. Terms such as nāsūt, malakūt, and jabarūt are not incidental; they reflect a conscious effort to embed the metaphysics of wilāyah within the aesthetics of lament. The usage of these terms indicates an intimate knowledge of cosmology, wherein the martyrdom of Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi al-salām) is not confined to history but transcends into the realms of eternal truth.

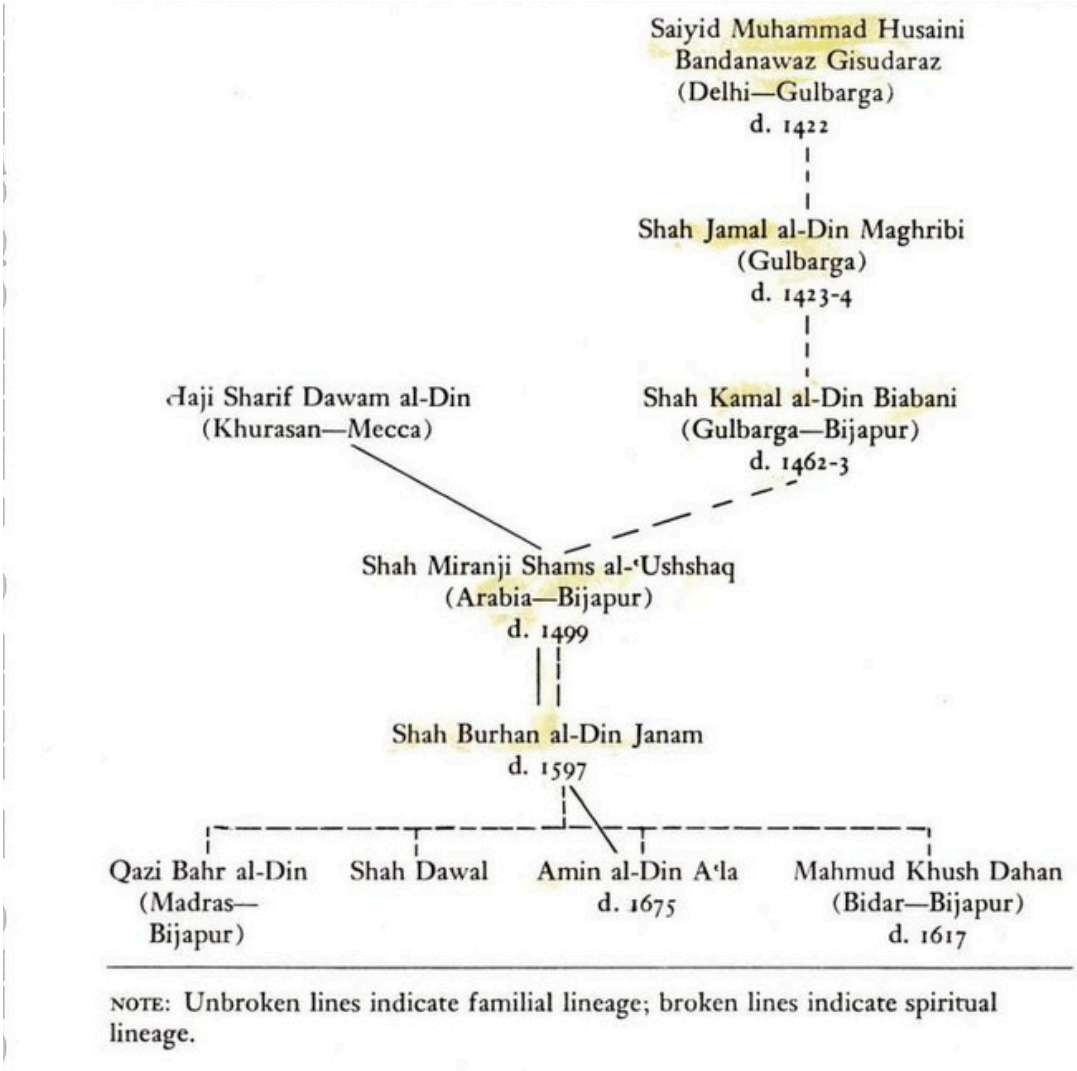
The purpose of this book is manifold. First, it seeks to reintroduce the marsiya of Ḥaḍrat Burhānuddīn Jānam to contemporary readers, especially scholars and lovers of Islamic literature, who may be unfamiliar with the Dakhni tradition. Second, it endeavors to provide a faithful and annotated English translation of the original verses. Third, it offers theological and literary commentary to elucidate the deeper meanings embedded in the text. Fourth, it engages with critiques and objections that have historically been leveled against marsiya literature, particularly within reformist or anti-emotive strands of Islamic thought.
And finally, it positions marsiya not only as a historical or cultural artifact but as an enduring mode of Islamic spirituality and resistance.

The present work also aims to reframe our understanding of Islamic poetics itself. In a world where literary production is increasingly divorced from sacred intent, this book argues for a return to *ʿilm*, *adab*, and *maʿrifah* as the foundations of creative expression

The marsiya of Jānam is not merely a literary curiosity from a forgotten past; it is a living testament to a worldview in which poetry serves the soul and articulates divine longing. Through its verses, one may recover not only a lost literary heritage but also the inner meanings of sacrifice, loyalty, and divine proximity.

In pursuing these aims, the author makes no claims to finality or infallibility. This book is, above all, a labor of love — an offering to the legacy of Sayyid al-Shuhadāʾ Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi al-salām), whose remembrance is the fountainhead of all maʿrifah, and whose name is the seal upon the hearts of all lovers of truth. If this humble work contributes even a single drop to the vast ocean of devotion in his name, then its purpose is fulfilled.

Wa mā tawfīqī illā biLlāh.



Spiritual Lineage of Ḥaḍrat Burhān al-Dīn Jānam (رحمة الله عليه)
The spiritual chain of transmission (silsila-e-tareeqat) of Ḥaḍrat Burhān al-Dīn Jānam (d. 950 AH / 1543 CE) traces back to Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusainī, better known as Khwāja Bandanawāz Gesū Darāz (رضي الله عنه), one of the most prominent Chishti saints of the Deccan.
This chain is as follows:
Ḥaḍrat Burhān al-Dīn Jānam
← son & murīd of → Shāh Mīrān Jī Shams al-ʿUshshāq
← murīd of → Shāh Kamāl al-Dīn Biyābānī
← murīd of → Shāh Jamāl al-Dīn Maghribī
← murīd of → Khwāja Bandanawāz Gesū Darāz (رضي الله عنه)

Source: Adapted from Richard M. Eaton, The Sufis of Bijapur (1300–1700): Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India, Princeton University Press.

The First Urdu Marsiya:
A Historical and Literary Study:

The evolution of marsiya in Urdu is not merely a poetic trajectory — it is a spiritual unfolding within the cultural, theological, and literary spheres of the Indo-Islamic world. This chapter attempts to locate, with clarity and thoroughness, the earliest expression of marsiya in Urdu, and to examine why Hazrat Syed Shah Burhān al-Dīn Jānam Quddisa Sirrahū deserves rightful recognition as its first authentic exponent.

From the outset, let us be clear: all literary historians and academic scholars agree that the first Urdu marsiya emerged from the Deccan. The region's unique confluence of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and indigenous linguistic traditions created fertile ground for poetic innovation. What remains debated, however, is who precisely was the first marsiya poet in Urdu.

Three names consistently surface in this enquiry:

- Hazrat Syed Shah Ashraf Biyābānī al-Rifāʿī Quddisa Sirrahū,
- Hazrat Syed Shah Burhān al-Dīn Jānam Quddisa Sirrahū,
- Sultan Quli Qutb Shah of Golconda.

Before we resolve this debate, it is crucial to understand the poetic landscape of early Urdu. During the earliest phases of its development, Urdu — still a nascent language — did not yet have distinct genres as we know them today. The marsiya was not yet a formalized, structured genre. Instead, what we now retrospectively call "marsiya" often appeared in the form and meter of ghazal, or took the shape of masnavi-style narrative laments. It was a time of linguistic experimentation and devotional sincerity.

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The First Contender: Hazrat Shah Ashraf Biyābānī

Hazrat Shah Ashraf Biyābānī, the son of Hazrat Ziyā al-Dīn Biyābānī, was a luminary of his time. His work Nausarhar, written in 909 Hijri, was long regarded as the first marsiya in Urdu. Indeed, many classical scholars such as Mohiuddin Zoor Qādri and Naseeruddin Hashmi identified him as the pioneer of the genre.

However, Nausarhar is a unique text. Comprising nine chapters, Hazrat Ashraf explicitly stated that he wrote it to leave behind a legacy — a garland (har) of pearls (nau) strung from rare and elevated expressions. The work is rich with Arabic, Persian, Punjabi, and Marathi influences, making it a linguistic marvel. Yet, modern scholarship — after thorough examination — has reclassified this text not as a marsiya, but as a masnavi or a "shahādatnāma". While it narrates the events of Karbala, it does so not as elegy, but as didactic storytelling, with artistic and spiritual purpose more aligned with language development than with poetic mourning.

Furthermore, the text contains many narrative elements and theological interpretations not rooted in established sources, suggesting that Hazrat Ashraf's goal was the propagation of Urdu and devotional edification, not the crafting of a marsiya in the literary sense we now understand.

Asha'ār from the Book Nausarhar:

Jahāṅ paḍiyā Sayyid rāo	*Ghōṛē par the bhīṅ parāo*
Āē bairī ūpar wāṭ	*Sīṣ mubārak lētā kāṭ*
Tū kyā ānkhūṅ sun āē yār	*Jagg me huī yūṅ andkār*
Āsī uṭhī āndhī bāo	*Chandr sūraj rūp chhupāo*
Hūwā yūṅ tāriḳ jahān	*Karnā sakē kōī bayān*
Ambar garjā larzē bhīṅ	*Jānūṅ qiyāmat qāyam huīṅ*

The Second Contender: Sultan Quli Qutb Shah

The second prominent name is Sultan Quli Qutb Shah, the founder of the Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda and the first Urdu poet with a complete dīwān. A master of several poetic forms, he wrote ghazals, qasāʾid, naʿts, and marsiyas. As a devout lover of the Ahl al-Bayt and a known adherent of the Twelver Shīʿī tradition, his marsiyas often reflect a deep theological and emotional connection to the tragedy of Karbala.

His command over Urdu, coupled with his elevated literary style, led many to declare him as the first true marsiya writer after Nausarhar was reclassified. His position as a royal patron of the arts gave him wide influence, and he laid the foundation for the Persianate-Urdu poetic tradition of the Deccan. Yet, even Sultan Quli's works — while elegant and emotionally charged — do not precede the marsiya of Hazrat Burhān al-Dīn Jānam in chronological or literary maturity.

Muṣṭafā ke bāġh ke phūlōñ koñ bin pānī sūkhā'e
Muṣṭafā hor Murtaẓā hor Fāṭimah kā dil dukhā'e?

Jiyūñ nabīyāñ meñ Muṣṭafā haiñ, tiyūñ imāmāñ meñ Ḥusayn
Kufr ke tīñ bhaañ kar Islām kīte haiñ Ḥusayn

Dūstāñ rū rū, laḥū ġham the, asar haiñ ham amīr
Bāp nāhiñ, māñ nāhiñ, Ḥusayn haiñ Karbalā meñ asīr

Apne pūtāñ koñ kahe, 'pand band piyo, tum chup raho'
'Mere baʿd az pyaas merā, merē logāñ koñ kaho'

Ẓulm behad kīte bābā, ẓālimāñ koñ dād dīyo
Tum ġhaẓab kī tīg sab Yazīdiyāñ ke sar par dīyo dīyo

Dīn-dunyā ke shāh rakh, Quṭb-e Zamān koñ apnī panāh
Tumhīñ bakhshō, ḳhudā ke luṭf sōñ merē gunāh

Source: Kulliyāt-e-Muḥammad Qulī Quṭb Shāh

The True Pioneer: Hazrat Burhān al-Dīn Jānam Quddisa Sirrahū
In light of recent scholarship, the mantle of the first Urdu marsiya nigār now rests, with justified reverence, upon the shoulders of Hazrat Syed Shah Burhān al-Dīn Jānam. Born around 950 AH, Hazrat Jānam lived well before the birth of Sultan Quli Qutb Shah (973 AH), and was immersed in the Sufi, intellectual, and poetic traditions of Bijapur.
A disciple of his own father — Hazrat Mīrān Ji Shams al-ʿUshshāq — Hazrat Jānam was deeply shaped by the Deccan's spiritual climate and the metaphysical teachings of Khwāja Bandah Nawāz Gisu Darāz.

Contrary to earlier misunderstandings, it is now confirmed that Hazrat Jānam composed marsiyas both for Imam Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi al-salām) and for his own father. His poetic output is steeped in spiritual symbolism, theological depth, and the gnosis of tawḥīd and wilāyah.
Far from being a mere literary exercise, Hazrat Jānam's marsiyas are mystical commentaries, expressing the metaphysical realities of Karbala through Deccani linguistic sensibility.

According to Dr. Raseed Moosavi, a respected scholar of Deccani literature, "From the time of Yūsuf ʿĀdil Shāh to ʿAlī ʿĀdil Shāh Awwal, we find no record of any marsiya except that of Burhān al-Dīn Jānam. Based on current evidence, it is he who must be acknowledged as the first marsiya poet of the Deccan."
His marsiya manuscripts are preserved in Idāra Adabiyāt-e-Urdu, Hyderabad, providing textual validation to this claim.

Furthermore, the literary structure of Hazrat Jānam's marsiyas reflects a clear departure from generic storytelling, and a movement toward structured lamentation, using elegiac rhyme schemes, spiritual cosmology, and devotional vocabulary. He introduced metaphysical elements such as ʿālam al-malakūt, jabarūt, and wilāyah into poetic mourning, thus spiritualizing and sanctifying the very act of remembrance.

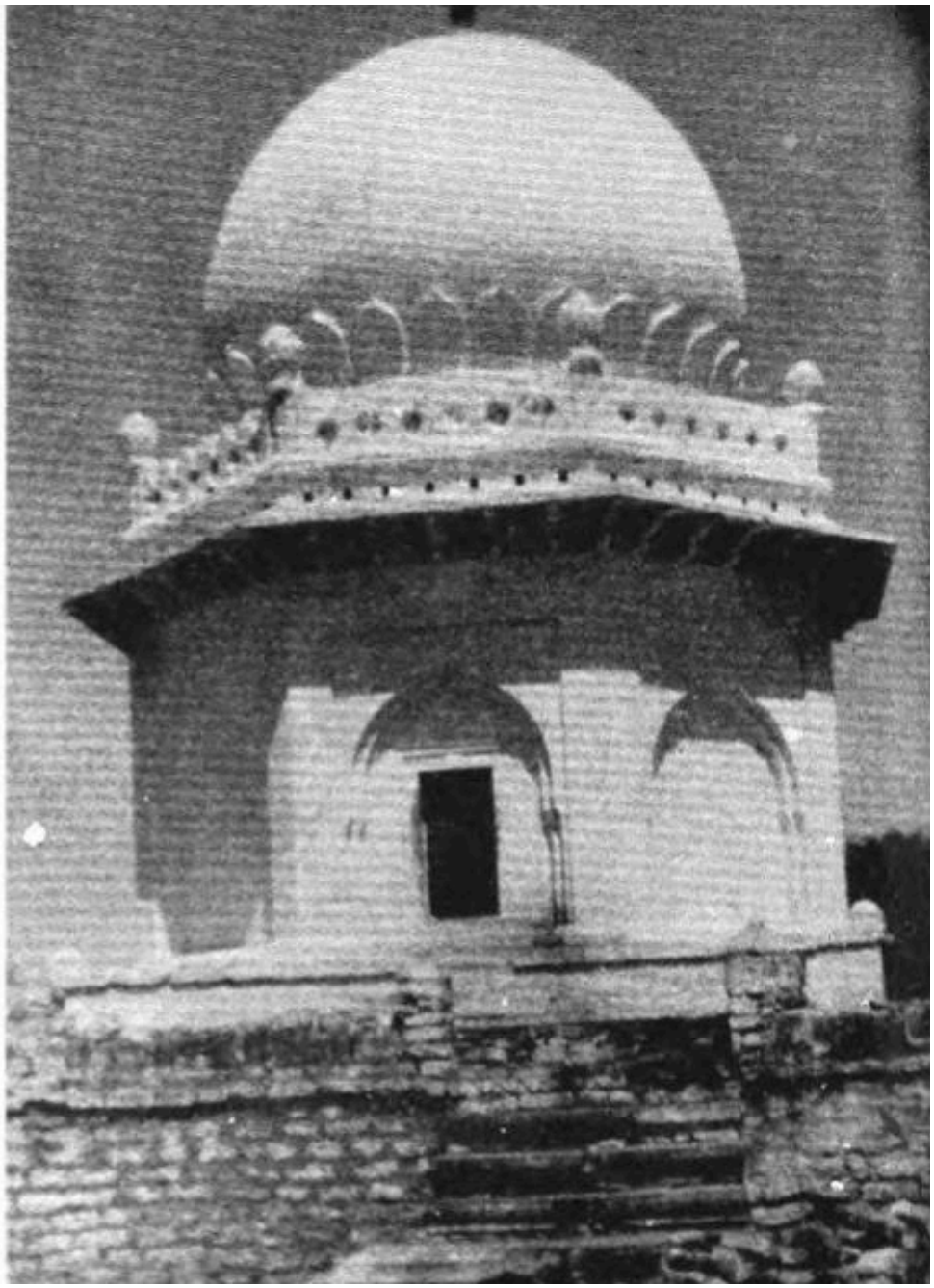
His marsiyas — unlike those attributed to earlier figures — are not only chronologically prior to Qutb Shah's compositions, but also thematically and theologically superior, rooted not in cultural nostalgia but in Islamic cosmology and the Sufi metaphysics of martyrdom.

CONCLUSION: THE RESTORATION OF TRUTH

In summary, while Hazrat Ashraf Biyābānī's Nausarhar is a linguistic treasure and Sultan Quli Qutb Shah's contributions are foundational to Urdu's literary prestige, it is Hazrat Syed Shah Burhān al-Dīn Jānam who must be honored as the first true marsiya writer in the Urdu language.

This recognition is not merely a matter of dates, but of intention, content, and authenticity. Hazrat Jānam's marsiyas reflect a conscious devotion to the Ahl al-Bayt, articulated through a developing Urdu idiom that bridges Arabic theology, Persian poetics, and Sufi cosmology.
He offers not simply lamentation, but a sanctified theology of remembrance, rooted in the love (maḥabbah) of Ḥusayn and the grief (ḥuzn) that animates the believer's soul.

In the ongoing history of Urdu literature and South Asian spirituality, Hazrat Jānam stands as a bridge — between languages, between sects, and between the seen and the unseen.
His marsiya is not just the first of a genre; it is a doorway into sacred remembrance, and it deserves to be remembered — not merely in academic footnotes, but in the living tradition of Ḥusayn's lovers.



DARGAH SHAREEF ḤAḌRAT SAYYID SHĀH
BURHĀN AL-DĪN JĀNAM
QUDDISA SIRRUHU.
(BIJAPUR, KARNATAKA, INDIA.)

Life and Times of Ḥaḍrat Burhānuddīn Jānam

Hazrat Syed Shah Burhanuddin, known by his poetic signature (takhallus) Janam, was the eldest son of the great Chishti Sufi master Hazrat Miran Ji Shams al-Ushshaq, and succeeded him as his spiritual heir (sajjāda-nashīn). The reason for choosing the name Janam is not explicitly known, but it is generally accepted that Hazrat Miran Ji, out of affection, would lovingly call his son janam — a term of endearment meaning "beloved" or "life itself." Over time, this affectionate name became Hazrat's adopted takhallus, under which he composed some of the earliest literary works in the Deccan.

In Sufi literature and among his devotees, he is referred to with honorific titles such as Burhān al-Ḥaqq waʾl-Dīn, Burhān al-Ḥaqīqat waʾl-Dīn, Qutb al-Aqṭāb, Qutb al-Āfāq, and Burhanuddin Shah Janam — all of which indicate his rank as a spiritual axis and a master of both outward knowledge and inward realization. These titles also reflect the immense reverence in which he was held by his contemporaries, disciples, and later generations.

Although no definitive birth date is found in early chronicles, the distinguished Deccani scholar Dr. Mohiuddin Qadri Zoor, in his critical work on Irshād Nāma, has estimated Hazrat Janam's birth to have occurred around 950 AH. A vivid and poetic reference to his birth appears in the work Shajarat al-Atqiyā, written by a murīd and khalīfa of Hazrat Ameenuddin Aala, his son.

The verse states:

"Hua shah ke ghar ye roshan charāgh,
Kiya Chisht ke khanwāde ko bāgh.

Rakhē nām Burhān tab Shāh kā,
tujlā disā mukh ūpar Māh kā."

These lines metaphorically describe the birth of Hazrat Janam as the lighting of a lamp in the household of a spiritual monarch, turning the entire Chishti lineage into a blossoming garden. The imagery reflects not only joy but a sense of divine continuity in the spiritual genealogy.

Syed Burhanuddin Janam belonged to the noble Sadāt-e-Zaidi family, directly descending from Hazrat Zayd Shaheed, the son of Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, the son of Imam Hussain ibn ‘Ali (‘alayhimussalām). This lineage traces back to Imam ‘Ali al-Murtazā and Hazrat Abu Ṭālib, making Hazrat Janam a part of the blessed Ahl al-Bayt.
His family had resided in Mecca, and his grandfather Hazrat Haji Sharif Dawaamuddin is reported to have lived there. Hazrat Miran Ji Shams al-Ushshaq later traveled to Madinah for ziyārah, and it was during this journey that he received a spiritual command to migrate to the Deccan — a command that altered the course of regional Sufi history.

At the youthful age of 20, Hazrat Janam was appointed his father’s khalīfa. But even before this formal succession, his ability to understand and convey deep Sufi knowledge had already become evident. One well-known incident narrates that during his father’s lifetime, a seeker traveled a great distance and asked Hazrat Miran Ji, “Where is God?” The saint replied simply, “He is near you,” and dismissed him. The seeker left bewildered. Hazrat Janam, aware of the situation, welcomed the man into his home, hosted him, and gradually explained to him the esoteric depth of his father’s reply. When asked whether his father had spoken truthfully, the seeker affirmed it with conviction.

This episode demonstrates Janam’s maturity in both wisdom and compassion — he had become capable, even in his father’s lifetime, of guiding others through the labyrinth of spiritual inquiry.
When Hazrat Miran Ji passed away in 972 AH / 1564 CE, Janam was already well-versed in spiritual sciences. If we accept the widely cited year of 992 AH / 1584 CE as the year of his passing, Hazrat Janam lived to the age of approximately 42 years.
Chroniclers unanimously agree that his wife was pregnant at the time of his death. His son, Hazrat Ameenuddin Aala, was born after his demise and therefore could not benefit from his father's personal training. Instead, he was nurtured and spiritually instructed by Hazrat Janam’s senior khalīfa, Hazrat Mahmood Khush Dahan, from whom he received both bayʿat and khilāfat. He also received the spiritual kulāh from Hazrat Khwaja Ataullah, a prominent Chishti master of the time.

Among those who have written in detail about Hazrat Janam is Professor Abdul Haq, who notes that Janam was not only a devout Sufi and khalīfa of Hazrat Miran Ji, but also a distinguished teacher of both exoteric knowledge (ʻilm-e-ẓāhir) and esoteric knowledge (ʻilm-e-bāṭin).
He authored numerous treatises — many of them in early Dakhni Urdu — and frequently taught in this vernacular, which reveals his deep concern for spiritual accessibility among common seekers. His writings include both verse and prose, though most of his prose was reserved for complex Sufi discussions and was written in Persian.

Among his most prominent works are:

- Wasiyat al-Hādi
- Sukh Sahīlā
- Manfaʻat al-Īmān
- Nukta-e-Wāhid
- Nasīm al-Kalām
- Ramūz al-Wāsilīn
- Bashārat al-Dhikr
- Ḥujjat al-Baqāʾ

Dr. Mohiuddin Zoor Qadri affirmed Janam's place as a pioneer of early Urdu literature in the Deccan, stating that he was not only prolific but profoundly influential. Sir Abdul Qadir Sarwari, in his survey of Urdu literature, noted that Hazrat Janam was among the first poets to use classical Persian metres in Urdu, thus bridging Persian literary elegance with vernacular immediacy. His use of the Dakhni dialect in long narrative poems (masnavis) laid the groundwork for later genres such as marsiya, manqabat, and taṣawwufī masnavī. These compositions demonstrate a linguistic richness that blends Deccani, Hindi, and traces of Punjabi Gujri, often described in later philological studies as a precursor to modern Urdu literary form.

