

# The Lamentation Poetry and its Significance in the Şadr al-İslām Period

**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze rithā' poetry, which holds a significant place in the literary production of the Şadr al-İslām (early Islamic) period. To this end, literary works of the period, especially poems, will be carefully scrutinized, while tracing the development process of rithā' poems, identifying the themes and topics covered, and exploring the prominent poets of the genre. Additionally, the historical and social context of the period, which played a pivotal role in the emergence and evolution of rithā' poems, will be taken into account. Therefore, sources that shed light on the political, social, and cultural structures of the period will also be examined. The study will also investigate different perspectives and interpretations of rithā' poems and conduct an extensive analysis of the literary understanding and values of the period. The outcomes of this study will demonstrate that rithā' poetry not only embodies a literary genre but also serves as a mirror reflecting the social, cultural, and aesthetic values of the Şadr al-İslām period. This research, characterized by its circumscribed purview, which solely emphasizes the examination of poetic compositions from the Şadrü'l-İslām era, sets itself apart from extant scholarly inquiries on the topic, thereby enriching the academic discourse.

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**Keywords:** Arabic Language and Literature, Classical Arabic Poetry, Rithā', Lamentation, Mourning.

## Şadrü'l-İslām Döneminde Mersiye Şiiri ve Önemi

**Öz:** Bu çalışma, Şadrü'l-İslām dönemi edebiyatında önemli bir yere sahip olan mersiye şiirlerinin analizini amaçlamaktadır. İlk olarak döneme ait edebî eserler, özellikle şiirler incelenecek ve mersiye şiirinin gelişim süreçleri, ele aldığı konular ve öne çıkan şairlere odaklanılacaktır. Bu bağlamda, dönemin tarihi ve sosyal yapısı, mersiye şiirlerinin ortaya çıkışı ve gelişiminde belirleyici bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu nedenle, dönemin siyasi, içtimai ve kültürel yapılarına ilişkin kaynaklar da incelenecektir. Çalışma kapsamında mersiye şiirleriyle ilgili farklı görüşler ve yorumlar da tetkik edilecek, dönemin konuyla ilgili edebî anlayışı ve değerleri hakkında bir analiz yapılacaktır. Bu analiz, mersiye şiirlerinin yalnızca bir edebî tür olmadığını, aynı zamanda dönemin sosyal, kültürel ve estetik değerlerini yansıtan bir araç olduğunu da gösterecektir. Yalnızca Şadrü'l-İslām dönemine ait şiişel kompozisyonların incelenmesine odaklanan ve sınırlandırılmış kapsamıyla temayüz eden bu araştırma, konuyla ilgili mevcut bilimsel çalışmalardan ayrılarak akademik söylemi zenginleştirmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Arap Dili ve Edebiyatı, Klasik Arap Şiiri, Mersiye, Ağıt, Yas.

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## Introduction

Love is an indispensable subject in literature that shapes human thoughts and emotions. The portrayal of this emotional connection between individuals, which is one of the most ancient concepts in human history, has been an enduring theme in literature. Emotional bonding plays a pivotal role in shaping human relationships, and literature is an essential medium for expressing such ties. Literary works that delve into subjects such as love, desire, loss, and longing can have a profound impact on readers, enhancing their ability to comprehend and communicate their emotional experiences more effectively. Birth and death are critical milestones that delineate the commencement and cessation of the human experience and represent transformative junctures in individuals' lives. In particular, death highlights the frailty and vulnerability of human existence, profoundly influencing human lives. The loss of a beloved individual can result in enduring pain and sorrow. However, the transformation of this pain into an aesthetic structure has resulted in the emergence of a literary genre, known as *rithā'* (lamentation). *Rithā'* poems, which are similar to panegyrics, are directed towards the deceased and are recited following their passing. The elegy holds a significant position in Arabic literature, serving as a vehicle for expressing grief and sorrow resulting from the loss of a beloved individual.<sup>1</sup>

The elegy has been a highly esteemed form of poetry and is considered an integral component of the traditional *qasīda*. Numerous monothematic elegiac *qasīdas* can be found in the realm of ancient Arabic poetry, which were employed by individuals to express their lamentation over the loss of a cherished individual or object. This poetic form has undergone an evolutionary progression, transitioning from a free verse in its nascent stages to structured verse patterns over time, ultimately culminating in its current form. The subject matter of elegiac poetry encompasses a universal theme that should not be ascribed to any specific community or group. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that elegiac poetry occupies a prominent position within Arabic literature and provides distinct examples of the form.<sup>2</sup>

The primary objective of this scholarly investigation is to conduct an analysis of *rithā'* poetry, a genre of great significance within the literary production of the *Şadr al-İslām* era. To achieve this aim, a thorough examination of literary works from the period, especially poems, will be carried out, with a focus on

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<sup>1</sup> Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan Ibn Raşīq al-Qayrawānī al-Azdī, *al-'Umda fī maḥāsini al-shi'r wa ādābih*. ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1401/1981), 1/123.

<sup>2</sup> Fadwā 'Abd al-Raḥīm Qāsim, *al-Rithā' fī al-Andalus 'Aşr Mulūk al-Ṭawā'if* (Nablus: al-Najah National University, Kulliyya al-Dirāsāt al-'Ulyā, Master's Thesis, 1423/2022), 2-3.

tracking the developmental trajectory of rithā' poetry. This will entail identifying the themes and topics addressed within the genre and exploring the prominent poets associated with it. Moreover, the study will take into account the historical and social context of the era, which played a pivotal role in the emergence and evolution of rithā' poetry. The research will draw upon sources that shed light on the political, social, and cultural structures of the time. The investigation will also seek to scrutinize various perspectives and interpretations of rithā' poetry, conducting an extensive analysis of the literary understanding and values of the period. Ultimately, the results of this study will reveal that rithā' poetry embodies not only a literary genre but also a reflection of the social, cultural, and aesthetic values of the Şadr al-Islām period.