Naseeruddin Hashmi, in his biographical notes, confirms that Hazrat Janam died in Bijapur and was buried near his father Hazrat Miran Ji, in a mausoleum that continues to be a site of reverence. Today, the dargah sharīf of Hazrat Janam, alongside that of his father and son, stands in Bijapur, Karnataka, and remains a marjaʻ-e-khalāʾiq — a sanctuary of remembrance, reflection, and supplication for countless devotees.
Their shrines, revered by both commoners and seekers, bear witness to a spiritual legacy that not only shaped Deccan's literary landscape but also deeply enriched the religious and emotional life of its people.

Many foreign scholars and historians have also written about Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam, highlighting his lasting impact on the spiritual and cultural life of the Deccan. In my previous book Gesu Daraz, I discussed the work of Professor Richard Maxwell Eaton, especially his insights on Khwāja Bandā Nawāz Gesu Daraz.
In the same well-known book, The Sufis of Bijapur (1300–1700): Social Roles of Sufis in Medieval India, Professor Eaton also writes in detail about Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam. His discussion is thoughtful and thorough, showing how Hazrat Jānam's influence went beyond religious teachings to shape the society and culture of his time. Below, the reader is invited to consider Eaton's remarks on Hazrat Jānam.

Among the earliest literary pioneers of the Deccan, Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam stands out not only for his prolific output but also for his conscious engagement with the linguistic and cultural dynamics of his time. In his seminal work The Sufis of Bijapur (1300–1700), Professor Richard Maxwell Eaton presents a nuanced and richly layered portrayal of Jānam's contribution to the intellectual and spiritual life of the Deccan.

Eaton draws particular attention to the language used by Hazrat Jānam, noting that it bore clear Panjabi affinities and was referred to by Jānam himself as "Gujari" — not to be confused with Gujarati, but rather a dialect rooted in Western Hindi and Panjabi traditions. This language, brought south by the Gujars accompanying North Indian armies, found a linguistic foothold in the Deccan, retaining its name and character over time. This "Gujari" form of Dakhni would eventually evolve into a sister form of Hindustani, paving the way for later Northern Hindustani/Urdu, thus forming a critical link in the development of early Urdu literary tradition.

Eaton argues that the timing of Dakhni's literary emergence is in itself a milestone. Dakhni achieved literary expression several centuries before Urdu gained comparable status in North India. While Persian remained dominant in the North until the eighteenth century, the Deccan saw a more organic vernacular flowering. In Bijapur, Deccani Muslims—less beholden to Persian literary norms—embraced their mother tongue, Dakhni, as a legitimate and vibrant medium of literary expression. This distinction was rooted not only in language politics but also in cultural identity: the early Deccani Sufis and poets represented a spiritual tradition that had asserted its independence from Northern models, just as the Bahmani polity had earlier done in political terms.

The role of the Chishti Sufis in this vernacular turn was profound.
As Eaton outlines, the descendants of Shah Miranji Shams al-ʿUshshāq, including Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam, used Dakhni for a range of expressive purposes — from mystical verse to theological instruction. Dakhni was not only the language of the people — used in the bazaar, the military, and among the masses — but it also held practical advantages due to its use of the Perso-Arabic script, which allowed easy importation of Islamic vocabulary. Its accessibility made it the natural choice for Sufis aiming to reach both Muslim and Hindu audiences integrated into urban Bijapur life.

Burhānuddīn Jānam, Eaton notes, was perhaps the most prolific among the Sufis of Shāhpur Hillock, authoring more than a dozen works.
While his poetry was consistently in Dakhni, his prose alternated between Dakhni and Persian depending on content and audience.
His disciple Shaikh Mahmud Khush Dahan, for instance, wrote only in Persian, while others like Mahmud Bahri continued the dual tradition: verse in Dakhni and prose in Persian. Eaton emphasizes that the nature of the audience determined the language: Dakhni for the common people, Persian for the inner circle of Sufi initiates and more abstract metaphysical discourse.

This bifurcation also reflected broader patterns in Sufi pedagogical strategy. As Annemarie Schimmel (quoted by Eaton) observes, poetry — particularly in the vernacular — was the most effective medium for reaching illiterate or semi-literate masses who retained teachings through verse. Dakhni poems often served as spiritual nourishment, shaping the "Weltbild" or worldview of listeners. Sufis like Jānam were fully aware of this oral power, even if they sometimes apologized for using the “low” idiom of Dakhni. Jānam himself, in his Irshād-nāma, defends his linguistic choice by writing, "There is nothing the matter with speaking Hindi; open your eyes to the meaning in the treasure."
Such a defense suggests a deep consciousness of language hierarchy, and yet a firm commitment to speaking in the idiom that most effectively reached hearts.

Eaton further documents how literary limitations of early Dakhni sometimes prompted Sufi authors to shift registers.
For example, Jānam's Irshād-nāma — originally written in a highly Sanskritized form of Dakhni — failed to convey the technical intricacies of Chishti metaphysics to his audience. This failure reportedly led his murīds to request a more accessible version, resulting in the more Persianized Kalimāt al-Ḥaqāʾiq. Similarly, Mahmud Bahri was asked to translate his Sanskritized Dakhni poem Man Lagan into Persian for greater comprehension. These examples reflect a conscious linguistic navigation between vernacular intimacy and classical abstraction — a duality that defined the Deccan Sufi literary landscape.

Eaton concludes that the Sufis of Bijapur, through their pioneering use of Dakhni, were not merely adapting to circumstance but actively shaping the language’s literary respectability. By composing poems, songs, and later prose works in Dakhni, they laid the groundwork for its transformation from a spoken idiom into a recognized literary language. Even court poets and monarchs, such as Sultan Ibrahim ʿĀdil Shāh II, followed this model, employing Dakhni in significant works like the Kitāb-i Nauras. As Professor Schimmel insightfully summarizes (as quoted by Eaton), the Sufi need to explain divine truths to common people — who knew neither Arabic nor Persian — necessitated the turn to vernacular. Over time, this led to the emergence of Dakhni as a literary medium capable of conveying both mystical insights and more secular themes.

In essence, Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam's contributions, as portrayed by Professor Eaton, were not merely literary but civilizational.
By straddling linguistic registers, responding to audience needs, and rooting his expression in both spiritual authenticity and social accessibility, Jānam played a central role in shaping the vernacular religious culture of the Deccan.
His life and works stand as testaments to the power of language — not just as a tool of communication, but as an instrument of transformation.

With this overview of Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam's life and contributions, we begin to see the breadth of his influence — as a spiritual guide, a scholar, and a literary figure rooted deeply in the cultural soil of the Deccan.
His writings reflect a sincere concern for communicating complex ideas in a language that could reach people beyond the narrow bounds of scholarly circles. His legacy, preserved through both his prose and poetry, continues to resonate in the spiritual and intellectual traditions of South India.

What follows now is an exploration of another profound aspect of Hazrat Jānam's life — his devotion to the memory of Imām Ḥusain ʿalayhis-salām and the events of Karbalā. Through his marsiyas, Hazrat Jānam gave poetic voice to grief, reverence, and spiritual longing. These elegies are not only significant for their literary merit, but also for the way they embody a deeply personal and communal form of remembrance.
In the chapters ahead, we will examine the themes, language, and historical context of his marsiya writing, and consider how it contributed to the evolving practice of ʿazādārī in the Deccan.

The Marsiya:
Original Dakhni Text with English Translation

محرم کا چندر ، پھر گھن پہ لے ماتم ، ہوا پیدا
محباں کے دلاں میں ، سب شہاں کا غم ، ہوا پیدا

Roman Urdu:
Ō Wājib takhm-e-gham boyā, sō Mumkin ḳhwāb meñ royā
Ujālā Mumtaniʿ ḳhwoyā, ho ʿĀrif gham, hu’ā paidā

The Necessary Being sowed the seed of grief,
The possible (creation) wept over it in a dream.
The impossible's radiance was lost,
And thus, a knower of sorrow was born.

دکھی ہو احدیت میانے ، نکل وحدت منے آنے
یو غم عالم پہ دکھلانے ، صفی آدم ، ہوا پیدا

Dukhī ho Aḥadiyyat miyāne, nikl Waḥdat mane āne
Yū gham ālam pe dikhlāne, Ṣafī Ādam, hu’ā paidā

When sorrow stirred within Divine Oneness,
Unity emerged into being.
To manifest that grief upon the world,
The Chosen One — Adam Ṣafīullāh — was born.

او واجب تخم غم بویا ، سو ممکن خواب میں رویا
اُجالا ممتنع کھویا ، ہو عارف غم ، ہوا پیدا

Ō Wājib takhm-e-gham boyā, sō Mumkin ḳhwāb meñ royā
Ujālā Mumtaniʿ ḳhwoyā, ho ʿĀrif gham, hu’ā paidā

The Necessary Being sowed the seed of grief,
The possible (creation) wept over it in a dream.
The impossible's radiance was lost,
And thus, a knower of sorrow was born.

مکاں سٹ کینچ مخفی کا ، کرے سب بھینس سفلی کا
پھر اکر اِسم علوی کا ، یو سب عالم ، ہوا پیدا

Makān saṭ kēñch Makhfī kā, kare sab bhens Sifli kā
Phir akar ism-e-Alwī kā, yū sab ʿālam, hu’ā paidā

The Hidden tore through space,
Dispelled all the lower-world fog,
Then with the emergence of the lofty Name —
This entire universe came into being.

ہو ظاہر روح کے جسماں ، ہوئے قدرت کے گرِ قسماں
طلسم ، اس قسم کے رسماں پکڑ محکم ، ہوا پیدا

Ho zāhir rūḥ ke jismāñ, hu’e qudrat ke gir-e-qismāñ
Ṭilism, is qism ke rasmāñ pakaṛ muḥkam, hu’ā paidā

Spiritual bodies appeared,
Knots of Divine secrets revealed in various forms,
A firm and sacred talisman of such order
Was brought into existence.

ہوا ہور باؤمل ، پانی ہوئے درخاکِ جسمانی
ولے اس نور نورانی میں ، نارا کم ہوا پیدا

Hw’ā hōr bāomal, pānī hu’e dar-ḳhāk-e-jismānī
Walē is nūr-e-nūrānī meñ, nārā kam hu’ā paidā

Fragrance spread across the air,
Water stirred within the earthen body,
Yet in that radiant Light,
The blaze of fire became subdued.

لیا ناسوت حیوانی ، سو ملکوت نور کے پانی
ہوا جبروت روحانی ، جولا ھوت دم ہوا پیدا

Liyā Nāsūt-e-ḥaywānī, sō Malakūt nūr ke pānī
Hu’ā Jabarūt-e-rūḥānī, Jo lāhūt dam hu’ā paidā

The animal self of this earthly realm was formed,
Then filled with celestial light,
The breath of the spiritual realm (Jabarūt) was infused —
And thus, a soul-bearing being was born.

مدینہ علم جیؤں سرور ، علی بابھا رہبر
سو معنیٰ علم کا مظہر ، شہ اکرم ہوا پیدا

Madīnah ʿilm jiyūñ sarwar, ʿAlī bābuhā rahbar
Sō maʿnī ʿilm kā maẓhar, Shah-e-akram hu’ā paidā

The city of knowledge is the Prophet ﷺ,
And ʿAlī is its gate and guide.
The true manifestation of that knowledge —
The noble King (Ḥusayn) was born.

میں کیا کھوں حال عالم کا ، کلمہ بول خاتم کا
ولے اُس اسمِ اعظم کا نکوئی محرم ہوا پیدا

Maiñ kyā kahūñ ḥāl-ʿālam kā, kalimah bol ḳhātim kā
Walē us Ism-e-aʿẓam kā, nakō’ī muḥram hu’ā paidā

What can I say of the state of the world?
The Seal of Prophets ﷺ declared the word.
Yet, for the Most Great Name —
No true confidant was ever born.

فلک اس غم سوں ہو کے خم ، بسایا جگ اُپر ماتم
کریں سب و مبدم یو غم ، جدھاں تے ، غم ہوا پیدا

Falak is gham sōñ ho ke ḳham, basāyā jag ūpar mātam
Karē sab-o-mabdam yū gham, jidhāñ tē, gham hu’ā paidā

The heavens bowed under this sorrow,
And mourning spread across the world.
All from beginning to end must grieve
For the place where grief was born.

شہاں کے تئیں سرانے کوں ، نہایت غمکا پانے کوں
یو دُوک شہ کا پچھانے کوں ، سو جامِ جم ہوا پیدا

Shahāñ ke ti’ñ sarāne kūñ, nihāyat gham kā pāne kūñ
Yū dūkh Sheh kā pichhāne kūñ, sō Jām-e-Jam hu’ā paidā

To be placed at kings’ pillows,
To drink the deepest draught of sorrow,
To perceive the pain of the Martyr —
A vision like Jām-e-Jam was born.

رھیا طاقت نہ طاقت کوں ، دیئے سب چھوڑ ، راحت کوں
سو اس غم کے جراحت کوں ، نہ کئیں ، مرہم ہوا پیدا

Rahyā tāqat nah tāqat kūñ, diyē sab chhoṛ rāḥat kūñ
Sō is gham ke jarāḥat kūñ, nah kaiñ, marham hu'ā paidā

Strength could no longer restrain strength,
All comforts were forsaken.
Yet for this wound of sorrow,
No balm was ever born.

لگیا دُک شاہ کا جس رے ، نسوجھے غم بجز نس رے
خبر نئیں غم کی ہے کس رے ، جو غم ہمدم ہوا پیدا

Lagyā dūk Shāh kā jis re, nasūjhē gham, bajuz nas re
Ḵhabar nahīñ gham kī hai kis re, jo gham hamdam hu'ā paidā

Whoever felt the pain of the King,
Grief ran deep through their veins.
Yet none knew whose heart it truly struck —
Only the companion of grief was born.

حسینا گئے ہیں جس رہ پر ، سو واضح کاں ہے گمرہ پر
سمیا جو آکھڑیا شہ پر ، سو ایسا کم ہوا پیدا

Ḥusaynā ga'e haiñ jis rah par, sō wāżiḥ kāñ hai gumrah par
Samiā jo ā khaṛiyā Shah par, sō aisā kam hu'ā paidā

The path Ḥusayn walked is the path of truth;
All else is misguidance.
He who stood beside the Martyr —
Such loyalty is rare in existence.

نہیں آرام کس یک دن ، گھٹے سک دک بدھے دن دن
جو کرنے بدل ، پل چھن چھن ، یو سب عالم ہوا پیدا

Nahīñ ārām kis yak din, ghaṭē suk dūk baḍhē din din
Jo karnē badal, pal chhan chhan, yū sab ʿālam hu’ā paidā

Not a single day brought peace,
Comfort diminished, sorrow grew each day.
Each moment longed for change —
This is the world that was born.

جناور سب سٹے زوجاں ، دریا کے کھلبلے موجاں
شمر جب کفر کر ، فوجاں لے ، شہ کے سم ، ہوا پیدا

Janāwar sab saṭṭē zaujāñ, daryā ke ḳhalbalē maujāñ
Shimar jab kufr kar, faujāñ le, Shah ke sam, hu’ā paidā

All beasts left their mates,
The river’s waves turned restless.
When Shimr approached with blasphemous troops —
That moment of terror was born.

ہوا ماتم رسول اُوپر ، علی پر ھور بطول اوپر
نین نرگس کے پھول اوپر ، انجو شبنم ہوا پیدا

Hu’ā mātam Rasūl ūpar, ʿAlī par hōr Baṭūl ūpar
Nain Nargis ke phūl ūpar, anjū shabnam hu’ā paidā

Mourning fell upon the Prophet ﷺ,
Upon ʿAlī and also Fāṭimah,
Over the eyes like narcissus blossoms —
Tears fell like morning dew.

جتے قلبے میں غم بستا ، سو او جی میں عیاں دستا
یو ہو سری سوں وابستا ، خفی جانم ہوا پیدا

Jitē qalbē meñ gham bastā, sō ū jī meñ ʿayāñ distā
Yū ho sirrī sōñ wābastā, ḳhafī Jānam hu’ā paidā

Where grief dwells in the heart,
It shines upon the face.
Tied to the secret of secrets —
That hidden Jānam came into being.

This marsiya by Ḥaḍrat Burhānuddīn Jānam consists of a total of eighteen verses — and to the best of our research, these eighteen are all that have survived. In fact, most previous publications that mention this marsiya include only a handful of couplets, often incomplete or without clear attribution. It is only after extensive cross-checking of manuscripts and scattered references that the complete set of eighteen verses could be gathered and presented here.

Each verse has been included here in its original Dakhni form, followed by a careful English translation. A detailed explanation of the themes and meanings behind these verses is taken up in the next chapters, where each couplet is discussed in its spiritual and poetic context.

Apart from this marsiya, historical sources mention at least two more marsiyas attributed to Ḥaḍrat Jānam. One of them, though lesser-known, has also been included towards the end of this book, so that readers can get a broader sense of his engagement with the marsiya tradition and his spiritual expression through it.

Commentary and Theological Reflections on the Marsiya:

The marsiya of Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam occupies a unique and luminous place in the literary and spiritual tradition of Islamic mourning for Imām Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām). This marsiya is not merely a poetic elegy but a vessel that conveys profound metaphysical and mystical truths — truths that are not commonly discussed in popular religious discourses. What distinguishes this marsiya is how it intertwines the tragedy of Karbala with themes such as the primordial light (nūr-e-Muḥammadī ﷺ), the sorrow of the Prophets (‘alayhim al-salām), and the intricate concepts of Sufi metaphysics.

Hazrat Jānam articulates the grief of Karbala not only in historical and emotional dimensions but through the esoteric lenses of tasawwuf.
The marsiya invokes spiritual cosmology:
the interaction of nūr (light), rūḥ (spirit), jism (body), nasūt (the physical realm), malakūt (the luminous angelic realm), jabarūt (the realm of power), and lāhūt (the ineffable divine realm). Through these multi-dimensional ideas, the poet expresses how the sorrow of Imām Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām) permeates the entire cosmic order.

A particular concern arises from the use of certain mystical or philosophical terms that the general public — especially those inclined to sectarian interpretations — may misread or misrepresent. Words that stem from classical Sufi usage, when taken out of their intended spiritual context, have sometimes led to unjust accusations of doctrinal deviation. It is for this reason that a careful sharḥ (explanation) of these verses and words becomes essential, especially for readers of our time who may not be familiar with Sufi idioms or traditional metaphysical language.

This commentary, therefore, serves not only as a means of clarifying linguistic nuances but also as a defense against the misappropriation of Sufi expression by sectarian polemic. In the light of the teachings of the noble saints and Sufi masters, we attempt here to highlight the truths conveyed in this marsiya and to restore the rightful spiritual meanings that Hazrat Jānam intended.

Below, we present selected verses from the marsiya, accompanied by detailed commentary on certain key phrases and expressions.

The Word “Mātam”: A Linguistic, Literary, and Spiritual Commentary

Hazrat-e-Jānam’s marsiya begins with the profound verse:

“MUḤARRAM KĀ CHĀND PHIR GAHAN PE LE MĀTAM, HUʾĀ PAIDĀ”

In this opening line, the poet employs the word “mātam” not casually, but with deep poetic and spiritual intention. Given the complexity of the term and the historical misinterpretations attached to it, a comprehensive commentary is not just beneficial but necessary.

In public perception, particularly among many in the Ahl al-Sunnah community, the word mātam is often reduced to its external, ritualistic expression — associated exclusively with chest-beating or self-flagellation, often linked to Shīʿī mourning practices. Unfortunately, this view has been amplified by sectarian rhetoric and a lack of philological curiosity. Rarely has there been an earnest inquiry into the deeper meanings, origins, and evolution of the term — across linguistic, cultural, and spiritual traditions.

It is important to underscore: mātam, in its original conception and classical usage, is not the property of any one group or ritual. Rather, it is a universal human — and spiritual — response to the martyrdom of truth, exemplified most luminously in the tragedy of Karbalāʾ.

LINGUISTIC ORIGINS AND EARLY USAGE

The word “mātam” stems from the Arabic triliteral root م ت م, forming the verbal noun (maṣdar) that conveys the meaning:
intense grief; collective mourning; lamentation upon death or tragedy.
In classical Arabic, mātam referred to communal gatherings of sorrow, often involving poetry, weeping, and expressions of grief.
These gatherings were recognized as natural and spiritually valid reactions to loss — especially the loss of martyrs or loved ones.

This term traveled into Persian where it absorbed richer metaphorical textures. In Persian literature — especially among the Sufis — mātam became more than just lamentation. It evolved into a metaphor for:

- The soul's protest against injustice
- The lover's grief over divine separation
- The remembrance of those who stood for ḥaqq

Sufi poets used the vocabulary of gham (grief) and mātam (its expression) to articulate their love for Imām Ḥusayn ('alayhi al-salām) and the values he embodied.

THE WORD MĀTAM IN URDU: FIRST APPEARANCES

The earliest recorded use of the term mātam in Urdu literature appears in the work of Hazrat Syed Shāh Ashraf Biyābānī Quddisa Sirruhu, the spiritual heir of Hazrat Ziyāʾuddīn Biyābānī.

In his prose text "Nausarhar" — composed in 909 AH — he uses the word in the context of azadārī (mourning for Imām Ḥusayn):

> *"Kooyal āpas yo dukh dhar, baithi kapre kāle kar.*
> *'Matam' kooth kālik lāo, lāl kīti chal lahu bharāo."*

The usage is not incidental. It is deliberate, poetic, and spiritual — aligning the act of mourning with natural, symbolic imagery. This early Deccani marsiya establishes that the word mātam was employed in pre-modern Urdu to denote sincere expressions of grief, devoid of sectarian context.

Similarly, in Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam's marsiya, we find another example:

"HU'Ā MĀTAM RASŪL ŪPAR, 'ALĪ ŪPAR, HOR BAṬŪL ŪPAR"

And later, in the marsiya of Hazrat Shāh Rājū Qattāl Quddisa Sirruhu, a descendant of Khwāja Bandanawāz Gesū Darāz, we find:

"GHAMZADA HO KAHĀÑ PO NIKLIYĀ GHAM KĀ CHĀND HAĀYE HAĀYE,
SHOOR 'MĀTAM' KĀ UTHIYĀ HAR JAG ME GHAR GHAR HAĀYE HAĀYE."

These examples demonstrate that mātam in the works of early Urdu Sufi poets carried an atmosphere of shared mourning — not limited to any ritual, but representing a collective, sacred sorrow.

GHAM AND MĀTAM: A SEMANTIC DISTINCTION

In popular usage, mātam and gham are often treated as synonyms. However, a closer linguistic and conceptual reading shows a nuanced difference:

- "Gham" is an internal state — a deep, often silent grief. It may remain unspoken or hidden, a fire that burns in the heart.
- "Mātam" is an external act — the expression of that grief through tears, speech, lamentation, or ritual.

Thus, while gham is the flame, mātam is its smoke. One dwells inwardly; the other becomes visible, audible, and communal.
In literary tradition, especially in Urdu and Persian, this distinction is upheld. Hence we find phrases like:

- Gham-e-Ḥusayn ('alayhi al-salām) – the sorrow for Ḥusayn
- Mātam-e-Ḥusayn ('alayhi al-salām) – the collective expression of that sorrow

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE AND THE ROLE OF WILĀYAH

The question, then, is not merely what mātam means, but how we understand and practice it. Is it only a ritual, or is it rooted in awareness (ʿilm), love (maḥabbat), and spiritual depth (maʿrifah)?
We must remember the saying of the Prophet ﷺ:

"Anā Madīnatu'l-ʿIlm wa ʿAlīyyun Bābuhā"
"I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate."

This is not just a praise of Sayyidunā ʿAlī, but a divine indication of the path we must follow. If we claim connection to Wilāyat, then our acts — even our grief — must be performed with understanding and spiritual purpose.

Blind repetition without insight is not the legacy of the Ahl al-Bayt. Instead, they called us to knowledge-based devotion, where every act — even mātam — becomes meaningful when linked to the values of Wilāyah: truth, justice, wisdom, and love.

If we isolate mātam from its context — its ethical, theological, and spiritual backdrop — it risks becoming an empty shell. But if we ground it in ʿilm and wilāyah, then even tears become a sacred offering.