Given the cultural importance and historical depth of rithā' poetry, it is surprising that there remains a significant gap in our understanding of its evolution and its role during the Şadr al-Islām period. This study aims to fill this gap, contributing to the broader field of Arabic literature and cultural studies. Our methodology will involve a close textual analysis of primary sources, supplemented by historical and socio-cultural context derived from secondary sources. A comparative analysis will be performed between male and female poets to shed light on any potential gender-based distinctions within the genre. The importance of this research lies not only in its potential to enrich our understanding of a significant genre within Arabic literature, but also in its broader implications for understanding the cultural and social dynamics of the Şadr al-Islām period. As we uncover the nuances of rithā' poetry, we also uncover the complexities of the human experience during that time. In doing so, we hope to foster a deeper appreciation for Arabic literature and its historical contexts, both within academia and beyond. Given the universality of themes such as grief and loss, the findings of this research may resonate with readers across cultures and time periods, underscoring the enduring relevance and power of poetry.

### **1. The Rithā' in (Early Islamic) Şadr al-Islām Period**

Arabic elegies are a poetic form that serves as a medium for expressing grief, pain, and sorrow following the death of an individual. These poems typically aim to highlight the positive qualities of the deceased, express the poet's emotional attachment to the individual, and provide a means of solace. While the format of elegies may vary across cultures, the underlying themes and content remain largely consistent. Hagiographical sources suggest that the origins of elegiac poetry can be traced back to the rithā' style, which is said to have been utilized by the first humans. For instance, it is reported that the

Prophet Adam sang a few couplets in elegiac style after the death of his son Abel, who was killed by Cain.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, upon the death of his son, the Prophet Muhammad delivered a discourse in a style akin to rithā', offering words of comfort to the people. Elegiac poetry also features prominently in Islamic tradition, with both 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40/661) and Fāṭima bt. Muḥammad (d. 11/632) recited elegies at the Prophet's grave upon his passing.<sup>4</sup>

To gain a deeper comprehension of the elegies produced during the Ṣadr al-Islām period, it is pertinent to compare these literary works with their pre-Islamic antecedents. During the *Jāhiliyya* (pre-Islamic) period, the Arabs employed poetry as a means of expressing their emotions. After the advent of Islam, the adherence to this poetic tradition persisted, but poetry that contravened Islamic teachings became unacceptable. The primary reason for this was that poets now preferred to compose poetry in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Poetry, which had a significant role in Arab society, entered a new phase with the onset of the Islamic era. While old themes continued to be practiced, a new literary style was developed by incorporating new topics specific to Islam. The emergence and proliferation of Islam resulted in significant transformations in the lives of the Arabs. This new religion completely overturned the prior *Jāhili* (pre-Islamic) way of life, teaching the Arabs new principles and enabling them to live in a manner they had not before. Islam united the Arabs in their belief in God, led them to renounce tribalism, and instilled in them an awareness of the *ummah* (Islamic community) as a whole, thereby teaching them that superiority is not conferred based on one's tribe. Islam brought about profound changes in the intellectual, political, social, and economic spheres of Arab life. Although the Arabs had a rich history, the changes they experienced with the advent of Islam were greater than those at any other time in history.<sup>5</sup>

The genre of elegy, which held a significant place in the pre-Islamic Arabic poetic tradition, retained its importance even after the advent of Islam. Elegiac poets, both before and after Islam, expressed their grief by highlighting the noble qualities and positive characteristics of the deceased. In this context, they conveyed a sense of human helplessness in the face of death, while also honoring the deceased's generosity, nobility, courage, and

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<sup>3</sup> Seyfullah Korkmaz, "Tokatlı Şâir Rızâî İshâk b. Hasan'ın Bir Mersiyesi", *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 12 (2002), 188-189.

<sup>4</sup> Korkmaz, "Tokatlı Şâir Rızâî İshâk b. Hasan'ın Bir Mersiyesi", 188-189; 'Umar Riḍā Kaḥḥāla, *A'lām al-nisā' fi 'ālamay al-'Arab wa al-Islām* (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Risāla, n.d.), 4/113; 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, *Dīwān al-Imām 'Alī*, ed. Na'īm Zarzūr (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyye, n.d.), 97-98.

<sup>5</sup> Jurjī Zaydān, *Ta'rīkh ādāb al-lughā al-'Arabiyya* (Windsor: Hindāwī, 2013), 223-224.

benevolence. At the same time, their expression of sorrow, mourning, and weeping reflected their deep love for the deceased. Through the elegiac form, the poet sought to impart wisdom and understanding about the nature of life, in a simple yet profound way. Some elegies focused on the lives of leaders, leaving a powerful impression on the hearts and minds of readers. Given the frequency of wars during the Islamic period, various forms of elegy were common. This allowed poets ample opportunity to express their emotional pain in heartfelt words that resonated with their audience.<sup>6</sup>

There exist discernible divergences between pre-Islamic and Islamic-era rithā' poems. Notably, disparities in meaning and content arose in rithā' poems authored by polytheist and Muslim poets. In light of the Prophet's endeavors to establish Islamic principles and to secure societal harmony, Muslim poets broached Islamic subjects in their rithā' poems, and integrated the new understandings and principles brought by Islam in their poems. By highlighting the deceased's contributions to Islam and their role in conquests, Muslim poets conferred an Islamic identity upon rithā' poems. Conversely, the mourning poems of polytheist poets persisted in rithā' elements of the Jāhiliyya period. In these poems, polytheist poets adhered to fundamental themes of mourning poetry prevalent in the Jāhiliyya period, such as lamenting the deceased with tears, profound sorrow for their loss, and extolling their virtues in the world.<sup>7</sup>

After the emergence of Islam, the Prophet banned the majority of the customary mourning practices during the Jāhiliyya era. These included loud wailing, and garment rending upon the occasion of a person's death. In contrast, the Prophet encouraged his Companions to express their grief and lament over the deceased. For example, after the Battle of Uhud, Muslims began to weep over the martyrs, and every family was preoccupied with mourning and lamenting for their loved ones. However, the Prophet observed that no one was weeping for his uncle Ḥamza and was deeply saddened by this. As a result, the Prophet shed tears and some of the leading Muslims gathered women to weep and lament for Ḥamza. The women of *Anşār* (a term meaning "helpers", used to refer to the Medinan citizens who welcomed the Prophet Muḥammad and his followers to their city and supported them) wept for Ḥamza until midnight. The Prophet prayed for these mourners and informed them that they could now return to their homes.<sup>8</sup> Following this

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<sup>6</sup> 'Adhrā 'Awda Ḥusayn, "al-Rithā' fi al-shi'r al-Jāhili wa al-Islāmi", *Majalla al-Ustādh* 208 (1435/2014), 143.

<sup>7</sup> Kenan Demirayak, *Arap Edebiyatı Tarihi - II: Sadru'l-İslam Dönemi* (Erzurum: Fenomen Yayınları, 2013), 110-111.

<sup>8</sup> Mehmet Yılmaz, "Hz. Fâtıma'nın Allah Resûlü'ne Mersiye Şiirleri", *Dergiabant* 8/2 (2020), 715.

incident, it became customary among the people of Medina to lament Ḥamza. This situation highlights the significant shift in mourning practices with the emergence of Islam. The Prophet prohibited certain mourning customs that were prevalent during the *Jāhiliyya* era, which involved excessive and often violent displays of grief. In contrast, the Prophet encouraged the expression of grief through weeping and lamenting over the deceased.<sup>9</sup> The example of mourning for Ḥamza further emphasizes the importance of expressing grief and honoring the dead in Islamic culture. This narrative sheds light on the social and cultural practices of the early Islamic community and offers insight into the changes that occurred with the advent of Islam.

The elegiac literature dedicated to cities constitutes a noteworthy theme in Arabic literature. The advent of Islam brought about certain transformations in the cultural practice of composing city elegies. In the poetry of the pre-Islamic *Jāhiliyya* era, city elegies predominantly focused on palaces, castles, or the decline of sovereignties, rather than on the cities themselves. This observation supports the claim that the genre of city elegies emerged as an independent poetic subject during the Abbasid period (750-1258). During the Ṣadr al-Islām period, however, there are no recorded elegies dedicated to cities or states in its early stages. This is attributed to the fact that this period coincided with the pinnacle of Islamic power. During the reign of the Prophet and the first four guided caliphs, Islam spread over vast territories and, despite changes in the administration of cities, there were no disastrous events, such as destruction and devastation, to be lamented in the elegies. While internal conflicts, particularly during 'Alī's reign, caused instability, the spread of Islam through conquests improved the physical conditions of cities. As a result, despite unfavorable political circumstances, the necessary conditions for the composition of city elegies had not yet emerged.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Elegies Composed by Male Poets in the Ṣadr al-Islām Period

The elegiac genre in Arabic literature is often associated with female productivity, evincing a certain inspiration that is occasionally compared to Jewish culture. The theme of *rithā'*, one of the prominent subjects in Arabic literature, appears in the poetry of the Old Testament as well. In both cultures, these poems express grief over the death of a beloved relative or a heroic figure who has been slain in battle. However, it has been suggested

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<sup>9</sup> Yılmaz, "Hz. Fâtıma'nın Allah Resûlü'ne Mersiye Şiirleri", 715; Sayyid b. Ḥusayn al-'Affānī, *Fursān al-nahār min al-ṣaḥābah al-akhyār* (Jiddah: Dār Mājjid 'Asīrī, n.d.), 2/515-516

<sup>10</sup> Yakup Göçemen, "Cāhiliyeden Endülüs'ün Yıkılışına Kadar Arap Edebiyatında Şehir Mersiyeleri", *Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 7/1 (June 2020), 287.

that the elegiac genre in Hebrew differs from its Arabic counterpart in one crucial aspect. Notably, the most famous example of mourning in the Old Testament features a male mourner, whereas, in Arabic mourning ceremonies, elegies are typically composed by women.<sup>11</sup> While it is true that ancient Arab women were involved in the art of mourning, it is also worth noting that during the Şadr al-Islâm period, the most famous poets who practiced the art of mourning were men.

The preponderance of elegiac compositions by male poets during the Şadr al-Islâm period is likely attributable to the large number of wars that took place during this era and their consequent influence on the literary form of elegy. The loss of life that occurred on the battlefield was frequently mourned through elegies, and this culture of war continued to shape the elegiac tradition throughout the Şadr al-Islâm period. In fact, the practice of taking oaths to avenge the deaths of warriors and to intimidate adversaries was a common feature of elegies composed during the Jâhiliyya period and persisted among Muslim poets such as Ka'b b. Mâlik (d. 50/670) and Ḥassân b. Thâbit (d. 60/680 [?]) during the Şadr al-Islâm period. The same tradition is observed in the poetry of other poets such as Umayya b. Abî al-Şalt (d. 8/630 [?]), Ḍirâr b. Khattâb (d. 12/633 [?]), and 'Abdullah b. al-Ziba'râ (d. 15/636 [?]), who aligned with the polytheist forces for a certain period.<sup>12</sup>