SHARḤ OF THE FIRST LINE OF HAZRAT JĀNAM'S MARSIYA

Having deeply examined the metaphysical and linguistic layers behind the term matam in the opening line of Hazrat Jānam's marsiya, we now transition to a comprehensive commentary on the entire first verse.
The verse reads:

"Muḥarram kā chaṅd phir gahān pe le matam huā paidā"

This single poetic line carries within it a universe of grief, symbolism, and doctrinal resonance

When the crescent of Muḥarram appears in the sky, it serves not merely as a marker of a new lunar month, but as the rise of a cosmological symbol—a celestial emblem of mourning and divine protest.
Historically and theologically, Muḥarram is not just the first month of the Islamic calendar; it is the month consecrated by the blood of the grandson of the Prophet ﷺ—Imām Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām).

In the spiritual framework laid out by Hazrat Jānam, the sighting of the Muḥarram moon invites a critical reflection upon one's alignment with either the path of remembrance and sorrow or that of heedlessness and worldly festivity. There are those who, upon the moon’s appearance, are enveloped in the grief of Karbalā—whose hearts incline toward mourning, reflection, and remembrance. And there are others who mark it as the beginning of a "new year," offering celebratory greetings, divorced from the historical and spiritual weight of the moment.

Hazrat Jānam’s verse underscores that this divergence is not a matter of mere emotional response, but a moral stance.
To weep for Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām) is to stand with divine justice; to treat the month as a time of joy is to risk insensitivity to a cosmic tragedy.
This is not about sectarian identity—it is about ethical consciousness.
It is a test of insight: who remembers the thirst of the martyrs, and who turns away from it?

There are, unfortunately, voices—often rigid in their jurisprudence and narrow in their understanding—who object to extended mourning, citing narrations that limit grief to three days. But these narrations pertain to ordinary bereavement, not to the martyrdom of Sayyid al-Shuhadāʾ.
The grief of Karbalā is exceptional, both in its cause and in its consequence. Rasūlullāh ﷺ himself mourned Imām Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām) before his martyrdom even occurred, weeping when informed by Jibrāʾīl (‘alayhi al-salām) of what was to come. Can this type of divine sorrow be bound by the rules of worldly mourning?

Sayyidah Fāṭimah (salamullāhi ʿalayhā), Amīr al-Muʾminīn ʿAlī (‘alayhi al-salām), and the early believers bore this sorrow as a sacred trust.
The shedding of tears, the narrating of his suffering, and the remembrance of his stand for truth are not cultural practices—they are spiritual necessities. Each act of mourning becomes a declaration: that Ḥusayn’s sacrifice still speaks, still matters, and still commands fidelity.

When Hazrat Jānam declares that the moon of Muḥarram gives rise to matam, he offers a vision of the cosmos itself entering lamentation.
The heavens participate in the grief of the family of the Prophet ﷺ. The lunar cycle aligns with the divine rhythm of remembrance.
This is why grief for Ḥusayn is not only timeless—it is cosmic.

At this point, we must also consider a vital historical and cultural context. Hazrat Jānam belonged to the Deccan—a region where the spirit of azādārī has historically been vibrant, inclusive, and deeply rooted in collective consciousness. In the Deccan, preparations for Muharram would begin even before the crescent appeared. As soon as the moon of Muḥarram was sighted, entire communities—regardless of sect or social standing—would reorient their lives around azādārī. This devotion transcended boundaries: whether Shīʿa or Sunnī, rich or poor, all would participate. Even many Hindus in the region shared in this reverent commemoration.

Such was the moral and cultural commitment to the memory of Imām Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām) that it became woven into the very fabric of life. Similarly, in North India—especially in cities like Lucknow—a unique cultural tradition persists. Young children, some scarcely able to speak clearly, go from house to house upon the sighting of the Muḥarram moon, announcing that the days of azādārī have arrived. This early education imprints Ḥusayn’s love onto their hearts, forming a lifelong allegiance to his cause.

In our present time, these practices offer a valuable insight: if we wish to preserve the legacy of Imām Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām), we must cultivate his remembrance in our children from an early age. Sadly, in many households today, this chain of transmission is weakening. Families drift from these values; young minds remain unaware of Ahl al-Bayt’s noble path.
It is imperative that we reinvigorate this education—not through dogma, but through loving engagement and clear understanding.

In that sense, matam becomes more than ritualized expression. It becomes a theology of protest against injustice, a spiritual echo of the Prophet's ﷺ love for his grandson, and a metaphysical call to align the soul with the oppressed. It is through this lens that Hazrat Jānam invites us to see Muḥarram—not as a calendar month, but as an unfolding of divine sorrow.

Thus, those who mourn do not merely recall history—they participate in a living tradition of resistance, love, and sacred memory. They reject moral amnesia and affirm a legacy of dignity. In contrast, those who reduce this grief to a cultural or temporal phenomenon overlook its role in shaping Islamic consciousness.

Hazrat Jānam's line, therefore, is more than a poetic gesture—it is a call to awaken. It tells us that remembrance is not a passive act, but a form of spiritual presence. As we move forward in the marsiya, let us keep in mind: every line bears the weight of the unseen, and every tear for Ḥusayn (ʻalayhi al-salām) is a step into the light of truth.

UNIQUE STRUCTURE OF HAZRAT-E-JĀNAM'S MARSIYA

Hazrat-e-Jānam's marsiya stands apart from the later conventional marsiya formats that emerged centuries after him.
The classical structure of marsiya evolved into distinct sections such as:

1) Tamhīd
2) Sarāpā
3) Ruqsat
4) Āmad
5) Rajz
6) Jang
7) Shahādat
8) Bain

However, this highly codified structure is not found in Hazrat-e-Jānam's composition.
Instead, after the opening verse, his marsiya takes a spiritually contemplative turn.

The first six verses after the opening line do not narrate events of Karbalāʾ but rather expound the metaphysical and spiritual dimensions of mourning (azādārī) through Sufi imagery. He doesn't simply describe the sorrow of Imām Ḥusayn (ʻalayhi al-salām); he spiritualizes it.

Hazrat-e-Jānam, being a spiritual heir to Hazrat Khwāja Bandanawāz Gesū Darāz, infused his poetry with the deep tones of that lineage.
His marsiya is not just lament; it is a mirʾāt al-ḥaqīqah — a mirror reflecting the higher realities of sorrow, love, sacrifice, and divine proximity.

Each of the six verses that follow the first line deserves a detailed exposition, for they are laden with Sufi cosmology and metaphysical insight. His use of terms such as ʿālam al-rūḥ, malakūt, jabarūt, nāsūt, and lāhūt reflect the multi-layered spiritual universe through which he understands the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn.

In the upcoming sections, we shall examine verses 2 through 5 in depth, decoding their terminology and unveiling the meanings embedded in each phrase — allowing the reader to witness how Hazrat-e-Jānam's poetry does not merely weep for Karbalāʾ, but contemplates its eternal spiritual resonance.

VERSE 2:

Dukhī ho Aḥadiyyat miyāne, nikl Waḥdat mane āne
Yū gham ālam pe dikhlāne, Ṣafī Ādam, hu'ā paidā

When sorrow stirred within Divine Oneness,
Unity emerged into being.
To manifest that grief upon the world,
The Chosen One — Adam Ṣafīullāh — was born.

This verse unfolds a profound mystical cosmology rooted in Islamic metaphysics and Sufi thought.
The opening phrase, "Dukhī ho Aḥadiyyat miyāne", speaks of a stirring within Aḥadiyyat — the absolute singularity of Allāh, a pre-creational state where no duality, form, or attribute exists. In Sufi cosmology, this is the first veil, a state of perfect Unity where the Divine is unknown, unmanifested, and utterly alone.

Hazrat-e-Jānam poetically expresses that even in this state of pure Oneness, a metaphysical sorrow arises — a longing or ḥubb (Divine love) for self-disclosure. This recalls the ḥadīth-e-qudsī:

"Kuntu kanzan makhfiyyan fa-aḥbabtu an uʿrafa fa-khalaqtu'l-khalq."
"I was a Hidden Treasure and I loved to be known, so I created creation."

From this sacred longing, Waḥdat (Unity in manifestation) emerges — a stage where Divine attributes, names, and potentiality begin to stir. This marks the transition from Oneness beyond comprehension to Unity with expression.

But why did this manifestation occur? The second line answers:
"Yu gham ʿālam pe dikhlāne" — *So that this grief (or Divine longing) may be revealed to the world.*

Here, "gham" does not mean worldly sorrow. It refers to the Divine Pathos — the sorrow of unshared beauty, the hidden majesty, the desire to bestow mercy and love, which is the very essence of creation. This sorrow is spiritual, not emotional. It is the Divine impulse behind existence itself — the need to be mirrored and recognized.

And so, Ṣafī Ādam was born — Adam the Chosen One (ʿalayhis-salām), the first prophet, the first vessel of Divine manifestation. Unlike "Insān-e-Kāmil" (the Perfect Human), which is a culmination of the spiritual journey, Adam marks the beginning of humanity's sacred trust — the one who bore the responsibility (amānah) of Divine knowledge and sorrow.

Hazrat Adam was named Ṣafī (the pure and chosen) because he was selected to be the first carrier of this Divine reflection.
He was the mirror in which the Names of Allāh were first displayed — the one who was taught all the names (wa ʿallama ādam al-asmāʾa kullahā). In that sense, he became the first witness to Divine sorrow and love.
So, this verse is not about humanity at large, or the archetype of Insān-e-Kāmil, but about the very first human being —
the Prophet Adam (ʿalayhis-salām) — who was created to manifest and carry this Divine secret into the world.

VERSE 3:

Ō Wājib takhm-e-gham boyā, sō Mumkin ḳhwāb meñ royā
Ujālā Mumtaniʿ ḳhwoyā, ho ʿĀrif gham, huʾā paidā

The Necessary Being sowed the seed of grief,
The possible (creation) wept over it in a dream.
The impossible's radiance was lost,
And thus, a knower of sorrow was born.

In this verse, Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam deploys the language of Islamic metaphysics with an ease that is at once poetic and profound. The verse, deceptively compact, articulates a worldview that has occupied the hearts and intellects of Sufi philosophers, poets, and lovers for centuries. It speaks not merely of an event in history, but of the architecture of reality itself—creation, veiling, grief, and the emergence of divine recognition through the vessel of ʿishq, or divine love. For the contemporary reader, particularly one less familiar with the intricate cosmology of Sufi metaphysics, this verse may seem esoteric or abstract. But on closer engagement, one realizes that it is not merely mysticism for mysticism's sake—it is a blueprint of how Divine sorrow was mirrored in the figure of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām), and how his martyrdom is not an isolated tragedy but a cosmic event rooted in the very principles of existence.

The first hemistich, "Ō Wājib takhm-e-gham boyā"—"The Necessary Being sowed the seed of grief"—refers to Wājib al-Wujūd, or the Necessary Existent. This is a term from Islamic theology denoting the One who must exist, the Absolute whose non-existence is inconceivable. In this powerful metaphor, Hazrat Jānam attributes the initiation of sorrow not to chance or chaos, but to Divine intentionality. The act of sowing, takhm boyā, is agricultural, evoking the image of a cultivator gently planting a seed—here, the seed of gham. Sorrow, in this framework, is not an accident of the world or a symptom of disorder. It is, in fact, cultivated by the Creator as a necessary precondition for maʿrifah—gnosis. Within the mystical tradition, gham is not merely emotional sadness; it is the shadow of ʿishq, the consequence of longing. Love necessitates separation. Longing necessitates sorrow. Without gham, there can be no search, no yearning, no reaching toward the Beloved.

The next line, “sō Mumkin ḳhwāb meñ royā”—“The Possible wept over it in a dream”—deepens the cosmological hierarchy. The Mumkin al-Wujūd refers to all contingent existence—all that can exist or not exist, including the human being. In this schema, creation itself is cast as a dreamer, not fully awake, perceiving truth not directly but in parables, metaphors, and signs. This dream imagery is especially significant in Sufism, where the world is often described as ḥulm—dreamlike, transient, a veil that simultaneously reveals and conceals. The sorrow that the Mumkin feels is not full comprehension but an intuitive, dream-state recognition of a Divine sorrow that underlies the world. This is the human condition: we are not unaware of sorrow, but our awareness is partial, hazy, and often misinterpreted. We are beings who weep in our sleep, unaware of the full reality that surrounds us.

The third hemistich—“Ujālā Mumtaniʿ ḳhvoyā”—“The radiance of the Impossible was lost”—introduces the most abstract layer of this metaphysical trinity. Mumtaniʿ al-Wujūd is the impossible existent—that which can neither exist nor be conceived in its fullness. In theological terms, this refers to Allāh’s essence in its absolute, unmanifested form. The radiance of the Impossible, then, refers to the light that cannot be accessed—the Divine Essence that remains forever veiled. In this line, Hazrat Jānam tells us that this light—this ujālā—is hidden, eclipsed. It is not that the light never was, but that the contingent world cannot perceive it. The veil is not a punishment; it is a mercy. To behold Mumtaniʿ al-Wujūd in its fullness would annihilate all limited beings. Hence, our sorrow is not merely for what we suffer, but for what we can never fully know.

And then comes the final declaration: “ho ʿĀrif gham, hu’ā paidā”—“And thus, a knower of sorrow was born.” This is the arrival, the nativity not of an individual, but of an archetype—the ʿārif, the gnostic. But not just any gnostic. This is the one who knows through grief. The ʿārif-e-gham. In Sufi terminology, ʿirfān is the highest form of knowledge—not rational deduction, but unveiling, kashf. It is experiential, inward, transformative. The one who becomes ʿārif-e-gham is the one who has traversed the valleys of longing, the deserts of separation, and the mountains of sacrifice. The embodiment of this journey is none other than Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi’s-salām).

Imām Ḥusayn is not simply a martyr. In the metaphysical vision offered by Hazrat Jānam, he is the most perfect mirror of Divine sorrow. His suffering is not an isolated act of historical resistance, but the necessary flowering of that takhm-e-gham—the seed of grief sown by the Divine itself. If we understand his martyrdom as a tragic political event, we miss the point. If we see it only as a historical struggle, we truncate its depth. The ʿārif-e-gham is the one who realizes that Ḥusayn's sacrifice is a Divine sign, an āyah, that discloses the hidden sorrow of the Beloved. And more than that: it is a path. His grief is a ladder for those who seek the Real. His tears are not weakness, but waterings of that primordial seed.

It is here that Hazrat Jānam's choice of language becomes especially potent. Instead of emotional outcry, he offers metaphysical meditation. Instead of lament alone, he offers ontology. The marsiya becomes not a reaction to Karbalaʾ, but a revelation of it—a cosmic decoding of what it means for the Divine to have allowed such grief, and what it means for humanity to respond. By invoking the three categories of Wājib, Mumkin, and Mumtaniʿ, Hazrat Jānam is not indulging in philosophical jargon; he is locating Ḥusayn in the very fabric of being. His sorrow is not an interruption in the Divine order—it is the fulfillment of its inner truth.

To the modern reader—especially from the younger generation who may find such abstractions distant or difficult—it is important to recognize that this language is not meant to obscure, but to elevate. In a world increasingly flattened by materialism and immediacy, the Sufi marsiya demands slow reading, contemplative attention. It refuses to reduce Ḥusayn to slogans. It insists that to truly love him, we must come to know the sorrow he bore—not just as an emotional burden, but as a spiritual principle. In the language of Hazrat Jānam, that knowledge begins not with words but with wounds, not with answers but with awe.

Thus, this verse is not merely about grief—it is grief as revelation. It is about how the universe is structured around a longing for the Divine, and how Imām Ḥusayn becomes the key to unlocking that longing. He is not just the "Prince of Martyrs" in history; he is the ʿārif of Divine sorrow, the one who stands at the intersection of Wājib and Mumkin, holding the lost light of Mumtaniʿ in his bleeding hands. This is why Hazrat Jānam places him not in the battlefield of Karbalaʾ, but in the architecture of existence itself. The marsiya is not just mourning—it is metaphysics weeping in meter.

VERSE 4:

Makān saṭ kēñch Makhfī kā, kare sab bhens Sifli kā
Phir akar ism-e-Alwī kā, yū sab ʿālam, huʾā paidā

The Hidden tore through space,
Dispelled all the lower-world fog,
Then with the emergence of the lofty Name —
This entire universe came into being.

In this verse, Hazrat-e-Jānam transitions from metaphysical sorrow to cosmological manifestation. The verse can be interpreted as a mystical allegory of the unfolding of the cosmos from the hidden, unmanifest source (al-Makhfī) into the visible, structured world — through spiritual hierarchies.

The word "Makān" here, while literally meaning 'space' or 'place', symbolically denotes the realm of creation — the dimensional framework through which the Divine becomes observable. "Saṭ kīnch", meaning 'tore open', implies the act of Divine unveiling. This corresponds to the mystical idea of Kashf, or spiritual unveiling, wherein veils that hide the Absolute are lifted — metaphorically, in creation itself and experientially, in spiritual realization.

The "Makhfī" refers to the Hidden One — one of the Divine attributes (Asmāʾ al-Ḥusnā) is al-Bāṭin — the Inner, the Concealed. In Sufi metaphysics, creation is a means through which the Bāṭin becomes Ẓāhir — manifest. The tearing open of makān by the makhfī suggests the moment of taḥallī — Divine self-disclosure.

"Bheens siflī kā" references the siflī or the lower world — Nāsūt, the realm of physicality and material darkness. The act of cleansing here is symbolic of the purification of the base realms through the descent of light. This can be seen as an allegory for how even the lowest world contains the potential for Divine presence, once the veils are lifted.

Now comes the most powerful image: “Phir akar ism-e-ʿulvī kā” — then emerged the Lofty Name. Here, Hazrat-e-Jānam uses a Sufi code: the Ism-e-ʿAẓam, or the Greatest Name. In many Sufi teachings, this refers either to the hidden name of Allāh which has the power to unlock realities or — in esoteric Shīʿī-Sufi cosmology — to the Muhammadan Reality. The Ism-e-ʿulvī (lofty name) is the archetype of all names, the summation of Divine attributes in a single, exalted reality.

This emergence causes the entire ʿālam — the universe — to come into being. This verse thus presents a full arc: from hiddenness (buṭūn) to manifestation (ẓuhūr), from impurity (saflī) to purification, and from nameless potential to meaningful form — all of which ties back to the grief-bearing, love-reflecting cosmos in which the Karbala event stands as the ultimate expression.

Ho zāhir rūḥ ke jismāñ, hu’e qudrat ke gir-e-qismāñ
Ṭilism, is qism ke rasmāñ pakaṛ muḥkam, hu’ā paidā

Spiritual bodies appeared,
Knots of Divine secrets revealed in various forms,
A firm and sacred talisman of such order
Was brought into existence.

This verse portrays the crystallization of spiritual realities into structured forms. The “rūḥ ke jismāñ” are not material but ajsam-e-latīfa — subtle bodies or spiritual forms. In many Sufi teachings, especially in the works of Imām al-Ghazālī and Ibn ʿArabī, it's stated that before any material embodiment, the soul has a subtle presence — composed of Divine breath (nafas al-Raḥmān) and connected to the realms of Malakūt (Angelic realm) and Jabarūt (Power/Intelligible realm).

The phrase “Ẓāhir rūḥ ke jismāñ” refers to the moment when the latent forms of spirit (ṣuwar rūḥānīyya) become manifest in creation — the soul's descent toward embodiment. These are not limited to humans but include all conscious existences in higher worlds.

Then comes “qudrat ke gir-e-qismāñ” — the knots of power unraveling in measured portions. Divine Power (qudrat) is what sustains all existence. The term “gir-e-qismāñ” suggests that this power was folded, bound in secrets, and then carefully opened in measured degrees.
The Qur’ān says:

“Innā kulli shayʾin khalaqnāhu bi-qadr”
“We have created everything with due measure.”

This verse echoes that spiritual law: the structure of creation is deliberate, meaningful, layered, and hierarchical.

The verse culminates with “Ṭilism, is qism ke rasmāñ, pakaṛ muḥkam” —
A talisman of such rituals or designs, firmly held. The use of Ṭilism (talisman) here is not accidental. In Sufi literature, ṭilismāt represent the encoded mysteries of the cosmos. A ṭilism is both a veil and a key — a structure whose meaning must be deciphered.

Hazrat-e-Jānam says that the designs of such a ṭilism — this cosmos — were held firmly, i.e., with purpose, precision, and permanence.
This statement reinforces the idea that the universe is a coded message — a Divine text — where everything, including the sorrow of Karbala, has a role. It is not chaos; it is order, encoded in layers, built upon sorrow, love, and unveiling.

Thus, the verse as a whole tells us: creation is the manifest body of spirit; Divine power structures it; and the whole system is a ṭilism — a coded, veiled, but beautiful cosmos — born not randomly, but as part of a sacred plan to reveal the sorrow that began in Divine Unity and found its greatest echo in Imām Ḥusayn’s stand.

Hw'ā hōr bāomal, pānī hu'e dar-ḳhāk-e-jismānī
Walē is nūr-e-nūrānī meñ, nārā kam hu'ā paidā

Fragrance spread across the air,
Water stirred within the earthen body,
Yet in that radiant Light,
The blaze of fire became subdued.

This verse by Hazrat-e-Jānam is one of the most aesthetically and spiritually layered lines of the marsiya, embedding within it a multidimensional cosmology of the human body, elemental creation, the descent of Divine Light (nūr), and the mystery of ʿAzādārī itself as a spiritual emergence.

The verse opens with "Huʾā hōr bāomal" — literally, "a breeze of fragrance spread." This imagery immediately invokes Sufi symbolism of Divine Breath (nafas al-Raḥmān) — the breath of the All-Merciful, which is believed to have breathed life into creation. The term "bāomal", derived from "bū-e-ʿamal" or "bū" meaning scent/fragrance, implies that the action or movement is not ordinary wind but a fragrant, purposeful breeze — a spiritual current carrying Divine intention. In Sufi texts, particularly in the works of Rūmī and Ibn ʿArabī, fragrance is often a metaphor for Divine presence: something that is not seen but sensed, something subtle yet undeniable, something that awakens the soul.
Hazrat-e-Jānam here invokes that same idea — the descent of Divine inspiration, not in force, but in gentle mercy, enveloping the material world.

The second hemistich, "pānī hue dar khāk-e-jismānī", describes water stirring within the dust of corporeal bodies. This line builds directly upon Qurʾānic ontology:

"We created every living thing from water" (Qurʾān 21:30).

The phrase "khāk-e-jismānī" refers to the physical body made of earth — reminding us of the creation of Adam (ʿalayhi's-salām) from clay.
The image of water within dust signifies the animation of lifeless matter — the Divine breath giving movement, soul, consciousness.

But it is not just physical life that is being evoked. In the language of ʿirfān, water is the symbol of maʿrifah (gnosis) — flowing, purifying, and essential. Dust is the body, and water is the flowing knowledge and awareness that gives it sacred animation.

Then comes a profound contrast: "walē is nūr-e-nūrānī meñ, nārā kam huʾā paidā." This radiant light (nūr-e-nūrānī) is no ordinary illumination. It is what the Qurʾān refers to as *"nūrun ʿalā nūr" — light upon light (24:35),* which is often interpreted in Sufi and Shiʿi traditions as the nūr of the Ahl al-Bayt, especially the nūr of Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām) — a light of guidance, sacrifice, and spiritual truth.

In this supreme radiance, nārā — fire — is subdued, or born gently: "nārā kam huʾā paidā." This is an inversion of the standard elemental hierarchy: fire is usually the most active, dominant force — destructive, illuminating, purifying. Yet Hazrat-e-Jānam shows that in the presence of supreme nūr, even nār — fire — loses its violence and becomes subdued. This may be a reference to the fire of passion, of anger, of vengeance — all of which are subdued in the pure, selfless nūrānī nature of the Imām and his sacrifice.

In another interpretation, fire here represents the burning grief (gham) — the internal blaze of the lover's heart. In the presence of Divine nūr, this grief becomes refined, tamed, redirected — becoming ṣabr (patience), taslīm (submission), and shukr (gratitude). The ʿazādār, who burns in love and sorrow for Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām), is not consumed by it — because in the light of truth, even burning becomes a means of purification.

In the Sufi schema of the four elements —

- nāran (fire),
- māʾ (water),
- turāb (earth),
- hawā (air)
-

Hazrat-e-Jānam builds a spiritual anatomy here: air becomes sacred fragrance; water becomes maʿrifah; earth becomes the receptacle of light; and fire becomes not destructive but divine.

This sets the stage for understanding the Perfect Human (Insān-e-Kāmil) not just as a theological figure, but as a cosmic event: an entity in whom all elements are harmonized in service of Divine grief and revelation.