It is widely recognized that the compositional structures that emerged in pre-Islamic rithâ' poems persisted in subsequent centuries of Arabic literature.<sup>13</sup> The Şadr al-Islâm period, which immediately followed the end of the Jâhiliyya period, was particularly close to these traditions in this regard. However, it is erroneous to assume that the rithâ' poems composed during the Şadr al-Islâm period were mere repetitions of pre-Islamic lament traditions. Islam explicitly forbade the beliefs and customs of the Jâhiliyya period and replaced them with a new belief system and way of thinking that ultimately affected the society's way of life and literary productions. As early as the advent of Islam, elegies began to incorporate concepts introduced by Islam, such as Allah, the hereafter, martyrdom, and  *jihad*  (a term often translated as "struggle" or "striving", which in the Islamic context can refer to a range of efforts from personal spiritual struggle to armed struggle for the sake of God). For instance, Khubayb b. 'Adî (d. 4/625), who was captured, taken to Mecca, and subsequently tortured by the Meccan polytheists during the expedition of al-

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<sup>11</sup> Ilse Lichtenstadter, "Geschichte in dichterischem Gewand in der alten arabischen Literatur", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 133/1 (1983), 33.

<sup>12</sup> M. Faruk Toprak, "Mersiye", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2004), 29/221.

<sup>13</sup> Shawqî Dayf, *al-Rithâ'* (Cairo: Dâr al-Ma'ârif, n.d.), 9.

Rajī' between the Muslims and the Meccans, incorporated these new Islamic concepts in the elegy he sang for himself before his death. This has been cited by contemporary scholars as evidence that the elegies of this period were influenced by the tenets of Islam.<sup>14</sup> Khubayb b. 'Adī's poem in question is as follows:

1. "لَقَدْ جَمَعَ الْأَحْزَابُ حَوْلِي وَالْبُؤَى قَبَائِلَهُمْ وَاسْتَجْمَعُوا كُلَّ مَجْمَعٍ
2. وَكُلَّهُمْ مُبَدِي الْعَدَاوَةِ جَاهِدٌ عَلَيَّ لِأَنِّي فِي وَثَاقٍ بِمَصِيعٍ
3. وَقَدْ جَمَعُوا أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنِسَاءَهُمْ وَقُرْبَتٌ مِنْ جِدْعٍ طَوِيلٍ مُنْعٍ
4. إِلَى اللَّهِ أَشْكُو عُزْبَتِي ثُمَّ كُرْبَتِي وَمَا أُرْصَدَ الْأَحْزَابُ لِي عِنْدَ مَصْرَعِي
5. فَذَا الْعَرْشِ، صَبْرِي عَلَى مَا يُرَادُ بِي فَقَدْ بَضَعُوا لِحْمِي وَقَدْ يَاسَ مَطْمَعِي
6. وَذَلِكَ فِي ذَاتِ الْإِلَهِ وَإِنْ يَشَاءُ يُبَارِكُ عَلَيَّ أَوْصَالَ شِلْوٍ مُمَزَّعٍ
7. وَقَدْ خَيْرُونِي الْكُفْرَ وَالْمَوْتَ دُونَهُ وَقَدْ هَمَلْتَ عَيْنَايَ مِنْ غَيْرِ مَجْرَعٍ
8. وَمَا بِي حِذَارُ الْمَوْتِ، إِنِّي لَمَيْتٌ وَلَكِنْ حِذَارِي جَحْمُ نَارٍ مُلْفَعٍ
9. فَوَاللَّهِ مَا أَرْجُو إِذَا مِتُّ مُسْلِمًا عَلَيَّ أَيُّ جَنْبٍ كَانَ فِي اللَّهِ مَصْرَعِي
10. فَلَسْتُ بِمُبْدٍ لِلْعُدُوِّ تَحَشَّعًا وَلَا جَزَعًا إِنِّي إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرَجِي"

"1. The factions gathered around me, brought together their tribes and assembled all the groups.

2. They all showed hostility towards me and behaved in an aggressive manner, for I am tightly bound with chains.

<sup>14</sup> M. Faruk Toprak, *Endülüs Şiirinde Mersiye* (Ankara: Grafiker Yayınları, 2014), 40-41.



3. *They had brought their women and sons together, and I was brought close to a long, sturdy tree trunk.*
4. *I complain to God about my exile, my suffering, and the fate that the enemy groups have planned for me.*
5. *O Lord of the Throne, grant me patience to endure the evil they have planned for me. They have torn my flesh apart. My hopes were dashed.*
6. *This is the work of God. If He wishes, He will bless the severed limbs.*
7. *They gave me the choice between disbelief and death. My eyes were wet, but not because of fear.*
8. *I am not afraid of death. I am already dead. But I fear the vast fire of hell.*
9. *I swear by God. If I die as a Muslim, I will not care how my death came about in God's cause.*
10. *I will not bow down to the enemy or show any signs of fear. For my return is to God.*<sup>15</sup>

The poem above is a narration of the poet's experience of being surrounded and persecuted by hostile factions. The first verse sets the scene of the factions coming together, while the second describes their aggressive behavior towards the poet, who is bound in chains. In the third verse, the factions have brought their families to witness the poet's punishment, which is to be carried out near a sturdy tree trunk. The fourth verse sees the poet complaining to God about his exile, suffering, and the fate that his enemies have planned for him. This is followed by a prayer in the fifth verse for patience to endure the evil that has been planned for the poet. The poet acknowledges the physical harm that has been inflicted upon him and the disappointment of dashed hopes. In the sixth verse, the poet submits to the idea that his situation is the work of God, and if it is His will, He will bless the severed limbs. The seventh verse emphasizes that the factions have given the poet a choice between disbelief and death. The eighth verse reveals that the poet is not afraid of death, as he considers himself already dead, but he does fear the vast fire of hell. The ninth verse sees the poet swearing an oath by God that he will not care how he dies as long as he dies as a Muslim in God's cause. The final verse is a declaration of the poet's refusal to bow down to the enemy or show any signs of fear, as he believes his return is to God. Overall, the poem is a powerful expression of the poet's faith and determination in the face of persecution and adversity, and his unwavering

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<sup>15</sup> Ibn Hīshām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā - İbrāhīm al-Abyārī - 'Abd al-Ḥafīz al-Shalabī (Egypt: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1375/1955), 2/176-177.

commitment to God. It showcases the poet's deep spirituality and his willingness to endure suffering and even death for his beliefs.