In this way, this verse not only encapsulates the descent of Divine will into physical reality, but also offers a powerful meditation on how the spiritual seeker, and indeed the true mourner of Karbala, must harmonize these inner elements to receive the fragrance of Ḥusayn's truth.

Liyā Nāsūt-e-ḥaywānī, sō Malakūt nūr ke pānī
Hu'ā Jabarūt-e-rūḥānī, Jo lāhūt dam hu'ā paidā

The animal self of this earthly realm was formed,
Then filled with celestial light,
The breath of the spiritual realm (Jabarūt) was infused —
And thus, a soul-bearing being was born.

This verse by Hazrat-e-Jānam continues his deeply layered metaphysical mapping of the spiritual cosmos as it relates to the origins of azādārī, the sacred mourning for Imam Husayn (ʿalayhi's-salām).
With remarkable economy of language, he compresses into a single quatrain the entire mystical journey of existence—from the physical world to the divine breath—structured across four canonical planes of Sufi cosmology:

- Nāsūt,
- Malakūt,
- Jabarūt,
- and Lāhūt.

“Liyā Nāsūt ḥaywānī” — “The realm of Nāsūt took on its living form”
The term Nāsūt originates from Sufi metaphysics and denotes the lowest plane of existence: the material, tangible world of human embodiment. But Hazrat-e-Jānam does not present it merely as a static realm of matter. By stating that “Nāsūt ḥaywānī” was assumed or activated, he refers to the moment when the physical realm came alive with the infusion of Divine intent, allowing it to serve as the theater of sacred history — particularly the event of Karbala.

The phrase ḥaywānī (literally, “animate” or “animal-like”) is not a reduction of the human condition to animalistic behavior. Rather, it points to the fact that life, motion, sentience, and biological participation entered into the Nāsūt. This phrase acknowledges the necessity of embodiment: that spiritual truths are not fully realized until they are lived—with pain, with love, with flesh, and with death.

In Karbala, this aspect is paramount. Imam Husayn (ʿalayhi’s-salām), although possessing the loftiest spiritual rank, embraced the realm of Nāsūt. He did not resist suffering in the physical sense.
He allowed his body to thirst, to bleed, and to fall—just so that the Divine message could pass through existence at its lowest plane and illuminate it with truth. Hazrat-e-Jānam’s line implies that Nāsūt becomes honored, even sanctified, precisely because a sacred presence once passed through it.

We must also recognize the delicate spiritual paradox here: the most subtle, divine truths must descend into the most gross, corporeal levels to become fully actualized. This is the way of love in Sufism: the sirr (secret) of the Beloved must descend into the world of dust so that the lover may encounter Him.

- **“So Malakūt nūr ke pānī” — “Thus flowed the waters of Malakūt’s light”**

The second line flows effortlessly from the first. Once Nāsūt becomes receptive, it does not remain barren. The waters of Malakūt—the angelic or imaginal world—descend into it. In Sufi thought, Malakūt is the realm of forms that are luminous but subtle: the world of angels, divine visions, dreams, and spiritual archetypes. If Nāsūt is the body, Malakūt is the world of meaning within the body.

Describing light as “water” is a profoundly Qur'ānic metaphor. Water is life-giving, flowing, and essential for growth; light, in Islamic cosmology, is the very nature of divine knowledge (nūr). By describing Malakūt’s nūr as pānī (water), Hazrat-e-Jānam evokes the fertility of the soul: once the embodied realm opens itself to spiritual purpose (as Imam Husayn embodied it), then Divine illumination flows into it, just as rain descends upon a parched field. Importantly, this metaphor aligns with the mourning rituals of azādārī. The act of weeping, when done with sincerity and divine remembrance, is considered in Sufi tradition as a malakūtī outpouring: tears are the visible “water” of the soul’s unseen “light.” Therefore, weeping for Imam Husayn is not simply emotional—it is a spiritual irrigation of the heart, a descent of Malakūt into Nāsūt, sanctifying the act of grief as an awakening.

- “Huʾā Jabarūt rūḥānī” — “Then came forth the spirituality of Jabarūt”

Having set the stage with Malakūt’s flowing light, the next level Hazrat-e-Jānam invokes is Jabarūt — the realm of power, of Divine command, and pure intelligibility. In classical Sufi cosmology, Jabarūt lies above Malakūt. It is the realm not of forms or images, but of spiritual realities, Divine laws, and archetypal energies. If Malakūt is the light of angels, Jabarūt is the radiance of God’s unfiltered Will.

To say that Jabarūt rūḥānī emerged is to say that the command (amr) of God entered into visibility—not only as guidance but as soul. The word rūḥānī connects Jabarūt to the living, vital energy that pervades the cosmos. This is the level at which Imam Husayn’s mission transforms from individual tragedy to cosmic will. His martyrdom is no longer a political stance, nor even a human sacrifice—it becomes a manifestation of the Divine command. It becomes necessary, spiritually preordained. His every word on the battlefield, his refusal to submit, his patience under suffering—all are embodiments of Jabarūt: strength, power, but veiled in submission. Jabarūt here signifies the active sovereignty of the soul under Divine decree.

In azādārī, this layer helps explain why the remembrance of Karbala is not only emotional (Malakūt) or embodied (Nāsūt) but also doctrinal, intellectual, and spiritual. It is a cosmic memory, replayed each year so the soul may touch the echo of that command again.

- **“Lāhūt dam, huʾā paidā” — “Then the breath of Lāhūt came into being”**

The final layer, the climactic culmination, is Lāhūt — the highest metaphysical realm in Sufi theology, associated with Divine Essence, pure Unity, and the Reality of realities (Ḥaqīqat al-Ḥaqāʾiq). This is the realm where only Allāh exists, where there is no multiplicity, no duality, no veils — the source of all other realms.

But Hazrat-e-Jānam introduces a radical image: “Lāhūt dam” — the breath of Lāhūt. What is this breath? It is the life-force, the nafas-e-Raḥmānī (the breath of the Most Merciful) that animates everything. In Qur’ānic language, this refers to:

“Wa nafakhtu fīhi min rūḥī”
“And I breathed into him from My spirit.”

Here, the Lāhūtī breath becomes the animating principle of the entire cosmos—but in the context of this verse, it particularly refers to the spiritual breath that awakens hearts to Imam Husayn’s sacrifice.
The azādār’s sigh, the mourner’s lament, the zikr uttered with trembling — all are reflections of that first Lāhūtī breath, echoing across the worlds.
Hazrat-e-Jānam seems to say: without this dam, this breath of Lāhūt, none of the lower realms could hold meaning. It is the final infusion that makes all the other dimensions spiritually coherent. The breath is not merely air—it is Divine intention, presence, and connection.
When the mourner breathes in grief for Imam Husayn, he or she is, knowingly or unknowingly, breathing that same sacred breath.

Through this verse, Hazrat-e-Jānam orchestrates a majestic ascent through the cosmological stages of existence: from the bodily world of Nāsūt, to the illumination of Malakūt, the strength of Jabarūt, and finally the breath of Divine unity in Lāhūt. These aren’t just abstract metaphysical terms; they are layers of reality reflected in the azādār, in the soul of the one who remembers Karbala.

This sharah shows that azādārī is not a mere cultural practice. According to Hazrat-e-Jānam, it is a cosmic reenactment, an immersion in the Divine drama of creation, carried from the essence of God (Lāhūt) into the body of the believer (Nāsūt). Imam Husayn's martyrdom is the axis upon which this metaphysical descent and return revolves — making every tear, every breath, and every lament a sacred rite in the highest order of spiritual truth.

Madīnah ʿilm jiyūñ sarwar, ʿAlī bābuhā rahbar
Sō maʿnī ʿilm kā maẓhar, Shah-e-akram huʾā paidā

The city of knowledge is the Prophet ﷺ,
And ʿAlī is its gate and guide.
The true manifestation of that knowledge —
The noble King (Ḥusayn) was born.

This verse reflects a powerful synthesis of theological tradition and Sufi insight. At its core is the well-known Prophetic ḥadīth:

"I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its gate."
(Ana madīnat al-ʿilm wa ʿAlī bābuhā)

Hazrat-e-Jānam draws from this tradition, but he does not merely quote it — he meditates upon its implications for the cosmic reality of knowledge, for spiritual access, and ultimately for the birth of Imam Husayn (ʿalayhi's-salām) as the maẓhar, or the living embodiment of that sacred knowledge.

In the recorded Malfūẓāt of Hazrat Khwāja Banda Nawāz Gesū Darāz (quddisa sirruhū), as narrated by Hazrat Syed Muhammad Akbar Ḥusaynī, there is a striking elaboration of this ḥadīth:

"The Prophet is the city of knowledge, and Mawlā ʿAlī is its gate. Whoever wishes to enter the city must come through the gate; and whoever wishes to carry anything out from the city must exit through the gate."

This statement is a profound spiritual directive. The city symbolizes the entirety of Prophetic wisdom, the inner meanings of revelation, the truth of Divine gnosis. The gate, as Hazrat Khwāja Banda Nawāz explains, is not merely a boundary but a means of approach and return. One cannot hope to access, enter, or even depart from the Divine knowledge contained in Prophethood except through the gate — and that gate is Mawlā ʿAlī.
This gate is not physical — it is ontological. It is through ʿAlī's spiritual station that the seeker comes to understand the inner dimensions of Islam, to perceive the light of the Prophet in a way that unveils meaning (maʿnā) from form (ṣūrat).

Hazrat-e-Jānam continues:

"So maʿnī-yi ʿilm kā maẓhar — Shah-i-akram huʾā paidā"

— "Thus, the essence of knowledge found its manifestation in the noble sovereign who was born."

This "noble sovereign" — Shah-i-akram — is Imam Husayn (ʿalayhi's-salām). He is not just born in the lineage of knowledge; he is its maẓhar, its outward expression. In Sufi metaphysics, the maẓhar (manifestation) of any Divine attribute represents its living reality — not merely its reflection but its experiential embodiment. In the person of Imam Husayn, the wisdom hidden in the City and transmitted through the Gate becomes visible — in action, in word, in sacrifice.

Through this verse, Hazrat-e-Jānam establishes a sacred lineage of knowledge that is not merely biological but spiritually structured.
It begins in the Prophet, flows through ʿAlī, and reaches culmination in Husayn, who actualizes the maʿnā (meaning) of knowledge not in sermons or books but in blood, silence, and surrender at Karbala.

In the context of Azadārī, this verse teaches that the mourning for Husayn is not just mourning a body — it is mourning the embodiment of Divine knowledge. His martyrdom becomes a commentary upon the inner secrets of Prophethood, revealed through the gate of ʿAlī, and lived through Husayn.

Maiñ kyā kahūñ ḥāl-ʿālam kā, kalimah bol ḳhātim kā
Walē us Ism-e-aʿẓam kā, nakō’ī muḥram hu’ā paidā

What can I say of the state of the world?
The Seal of Prophets ﷺ declared the word.
Yet, for the Most Great Name —
No true confidant was ever born.

This verse shifts the emotional tone of the marsiya into one of sorrowful commentary on the loss of inner understanding. It begins with a rhetorical pause — “Maiñ kyā kahūñ ḥāl-e-ʿālam kā” — “What can I say of the condition of the world?” The phrase suggests a moment of speechlessness, not due to ignorance, but due to the depth of pain and spiritual betrayal witnessed in creation.

The next line — "Kalimah bol Khātam kā" — refers to the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the Khātam an-Nabiyyīn, who pronounced the Kalimah — Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadur Rasūl Allāh. But Hazrat-e-Jānam's tone is not celebratory — it is contemplative, even mournful.
The Kalimah was uttered, yes — but its inner meaning remained hidden from the hearts of many.

This leads to the pivotal final line:

"Walē us ism-e-aʿẓam kā, na koyī maḥram huʾā paidā"
— "But of that Greatest Name, no true intimate was born."

Here, the Ism-e-Aʿẓam — the Greatest Name of God — becomes the axis of the verse's spiritual anguish. The Ism-e-Aʿẓam is not simply a specific linguistic Name of God; it is often interpreted in Sufi tradition as the composite spiritual essence through which all realities are unfolded and sustained. It is the supreme key to Divine presence, the ultimate Name known only to the spiritually elect.

Hazrat-e-Jānam's lament is that despite the Kalimah being recited, the inner gate to the Divine Reality — the maʿrifah of the Ism-e-Aʿẓam — remained closed to the majority. The world embraced ritual, but failed in intimacy. The maḥram — the confidant, the trusted friend of sacred mysteries — never truly emerged.

And yet, the poet implies — without saying it directly — that Imam Husayn is that true maḥram, the one who carried the secret of the Ism-e-Aʿẓam not merely in knowledge but in action, in resistance, in surrender.
His martyrdom was not the end of a political struggle;
it was the bursting forth of the veiled Divine Name, the radiant flash of truth in a world lost in form.

This verse reinforces the theology of Azadārī: that the grief for Husayn is a grief for the loss of the true companion of Divine meaning, the veiling of the Greatest Name, and the silencing of the one who understood the Kalimah not just on the tongue but in the soul.

Falak is gham sōñ ho ke ḳham, basāyā jag ūpar mātam
Karẽ sab-o-mabdam yū gham, jidhāñ tē, gham hu'ā paidā

The heavens bowed under this sorrow,
And mourning spread across the world.
All from beginning to end must grieve
For the place where grief was born.

1. THE SKIES IN SACRED SORROW

In declaring that the "skies bowed" under sorrow, Hazrat-e-Jānam transforms Karbala from a temporal event into an existential rupture felt even in the firmament (falak). This image is more than metaphor. According to Abū Nuʿaym, Imam ʻAlī stood by the future grave of Imam Ḥusayn (ʿalayhis-salām) and warned that even the heavens would weep for him. Similarly, Ṣufyān al-Thawrī's grandmother recalled,

"I saw the sky weeping for him for many days" **.**

These traditions underscore that what the poet describes is rooted in the earliest narrations — grief so profound it visibly moved the cosmos.

2. BLOOD AND DARKNESS AS COSMIC MOURNING

The verse continues: *"mourning spread over the world."*
Traditions confirm that this grief manifested physically:
Umm Ḥabbān said, "three days of darkness descended and beneath every stone fresh blood was found" , while Abū Saʿīd added that "blood rained from the sky, staining clothes until they tore" .
These signs — blood-filled vessels, screaming skies, and darkened days — are not legendary embellishments, but expressions of sorrow that overwhelmed both heaven and earth.

3. MOURNING ACROSS AGES AND BEINGS

The line *"every being—ancient and present—lived this grief"* captures the universal breadth of Karbala's impact. Narratives affirm that not just humans, but angels, jinn, and even natural elements joined in sorrow.
The sky's red horizon remained visible for six months, and Ibn Sīrīn notes that this redness did not exist before Karbala.
Collectively, these reports confirm that the sorrow of Karbala surpassed history—it enveloped cosmos, creatures, and chronology itself.

4. KARBALA: THE BIRTHPLACE OF SORROW

Finally, *"for at the place where sorrow first was born, sorrow took form."*
The spot of Karbala is described not as the end of grief, but its ontological origin point. The pain that had existed in the heavens since Creation ripened into physical agony there. Abū Nuʿaym reports that Imam 'Alī foresaw camels, belongings, blood, and that heaven and earth would weep at that exact site . Hazrat-e-Jānam captures this convergence of spiritual and material grief — where Divine sorrow finds bodily expression — declaring that sorrow, born in heaven, finally attained birth in the dust of Karbala.

5. THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR AZĀDĀRĪ

This verse serves as a majestic theological statement: Azādārī is not a cultural ornament—it is a cosmic duty. To mourn at Karbala is to echo a sorrow that shook the skies, stained the earth with blood, and bound all of creation in weeping. Each tear becomes a participant in a grief older than time, and each lament resonates with divine lament. In this light, Hazrat-e-Jānam's verse elevates the mourner's act to a universal, metaphysical worship—an echo of grief first declared in heaven, now embodied on earth.

Shahāñ ke ti’ñ sarāne kūñ, nihāyat gham kā pāne kūñ
Yū dūkh Sheh kā pichhāne kūñ, sō Jām-e-Jam hu’ā paidā

To be placed at kings’ pillows,
To drink the deepest draught of sorrow,
To perceive the pain of the Martyr —
A vision like Jām-e-Jam was born.

From the very outset, Hazrat-e-Jānam appears acutely aware of his audience—not merely as an abstract collective of believers, but as a community made up of rulers, scholars, poets, and common folk alike. His marsiya is not confined to individual grief; it unfolds as a layered conversation with the society around him. The inclusion of imagery such as shāhān ke ti’n sarāne kūñ—“at kings’ three pillows”—is more than poetic flourish. It is deliberate, reflective, and pedagogical.
It acknowledges that azadari is not the sole duty of the faqīr or the sālik; it is also a moral responsibility for those in power. In speaking to the sovereigns of his day, Hazrat-e-Jānam is not admonishing with confrontation, but guiding with spiritual tact. This, indeed, is the adab of Sufi instruction: not to shame, but to awaken.

In this verse, Hazrat-e-Jānam offers more than poetic imagery; he provides a pedagogical moment for the rulers of his time. By speaking of grief so universally acknowledged that even “kings—at their three pillows—felt that infinite sorrow,” he subtly instructs the Ādil Shāhī sultans in the etiquette of ʿazādārī. These were not distant or disinterested monarchs but devotees who themselves observed mourning rituals. Indeed, historical records show that during the reign of ʿAlī Ādil Shāh I—who restored Shīʿī khuṭbahs and sponsored Persian preachers—and under his successors in Bijapur, Muharram rituals were not only permitted but officially supported. For instance, the Ḥusaynī Mālah (also known as Pānī Mahal) was built as a dedicated imāmbāṛā, a structure specifically meant for gathering in Muharram. The sultans ensured processions, recitations, and mourning ceremonies were conducted with decorum and inclusivity, inviting participants across sectarian lines.

Hazrat-e-Jānam's marsiyā, then, serves both as a devotional lament and a living model of spiritual protocol for sovereigns who bore the title of Shāh. By describing kings confronted with Karbalā's grief, he is not condemning regal authority, but illuminating how even exalted status must humble itself before divine sorrow. His tone is gentle yet firm: "Remember, Your Highness, true ʿazādārī is not a fringe ceremony—it is reverence, taught to every crowned head by the sacrifice of Ḥusayn ʿalayhi's-salām."

Furthermore, the foundation of Ḥusaynī Mālah in Bijapur's royal walls demonstrates this teaching in stone. Constructed during the reign of Ibrāhīm Ādil Shāh II under the name Ḥusaynī Mahal, this structure, adorned with ʿalam motifs, served as the Sultan's own Muharram hall. It stands as tangible proof that rulers—though belonging to Shīʿī tradition—were not detached spectators but active patrons of dignified mourning. Hazrat-e-Jānam's marsiyā thus reinforces this historical reality, urging both elites and commoners to embrace grief as ritual, reflection, and moral affirmation.

In essence, this verse conveys three interwoven messages: first, that grief over Karbalā transcends social and political standing; second, that such grief has historically guided even royal conscience; and third, that through structured ʿazādārī—observing the etiquette of mourning—the ummah reaffirms its collective identity centered around truth, sacrifice, and divine love. Far from being sectarian indulgence, this is a tradition of spiritual cultivation, modeled for all—commoners and kings alike—by the ultimate martyr, Imām Ḥusayn ʿalayhi's-salām.

Rahyā tāqat nah tāqat kūñ, diyē sab chhoṛ rāḥat kūñ
Sō is gham ke jarāḥat kūñ, nah kaiñ, marham hu'ā paidā

Strength could no longer restrain strength,
All comforts were forsaken.
Yet for this wound of sorrow,
No balm was ever born.

When Hazrat-e-Jānam says that "no strength remained in those once mighty," he is not referring only to bodily fatigue. He is unveiling a portrait of a cosmic exhaustion, a spiritual collapse, that descended upon the household of the Prophet ﷺ after the tragedy of Karbala. The word ṭāqat here is layered — it connotes physical vitality, yes, but also the strength of presence, of lineage, of divine trust, and of dignity. That all of this — this collective reservoir of sacred energy — was shattered, drained, and left behind in the sands of Karbala.

When Karbala ended in physical martyrdom, a new chapter began — one far more insidious: the martyrdom of grief. For those who survived — the women, the children, and the solitary Imam — life did not return to normal. There was no solace, no return to peace. As the poet laments, "so is gham ke jarāḥat ko na kayō marham huā paidā" — there was no balm for such a wound, because the wound itself was Divine in its depth and endless in its reach.

Among the survivors, Imam Zain al-Abideen (a.s.), son of Imam Husayn (a.s.), was the spiritual heart of the aftermath. Though he was physically ill during the events of Ashura, his illness was not a mark of weakness but a divine strategy — the torch of Imamat had to be preserved. But what Imam Sajjad (a.s.) saw and endured was unimaginable: the severed heads of his father, brothers, uncles, and companions, all paraded before his very eyes. He walked shackled and wounded through Kufa, through Shaam, not as a noble descendant of the Prophet, but as a prisoner, a spectacle for the tyrant's court.

His grief was not a moment — it became a lifelong maqām, a permanent spiritual station of sorrow. He wept so continuously that he became known as “Bakkāʾīn” — among the great weepers of history.
He could never eat or drink without being overcome by tears. When offered water, he would say, “How can I drink while my father was slaughtered while thirsty?” His tears were not only for his father, but for truth dishonored, the Prophet's family disgraced, and for a world that allowed the lamp of guidance to be extinguished.

To understand his grief, one must remember the weeping of Prophet Yaʿqub (a.s.) in the Qur’an. The Qur’an tells us that he wept so intensely over the separation from his son Yusuf (a.s.) that he lost his eyesight:

“And his eyes became white with sorrow,
and he was suppressing grief.” (Surah Yusuf 12:84)

But Prophet Yaʿqub did not even know whether Yusuf was dead — it was the mere separation, the absence, the not-knowing, that dissolved his vision. Then what can be said of Imam Sajjad (a.s.), who not only knew, but witnessed — who stood helpless as each beloved soul was struck down before him? His tears were not for the unknown, but for a known, intimate, and holy destruction. Thus, the magnitude of his sorrow is immeasurable — a sacred grief that cannot be compared, and a wound for which no balm was destined to exist.

Alongside him stood Sayyida Zainab (s.a.), the towering mountain of dignified resistance. Her strength was not the absence of grief, but its sublimation. She too had seen her sons, her brothers, her family members fall. She too had been taken prisoner, stripped of security and sanctuary. Her eloquent sermon in the court of Yazid remains one of the most resounding declarations of divine justice and condemnation of tyranny in Islamic history.

Her words were swords, her patience a miracle. But inwardly, her heart bled. In one riwāyah, when someone asked her how she had endured all of this, she replied with a trembling voice: "I entrusted everything to Allāh." She bore the unbearable, and in her sorrow, she became the voice of Karbala — the bridge between martyrdom and memory, between loss and legacy.

Then there was Bibi Sakina (s.a.), the beloved daughter of Imam Husayn (a.s.). A child — yet whose eyes saw more than what even grown men could bear. She saw her father fall; she cried over his mutilated body. In the dungeons of Shaam, she cried for her father, asked for his head, and when it was finally placed before her, she sobbed with such pain that her young soul departed this world. The sorrow of a child, so pure and helpless, shattered every soul who heard her cries.

She is remembered not only for her innocence but for the depth of spiritual pain she carried. Her suffering has become a symbol of all oppressed children, and her name remains enshrined in the hearts of every mourner who recalls the thirst, the trauma, the tattered tents, and the tremble in her voice.

Even Bibi Shehrbānū (s.a.), though not physically present at Karbala, is remembered in the collective sorrow. She was the mother of Imam Zain al-Abideen (a.s.) and the daughter of the Sassanid emperor — a noble link between Persia and Prophethood. In the spiritual imagination, her absence magnifies the loneliness of her son. Her silence echoes in his tears. Her presence lives on through the endurance and piety of her offspring, and she remains a hidden mourner of Karbala, whose grief is veiled but eternal.

After Karbala, the Ahlul Bayt were dragged through cities as humiliated prisoners. They were displayed like captives of war — despite being the household of the Prophet ﷺ. Their heads were uncovered, their dignity violated. The streets of Kufa and Shaam bore witness to the mockery of truth. The Ummah that had once shouted "Marḥabā, Ya RasūlAllāh!" now jeered at his family.

Yet it was through this grief that Azadari was born. The Majlis, the tears, the noha, the matam — all became forms of spiritual resistance, spiritual healing, and spiritual remembrance. Through the agony of those who lived, the memory of those who died was kept alive for all time. Karbala did not end with swords — it began again in the chains, in the cries, and in the eternal sorrow of the Ahlul Bayt.