The demise of Khubayb was a source of great sorrow for the Muslim community, leading several poets to express their grief through elegiac compositions. Among them was Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 60/680 [?]), an illustrious poet from the Ṣadr al-Islām era, lamented Khubayb's passing in a poignant poem:

1. مَا بَالُ عَيْنِكَ لَا تَرَقَا مَدَامِعُهَا سَحًا عَلَى الصَّدْرِ مِثْلَ اللُّوْزِ الْقَلِقِ

2. عَلَى خُبَيْبٍ فَتَى الْفَتِيَانِ قَدْ عَلِمُوا لَا فَاشِلٍ حِينَ تَلْقَاهُ وَلَا نَزِقِ

3. فَادْهَبْ خُبَيْبُ جَزَاكَ اللَّهُ طَيِّبَةً وَجَنَّةَ الْخُلْدِ عِنْدَ الْحُورِ فِي الرُّقُقِ

4. مَاذَا تَقُولُونَ إِنْ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ لَكُمْ حِينَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ الْأَبْرَارُ فِي الْأَقْفِ

5. فِيمَ قَتَلْتُمْ شَهِيدَ اللَّهِ فِي رَجُلٍ طَاغَ قَدِ اوعَثَ فِي الْبُلْدَانِ وَالرُّفُقِ

"1. What happened to your eyes? Tears flow incessantly from your eyes like moving pearls, without any remedy for your eye sockets.

2. (These eyes) weep for Khubayb. When facing him, you can see that he is not untalented or ill-tempered.

3. (Go ahead) Khubayb! May Allah reward you with good rewards and the companionship of houris in eternal paradise.

4. While there are sinless angels on the horizon, what will you answer when the Prophet asks you about this?

5. Why did you kill Allah's martyr for a tyrant and his companions who commit crimes all over the land?"<sup>16</sup>

The poem is structured in five verses, with each verse conveying a different emotion or message. In the first verse, the poet describes the tears that flow from his eyes upon hearing the news of Khubayb's death. The use of the metaphor "moving pearls" emphasizes the beauty of the tears and the sorrow they represent. However, the tears are also described as "without remedy,"

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2/177.

which suggests that there is no cure for the grief that the poet and the Muslim community feel over Khubayb's death. In the second verse, the poet suggests that he was a talented and virtuous individual. The use of the phrase "not untalented or ill-tempered" serves to emphasize Khubayb's positive qualities and to contrast them with the actions of his captors. In the third verse, the poet bids farewell to Khubayb and expresses his hope that Allah will reward him with good rewards and the companionship of houris in paradise. This verse serves as a reminder that the ultimate goal for Muslims is to attain paradise, and that death is not the end, but rather a transition to a better life. In the fourth verse, the poet turns his attention to Khubayb's killers and addresses them directly. He asks them how they will answer to the Prophet when he questions them about their actions, and implies that they will be held accountable for their deeds. The reference to "sinless angels" on the horizon serves to highlight the contrast between the killers' actions and the purity of the angels. Finally, in the fifth verse, the poet questions the motives of Khubayb's killers and asks why they would kill Allah's martyr for the sake of a tyrant and his criminal companions. This verse serves as a condemnation of the killers' actions and a reminder of the importance of standing up for what is right, even in the face of adversity.

Ḥassān b. Thābit sometimes utilizes common themes used in pre-Islamic poetry in his works. For instance, in the opening lines of his elegy for Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 3/625), he focuses on a land whose traces have been erased, which was a common theme in pre-Islamic poetry. Through his poetry, Ḥassān b. Thābit pays tribute to Ḥamza and captures the essence of the Arab poetic tradition:

1. "هَلْ تَعْرِفُ الدَّارَ عَفَا رَسْمَهَا بَعْدَكَ صَوْبُ الْمُسْبِلِ الْهَاطِلِ

2. بَيْنَ السَّرَادِيحِ فَأَدْمَانَةٍ فَمَدْفَعِ الرُّوحَاءِ فِي حَائِلِ

3. سَاءَ لُهَا عَنْ ذَاكَ فَاسْتَعْجَمْتَ لَمْ تَدْرِ مَا مَرْجُوعَةُ السَّائِلِ

4. دَعُ عَنكَ دَارًا عَفَا رَسْمَهَا وَابِكِ عَلَى حَمْرَةَ ذِي النَّائِلِ

5. الْمَالِي الشَّيْزِي إِذَا أُعْصَفَتْ غَبْرَاءُ فِي ذِي الشَّبِيمِ الْمَاحِلِ"

"1- Do you know the land whose traces were erased by the torrential rains

*after you?...*

2. ...*Between the highlands and Udmāna and in Madfa' al-Rawḥā' in the Ḥā'il.*

3- *I asked it (i.e. the land) about him (i.e. Ḥamza). It didn't answer and didn't know how to answer the questioner.*

4- *Forget the land whose trace is gone and weep for Ḥamza, the bestower!...*

5. ...*(Weep for Ḥamza's death), who filled (food bowls made from the) al-Shīzā (tree) on cold and windy winter days..."*<sup>17</sup>

This elegy was written after the death of Ḥamza, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. The poem speaks of a land that has been washed clean of its traces by torrential rains, and the poet asks if the land remembers Ḥamza. The poem then describes the location of the land, which is between the highlands and Udmāna, and in Madfa' al-Rawḥā' in the Ḥā'il. The speaker then says that he asked the land about Ḥamza, but it did not answer and did not know how to respond to the question. The speaker tells the reader to forget about the land whose traces have been erased and instead weep for Ḥamza, who was known for his generosity and kindness. This section ends by praising Ḥamza and his acts of kindness, specifically mentioning how he would fill food bowls made from the al-Shīzā tree on cold and windy winter days. The elegy is a mournful tribute to Ḥamza and his virtuous character, and it highlights the emotional impact of his death on the Muslim community.