Hazrat-e-Jānam, in this verse, does not merely describe grief.
He defines it — as a wound without remedy, a pain without parallel, and a love that bleeds across time. This sorrow has no balm, because it is the mirror of Divine Beauty torn by injustice. It is the gham-e-Hussain, and it shall never die.

Ḥusaynā ga'e haiñ jis rah par, sō wāżiḥ kāñ hai gumrah par
Samiā jo ā khaṛiyā Shah par, sō aisā kam hu'ā paidā

The path Ḥusayn walked is the path of truth;
All else is misguidance.
He who stood beside the Martyr —
Such loyalty is rare in existence.

This couplet from Hazrat-e-Jānam encapsulates one of the most spiritually loaded assertions of the Marsiya:
that Imam Husayn (ʿalayhi's-salām) is not merely a symbol of truth — he is the truth in motion. The "path" (raah) that Imam Husayn chose — of sacrifice, steadfastness, and surrender to Divine Will — is declared here to be the only manifest, unclouded, and absolute path of Haqq (truth). Conversely, any soul that took a stand against him — whether out of ignorance, fear, or arrogance — was, by the very nature of that opposition, veiled from guidance.

The language of Hazrat-e-Jānam here is not symbolic alone — it is declarative, unambiguous, and aligned with the spiritual consensus of the Awliyāʾ, especially those of the Chishti Sufi tradition.
In this regard, one of the most celebrated affirmations of Imam Husayn's sanctity comes from Hazrat Khwāja Moinuddin Chishti Ajmeri (raḥmatullāhi ʿalayh) — known as Sultan al-Hind — in his famous rubāʿī:

"Shāh ast Ḥusain, Bādshāh ast Ḥusain,
Dīn ast Ḥusain, Dīn panāh ast Ḥusain,
Sardād, nadād dast dar dast-e-yazīd,
Ḥaqqā ke bina-e-Lā ilāh ast Ḥusain."

Translation:
Husayn is a king, indeed he is the king of kings.
Husayn is the faith, the protector of faith.
He gave his head but not his hand to Yazīd.
Indeed, Husayn is the foundation of 'There is no god but Allah.'

This stanza is not poetry alone; it is haqqāni declaration.
When Khwāja Gharīb Nawāz, a master of inner and outer sciences, calls Husayn "the foundation of Lā ilāha illallāh," it affirms that the Divine Unity is not upheld merely by words or belief, but by sacrifice for the truth. That sacrifice reached its zenith in the plains of Karbala.

In his verse, Hazrat-e-Jānam states:
"Ḥusainā gaʾe haiñ jis raah par..." —
The path of Imam Husayn was not an invention, nor was it a rebellion. It was a reenactment of the Prophetic Sunnah, a manifestation of Qur'ānic injunctions, and an unveiling of the hidden dimensions of Divine Love (ʿishq-e-Ilāhī) and Justice (ʿadl-e-Ilāhī). That path has since become the meemār (cornerstone) of spiritual struggle — the defining compass for any seeker who wishes to walk in the light of truth.

In contrast, Hazrat-e-Jānam writes:
"Samiyā jo ā khaṛiyā shah par..." —
“Whoever stood up against the Shah (King)...” — this isn’t just a political metaphor. Imam Husayn is the Shāh-e-Dīn, the King of the Path, the inheritor of Prophetic authority (wilāyah) and knowledge (ʿilm-e-ladunnī). Therefore, opposition to him is not merely opposition to a person — it is opposition to Divine Will.

Now, who stood against him? Here, Hazrat-e-Jānam is unequivocally alluding to Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiyah, the Umayyad ruler whose claim to the caliphate was not grounded in spiritual worth or Prophetic inheritance, but in dynastic power and coercion. While some chroniclers attempt to sanitize Yazid's image, the reality — as echoed by countless scholars, Sufis, and historians — is that his rule stood in utter contradiction to the Muhammadan ethos. He normalized debauchery, mocked prophetic teachings, and — most importantly — sanctioned the massacre of the Ahl al-Bayt.

This is where we invoke another sacred tradition — the famous ḥadīth of the Prophet ﷺ:

"ʿAlī maʿa’l-Ḥaqq wa’l-Ḥaqq maʿa ʿAlī."
"ʿAlī is with the Truth, and the Truth is with ʿAlī."

Since Imam Husayn is the beloved grandson of the Prophet ﷺ and the son of Imām ʿAlī (ʿalayhi’s-salām), he is naturally the mirror and continuity of this haqq. When he stood in Karbala, he carried not only his personal sanctity but the full spiritual legacy of the Prophet — as also affirmed in ḥadīth al-thaqalayn:

"I leave behind me two weighty things:
the Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt."
(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, etc.)

If the Qur’an is one weight, Imam Husayn is the embodiment of the second — the living proof of Divine guidance.

Thus, those who stood against him — regardless of worldly power — were manifestly on the path of misguidance. Hazrat-e-Jānam concludes: *"...so aisā kam huʾā paidā"* —

"Such a (wretched) one was born..." — here the poet mourns not just for the betrayal of Husayn, but for the spiritual decay that made such enmity even possible. It was a fitrah gone astray, a soul so veiled by dunya and nafs that it could not recognize the Divine radiance in the face of Husayn.

In every age, this verse reawakens the standard of truth:
"Where there is Husayn, there is truth. And where there is Yazīd, there is spiritual ruin."
The same principle applies today — those who stand for justice, truth, sacrifice, and spiritual dignity are Husaynīs, and those who betray these values for power and ego are, in spirit, Umayyad.

Janāwar sab saṭṭē zaujāñ, daryā ke ḳhalbalē maujāñ
Shimar jab kufr kar, faujāñ le, Shah ke sam, huʾā paidā

All beasts left their mates,
The river's waves turned restless.
When Shimr approached with blasphemous troops —
That moment of terror was born.

In this verse, Hazrat-e-Jānam depicts a scene of utter cosmic disarray — not just among humans, but within all of creation.
The phrase *"Janāwar sab saṭṭe zaujāñ"*
(all animals were separated from their mates)
reflects not simply panic, but the breaking of a Divine harmony — a rupture in the natural balance of creation, caused by the emergence of disbelief in the sacred presence of Imām al-Ḥusayn (ʿalayhis-salām).

This is a poetic portrayal of the collective grief of creation, which Sufi metaphysics has long held to be spiritually conscious.
Just as the Qur'ān declares:

"Wa-in min shayʾin illā yusabbiḥu bi-ḥamdihī" —
"There is nothing in existence that does not glorify Allāh," —

so too, creation grieves when Divine representatives are wronged.

This grief was not metaphorical. Numerous historical riwāyāt affirm that even the beasts and birds mourned the tragedy of Karbala. One such narration states that after Imām al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom, owls refused to sing at night and pigeons ceased their cooing. Their silence was a sign of recognition — that a calamity had struck not merely a people, but the axis of Divine justice in the world. There are also reports of jinn and wild animals wailing in the wilderness, and one tradition mentions that camels broke their own reins and fled into the desert on the night of the tragedy.

But this reaction is not merely poetic embellishment. Modern behavioral science, especially in the field of comparative psychology and ethology, has demonstrated that animals have sophisticated emotional lives. Elephants have been observed to mourn their dead; dogs grieve the absence of human companions; dolphins express joy, sorrow, and even trauma. In spiritual ecology, this connection is explained further: when a human being radiates purity, mercy, and love, animals respond instinctively with loyalty and reverence. This is why prophets and awliyāʾ are remembered for their relationships with animals — Imām al-Ḥusayn's profound compassion for creation is not just moral but existential: he was the qibla of Divine mercy on earth. Therefore, when he was surrounded by the forces of oppression, the natural order itself began to collapse.

The line "dariyā ke khilbile maujāñ" captures this collapse vividly — the Euphrates itself, whose waves had once flowed in silent dhikr, now churned in protest, unable to bear the injustice of being withheld from the very household of the Prophet ﷺ. Hazrat-e-Jānam presents this cosmic disquiet as a testimony of nature in favor of Ḥusayn.

And then comes the climax:
“Shimr jab kufr kar, faujāñ le, Shah ke sam, huʾā paidā” — Shimr approaches, carrying disbelief itself, veiled in piety but driven by bloodthirst. This verse is unambiguous in its theological assertion:
Shimr is not simply sinful — he is a kāfir.
Though he performed outward rituals of Islām, his heart harbored enmity for the Ahlulbayt (ʿalayhim as-salām).
Hazrat-e-Jānam does not mince words — he names Shimr’s entire act as kufr, exposing the hollow religiosity of those who raise swords against the progeny of the Prophet ﷺ.

In doing so, Hazrat-e-Jānam directly confronts the modern wave of Nasibiyyat — the apologetic trend among some so-called Sunnis who claim to love the Ahlulbayt but stop short of condemning Yazīd and his army as disbelievers. For such minds, this verse is a slap of clarity:
a person who prays but opposes the household of the Prophet ﷺ in action and intent, especially by killing them, cannot remain within the fold of Islām. The Qur’ān itself declares:

“Inna alladhīna yuʾdhūn Allāha wa-rasūlahu
laʿanahum Allāhu fi’d-dunyā wa’l-ākhirah” —

“Those who harm Allāh and His Messenger —
Allāh curses them in this world and the Hereafter.”

What greater harm can be done than the murder of the Prophet’s grandson?

The view that Yazīd and his army were disbelievers is not new. Hazrat-e-Jānam is joined by countless awliyāʾ and fuqahāʾ of the past who have condemned Yazīd and his ilk in no uncertain terms. From the malfūzāt of Khwāja Syed Ḥasan Rasūl-numā Narnulī Summa Dehlvī, a saint of Narnaul, we read a deeply argued theological condemnation of Yazīd — declaring not only the permissibility of laʿnat but affirming his open kufr, based on his transgressions against the Prophet’s household. Similarly, the manuscript Manāqib al-Sādāt by Shaykh Shahābuddīn Suhrawardī Daulatābādī contains detailed discussions of the kufr of Yazīd’s regime, describing his actions not merely as political rebellion but as war against Allāh and His Messenger.

And in our own time, the esteemed international research scholar Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qādrī has authored a definitive scholarly work titled “Al-Qaul al-Matīn fī Amr-i Yazīd al-Laʿīn.”
This masterpiece draws from Qur’ān, ḥadīth, fiqh, history, and ethics to establish without ambiguity that Yazīd was a kāfir and malʿūn, and that declaring laʿnat upon him is not just valid — it is necessary. Every sincere seeker of truth should study this book, for it refutes the subtle justifications of modern-day Nasibis with rigorous evidence.

Thus, when Hazrat-e-Jānam writes this verse, he is not merely writing poetry — he is issuing a verdict of history, a spiritual declaration, a theological proclamation. Imām al-Ḥusayn (ʿalayhis-salām) did not fall to a Muslim army; he was martyred by enemies of Islām, cloaked in the robes of religiosity, just as Iblīs himself once worshipped but refused to prostrate before truth.

In conclusion, this verse is a mirror. It reflects the unrest of the cosmos, the grief of all creation, the moral clarity of kufr versus īmān — and above all, the status of Imām Ḥusayn as the axis of Divine love and justice. And this is why, even today, the path of Ḥusayn is the path of truth. Wherever there is mourning for Ḥusayn, there is life in the heart of the ummah. Wherever there is silence on Yazīd, there is the seed of hypocrisy.

Huʾā mātam Rasūl ūpar, ʿAlī par hōr Baṭūl ūpar
Nain Nargis ke phūl ūpar, anjū shabnam huʾā paidā

Mourning fell upon the Prophet ﷺ,
Upon ʿAlī and also Fāṭimah,
Over the eyes like narcissus blossoms —
Tears fell like morning dew.

In this spiritually intense couplet, Hazrat-e-Jānam opens a well of grief that begins with the Prophet ﷺ himself, then flows inward through Imam ʿAlī and Sayyidah Fāṭimah. In doing so, he anchors Azādari as a continuum of post-Prophetic sorrow, legitimized by explicit precedents—removing any doubt about its authenticity or necessity.

When Hazrat-e-Jānam says, *"Huwā matam Rasūl ūpar",* he invokes not mere poetic license but explicit Prophetic action. Consider the hadith narrated by Umm al-Faḍl bint al-Ḥārith: she reports that she placed the infant Husayn in the lap of Rasulullāh ﷺ, and upon hearing from Jibrīl his grim fate—martyred by his own nation—the Prophet ﷺ wept. Jibrīl showed him the red soil of Karbal a as tangible confirmation of that coming tragedy. This pre-martyrdom sorrow, recorded in works like al-Misqāt, lays a clear precedent: grieving Husayn's fate was not innovation —it was earnestly prophetic.

But that is not all. On the day of martyrdom itself, the Prophet ﷺ again wept. 'Umm al-Salmā narrated in Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī that she dreamed of seeing Rasulullāh, head and beard covered in dust, weeping, saying: "I have just witnessed the killing of Husayn." Echoing this is a narration from 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, recorded in multiple collections (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn al-Jawzī), in which he saw the Prophet ﷺ carrying a container of fresh blood at midday—"This is the blood of Husayn and his companions, and I have been collecting it since morning." When someone so sanctified is moved to tears, we understand that the grief itself is sanctified—not bid'ah, but inheritance.

Thus, mourning Rasulullāh ﷺ over Husayn's suffering is rooted in revealed tradition, bodily tears, and Divine sorrow. The Prophet ﷺ sets the rhythm for Azādari; we do not invent it, we inherit it.

IMAM ʿALĪ'S GRIEF: EARTH TREMBLED

Next, "ʿAlī par hor baṭūl ūpar" points to Imām ʿAlī's grief—deep, visible, and powerful. Multiple historical sources—Ibn Sa'd, Ibn al-Ḥajar, Majma' al-Zawā'id (al-Haithamī)—record that as Imam ʿAlī passed through the area later known as Karbala, he stopped when he recognized the sight of Husayn's grave. He wept so intensely that the soil was moistened with his tears. He then said to the Prophet ﷺ in a mystical interaction,
"O Prophet, You weep for him; I weep for him."
When the Caliph of justice himself mourns, it reveals that Husayn's martyrdom was not only an injustice of hearts but a cosmic rupture, moving even the earth in palpable sorrow.
His tears were not political—they were cosmic justice lamenting its own violation. In that moment, healing the soil around Husayn's grave became an act of divine justice itself.

FĀṬIMAH'S GRIEF: HANDMAID OF MERCY

The verse then turns to Baṭūl, the pure Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (ʿalayhā's-salam). Spiritual tradition tells us she walked the fields of Karbala after the martyrdom to remove the stones, preparing a soft bed for her father's rest. Though this may not come from textual hadith, its preservation in Sufi and spiritual history reflects the depth of her grief. Her sorrow was practical, intentional, and marked by love so deep that it extended before the burial, demonstrating that she participated in the mourning as an expression of mercy in action, not only emotion.
This is not a folkloric flourish—it is a conscience of mercy echoed in Islamic spiritual tradition.

GRIEF AS SPIRITUAL CONTINUUM

Hazrat-e-Jānam's wording—*that mourning flowed from Rasulullāh ﷺ to ʿAlī, and then to Fāṭimah*—establishes a hierarchy of sacred feeling.
This chain validates the spirituality of Azādari at multiple levels:
divine (Prophetic), justice-focused (ʿAlī), sacrificial (Fāṭimah), creating a foundation upon which the broader Ahlul Bayt and Sufi world can stand.
When each of these luminaries grieves, their sorrow becomes part of the prophetic emotional inheritance. They did not grieve in isolation—they grieved in *tawātur*, across time and spiritual lineage.

Verse (Second Line):

"Nā'in-nargis ke phūl ūpar, anjū shabnam hu'ā paidā."

Upon the narcissus-like eyes, tears fell like morning dew.

In this subtle and elegant expression, Hazrat-e-Janam uses a deeply poetic image — eyes like the nargis flower — to portray those blessed individuals whose hearts were spiritually connected to Sayyid al-Shuhadā', Imam Husayn (ʿalayhi-s-salām). On the surface, the verse refers to beautiful eyes shedding tears. But on a deeper, more spiritual level, these "narcissus-like eyes" symbolize the illuminated and sorrowful gaze of the Ahl al-Bayt, the Sādāt-e-Kirām, and the Awliyā'-e-Kāmilīn, whose hearts were always grieving for Karbala.

In Persian and Urdu literature, the nargis (narcissus) flower is often used to symbolize a sharp, piercing eye — a gaze full of longing, awareness, and quiet sorrow. It is not difficult to imagine then, that Hazrat-e-Janam is pointing to the eyes of those whose hearts truly perceived the tragedy of Karbala — who didn't merely read it as history, but felt it as a living, eternal pain.

Those eyes belong to the lovers of Husayn (ʿalayhi-s-salām) — the Sādāt and the saints — who carried the burden of this sacred grief. From their "nargis-like" eyes, shabnam — morning dew — appeared. Not ordinary tears, but tears so pure and silent that they resembled the earliest dew on the petals of a flower. These were the tears that did not come from worldly sadness, but from deep spiritual mourning: the kind of mourning that Hazrat Fatimah al-Zahrā (ʿalayha-s-salām) herself began; the same that Sayyidunā Ali (karamallāhu wajhahū) expressed when he passed by Karbala and wept profusely, and the very same grief that Rasūlullāh ﷺ showed in his lifetime when he foretold the martyrdom of his beloved grandson.

It is my understanding that in this verse, Hazrat-e-Janam may also be referring — through the metaphor of "nargis" — to those pure souls who descend from the family of the Prophet . Their spiritual vision, inherited through love and lineage, has always been filled with grief for Karbala. Their tears are not out of weakness; rather, they are a sign of perfection .in love — for grief over Husayn (ʿalayhi-s-salām) is itself a sign of īmān

These are the tears that the great saints and lovers of Ahl al-Bayt have carried through centuries. Whenever Imam Husayn's name is taken with love, these eyes weep. These are the eyes of the spiritual inheritors of the Prophet ﷺ — and their tears are a continuation of that very shabnam that began in Madinah when the Prophet ﷺ wept while holding Husayn in his lap.
It is the same dew that Bibi Fātimah (ʿalayha-s-salām) shed when she saw the soil of Karbala. It is the same wetness that fell from the eyes of Sayyidunā Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (ʿalayhi-s-salām), who wept for years and never ate a morsel of food or drank a drop of water without remembering his father's thirst.

So, when Hazrat-e-Janam says "Nā'in-nargis ke phūl ūpar, anjū shabnam hu'ā paidā", he is showing us how the grief for Karbala has been carried in the eyes of the awliyā', the sādaat, and the true muḥibbīn — like flowers soaked in dew. This single line becomes a mirror in which the reflection of centuries of mourning is seen — soft, fragrant, and soaked in sacred sorrow.

Second Line:

"Nā'in-nargis ke phūl ūpar, anjū shabnam hu'ā paidā."
Upon the narcissus-like eyes, drops of dew appeared.

This line carries a quiet pain. The image may seem poetic, but its meaning cuts deep. The poet speaks of eyes that resemble nargis flowers — wide, still, helpless — and over them, dew-like tears have formed.
These are not ordinary tears. These are the tears that fell for Imam Husayn ʿalayhis-salām. They are not for personal grief, but for a tragedy that the entire ummah carries in its chest. The poet is painting a picture of silent, constant crying — the kind of weeping that settles over one's eyes like dew, not in loud sobs, but in the way grief settles permanently.

When I reflect on these lines, I believe that “nā’in-nargis ke phūl” is not just a metaphor for physical eyes — it also refers to the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ, the Sādāt, and the Ahl al-Bayt, who through generations carried the weight of this sorrow. Their hearts, their eyes, and even their children carried the memory of Karbala. This line, in a very quiet way, reminds us that Azadari is not just an act — it's something that has been lived, generation after generation, by those closest to the Prophet ﷺ and by those who loved his family.

Now let us see how this deep grief unfolded in the lives of those who bore it — beginning with those who lived through it.
Grief of Imam Zayn al-Abidin ʿalayhis-salām
After the tragedy of Karbala, Imam Ali ibn Husayn, famously known as Zayn al-Abidin, became the living witness of Ashura.
He was present there — he saw his father killed, his family torn apart, and the women taken captive. This grief never left him.

It is narrated that he would cry every time he was served food, remembering that his father had been killed hungry and thirsty.
He was once asked, “Will this sorrow ever end?” He replied, “Ya‘qub cried until he lost his eyesight, even though Yusuf was alive.
I saw my family slaughtered before my eyes — how can I not cry?”
His tears were a lifelong azadari. They were not occasional — they were a part of his daily life.

SAYYIDAH ZAYNAB SALAMULLAHI ʿALAIHA: THE FIRST MOURNER
When the women of the Ahl al-Bayt were taken through Karbala after the battle, Sayyidah Zaynab came upon the body of her brother Imam Husayn. His body was headless, covered in blood, his limbs severed.
She cried aloud:
“Wā Muḥammadaah! O my grandfather, peace upon you from the angels of the sky. Look at your Husayn, lying in the desert, soaked in blood, his body mutilated. Your daughters have been taken as prisoners. Your grandsons have been killed.”
This moment has been preserved by the historian Tabarī (*Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk*, vol. 5, p. 456). Tabarī writes that both friends and enemies began to weep when they heard her. That cry was not just her voice — it became the first majlis, the beginning of azadari.

IBN ABBAS WEPT UNTIL HE WENT BLIND

Abdullah ibn Abbas, cousin of the Prophet ﷺ, was devastated when he received the news of Imam Husayn's martyrdom.
According to Sibt ibn al-Jawzī, he cried so much and so often that he eventually became blind. His sorrow was not political — it was the grief of a man who had seen truth slaughtered. The light of his eyes faded under the weight of what had been done to the Prophet's grandson.

HASAN AL-BASRĪ'S GRIEF

When the news of Karbala reached the great Tābi'ī Hasan al-Basrī, he broke down in tears. His face was soaked with crying, and he said: "How disgraceful is the nation that killed the son of their Prophet's daughter!"
(Narrated by al-Zuhrī)

BĀBĀ FARĪD'S CRYING AND FAINTING

Bābā Farīd al-Dīn Ganjshakar, one of the greatest early Chishtī saints, would often weep while speaking about the tragedy of Karbala.
His student and spiritual successor, Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā, narrates that once Bābā Farīd spoke about the events of Ashura and said: "Look at what they did to the Prophet's family. They left them to die of thirst, didn't give them even a drop of water. How will they face the Prophet on the Day of Judgment?"
After saying these words, he fainted. When he regained consciousness, he continued crying and again spoke of how mercilessly the children of the Prophet were treated.
(Rāhat al-Qulūb, p. 69)

KHWĀJA BANDANAWĀZ GĪSŪ DARĀZ: OUR OWN SPIRITUAL LINEAGE
Sayyid Muḥammad Husaīnī Gīsū Darāz, known as Khwāja Bandanawāz, who is part of our own silsila, also carried this grief. In his writings, especially in Jawāmi‘ al-Kilam, we find references to his sorrow during Muharram. His azadari was quiet but intense — filled with reflection, prayer, and mourning.

SHAYKH SAHL IBN TUSTAR: WEEPING AND A DREAM
In the book ‘Anāṣir al-Shahādatayn, a moving story is narrated about Shaykh Sahl ibn Tustar.
On the night of Ashura, he sat alone, weeping deeply while remembering the events of Karbala. He said to himself, “If I was not present in Karbala to die for Imam Husayn, at least let me cry tonight until my garment is wet with blood-like tears.”

That night, he saw the Prophet ﷺ in his dream, who said:
“Sahl, I swear by the Almighty, not a single tear you cried tonight will be wasted. For every drop, Allah will give you a special reward on the Day of Judgment.”
This story shows how weeping itself became a form of closeness to the family of the Prophet ﷺ.

SHAYKH SHARAF AL-DĪN ON MOURNING THE AHL AL-BAYT
In Manḥ al-Ma‘ānī, Shaykh Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā Manerī writes that on the day of Ashura, mourning with the Sādāt (descendants of the Prophet) is not only appropriate, but necessary. He mentions a narration where Jibrīl informed the Prophet ﷺ of Husayn’s martyrdom.
The Prophet asked:

“Who will mourn for Husayn when we are no longer here?”
Jibrīl replied:
“Your Ummah will mourn him till the end of time.”
This is the origin of azadari — a promise made in the presence of the Prophet ﷺ.