Elegy poets often convey in their works a sense of helplessness and despair in the face of grief, suggesting that there is no way to escape their overwhelming emotions. However, this sentiment is not universal in all elegies. Some poems address the challenge of finding solace and enduring through patience, while others emphasize the spiritual legacy left behind by the deceased as a source of comfort. The elegies written for Prophet Muḥammad provide excellent examples of this, as his life and teachings left a precious legacy for Muslims to draw upon. Ka'b b. Mālik, for instance, expressed his profound sorrow at the death of Caliph Uthmān (d. 35/656) in his elegy for him, acknowledging that there seemed to be no recourse to find comfort or patience.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast, 'Abdullah b. Rawāha's (d. 8/629) elegy for the martyrdom of Ḥamza highlights the importance of patience, particularly that of the Prophet

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<sup>17</sup> Ḥassān b. Thābit, *Dīvān Ḥassān b. Thābit*, ed. 'Abd A. Muhennā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1414/1994), 194.

<sup>18</sup> Mahmut Üstün, "Klasik Arap Şiirinde Mersiye", *Kafkas Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 8/15 (January 2021), 401.

Muhammad. The poem in question reads as follows:

1. "بَكَتْ عَيْنِي وَحَقَّ لَهَا بُكَاهَا وَمَا يُغْنِي الْبُكَاءُ وَلَا الْعَوِيلُ
2. عَلَى أَسَدِ الْإِلَهِ غَدَاةَ قَالُوا أَحْمَزَةُ ذَاكُمُ الرَّجُلُ الْقَتِيلُ
3. أَصِيبَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ بِهِ جَمِيعاً هُنَاكَ وَقَدْ أَصِيبَ بِهِ الرَّسُولُ
4. أبا يَعْلَى لَكَ الْأَرْكَانُ هُدَّتْ وَأَنْتَ الْمَاجِدُ الْبِرُّ الْوَصُولُ
5. عَلَيْكَ سَلَامٌ رَبِّكَ فِي جَنَانٍ مُخَالِطُهَا نَعِيمٌ لَا يَزُولُ
6. أَلَا يَا هَاشِمَ الْأَخْيَارِ صَبِراً فَكُلُّ فِعَالِكُمْ حَسَنٌ جَمِيلُ
7. رَسُولُ اللَّهِ مُصْطَبِرٌ كَرِيمٌ بِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْطِقُ إِذْ يَقُولُ
8. أَلَا مَنْ مَبْلَغُ عَنِّي لَوْيًّا فَبَعْدَ الْيَوْمِ دَائِلَةٌ تَدُولُ
9. وَقَبْلَ الْيَوْمِ مَا عَرَفُوا وَذَاقُوا وَقَائِعَنَا بِهَا يُشْفَى الْغَلِيلُ
10. نَسِيتُمْ ضَرْبَنَا بِقَلْبِ بَدْرِ غَدَاةَ أَتَاكُمُ الْمَوْتُ الْعَجِيلُ
11. غَدَاةَ ثَوَى أَبُو جَهْلٍ صَرِيعاً عَلَيْهِ الطَّيْرُ حَائِمَةٌ تَجُولُ
12. وَعُتْبَةُ وَابْنُهُ خَرَا جَمِيعاً وَشَيْبَةُ عَضَهُ السَّيْفُ الصَّقِيلُ
13. وَمَتْرَكْنَا أُمِيَّةً مُجْلِعِباً وَفِي حَيْرُومِهِ لَدُنْ نَبِيلُ
14. وَهَامَ بَنِي رَبِيعَةَ سَائِلُوهَا فَفِي أَسَافِنَا مِنْهَا قُلُوبُ

15. أَلَا يَا هِنْدُ فَبِكَيْ لَا تَمَلِّي فَأَنْتِ الْوَالِدَةُ الْعَبْرَى الْهَبُولُ

16. أَلَا يَا هِنْدُ لَا تُبَدِّي شِمَاتًا بِحَمَزَةٍ إِنَّ عَزِّكُمْ ذَلِيلٌ

"1. My eyes shed tears and had every right to do so. However, crying and lamenting does not serve any purpose.

2. On the day of his death, they asked if the slain man could be Ḥamza, the Lion of God.

3. With his death, all Muslims suffered calamity. The Prophet also suffered calamity.

4. O Abū Ya'la (Ḥamza)! The foundational pillars have collapsed for you. You are an honorable, good, and friendly person.

5. May the peace of your God be upon you in heaven, in eternal bliss.

6. O distinguished Hashimite clan! Be patient! All of your deeds were good and beautiful.

7. The Messenger of Allah is patient and noble. When he speaks, he speaks with Allah's command.

8. Who will deliver a message from me to Lu'ayy? Today, war will take place.

9. They had never tasted our wars, where our thirst for revenge was quenched, before this day and did not know.

10. You have all forgotten the blow we struck at the well of Badr on the morning when sudden death struck you.

11. You have forgotten the day when Abū Jahl fell to the ground, and the birds of prey circled around him.

12. You have forgotten the day when 'Utba and his son fell to the ground, and Shayba was struck by a sharp sword.

13. We left the evil Umayya with an arrow between his ribs.

14. Ask Banū Rabī'a! Our swords have notched due to them.

15. O Hind! Weep and lament! You have suffered loss. Your eyes are tearful and you are at a disadvantage.

16. *O Hind! Do not rejoice in Ḥamza's death! Your glory is ignominy.*<sup>19</sup>

This elegy is a collection of statements and rhetorical questions that express the sorrow and anger of the writer over the death of Ḥamza, a notable figure in Islamic history. The writer emphasizes the significance of Ḥamza's death as a calamity for all Muslims and the Prophet Muḥammad himself. The poet also speaks of the need for patience and the futility of excessive grieving. He urges the Hashimite clan to remain steadfast, reminding them that all their deeds were good and beautiful. The Messenger of Allah is described as patient and noble, speaking only with Allah's command. The poet reminds the audience of the victories of the Muslims in the past and the defeats inflicted on their enemies. The poet also challenges Lu'ayy to war, confident in the Muslims' ability to avenge Ḥamza's death. The poet then mentions the evils of Umayya and Banū Rabī'a, both of whom have suffered at the hands of the Muslims. The text concludes with a plea to Hind, urging her to refrain from rejoicing in Ḥamza's death. The poem warns that glory attained through such means is ignominious and will ultimately lead to disadvantage. Overall, the text expresses grief over Ḥamza's death and the sense of loss it brings to the Muslim community. The writer emphasizes the need for patience, confidence in Allah's command, and the importance of avenging Ḥamza's death.

As previously mentioned, the prevalence of male poets in the art of elegy during this period can be attributed to the loss of friends and companions by the poets who fought for Islam. One such poet, Ka'b b. Mālīk, composed his elegies not for the sake of gaining financial gain from his patrons or relatives, but rather for the Muslim pioneers and heroes. Ka'b b. Mālīk believed that those who died for the cause of Islam attained a high rank, and thus composed his elegies as a tribute to their sacrifice.<sup>20</sup> Following the death of 'Ubayda b. al-Ḥārīth b. al-Muḥṭalīb (d. 2/624), who was martyred in the Battle of Badr due to a wound in his foot, Ka'b b. Mālīk recited the following elegy:

1. "أَيَا عَيْنٍ جُودِي وَلَا تَبْخَلِي بِدَمْعِكَ حَقًّا وَلَا تَنْزُرِي

2. عَلَى سَيْدٍ هَدَانَا هَلَكُهُ كَرِيمِ الْمَشَاهِدِ وَالْعُنُصْرِ

3. جَرِيءِ الْمُقَدِّمِ شَاكِي السَّلَاحِ كَرِيمِ النَّثَا طَيْبِ الْمَكْسِرِ

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Hīshām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2/162-163.

<sup>20</sup> Murat Gök, *Ka'b b. Mālīk'in Hayatı ve Kişiliği* (Konya: Selçuk Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Master's Thesis, 2010), 82-83.

4. عُبَيْدَةُ أُمْسَى وَلَا نَرْتَجِيهِ لِعُرْفِ عَرَانَا وَلَا مُنْكَرِ

5. وَقَدْ كَانَ يَحْمِي غَدَاةَ الْفَتَا لِ حَامِيَةِ الْجَيْشِ بِالْمَيْتَرِ

"1. O eye! Shed your tears abundantly and do not withhold them, nor diminish them with miserliness.

2. Cry for a master! His death has devastated us, his appearance was noble and his lineage was high-born.

3. He was a man of great character, who rushed to the frontlines of battle, armed and endowed with fine qualities.

4. 'Ubayda set out at dusk, and we do not expect any good or evil from him.

5. On the morning of the battle, he defended his cause with his sword, just as the army protected it."<sup>21</sup>

This poem expresses grief and lamentation over the death of an individual, referred to as *sayyid* or master. The poet urges the eyes to shed tears freely without holding back, emphasizing the importance of mourning without restraint. The poem describes the deceased as a person of high rank and noble nature, who led the charge in battle and was skilled in arms. The name "Ubayda" is mentioned, and it is suggested that he went out at dusk and will not bring either good or bad to those mourning his death. The poem ends by comparing the protection of the individual's cause in battle to the protection of a sword-wielding army. This poem represents a common theme in elegiac poetry throughout history, which is the expression of grief and sorrow over the loss of a prominent individual. The focus on the deceased's noble character and achievements in battle reflects the importance placed on honor and bravery in this cultural context. The use of rhetorical questions and commands to the reader to mourn freely highlights the emotional intensity of the poem and the significance of mourning in the cultural context of the time. Overall, the poem serves as a tribute to the deceased and an expression of the pain and sorrow felt by those who knew him.