ANOTHER TESTIMONY OF BĀBĀ FARĪD

Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyā recalls that he once heard Bābā Farīd speak of a moment when the Prophet ﷺ told ʿAlī:
“When Husayn is killed, we will not be here. Who will mourn him?”
ʿAlī asked, “Will I be there?”
The Prophet said, “No.”
ʿAlī asked, “Will Fāṭimah be there?”
The Prophet again said, “No.”
Then ʿAlī asked, “Then who will mourn our Husayn?”
The Prophet said, “My ummah will cry for him.”
After this, the Prophet and ʿAlī both began to cry.
(Rāhat al-Qulūb)

These are the nargis-like eyes.
These are the drops of shabnam that the poet speaks of.
These are not imagined — they are real. They have fallen from the eyes of imams, the family of the Prophet, scholars, saints, and lovers.
They continue to fall.
This is azadari.
And we are only its humble part.

Verse 18 (Maqta – Final Couplet)

Jitē qalbē meñ gham bastā, sō ū jī meñ ʿayāñ distā
Yū ho sirrī sōñ wābastā, ḳhafī Jānam huʾā paidā

Where grief dwells in the heart,
It shines upon the face.
Tied to the secret of secrets —
That hidden Jānam came into being.

This verse marks the maqta of the marsiya — the final closing line where the marsiya-gō expresses their personal emotion, reflections, and spiritual position by invoking their takhallus (pen-name).
In this case, Hazrat-e-Janam uses his name with profound inner resonance, not just as a poetic device, but as a seal upon the journey of remembrance — the remembrance of Karbala.

Hazrat-e-Janam opens the line with a deeply observant truth:
***"Jite qalbe mein gham basta"* — the sorrow that resides in the heart is not hidden forever. True sorrow, especially that which is tied to the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (ʻalayhis-salaam), leaves its traces.**
It speaks even when lips are silent.
The grief of Karbala does not remain confined to the chest; it finds its way to the eyes, the voice, the posture — it reveals itself.

In the next line, "so o jee mein a'yān dasta", he acknowledges that such a sorrow becomes manifest in the very existence of a person — not only emotionally but existentially. One who has internalized the tragedy of Karbala becomes a living proof of remembrance. Their mannerisms, their tears, their silences — all become ashaar (verses) of the grief.

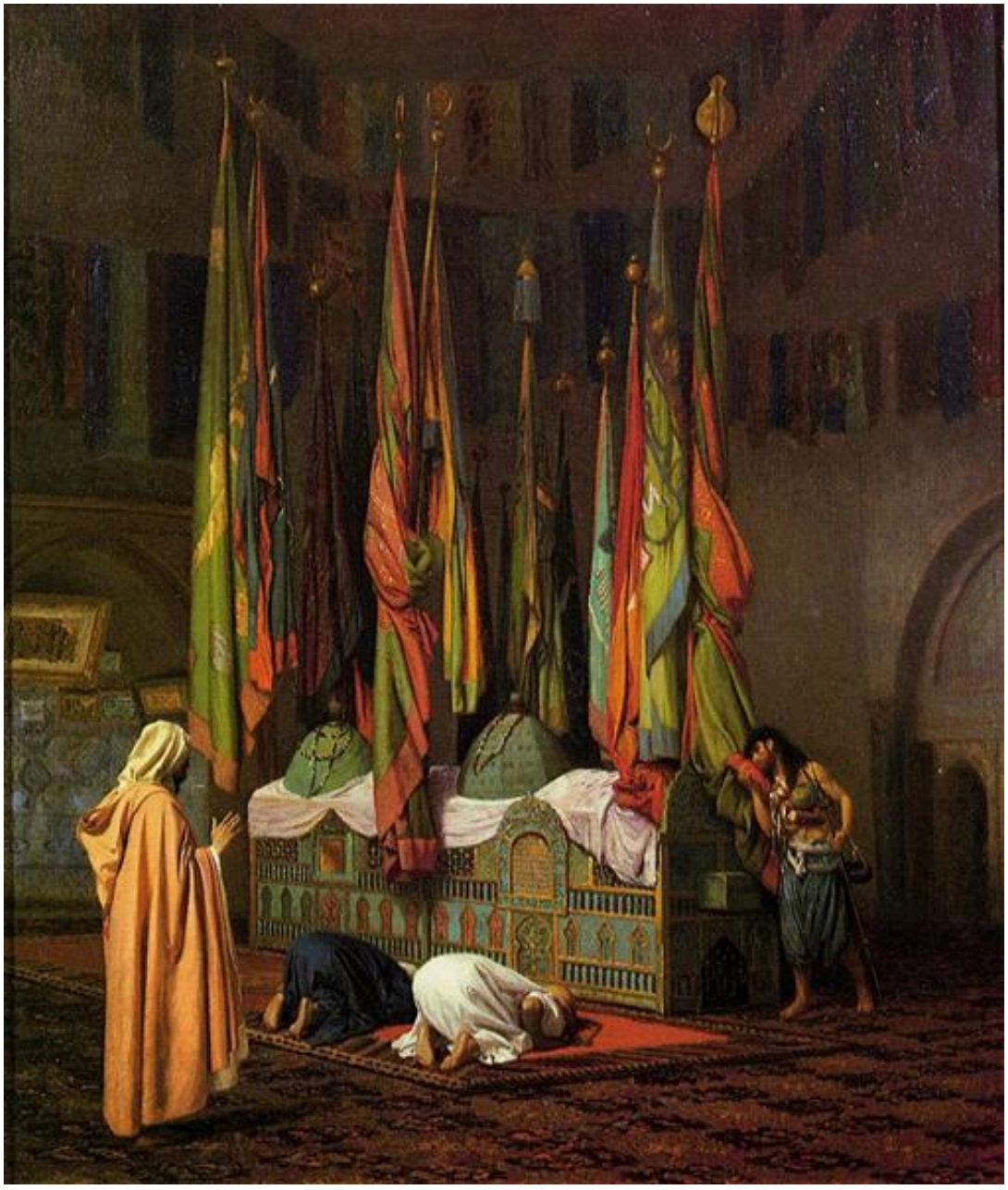
But this sorrow is not just pain for the sake of pain — it is connected to a sirr, a hidden secret. "Yo ho sirri sōn wābasta" implies that the grief of Imam Hussain (ʻalayhis-salaam) is not merely historical — it is deeply metaphysical.

It contains a secret that only hearts prepared by love and loss can carry. What secret? The secret that truth is sometimes meant to bleed to live on, that divine love comes with sacrifice, that silence on injustice is death of the soul.

And then Hazrat-e-Janam speaks of his own state — “khafī Janam hu'ā paidā.” The word khafī (hidden) here is essential. He does not claim his grief to be obvious, loud, or displayed. It is born quietly within.
His remembrance of Karbala is not for performance. It is internal, real, undeniable. The name "Janam" here stands not only as a signature, but a final offering — I am one who carries this hidden fire.

Thus, this maqta is not a poetic flourish — it is a confession. It is a whisper of those who mourn without needing an audience. It is about a remembrance that grows silently inside, and transforms one's life entirely.

And in choosing to end with this, Hazrat-e-Janam aligns himself with a long tradition of lovers, mourners, and seekers — from Zainab (‘alayhas-salaam) to Ali Zayn al-Abidin (‘alayhis-salaam), from Ibn Abbas to Sheikh Saahl Tustari, from the mystics of Chisht to the scholars of Baghdad — who did not just weep for Karbala, but let it become part of their being.
May the hidden grief born in such hearts
be a witness on the Day of Judgment.



- **An old painting by a 19th century French painter, Jean-Léon Gérôme is attributed to the Holy Shrine of Imam Hussain (AS).**

The Role of Marsiya in Islamic Consciousness

The literary tradition of marsiya, or elegy, has deep roots in Islamic heritage, symbolizing the poetic embodiment of grief, remembrance, and moral elevation. The term marsiya is derived from the Arabic root word rithāʾ, which literally means “to weep” or “to mourn.” In poetic usage, however, it encompasses far more than personal lament.
It becomes a powerful medium through which the death of a beloved individual is mourned, their virtues immortalized, and the emotional and spiritual anguish of the bereaved expressed with aesthetic finesse. In the domain of Islamic literary traditions—particularly in Persian, Arabic, and later Urdu—the marsiya evolved into a unique poetic form with profound moral, emotional, and theological resonance.

In classical Arabic culture, as evidenced by early Islamic sources, the tradition of marsiya predates Islam. According to Arabic narrative, Hazrat Adam (peace be upon him) himself is considered the earliest elegist, mourning his son Habil (Abel). Following in that tradition, marsiyas were recited for prominent figures such as Hashim, Abdul Muttalib, Abu Talib, Hamza, and Ja’far al-Tayyar, whose deaths were deeply felt by the community. These early expressions of grief, especially those recited by professional female mourners known as nawwaḥāt, have been preserved in early biographical sources such as Ibn Hisham’s al-Sīrah, confirming the centrality of mourning in early Islamic narrative culture.

Scholars like Ali Jawad Zaidi have provided insightful definitions of marsiya in the context of Indo-Islamic literature. In his monumental work Mir Anis: Hindustani Adab ke Maʿmār, Zaidi identifies marsiya as not just a poetic lament but as a structured literary form that transcends mere mourning—it is a dirge, a mournful composition reflecting profound personal or communal loss. He likens it to the Roman nenia, a funerary song sung to the tune of the flute in Roman processions, suggesting that the impulse to elegize the dead is nearly universal and takes various forms in different civilizations. The emotional and cultural function of such poetry—be it Roman, Arabic, or Indo-Persian—is ultimately the same: to immortalize loss through art.

In Kitab al-'Umdah, Ibn Rashiq attempts to delineate marsiya from other poetic genres by comparing it to madḥ (panegyric). He posits that there is little essential difference between praising the living and eulogizing the dead, except that marsiya includes that emotional and situational element which directly denotes the loss of life. This comparison not only blurs the line between celebration and mourning but also elevates the marsiya to a genre capable of housing both grief and grandeur—a duality that has given it its unique power in Islamic consciousness.

Altaf Husain Hali, one of the most significant reformist poets and critics of the 19th century, expands this definition by underscoring the moral mission of the marsiya. According to him, the purpose of marsiya is not merely to grieve but to immortalize the virtues of the deceased so that their moral excellence continues to inspire future generations. He writes that the marsiya "means to ache with grief upon someone's death and to keep their memory alive by describing their noble qualities." Thus, in the reformist framework of Hali, marsiya assumes the role of ethical education through poetic expression.

Shibli Nomani, in harmony with Hali's thought, argued that in Arabic poetry—regarded as the fountainhead of both Persian and Urdu literatures—the origin of poetry itself lies in marsiya. That is, the primal poetic impulse was to express grief, to weep for the lost, to inscribe loss in language. In this view, marsiya is not merely a subgenre of elegy but the very beginning of all literary expression in the Islamic tradition. Such assertions lend tremendous cultural authority to the marsiya, establishing it as not peripheral but central to Muslim literary consciousness.

One of the most nuanced perspectives on marsiya, however, comes from Imdad Imam Asar, who held that *any expression of a grief-stricken incident—whether poetic or prosaic—falls under the rubric of marsiya*. He expanded the category to include laments over not just death, but any sorrowful occurrence, such as the loss of a home in fire or the sinking of a ship. According to Asar, even personal letters or narratives that capture the essence of grief deserve to be treated as marsiya. His definition is unique not only because it deconstructs the formal limits of the genre but also because it identifies the emotion of ḥuzn (grief) as the central determinant of the genre, regardless of form or meter.

In his writings, Asar even allows for what we now call free verse, or prose-poetry, to be considered marsiya, suggesting a modernist rethinking of form. His work Kashf al-Haqā'iq advocates for this expansive vision of literary mourning. He argues that the condition of being metrically bound is not essential to the emotional and moral force of marsiya. In fact, he leaves open the possibility that a prose account of tragic suffering can possess all the rhetorical and spiritual qualities of a poetic marsiya.

At the same time, Asar insists that, etymologically, the word marsiya demands the inclusion of a deceased person as the referent of mourning. Since the Arabic root rithā' signifies the praise or description of a dead person, the core essence of the marsiya remains tied to death, even if its formal boundaries expand. Thus, in literary terms, he suggests a balance: while a marsiya can include other sorrowful events and can be written in prose, the classical and most elevated marsiya remains that which eulogizes the dead and does so in poetic form.

This nuanced debate—between tradition and modernity, between formal structure and emotional intensity—offers profound insight into the marsiya's evolving role in the Islamic imagination. Far from being a static poetic form, the marsiya has always been a living expression of communal memory, shaped by theological grief, historical trauma, and the moral imagination of poets. Whether mourning the martyrs of Karbala or the loss of a friend, whether rendered in rhymed couplets or rhythmic prose, the marsiya retains its central spiritual purpose: to transform sorrow into remembrance, and remembrance into reverence.

If one accepts the premise that poetry is the mirror of human emotion, and that marsiya represents one of its most poignant expressions, then it is reasonable to suggest that the genesis of marsiya coincides with the genesis of life itself. From the earliest human encounters with death, mankind has sought to articulate its sorrow, to memorialize the departed, and to find solace through verse. This idea is reinforced by the assertion that Prophet Ādam (ʿalayhis-salām) himself was the first marsiya-reciter — a testimony to the antiquity and inherent human nature of this genre.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, marsiya was already a common literary form. A survey of jāhili (pre-Islamic) Arabic poetry reveals that nearly every known poet had, at some point, composed marsiya. Poets composed elegies not only for brothers and sons, but also for friends and even for personal losses of wealth or homeland. The elegiac tradition included such renowned poets as

ʿAdī ibn Rabīʿah al-ʿĀmirī, Jābir ibn Sufyān,
ʿAlqamah ibn Mālik, al-Khansāʾ (the famous female elegist),
Sāṭam ibn Nuwairah, Duʿbul, al-Farazdaq, Kumayt al-Asadī,
Khālid ibn Maʿdān, Imām al-Shāfiʿī, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr,
Maḥmūd ibn Ḥusayn al-Shahdī, Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī,
Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn Ṭurayḥ, ʿAllāmah Shihāb al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir,
and ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-ʿUmarī —

each of whom contributed in various ways to this poetic legacy. Even during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, elegies were composed, and their emotional depth is preserved in early Arabic historical sources.

The origin of Arabic poetry itself is not precisely known, but literary historians have traditionally considered Muḥallil ibn Rabīʿah as one of the earliest poets who composed a marsiya on the death of his brother Kulayb. According to Maulana Shibli Nuʿmani, Arabic poetry began with the poetic cries of warriors (rajaz) on the battlefield, where warriors would chant rhythmic lines to incite passion and courage. These brief utterances, though limited in form, would signal the onset of conflict. Following this tradition, marsiya emerged as the second stage — a more reflective and emotionally driven genre, born out of war and its consequent losses.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, marsiya was not confined merely to expressions of grief. It also served as a celebration of valor and sacrifice. Some elegies were deeply personal, such as those of Durayd ibn al-Ṣimmah, who continued composing elegies after the killing of his brother ʿAbdullāh. One of the most evocative marsiyas of the time is that of Hind, who lamented the loss of her father, uncle, and son-in-law in the Battle of Badr — verses from which are preserved in al-Ṭabarī's Tārīkh.

This indicates that even women were active participants in this literary tradition and that marsiya, by its very nature, transcended the boundaries of gender and social station.

The advent of Islam brought about a transformative shift in Arab society — in belief systems, in social structures, and in literary practices. Yet, even with the rise of Islamic values, the poetic impulse did not wane. Poets continued to play a significant role in shaping the emotional and spiritual landscape of the ummah. The need to memorialize, to mourn, and to draw spiritual lessons from personal or collective tragedies remained deeply ingrained.

According to Professor Faḍl Imām, the first marsiya composed after the passing of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ was written by his beloved daughter, Fāṭima al-Zahrāʾ (ʿalayhā al-salām).
This marsiya is not only historic in its temporal significance but also in its poetic power. Among her preserved verses are these lines:

صبت عليّ مصائبٌ لو أنّها

صبت على الأيام صرن لياليا

“Misfortunes have poured upon me in such measure
That if they had descended upon the days,
they would have turned into dark nights.”

These verses — aching with sorrow, brimming with theological insight — mark not just a personal lament but a collective cry. They signify how marsiya was seamlessly woven into the early Islamic experience, where pain and poetry converged to create memory and meaning.

Marsiya is not merely a poetic form; it is a deeply rooted vessel for the articulation of pain, historical consciousness, and collective resistance. Its evolution is inseparably linked with one of the most defining tragedies in Islamic history — the incident of Karbala. But to understand the rise of marsiya in its true sense, it is essential to comprehend the socio-political and spiritual turmoil that surrounded the tragedy itself.

The narrative of Karbala finds its origin in the turbulent period following the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ's departure from this world.
After his passing, the Khilafat was held in succession by Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, and finally ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (radiyallāhu ʿanhum).

However, following the caliphate of the first two, the Islamic polity began to witness rising internal discord and fitnah. During the month of Ramaḍān, Imām ʿAlī (karamAllāhu wajhah) was assassinated in Kufa. After his martyrdom, his elder son, Imām Ḥasan, was recognized as the rightful successor to the Prophet ﷺ. But due to intensifying tensions and disunity among the people, he ceded leadership to Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān under a treaty that sought to prevent further bloodshed.

Unfortunately, Muʿāwiyah's leadership marked a shift in Islamic political ethos. In a grave departure from the consultative model of Khilāfah, Muʿāwiyah sought to establish dynastic rule by nominating his son Yazīd as his successor and began securing allegiance (bayʿah) for him during his own lifetime. Upon his death, Yazīd assumed control and, unlike his father, launched a reign characterized by oppression and moral decay. One of his earliest acts was to demand allegiance from Imām Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, the grandson of the Prophet ﷺ.

It was in this moment that conscience and tyranny stood face to face. Imām Ḥusayn refused to validate Yazīd's rule through bayʿah, declaring that a man of Yazīd's character could never be a rightful leader of the Muslims. Meanwhile, the people of Kufa — historically loyal to the family of Imām ʿAlī — wrote numerous letters to Imām Ḥusayn, inviting him to Kufa and pledging support for his claim. To verify the sincerity of their appeals, Imām Ḥusayn dispatched his cousin Muslim ibn ʿAqīl.
Upon arrival, Muslim was initially welcomed, but under the shadow of fear and intimidation by Ibn Ziyād, the governor of Kufa, the Kufans betrayed their word. Muslim was eventually captured and martyred.

Unaware of this betrayal, Imām Ḥusayn had already set out from Makkah with his family and a small band of loyal companions. On the way, he received news of Muslim's death. Despite the devastating message, he continued onward, fully aware of the fate that awaited him. En route, the army of al-Ḥurr ibn Yazīd al-Riyāḥī intercepted them and restricted their movement, forcing them to camp at the barren plains of Karbala near the Euphrates River. It was the 2nd of Muḥarram.

In the days that followed, Yazīd's forces gathered under the command of ʿUmar ibn Saʿd. The pressure mounted as Imām Ḥusayn was repeatedly asked to pledge allegiance to Yazīd — an offer he unwaveringly rejected. On the 7th of Muḥarram, a blockade was imposed on the Euphrates, and access to water was denied to Imām Ḥusayn's camp. The cries of thirsty children echoed through the plains, and the moral depravity of Yazīd's army became manifest.

Then came the 10th of Muḥarram — the Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ. Imām Ḥusayn, realizing that confrontation was inevitable, addressed Yazīd's army in one final, stirring khutbah, attempting to awaken their conscience. The powerful rhetoric moved al-Ḥurr ibn Yazīd, who repented and joined the Imām's side, eventually sacrificing his life in the battle.

The battlefield of Karbala saw the martyrdom of not only Imām Ḥusayn but also of his family members, including his infant son ʿAlī al-Aṣghar, and loyal companions. One by one, they fell with dignity, courage, and unwavering faith. The only surviving male was Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn, the ailing son of Imām Ḥusayn, who was too sick to participate in combat.

After the battle, the tents of the Ahl al-Bayt were set on fire, and the surviving women and children — including Sayyida Zaynab (radiyallāhu ʿanhā) — were taken as prisoners and paraded to the court of Yazīd in Damascus. There, they were subjected to humiliation and torment, yet it was in these trials that the voices of truth, particularly through Sayyida Zaynab's eloquent defiance, preserved the legacy of Karbala.

In the immediate aftermath, fear silenced the tongues of poets and scholars. But once the shackles of state tyranny loosened, the echoes of Karbala found expression in poetic lament — first in Arabic, then in Persian, and later in Urdu. This outpouring of grief took the form of marsiya — not the limited, personal lament of earlier times, but a vast, morally and theologically charged literary tradition.

The marsiyas of Karbala opened new dimensions. These were no longer confined to the grief of losing an individual; they became repositories of ethical imagination, a means of narrating history, and a platform to express spiritual resistance. Under the patronage of the Deccan sultanates, particularly in the courts of the Shīʿa-inclined rulers of Bijapur and Golconda, marsiya flourished as a literary form. It was here that the genre shed its earlier simplicity and was redefined — expanding its themes, exploring new poetic forms, and reaching new emotional depths.

Critics have often claimed that Urdu poetry is constrained by narrow thematic boundaries. Yet, the marsiya negated this assumption entirely. Its scope was so vast that nearly every human emotion and event could find representation within it. From the farewell at Madīnah to the parched plains of Karbala, from the cries of thirsty children to the anguished laments of orphaned daughters — all found expression in the canvas of marsiya.

The first scenes often described in marsiya are those of departure — the heartbreaking moment when Imām Ḥusayn leaves Madīnah, entrusting his sick daughter Ṣughra to the care of Sayyida Umm al-Banīn. From there, the journey unfolds: the news of Muslim's martyrdom, the encounter with al-Ḥurr, the scorching heat, the last acts of generosity, such as offering water even to the enemy. Each moment is layered with emotion, and the marsiya writers skillfully immortalized these details with dignity and pathos.

Marsiya also became a theatre of character portrayal — juxtaposing the virtuous against the vile. On one side stood Yazīd, Ibn Ziyād, and ʿUmar ibn Saʿd — embodiments of tyranny, deceit, and cowardice.

On the other, we find Ḥurr, who redeems himself through repentance; al-ʿAbbās, the flag-bearer of loyalty; and ʿAlī al-Akbar, the image of the Prophet ﷺ in valor and beauty.
Marsiya writers, adept in the art of psychological depth, portrayed not only the outer events but the inner worlds of these figures, illuminating their moral conflicts and spiritual states.

As marsiya grew in thematic depth, it enriched Urdu's lexicon.
The battlefield was described with minute precision — the shimmer of swords, the echo of hooves, the art of swordplay. The technical vocabulary expanded, borrowing from Arabic, Persian, and local dialects.
By the time of Ḍamīr Khaliq and, later, Anīs and Dabīr, marsiya had reached an unprecedented literary zenith. They transformed the genre into a complete poetic system, fusing storytelling, theology, ethics, and aesthetics.

In sum, marsiya became more than poetry — it became a cultural memory, a spiritual ethos, and a literary act of resistance. It carried the grief of Karbala across generations and borders, embedding itself in the hearts of all those who remembered Ḥusayn not just as a martyr, but as the voice of truth standing unshaken before a world of tyranny.

Addressing the Objections: Responses to Misconceptions

In every age, whenever the fragrance of devotion begins to spread through poetic forms, it is often accompanied by an echo of criticism. Marsiya—an exalted genre of devotional poetry—has, unfortunately, been a subject of immense misunderstanding and sectarian distortion. As someone who has grown up not only listening to marsiyas but reflecting deeply upon their meanings, I have observed a troubling pattern: the moment one utters the word marsiya or noha, many within the Muslim community instinctively associate it exclusively with the Shiʿa tradition—more so with the derogatory term Rāfiḍī, often used out of ignorance or prejudice.

Let it be stated unequivocally: this sectarian mindset is not rooted in scholarship, spirituality, or sincerity. It is a consequence of superficial religiosity and divisive propaganda. The tragic polarization we witness today—where even colors are seen through sectarian lenses, where green becomes "Sunni" and black becomes "Shiʿa," where terms like qasīda and manqabat are "owned" by one sect and marsiya and noha are "reserved" for another—is a testament to the deterioration of our collective spiritual maturity.

If someone argues, "But marsiyas are only read and written by the Rāfiḍīs," we must confront that misconception with historical evidence.
As this very book testifies, the first known marsiya in the Urdu language was composed not by a Shiʿa cleric in Persia or Iraq, but by Ḥaḍrat Syed Burhān al-Dīn Janām—a Sufi saint and scholar deeply rooted in the Chishtī spiritual tradition, whose lineage connects him to Khwāja Bandah Nawāz Gisu Darāz, the great Sunni Sufi of the Deccan.
Would it then be just—or even remotely accurate—to call Janām "Rāfiḍī"? Certainly not. His commitment to the cause of truth and his reverence for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām) were expressions of his wilāyah and maʿrifah, not of sectarian identity.

It is imperative to understand that when Sufi masters—those who walked the path of tawḥīd and fanāʾ fi'l-rasūl—composed marsiyas, they were not "borrowing" from another sect; they were expressing an eternal grief that transcends sects. Karbalāʾ is not a Shiʿa issue. It is a divine rupture in the history of Islam that reveals the cosmic conflict between Ḥusayniyyat and Yazīdiyyat. Every lover of truth, regardless of their school of thought, is bound to cry out: Yā Ḥusayn!

To deny marsiya a place in Sunni spirituality is to cut oneself off from the towering legacy of Sufi saints who walked this path long before modern sectarian divisions hardened. Marsiya is not a sectarian slogan; it is a sacred tradition.

OBJECTION ONE: "MARSIYA IS A SHIʿA FORM, NOT FOR AHL AL-SUNNAH WA'L-JAMĀʿAH."

One of the most persistent and misunderstood objections raised within the framework of sectarian discourse is the assertion that marsiya (elegiac poetry) and noha (lamentation) are inherently Shīʿah or Rāfiḍī constructs, foreign to the spiritual and devotional practices of the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. This claim, often repeated without historical examination or intellectual scrutiny, has over time embedded itself in the collective psyche of certain segments of the Muslim community. As a result, terms such as marsiya and noha have become stigmatized, perceived not as genres of sacred remembrance, but as sectarian slogans.

This unfortunate mischaracterization deserves to be addressed not only with emotional clarity but with academic integrity, linguistic depth, and spiritual honesty. To begin with, the idea that marsiya or noha are "owned" or "patented" by one sect is a historical fallacy.
It ignores centuries of Sunni Sufi literary production, particularly in the Indo-Persian and Dakhni worlds, where marsiya emerged organically from the love of the Ahl al-Bayt — and not from any sectarian ideology.

Let us first consider the etymology and genealogy of the term. The word marsiya is derived from the Arabic رِثَاء (rithāʾ), meaning "lament" or "elegy." The Qurʾānic tradition itself recognizes the nobility of lamenting for the righteous, the oppressed, and the prophets. From early Arabic literature to Andalusian poetry and into the Persianate courts of Delhi, Lahore, Bijapur, and Golconda, the genre of rithāʾ evolved not as a sectarian slogan but as a devotional literary form, where love for the Prophet's family (maḥabbat al-Ahl al-Bayt) was expressed through verse, rhythm, and metaphor.

It is a grave injustice, therefore, to project this literary and spiritual tradition into the narrow lanes of sectarian polemics. In fact, it was Hazrat Syed Burhān al-Dīn Jānām, a renowned Sunni-Sufi saint, who is widely recognized by scholars as the first Urdu marsiya writer.
His compositions, full of cosmological language and metaphysical symbolism, demonstrate beyond doubt that marsiya was nurtured within the Sunni Sufi milieu, particularly under the influence of the teachings of Khwāja Bandah Nawāz Gisu Darāz — a towering figure of the Ahl al-Sunnah.

So then, we must ask: Was Hazrat Jānām Shīʿah? Was he Rāfiḍī?
Of course not. The suggestion is absurd. His affiliations, spiritual ancestry, and theological stance were all deeply rooted in the Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamāʿah. If he composed marsiyas, it was because he saw in the remembrance of Karbala not sectarian theatre, but a universal mirror of divine truth, sacrifice, and love.
If marsiya were "Rāfiḍī innovations," why would a Sunni saint — trained in ʿilm, tasawwuf, and tafsir — engage in it?

To attribute marsiya exclusively to the Shīʿah tradition is therefore to indirectly accuse the Sunni Sufi masters of the Deccan — such as Hazrat Jānām, Hazrat Shah Rājū Qattāl, and others — of theological error.
Are we willing to declare their works invalid, or worse, bidʿah? Would that not be an insult to the very spiritual heritage we claim to uphold? Such reasoning betrays a lack of familiarity with the literary and devotional pluralism of classical Islam, especially in South Asia, where poetry was a spiritual vehicle—not a sectarian manifesto. In fact, a sincere reading of Sunni tadhkiras (biographical collections), Dakhni poetry, and early Urdu literature reveals a continuous and uncontested tradition of marsiya and noha writing among Sunni scholars, poets, and Sufi saints.

The real problem, therefore, is not marsiya itself — it is the sectarian codification of language that has emerged in recent centuries. Certain words have been "assigned" to certain sects. Black clothing is assumed to be "Shīʿah." Green is "Sunni." Even vocabulary — like ziyarat, mawlūd, marsiya — is placed in ideological boxes. But these are social constructions, not religious truths.

When a person weeps for Sayyid al-Shuhadāʾ, when a mother recites a marsiya in memory of the thirsty child in Karbala, when a poet praises the courage of Zaynab (ʿalayha al-salām), do we stop to ask:
"Which sect are you?" Or do we recognize a universal human grief that transcends divisions?

The truth is: Karbala is not a sectarian tragedy. It is an Islamic tragedy. More than that — it is a human tragedy. And to respond to it with silence in the name of sectarian purity is to betray the very ethos of Islam.
Karbala was not about Shīʿah vs. Sunni. It was about truth vs. falsehood, Ḥusaynī values vs. Yazīdī tyranny, Divine love vs. worldly ambition.

Let it also be remembered that in Sunni theology, the love of the Ahl al-Bayt is not an optional act — it is wājib. The Qur'ān commands:

"Say (O Prophet): I ask you no reward except love for my near relatives."
(Surah ash-Shūrā, 42:23)

Can love ever be silent?
Can love ever be indifferent?

Marsiya is not a doctrinal treatise. It is a cry of love, a poetic dirge, a spiritual protest against injustice. It is an echo of the Qur'ānic ethos, a continuation of the weeping of Yāʿqūb (ʿalayhi al-salām), the sorrow of Nūḥ (ʿalayhi al-salām), and the grief of Sayyida Fāṭima (ʿalayha al-salām). It is the voice of a heart awakened by the call of Karbala.

To deny this heritage simply because it is "associated" with another sect is a form of spiritual cowardice and sectarian pettiness. The giants of our Sunni tradition — the Imāms, the Sufis, the poets, the pīrs — never lived with such fear. They embraced love, regardless of how it was labeled. They wept when it was time to weep, even if others called their tears "bidʿah."

Objection Two: "Marsiyas use words like matam, haaye haaye, and wawaila which are not appropriate for Sunni practice."

A frequently raised objection by critics of marsiya literature pertains to its emotive vocabulary — particularly the inclusion of words such as matam, haaye haaye, and wawaila. These expressions, they argue, are culturally exaggerated or sectarian in tone, and thus inappropriate for Sunni Muslims. However, such objections are founded not in theological rigor or historical awareness, but in a flattening of religious aesthetics and an erasure of emotional authenticity within Islamic devotion.

To reduce terms like matam to mere physical ritualism or to equate haaye haaye and wawaila with innovation (bidʿah) is to ignore the multifaceted role that language, grief, and memory play in Islamic spirituality. These expressions do not emerge in a vacuum. They belong to a long and rich tradition of devotional literature where grief is not only permissible, but necessary. In fact, grief — when attached to divine love — becomes a form of purification (tazkiyah) and remembrance (dhikr).

In the tradition of the Prophets themselves, we find precedence for such emotive expressions. The Qur'an records the lament of Prophet Yaʿqūb (ʿalayhi’s-salām), who cried until his eyesight failed, mourning the absence of his son, Yūsuf (ʿalayhi’s-salām). If a father's grief over his child warrants such expression, how can one condemn the grief of the ummah over the martyrdom of Sayyid al-Shuhadāʾ, the grandson of the Messenger ﷺ?

The marsiya, in this regard, does not innovate beyond the framework of Sunnah; it amplifies the prophetic legacy of grief. The language of lamentation in marsiya — whether it is haaye haaye, wawaila, or matam — is not merely literary ornament. It is a linguistic vessel through which sacred sorrow is carried across generations.

This is affirmed most powerfully in the marsiya of Ḥaḍrat Shāh Rājū Qattāl Ḥusaynī, a towering Sunni Sufi figure and a descendant of Sayyidunā Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām). A man of spiritual authority and impeccable Sunni orthodoxy, Ḥaḍrat Shāh Rājū composed devotional marsiyas in the Dakhni literary tradition — deeply moving in tone, simple in structure, and spiritually resplendent.

In one of his marsiyas, we encounter the following refrain:

"Shoor mātam kā uthiyā har jag meñ, ghar ghar hāye hāye."
"The tumult of mourning rose across every land —
from house to house echoed the cry of 'haaye haaye'."

This is not an isolated line. It is a theological statement clothed in poetic form. By placing matam and haaye haaye at the center of communal grief, Ḥaḍrat Shāh Rājū affirms that these are not innovations or sectarian inventions — they are extensions of sacred sorrow. In his hands, the language of lament becomes a language of loyalty. The homes of the faithful, echoing with haaye haaye, are not signs of deviation — they are signs of wilāyah.

Moreover, this refrain is consistent with the ethos of the Qur'anic command

"Qul lā asʾalukum ʿalayhi ajran illā al-mawaddata fi'l-qurbā" —
"Say: I ask of you no reward except love for my near kin" (42:23).

If mawaddah demands love, and love gives birth to pain, then pain must find expression. And that expression, within the marsiya, takes the form of linguistic sighs — sighs that say more than philosophy ever can.

It is worth asking: do we not accept *dhikr* that involves rhythmic movement, *qawwālī* that incites ecstasy, or *munājāt* that brings weeping?
Why then do we single out *marsiya* for scrutiny when it speaks the same language — a language that springs not from sectarian ideology but from *iḥsān* — the spiritual excellence of remembering Allāh and His beloveds with presence of heart?

Those who object to the words haaye haaye and wawaila often fail to understand that these are not theological claims, but ishtiʿālāt — bursts of sorrowful recognition. They emerge when the heart is no longer able to bear the weight of love in silence. Just as Allāhu Akbar becomes a cry in prayer, haaye Ḥusayn becomes a cry in mourning. Both are sincere. Both are sacred.

To strip marsiya of its emotional vocabulary is to rob it of its soul. It would be like reading the Qur'an without tajwīd, or offering ṣalāh without khushūʿ. The form may remain — but the heart would be absent.

In light of this, the marsiya must be appreciated for what it is: not merely poetic tradition, but a spiritual technology. It teaches the ummah how to grieve nobly, how to remember truthfully, and how to resist tyranny beautifully. The use of matam, haaye haaye, and wawaila are not expressions of excess — they are acts of remembrance. In their echo lies the memory of Karbalaʿ. In their repetition lies the preservation of maʿrifah. In their cry lies the resistance to forgetfulness.

The legacy of Ḥaḍrat Shāh Rājū Qattāl Ḥusaynī, then, is not merely that of a poet — but of a wārith (inheritor) of prophetic grief. His marsiyas do not depart from Sunni orthodoxy; they deepen it. They do not threaten religious purity; they purify remembrance from the dust of forgetfulness. And in his voice, one hears not only poetry — but the weeping of history, sanctified.

Thus, to object to such expressions is not to defend the Sunnah — it is to misunderstand it. For the Sunnah is not only in law, but in love; not only in form, but in feeling.

And if remembering Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām) brings us to weeping — then let us weep. If it brings us to sigh — then let our sigh be a prayer.
For in every *haaye haaye*, there is a broken heart longing for justice;
and in every *wawaila*, a soul yearning for truth.
Let that not be silenced.

Objection Three:
"Even if marsiyas are acceptable, why should one weep? Isn’t excessive crying bid‘ah?"

**This objection has been addressed earlier, but must be reiterated:
Weeping over Imām Ḥusayn is not only permissible—it is meritorious.
It is a sunnah of the Prophet (ṣallā Llāhu ʿalayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam),
of his noble family, of his companions, and of the Sufi saints.
From the tears of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (ʿalayhā’s-salām) to the cries of
Sayyidnā Salmān and Sayyidnā Abū Dharr, from the lament of Sayyidnā
Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn to the verses of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī and Mawlānā
Rūmī—this tradition flows like a sacred river through our spiritual heritage.
The Prophet himself wept at the mention of Karbalāʾ. Should we, who claim
to follow him, be too “rational” or too “modern” to do the same?**

Objection Four: "Why do marsiyas glorify things like horses, swords, and other physical objects?"

**This objection arises not from theological precision, but from a modern
discomfort with metaphor, symbol, and sanctified memory.
It reflects a certain reductionism—a view that unless something is explicitly
divine, it cannot be spiritually meaningful.
But this view stands in sharp contrast to the way sacred tradition,
from the earliest days of Islam, has treated objects, places, and even
animals that become vessels of divine significance.**

Consider, for example, the way Muslims have historically spoken of Naʿlān Mubārak—the blessed sandals of the Prophet ﷺ. Poets have composed entire verses in praise of the dust beneath his feet. The camel Qaṣwāʾ, which carried him during the Hijrah and the Farewell Pilgrimage, is remembered with reverence. The Burāq, on which he ascended during the Miʿrāj, though never worshipped, is described in literature and art with awe and affection.
Why? Because in these cases, the object or animal is not admired in itself, but for what it carried, witnessed, or touched. The love is derivative—not materialist, but relational. It is not the sandal that is sacred; it is the proximity to the Prophet ﷺ that gives it value.
This is a foundational principle in Islamic aesthetics and ethics: what is touched by the sacred, becomes worthy of remembrance.

Marsiya literature follows this very principle. To honour Zuljanāh, the horse of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām), is not to glorify an animal arbitrarily, but to honour the bearer of divine grief. Zuljanāh was not a silent prop in the drama of Karbalāʾ—he was a witness to the final moments of Ḥusayn's life. According to many narrations, he returned to the tents of the Ahl al-Bayt alone, his body wounded, his saddle stained with blood. The grief he carried was not imagined—it was witnessed. It was Zuljanāh who brought the final message to Zaynab (ʿalayhā's-salām), and according to some traditions, it was he who attempted to defend the Imam even in the final moments. In poetry, then, Zuljanāh is not just a horse. He is an image of loyalty, a symbol of grief that even speechless creatures bore on that day.

The same holds true for other objects often mentioned in marsiyas: the ʿalam (standard), the tabūt (coffin), the Zulfiqār (the sword), and even the maqāme mashq (the water carrier's stand). These are not lifeless relics; they are symbols that condense entire histories, entire ethics, into a single word or image. The ʿalam is not merely a banner—it is the symbol of truth upheld in the face of annihilation. The tabūt is not merely a coffin—it is the last home of a martyr whose death redefined dignity. Even the broken water bag of ʿAlī Asghar becomes, in the hands of a poet, not a prop but a cry:
a cry against cruelty, a testament to what was denied to the innocent in the desert of Karbalāʾ.

For those who still feel uneasy, let us recall that even in classical Sunni traditions, objects associated with the Prophet ﷺ and the Ahl al-Bayt were preserved, kissed, and honored—not as idols, but as reminders.
In Istanbul, Damascus, and Cairo, relics of the Prophet ﷺ—his cloak, his hair, even his letter seals—have been preserved for centuries and continue to be honored. Were these practices signs of "excessive attachment to materiality"? Or were they acknowledgments of the deep human need to remain connected to the sacred through the tangible? The latter is evidently true, and it is this same impulse that marsiyas tap into: the desire to hold in words what history has touched with blood and light.

Let us also remember that Islamic spirituality, particularly in its Sufi dimension, does not separate matter from meaning. The body is not divorced from the soul; rather, the body is the vehicle through which spiritual realization is often made manifest. In the same way, a sword is not just a blade—it is an emblem of justice if held by the righteous.
A horse is not just transportation—it becomes a witness if it carries a martyr. The value of such objects is not in their metal or bone, but in their service to a higher purpose. That is why Hazrat-e-Jānam, and the entire marsiya tradition after him, does not hesitate to place Zuljanāh alongside Imām Ḥusayn—not as equal in stature, but as companion in sorrow.

For the modern reader, especially from the younger generation raised in an age of skepticism and demystification, these symbolic gestures may seem excessive or ornamental. But they are not. They are exercises in spiritual memory. They are ways of re-enchanting a world that would otherwise flatten grief into mere history, and love into mere emotion. The marsiya is not content with data. It seeks meaning. It does not just narrate what happened; it shows what it meant. And in that quest, it rightly calls upon every witness—man or animal, object or echo—who was present at the field of Karbalāʾ.

To love Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām) is not merely to recite his name.
It is to walk in the dust where he fell, to mourn with those who stood by him, and to see in every sword, every saddle, every drop of water that was denied—an ethical world that still judges us. That is why poets write of Zuljanāh. That is why they weep at the sight of a ʿalam. That is why the marsiya, though filled with "objects," never loses its soul.

Objection Five: “Isn’t marsiya just poetic exaggeration? Why invest so much religious weight into literary work?”

This question, though often posed innocently, reveals a deeper disconnection from the historical and spiritual function of literature in the Islamic tradition. To dismiss marsiya as mere poetic embellishment is not simply a misunderstanding of genre—it is to overlook centuries of intellectual, devotional, and ethical inheritance. It is to forget how Islamic culture, at its highest, has always married form with meaning, beauty with truth.

In classical Islamic civilization, poetry was never divorced from religion. Rather, it was one of its most powerful instruments. The most revered works of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Urdu literature are steeped in Qur’anic symbolism, Prophetic love, metaphysical inquiry, and eschatological concern. From the impassioned verses of Ibn al-Fāriḍ in Nāẓim al-Sulūk, to the layered allegories of Mawlānā Rūmī in the Mathnawī-ye Maʿnawī, poetry functioned not as distraction from truth, but as a vessel toward it. Each verse was a dhikr—a remembrance—disguised in rhyme.
The metaphor was not an escape from reality, but a doorway into it. To suggest, then, that marsiya is simply flowery language is to ignore this lineage. It is to forget that in our tradition, the word has always been sacred.

Marsiya, in particular, stands at the intersection of ḥaqq (truth), ḥubb (love), and ḥuzn (grief). It is not idle lament. It is the poetic re-presentation of a historical trauma so profound that the Prophet ﷺ himself wept over it before it happened. The tragedy of Karbalāʾ is not simply remembered—it is continually reinterpreted through marsiya, each generation finding in it a mirror of their moral anxieties, political failures, and spiritual aspirations. When a poet mourns Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi’s-salām), he is not merely telling a tale; he is reviving a conscience. His exaggeration, if it appears so to some, is not distortion—it is amplification.
He is raising the volume of truth in an age of silence.

Indeed, if we study history with care, we find that marsiya has never been confined to devotional settings alone. It has been a tool of resistance, a cry of defiance, a means of awakening ghayrah in the face of tyranny.
In colonial India, for instance, both Shīʿī and Sunnī poets invoked Karbalāʾ as a model for protest. Mir Anis, Mirza Dabir, Mohsin Kakorvi, Josh Malihabadi—these were not mere mourners, they were moral visionaries. Their pens challenged colonial injustice by reminding readers of an eternal paradigm: when Yazīd sits on the throne of power, every lover of justice must become a Ḥusayn. In Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, the subcontinent, and beyond, the marsiya has served as a subversive text—teaching that loyalty to truth is higher than loyalty to the state, and that mourning is not weakness, but resistance through remembrance.

Let us also not forget that in the Islamic worldview, not all knowledge is transmitted through law or prose. Some truths are too delicate for legal code, too vast for philosophical abstraction. They require a different language—one that does not merely instruct, but transforms.
That language is poetry. The Qur'an itself is not a treatise; it is a symphony. Its verses rhyme. Its cadences move. Its imagery evokes not just thought, but trembling. Why, then, should it surprise us that our own expressions of grief—our remembrance of Ashk-i Ḥusayn—would find their highest form in verse?

To those who accuse marsiya of "exaggeration," one might gently ask: how else does one speak of Karbalāʾ? With what words does one describe a six-month-old child pierced through the throat, a brother torn to pieces as he retrieves water, a grandson of the Prophet ﷺ beheaded before the eyes of his family? Is literalism adequate here? Is dry narration enough? No—such grief demands a language that stretches, that breaks, that weeps. Marsiya does not exaggerate—it agonizes. It searches for a form equal to its pain. If it swells with metaphor, it is because the wound it seeks to express cannot be spoken plainly.

And perhaps this is the deeper wisdom. Marsiya teaches us not just what happened at Karbalāʾ, but how to feel about what happened. It trains the heart. It refines the soul. It teaches a vocabulary of loyalty, of humility, of protest, of patience. It gives names to our unnamed sorrows and direction to our nameless longings. It is not sectarian—it is sanctified. It belongs not to a faction, but to the Ummah.

Let us say it plainly: the marsiya is not a private ritual. It is a communal inheritance. It belongs to every Muslim whose heart aches at injustice, who trembles before betrayal, who believes that even in loss, there is divine triumph. To read a marsiya is to enter the majlis of Fatimah al-Zahrāʾ (ʿalayhāʾs-salām), to hear again the sermon of Sayyidah Zaynab (ʿalayhāʾs-salām), to weep alongside Imām Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn (ʿalayhiʾs-salām). These are not exaggerations.
They are echoes. Echoes of a day that changed everything.

In closing, let us reject the casual cynicism that scoffs at sacred literature. Let us refuse the reduction of poetry to ornament.
Let us remember that words, in the Islamic tradition, are not entertainment—they are trust. And the words of marsiya are among the heaviest of that trust. They carry blood, memory, and longing.
They are tears that purify. They are wounds that speak.
They are the legacy of ḥubb al-rasūl, wilāyah, ikhlāṣ, and ṣabr.

And they are ours to keep.
O reader, do not abandon them.

The Significance of Azadari:

Azadari — the mourning rituals observed in remembrance of the tragedy of Karbala — is not merely an expression of grief, nor is it confined to the weeping over the martyrdom of Imam Ḥusain (ʿalayhis-salām) and his noble companions. It is an intellectual and spiritual framework, a collective remembrance that cultivates consciousness of divine justice, spiritual resistance, and the moral struggle between truth and falsehood.
The emphasis upon Azadari by the A'immah Maʿsūmīn (ʿalayhim al-salām) was never simply a sentimental insistence on mourning. Rather, it was a deliberate, theologically rooted call to uphold divine values — in love, remembrance, defiance, and hope.

THE QUR'ANIC IMPERATIVE: LOVE FOR THE PROPHET'S FAMILY
The Qurʾān declares in Sūrah al-Shūrā (42:23):

"Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it
except love for my near relatives."

According to several sound traditions, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ clarified that "my near ones" here refers explicitly to ʿAlī, Fāṭimah, and their progeny — a divine declaration establishing the love of the Ahl al-Bayt as the very price of Prophethood.

Sayyid ʿAlī Hamadānī (raḥimahullāh) in Mawaddat al-Qurbā offers a moving commentary:
"The Messenger of God ﷺ said: O people! Love God for the blessings He bestows upon you. Love me for the sake of God, and love my family for my sake. When asked about this love, he said:
It is the only recompense I seek for my mission. This love is the means to reach salvation and proximity to God."

Such divine love is not passive. It demands alignment — that we rejoice in their joy and grieve in their grief. The heart which truly loves must, as a natural response, be shaken by their sorrow. The very act of remembering Karbala with sincerity, with heartfelt tears, purifies the heart and illuminates the soul. In this grief, we find gates to Paradise opening through the remembrance of the martyrs of truth.

THE TEARS THAT CLEANSE AND AWAKEN

True grief — the kind that wells from the soul rather than performance — has a sanctifying power. As countless mystics and philosophers have written, the tears shed in love and pain are not weakness, but a return to the Beloved. We know laughter as an individual act — private and fleeting — but weeping is communal, metaphysical, and transcendent. It dissolves the self and brings one into union with the sorrowed One.

When a believer weeps for the loss of Imam Ḥusain, their heart, even if momentarily, becomes united with the truth he stood for. In those moments, there is no distance — only the nearness of love. The memory of Karbala thus becomes not merely a historical event, but a living spiritual reality that informs the moral compass of humanity.

AZADARI AS A SOURCE OF MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The mourning assemblies, elegies, processions, and recitations have long served not only as cultural expressions but as vital acts of ethical resistance. They have taught generations to distinguish between Ḥaqq and Bāṭil, between the oppressed and the oppressor.
The name of Yazīd — once a temporal ruler — has become synonymous with cruelty and treachery, while Ḥusain has become the eternal face of defiance and divine integrity.

By remembering Karbala, communities are trained to never accept tyranny, to never forget those who sacrifice for justice. As history records, the revolutions and movements that sought to challenge falsehood throughout the centuries — from early uprisings to modern struggles — were invariably inspired by the cry of “Ya Ḥusain!”

AZADARI AS SHAʿĀʾIRULLĀH — THE SACRED SYMBOLS OF GOD

The Qurʾān tells us:

"And whoever honours the symbols of God —
indeed, it is from the piety of hearts." (Sūrah al-Ḥajj 22:32)

Azadari, by preserving the memory of the martyrs of Karbala, is a sacred symbol of resistance, truth, and the preservation of dīn. When we gather to commemorate, we are not simply expressing sorrow — we are transmitting the moral framework of Islam to future generations.
Imam Ḥusain is not a "redeemer" in the sense that others may substitute for your sins. Rather, he is a redeemer in that he revealed the path to salvation. He demonstrated how an individual — armed with sincerity, trust in God, and refusal to compromise — could safeguard divine values even against the mightiest empires.

Had there been no Karbala, the true form of dīn might have been distorted beyond recognition. Kings and tyrants could have passed off their politics as divine commandments. But Ḥusain drew a line in blood — and that line remains today, unmoved.

AZADARI AS PRESERVATION OF IDENTITY

Azadari has also served as a cultural safeguard. As noted by scholars — including in academic journals such as The History of Religions (University of Chicago) — the collective remembrance of Karbala has empowered minority Muslim communities to retain identity amidst dominant cultures. The weeping for Imam Ḥusain became more than ritual — it became a declaration of belief, a badge of truth, and a communal anchor.
The famed historian Edward Gibbon wrote in The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire:

"It is a unique blessing of the Almighty to have created a man like Ḥusain... centuries may pass, but the sorrow of Karbala will continue to melt even the hardest of hearts."

Similarly, Edward G. Browne, in A Literary History of Persia, affirms: "Who is the man with a soul who can read the tragedy of Karbala and remain untouched? The mourning of Muharram, even in its theatrical form, evokes genuine and heartfelt emotions."

THE CONSENSUS OF SCHOLARS

Across centuries, scholars of both Sunni and Shīʿī traditions have upheld the significance of Azadari:

- Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (via Musnad): "He who sheds a single tear for Ḥusain shall be rewarded with Paradise."
- Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Dehlvī (Fatāwā ʿAzīziyyah): "If it were impermissible, why would tears of grief fall from the eyes of righteous men?"
- Imām al-Shāfiʿī: "If loving the Family of Muḥammad is called Rāfiḍī, then let all of creation bear witness: I am a Rāfiḍī."
- Mawlānā Abdul Waḥīd Farangī Maḥall: "Azadari is among the sacred signs of Islam. Its propagation is reward upon reward."

Even among the Sufis, the greats like Khwāja Ḥasan Niẓāmī openly affirmed that the azadari processions and majālis must be preserved and protected, not suppressed.

AZADARI TODAY: A LIVING TRADITION

In today's world, azadari manifests in countless forms — from intimate gatherings in homes to vast processions in cities. The taziahs, tabūt, ʿalams, and recitations are not merely traditional elements; they are active rejections of tyranny and continual affirmations of the divine path.

Majālis today continue to serve the same purpose they did centuries ago: the remembrance of God, the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ, and the moral lessons from the sacrifice of Ḥusain. Through these gatherings, believers find not only grief but spiritual training, moral clarity, and renewed purpose.

Each majlis begins with ḥamd and ṣalawāt, followed by discourses rooted in the Qurʾān and ḥadīth. They end with noḥahs, marsiyas, matam, and sometimes, tabarruk. But beneath every tear, every chant, and every heartbeat, lies a powerful cry that continues to echo across history: Ḥusain is the banner of truth, and azadari is its living standard.

THE MYSTICAL VOICE OF AZADARI:
ḤAḌRAT JĀNAM AND THE METAPHYSICS OF LAMENT

To understand Azadari in its most profound essence is to enter not only the domain of devotion and resistance but also that of mysticism and metaphysical reflection. In this realm, the contributions of Ḥaḍrat Jānam stand as a unique fusion of poetry, theology, and Sufi cosmology.
His marsiya is not merely an elegiac composition that mourns the tragedy of Karbala'—it is a sacred map through which the seeker may traverse the outer contours of grief and penetrate into the inner realities of ma'rifah (gnosis). What makes his voice singular in the history of Azadari is that it emerges not from the periphery of emotional mourning but from the heart of spiritual realization, shaped by the doctrine of waḥdat al-wujūd (Unity of Being) and the illuminative traditions of the Chishtī-Suhrawardī spiritual path.

Ḥaḍrat Jānam's spiritual genealogy reaches back to the venerable Khwāja Bandah Nawāz Gisu Darāz (raḥimahu'Llāh), one of the most prominent disseminators of Sufism in the Deccan. Through this lineage, Jānam inherited not just a chain of silsilah, but a vision—an ontological worldview in which every event, including the pain of martyrdom, is rooted in the Divine unfolding. His relationship with Karbala' was therefore not simply historical or emotional—it was metaphysical, contemplative, and deeply symbolic. He did not view the martyrdom of Ḥusayn (ʿalayhis-salām) as a discrete episode of injustice; rather, he interpreted it as a divine theophany, a moment in which al-ḥaqq (the Real) unveiled itself in the field of sacrifice.

Living in the spiritually vibrant milieu of Bijapur—where Sufi shrines, madrasas, and literary circles thrived—Ḥaḍrat Jānam composed his marsiya in a language charged with esoteric significance. His poetic vocabulary included terms like nāsūt (the human realm), malakūt (the angelic realm), and jabarūt (the realm of Divine Majesty), all of which are integral to Islamic metaphysics. These were not decorative embellishments, but precise spiritual markers, locating the events of Karbala' not merely on the plane of earthly oppression but across the cosmic domains of Being.

The thirst of the martyrs, for instance, was not merely for water—it became, in Jānam's vision, a symbol of ḥaqīqat, a yearning for the Eternal Beloved. The swords of Yazīd's army were not only instruments of death; they were veils against the Divine Light that Husayn (ʿalayhis-salām) bore within him.

What distinguishes Jānam's marsiya is precisely this synthesis of grief and gnosis. His lamentation is a form of mystical unveiling (kashf)—through which the weeping heart is guided not towards despair, but towards divine intimacy. Grief, in his verse, is not an end but a gateway: a door to tawḥīd, a mirror in which the mourner begins to see the Face of the Beloved in the blood of the martyr. Thus, the marsiya becomes not only a narrative of suffering but a sacred practice, a mystical dhikr performed through poetry. The act of reciting or listening to such marsiya is akin to performing spiritual remembrance (dhikr) with tears—where every syllable becomes an invocation, and every sigh, a step toward proximity with the Divine.

Unlike the ornate rhetorical flourishes of later marsiya poets, Ḥaḍrat Jānam's verses remain austere yet inwardly radiant. The seeming simplicity of his poetic structure veils a profound spiritual architecture. His marsiya is less an embellishment of pathos and more a cartography of esoteric truth. One finds in his work the subtle interplay of the outward (ẓāhir) and the inward (bāṭin), where the battlefield of Karbala' becomes both a temporal site of martyrdom and an eternal ʻālam of archetypes. Zaynab is not only the sister of Husayn but the embodiment of ṣabr, the metaphysical principle of steadfastness. Abbas is not merely a brother or a standard-bearer, but a symbol of the ʻabd, the perfect servant who sacrifices the self for the sake of Divine will.

Jānam's vision elevates Azadari itself. In his cosmos, Azadari is not just a ritual of remembrance—it is an act of mystical witnessing (*shuhūd*). It is to stand, not merely as a mourner, but as a lover and knower, in the presence of the Tajallī, the divine manifestation, that was Karbala'.

His poetic lament transforms the tragedy into a mirror of Divine Majesty (jalāl) and Beauty (jamāl). Every drop of blood spilled becomes a letter in the celestial script of Divine Mercy, and every tear shed by the believer becomes a response to that Divine call.

It is this inward gaze, this mystical approach to lament,
that allows Ḥaḍrat Jānam to transcend the genre of marsiya as it was known and offer something entirely original—a marsiya that is simultaneously elegy, metaphysics, and mystical treatise. In this sense, his contribution is not only to literature but to the spiritual philosophy of Azadari itself. Through him, we are reminded that Azadari is not only a matter of the tongue and chest—it is a matter of the soul, of ontological allegiance to Ḥusayn (ʿalayhis-salām), and through him, to the One.

In the vast garden of Islamic devotion, where many have wept for Ḥusayn, Ḥaḍrat Jānam's tear is the tear of the ʻārif, the gnostic—whose mourning is not devoid of meaning, but saturated with insight. It is a tear that does not drown the self in sorrow, but purifies it for arrival at the Divine.
His marsiya, therefore, is not a composition to be read and forgotten,
but a text to be entered, a journey to be taken, and a truth to be lived.

Conclusion:

A FINAL REFLECTION ON AZADĀRĪ, MYSTICAL MEMORY, AND THE LITERARY LEGACY OF ḤAḌRAT JĀNAM

From the inception of this work, we undertook not merely a literary or historical exploration, but a spiritual excavation into the hidden contours of devotion, remembrance, and metaphysical grief as they converge in the form of the earliest Urdu marsiya attributed to His Holiness Ḥaḍrat Sayyid Shāh Burhān al-Dīn Jānam Quddisa Sirruhu.
This book was never intended to be just an archival project or an attempt to reclaim a forgotten poet from the margins of Deccani literature; it was, rather, a pilgrimage — an azā itself — conducted through language, memory, and reflection.

At the heart of this journey lay Azadārī, the act of sacred mourning. In our opening chapter, The Significance of Azadārī, we sought to address what it means to grieve Imam al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī (ʿalayhi al-salām).
We contended that azādārī is not confined to the ritual expressions often narrowly associated with sectarian identity. Rather, it is a universal spiritual practice, a response of the soul to the eternal cry of truth (ḥaqq) that echoes from the plain of Karbalā. This mourning — in all its expressions, be it matam, marsiya, or silent tears — is a covenant with Divine justice, an affirmation of resistance against falsehood, and a continuation of the Prophetic path of compassion and sacrifice.

It was necessary to explore these meanings with care and nuance, especially given the misconceptions that surround marsiya in contemporary times. This led us to the second major chapter, Addressing the Objections: Responses to Misconceptions, in which we responded systematically — and perhaps spiritually — to some of the most common objections levied against the practice of marsiya writing and azādārī at large. These included the faulty belief that marsiya belongs solely to one sect, or that terms like “matam,” “wāwaila,” and references to Zuljanā or the Shāhid's horse are innovations without basis

Through references to historical Sufis, such as Hazrat Shāh Rājū Qattāl and others, we demonstrated that not only do these expressions have deep roots in Sunni-Sufi devotion, but they also reflect the richness of Islamic spiritual aesthetics that never divorced emotion from metaphysics, nor poetry from truth.

But the cornerstone of this book has been The First Urdu Marsiya: A Historical and Literary Study, a chapter in which we offered both a critical analysis and a humble tribute to the pioneering literary act of Hazrat Janām Quddisa Sirruhu. In tracing the historical evolution of Urdu marsiya, we navigated the contested claims of authorship — between Hazrat Shāh Ashraf Biyābānī, Qulī Qutb Shāh, and Janām — and, through careful scrutiny of linguistic, chronological, and theological evidence, we upheld the view that Jānam is the earliest and most authentic marsiya writer in Urdu. His marsiya is not a mere eulogy; it is a mystical unveiling (kashf) of grief as a metaphysical principle. By weaving together concepts such as waḥdat al-wujūd, ʿālam al-malakūt, and the light of Wilāyah into his poetic lament, Hazrat Janām did not merely tell the story of Karbalā — he interpreted it, theosophically and spiritually, for generations to come.

The marsiya itself — presented in full along with transliteration and translation — revealed Jānam's unique synthesis of Sufi cosmology and devotional lament. His verses described not only historical sorrow but a primordial wound that began even before time — a divine grief embedded in the architecture of the cosmos. Through symbolic language, he described the emergence of grief from Ahadiyyah, the descent of sorrow into the realm of Nāsūt, and the birth of an "ʿĀrif-e-Gham" — a knower of grief. This, we contended, is the identity of the true azādār: not one who merely mourns a past event but one who understands and lives the divine meaning of that event.

In engaging with this sacred text, we also attempted to address the deeper implications of Azadārī itself. It is not a static practice but an ever-evolving spiritual response. It transcends the binaries of Sunni and Shia, orthodox and Sufi, ritual and philosophy.

Karbalā was not the tragedy of a sect — it was the triumph of ethical monotheism against tyranny. Every verse of Janām's marsiya reiterates this truth. That the martyrdom of Imām al-Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi al-salām) is not bound by history but reverberates in every age — and in every heart that dares to bear the grief of Ḥaqq.

This book, therefore, is not an attempt to universalize grief in a shallow or rhetorical sense. Rather, it is an invitation to see how the Sufis of the Deccan, men like Janām, whose hearts were immersed in the divine ocean of maʿrifah, saw grief not as a limitation but as a door to intimacy with Allāh. They mourned not merely with tears but with vision, not merely with voice but with insight. Their poetry teaches us that true Azadārī is not reactive; it is reflective, transformative, and ultimately — a path to Divine Presence.

In this journey, we also engaged with the thoughts of scholars such as Professor Richard M. Eaton, whose historical framing helped us contextualise Jānam's life within the socio-spiritual tapestry of Bijapur. We invoked the memory of Khwāja Bandah Nawāz Gīsū Darāz, whose spiritual lineage Jānam inherited, and whose presence looms large in the landscape of Deccani Sufism. By acknowledging this lineage, we anchored our study in both intellectual integrity and spiritual continuity, reminding readers that marsiya is not merely literature; it is silsila — a chain of love and remembrance that stretches from Karbalā to our hearts.

So what, then, have we achieved?
We have re-examined the role of marsiya as a tool of Sufi pedagogy and divine remembrance. We have reclaimed Hazrat Janām's literary and spiritual legacy. We have answered objections with historical depth and spiritual clarity. We have offered the first complete presentation of his marsiya with translation for modern readers. And most importantly, we have affirmed that the language of grief, when illuminated by the torch of maʿrifah, becomes a language of truth, of resistance, and of Divine Love.

This book was not written merely to revive a neglected literary figure, nor to settle a scholarly debate about authorship.

It was written because in every age, the cry of “Yā Ḥusayn” continues to reverberate — and in every age, someone must listen, understand, and respond. Hazrat Janām heard that call in his time, and this book is our attempt to honor his response with sincerity, reverence, and love.

Let this be not the end of our journey, but the beginning of a deeper understanding — that Azadārī is not bound by rituals alone but lives in every truthful word, every awakened heart, and every sincere tear that falls in remembrance of Karbalā.

Let us all, in our own way, be ‘Ārifān-e-Gham’ — knowers of grief — and thus, lovers of truth.
Labbaik Yā Ḥusayn.

The Azādār: A Witness and a Wayfarer
The path of azādārī, as we have traced in this work, is not merely a response to historical tragedy — it is a living practice of wilāyah, a continuous expression of allegiance to truth in all its divine manifestations. In every age, Allāh Taʿālā has raised a group of ahl-e-ḥaqq — lovers, seekers, fuqara and awliyā — who stood firm against the oppression of their time. The pain of Karbalā is the blueprint for their courage, their silence is shaped by its cries, and their presence is animated by its absence.

It is not by accident that Sufis and poets of the Deccan chose to express their innermost states (aḥwāl) through the vocabulary of ḥusaynī grief. They saw in Karbalā the miʿrāj of the oppressed, the maqām of tawḥīd and the mirror of the nafs and ruh in eternal battle. Ḥaḍrat Jānam, in composing his marsiya, did not merely mourn — he bore shahādat in his breath, wilāyah in his ink, and ḥaqq in his sigh. His tears became words, and those words became silsila.
We must now ask ourselves: What does it mean to be an azādār today?

It is to resist injustice — whether outward or within.
It is to love the Ahl al-Bayt not as an identity, but as a light.
It is to remember Ḥusayn not only with words
but with action, adab, and truth.
It is to live in such a way that the words of "Hal min nāṣirin yansurunā?" echo not just in our majālis, but in the silence of our souls — and we answer, "Labbaik, yā Ḥusayn!" with our life.

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Azādārī, then, is not a sectarian flag — it is a ʿālam, a universe of sacred emotion. It is a majlis that begins in the heart and ends in Divine nearness. It is the science of remembrance (ʿilm al-dhikr), the poetry of pain (shiʿr al-ḥuzn), and the practice of presence (ḥuḍūr). And it is through figures like Hazrat Jānām that this path was mapped not with ink alone, but with soul.

Let us also recognize that this book itself is a form of khidmat-e-azādārī. Every page was written in remembrance. Every paragraph bears witness. Every reference is a nisbat. Our intention was never academic acclaim — it was nisbatan ilā al-Ḥusayn, a gesture of faqr, faqr-i-ḥusaynī, and a longing to be among those whose hearts have been awakened by Karbalā's call.

FINAL SUPPLICATION

We end with no conclusion, for how can Karbalā ever end?
We end with no closure, for Ḥusayn's dard is infinite.
We end with no pride — only with a trembling hand and a silent heart.

Yā Allāh, make this humble effort accepted in the court of the Imām al-Shuhadāʾ.
Yā Rasūlallāh ﷺ, count us among those who shed sincere tears for your blessed grandson.
Yā ʿAlī, grant us the strength to walk your path with adab and courage.
Yā Fāṭimah al-Zahrāʾ, be our intercessor in grief and our light in the darkness.
Yā Sayyid al-Ṣābirīn, Yā Abā ʿAbdillāh al-Ḥusayn, accept this book as a humble candle in your eternal shrine.

May this work be a witness on Yawm al-Qiyāmah, that in an age of forgetfulness, there were still lovers of remembrance.

Wa mā tawfīqī illā biLlāh.
Wa ḥasbunā Allāh wa niʿma al-wakīl.
Wa ṣallā Llāhu ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ʿalā Ālihī al-Aṭhār.

Labbaik, yā Ḥusayn.
Labbaik, yā Shāhīd.
Labbaik, yā Maẓlūm.

دیک چاندَر عاشور کا، عالم پہ غم پیدا ہوا
تب تے شفق کا گھن اُوپر، خونی علم پیدا ہوا

Dēk chāndar ʿĀshūr kā, ʿālam pe gham paidā huā
Tab tē, shafaq kā ghan ūpar, ḳhūnī ʿalam paidā huā

When the moon of ʿĀshūr rose, it didn't shine — it mourned.
Over the crimson horizon, the banner of sacred blood unfurled,
trembling across the world.

ہوا اس دُک کی سب سُن کر خبر، روتے ملائک گھن اُوپر
ناتاب لیا، اس دُک ستے، چندَر میں خم پیدا ہوا

Hawā us dukh kī sab sun kar ḳhabar, rotē malā'ik ghan ūpar
Nātaab liyā, us dukh satē, chāndar meñ ḳham paidā huā

As the wind carried the grief of Karbala through the heavens,
even the angels behind veils broke down in tears.
So heavy was the sorrow, the very moon bowed —
no longer radiant, only broken.

لالہ کا دل کر جوشِ خوں، بلبل سدا نعرا کرے
نرگس کے دیدیاں میں دیکھو، شبنم کا ضم پیدا ہوا

Lālah kā dil kar josh-e-ḳhūñ, bulbul sadā naʿrā kare
Nargis ke dīdiyāñ meñ dēkhō, shabnam kā ẓam paidā huā

The tulip's heart surged with blood,
and the nightingale screamed its protest.
Look into the narcissus's eyes — dew has gathered there,
like a silent, sacred weeping.

اور رَو حرم جو شاہ کا، اُس دھات سوں کہنے لگے
کس پر نہیں سو آج لگے، ہم پر یو غم پیدا ہوا

Aur rō ḥaram jō shāh kā, us dhāt soñ kahanē lagē
Kis par nahīñ sō āj lagē, ham par yō gham paidā huā

And when the Imām's beloved rose weeping from
that scorched earth, she cried:
"Tell me, who among us is untouched today?
This grief was born to consume my soul."

کیا ظلم کیتے کافراں، ناڈر کوں حق سوں، شہ اُوپر
جس واسطے آسماں زمیں، لوح و قلم، پیدا ہوا

Kiyā ẓulm kīte kāfirāñ, nāḍar koñ ḥaqq soñ, shah ūpar
Jis wāstē āsmāñ zamīn, lauḥ o qalam, paidā huā

What tyranny the deniers rained upon the Prince of Truth,
unafraid of divine justice—
He, for whose sake the heavens, the earth,
the Preserved Tablet, and the Pen were created.

جِن و مَلک، اِنساں سَگَل، کہتے دیکھو اُس دھات سوں
حضرت نبی کی آل پر، یُو کیا سِتم پیدا ہُوا

Jinn o malak, insāñ sagal, kahtē dēkhō us dhāt soñ
Ḥaẓrat Nabī kī āl par, yō kiyā sitam paidā huā

From dust, every being—jinn, angels, mankind—wailed in one voice:
"What horror has befallen the Prophet's sacred family?"

غمگیں علی کوں دیکھ کر، سرور حسین کے غم سُنیں
آدم صفی ہور نُوح کوں، رونے کوں غم پیدا ہوا

Ghamgīn ʿAlī koñ dēkh kar, sarwar Ḥusayn ke gham sunē
Ādam Ṣafī hūr Nūḥ koñ, rōnē koñ gham paidā huā

Seeing ʿAlī consumed in sorrow,
and hearing the grief of Ḥusayn—
Even Ādam Ṣafīullāh and Nūḥ were moved to tears.
Grief echoed across the ages of Prophets.

یاراں، تُمیں اندیش کر، دیکھو، حسینا او اھے
قدرت سوں جِس کے واسطے، باغِ ارم پیدا ہوا

Yārāñ, tumheñ andēsh kar, dēkhō, Ḥusainā o āhē
Qudrat soñ jis ke wāstē, bāġh-e-Iram paidā huā

Friends, reflect and see — this is that radiant Ḥusayn,
For whom the Garden of Iram was fashioned by Divine decree.

شہ کا صفت کہنے ستے، دیکھو دُنیاں حُورین کا
جمِ جانمؔ سیانے اچھو، فضل و کرم پیدا ہوا

Shah kā ṣifat kahanē satē, dēkhō dunyāñ ḥūrīn kā
Jam-e-Jānam siyānē achō, faẓl o karam paidā huā

o praise the virtues of the King, look at the beauty of heaven's houris—
And then behold the cup of Jānam: it overflows with grace and mercy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peerzada Syed Jaffer Hussain Hamzavi
A thirteenth-generation descendant of Hazrat Syed Shah Kamaluddin Miyan Shah Hamza Zaidi Chishti, known to seekers as Hamza Pīr, he hails from a lineage steeped in knowledge, piety, and the spiritual sciences. Raised amidst the blessings of ḵẖāndānī sohbat, his formation was guided not only by traditional scholarship but also by the subtle transmissions of love, silence, and presence that shape a seeker of truth.

A young ʻālim, fāẓil, and Sufi research scholar, his work reflects a deep commitment to both inherited tradition and contemporary relevance. His earlier publication, Gesu Daraz: A Heartfelt Reverence by Great Philosophers Worldwide, brought to light the universal legacy of Hazrat Khwāja Banda Nawaz Ġẖesū Darāz (quddisa sirruhū)—exploring his teachings and spiritual rank through the lens of global admiration and intellectual heritage.

This present work is not merely an academic pursuit. It is a heartfelt nazr in the bārgāh of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿalayhi's-salām)—an offering of love and remembrance, crafted in the spirit of devotion and reverence. In curating and interpreting the marsiyas of Hazrat Burhānuddīn Jānam, he seeks to revive a sacred poetic tradition that speaks not only to grief, but to divine nearness, ethical beauty, and the enduring call of Karbala.

May Allāh accept this humble effort as khidmat,
and may He increase the author in ʻilm, ḥikmat, and maqām.

DARGAH HAMZA PIR

Dargah Taarik Ud Dunya Waasil e Deen
Qudwat Ul Salikeen Qutub Ul Aqtaab Iftikhar e Auliya
Hazrat Sayyid Shah Miyan Kamaal Uddin
Hamza Pir Zaidi al Wasiti Chishti
Nizami Bandanawaazi Dharsonvi
Rehmat Ullahi Alaih.
(D h a r s o n , N a r n a u l , H a r y a n a , I n d i a .)

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IN THE SHADOW OF SORROW

The First Urdu Marsiya Composed by
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