### 3. Elegies Composed by Female Poets in the Şadr al-İslām Period

Numerous Arab scholars, including Shawqī Ḍayf (d. 1426/2005), have posited that Arab women generally surpassed male poets in their ability to compose

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Hīshām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2/24-25.



rithā' poetry. Dayf attributes this phenomenon to women's heightened emotional intelligence.<sup>22</sup> This widely held belief finds support in the evidence that demonstrates that the art of rithā' was not abandoned by women during the Şadr al-Islām period, and was instead associated with female intelligence and productivity. There are several records of women poets who were involved in the art of elegy during this era, with the elegies composed by female relatives of the Prophet Muḥammad being particularly noteworthy. For instance, following the demise of her nephew, Şafīyya bt. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 20/641), the aunt of the Prophet Muḥammad, composed the following elegy:

1. "أَلَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كُنْتَ رَجَاءَنَا وَكُنْتَ بِنَا بَرًّا وَلَمْ تَكُ جَافِيَا

2. وَكُنْتَ رَحِيمًا هَادِيًا وَ مُعَلِّمًا لِيُكِّ عَلَيْكَ الْيَوْمَ مَنْ كَانَ بَاكِيًا

3. فِدَى لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُمِّي وَخَالَتِي وَعَمِّي وَنَفْسِي وَمَالِيَا

4. فَلَوْ أَنَّ رَبَّ النَّاسِ أَبْقَى نَبِيْنَا سَعِدْنَا وَلَكِنْ أَمْرُهُ كَانَ مَاضِيَا

5. عَلَيْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ السَّلَامُ تَحِيَّةٌ وَأَدْخِلْتَ جَنَّاتٍ مِنَ الْعَدْنِ رَاضِيَا"

"1. O Messenger of God! You were our hope, you were our goodness, and you never were a rude person.

2. You were merciful, a guide and a teacher. Today, everyone who cries, let them cry for you.

3. My mother, my aunt, my uncle, my soul, and my property are all sacrificed for the Messenger of God.

4. If only God of the mankind had made His Prophet immortal. We would have rejoiced, but His decree has been fulfilled.

5. The peace and blessings of God be upon you. You are entered into the gardens of Eden, content and pleased."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Shawqī Dayf, *al-Rithā'*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Zaynab bt. 'Alī Fawwār, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī ṭabaqāt al-khudūr* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya 1999), 2/15.

In the elegy quoted above, the poet mourns the loss of the Prophet and praises his many virtues and accomplishments. In the first verse, the poet addresses the Prophet as the "Messenger of God" and expresses the sentiment that he was the people's hope and goodness, and was never a rude person. This sentiment is reflective of the Prophet's position as a spiritual leader and role model. The second verse continues to praise the Prophet's character, specifically highlighting his mercy and his role as a guide and teacher. The poet then calls upon all those who mourn to grieve for the Prophet. In the third verse, the poet expresses a profound devotion to the Prophet, declaring that she would sacrifice her mother, aunt, uncle, soul, and property for him. This is indicative of the deep love and reverence that the Prophet inspires in many Muslims. The fourth verse is a lamentation for the Prophet's mortality. The author expresses a desire for the Prophet to be made immortal by God, but acknowledges that this was not to be. This verse reflects the Islamic belief that the Prophet was a human being and not divine, and thus subject to mortality like all other human beings. Finally, the poem concludes with a prayer for the Prophet, asking that the peace and blessings of God be upon him and that he be granted entry into the gardens of Eden. This is a common sentiment expressed in Islamic poetry, as the gardens of Eden are believed to be the final abode of the righteous after death. Overall, the poem is a poignant expression of love, reverence, and mourning for the Prophet Muḥammad, highlighting his virtues and accomplishments and expressing a deep sense of loss at his passing.

Faṭıma bt. Muḥammad, the daughter of the Prophet of Islam, experienced profound sorrow upon the death of her father just like Şafıyya. Upon returning home after his burial, she recited the following elegy in the presence of the women gathered around her:

1. "إِغْبِرِ آفَاقُ السَّمَاءِ وَكُوِّرَتْ شَمْسُ النَّهَارِ وَأَظْلَمَ الْعَصْرَانِ

2. فَالْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَعْدِ النَّبِيِّ كَثِيْبَةٌ أَسْفًا عَلَيْهِ كَثِيْرَةٌ الرَّجْفَانِ

3. فَلِيْبِكِهِ شَرْقُ الْبِلَادِ وَعَرْبُهَا وَلِيْبِكِهِ مُضَرٌّ وَكَلَّ يَمَانِي

4. وَلِيْبِكِهِ الطَّوْرُ الْمُعْظَمُ جَوْهُ وَالْبَيْتُ ذُو الْأَسْتَارِ وَالْأَرْكَانِ

5. يَا خَاتَمَ الرُّسُلِ الْمُبَارَكِ ضَوْؤُهُ صَلَّى عَلَيْكَ مُنْزَلُ الْفُرْقَانِ"

- “1. The horizons of the sky are dusted. The sun of the day was wrapped up (and extinguished). The two periods of time (i.e. both day and night) darkened.
2. The earth is sad after the Prophet’s (death). It often shakes because of its sadness.
3. Let the east and west of the countries weep for him. Let the tribe of Muḍar and every Yemenite also weep.
4. Let the great mountain, whose air is great, weep. Let the (holy) house with its coverings and foundations weep.
5. O last of the prophets, whose light is holy. May God who sent down the Qur’an (to you) bless you.”<sup>24</sup>

Faṭīma’s first verse uses the imagery of the sky and sun to convey a sense of darkness and mourning. The phrase “the horizons of the sky are dusted” suggests a lack of clarity or visibility, while the sun being “wrapped up” and “extinguished” implies a sense of finality and loss. The idea that both day and night have darkened could be interpreted as a metaphor for the widespread impact of the Prophet’s death on all aspects of life. The second verse suggests that the earth itself is mourning, as it “often shakes because of its sadness.” This could be seen as a reflection of the deep emotional impact of the Prophet’s passing on all living things. The third and fourth verses call for widespread mourning, with the east and west of countries, the tribe of Muḍar, every Yemenite, the great mountain, and the holy house all urged to weep. This suggests that the Prophet’s death was felt as a profound loss not only by those who knew him personally, but by all who recognized his significance. The final verse addresses the Prophet directly, describing him as “the last of the prophets, whose light is holy.” The phrase “may God who sent down the Qur’an (to you) bless you” suggests a sense of reverence and gratitude for the Prophet’s role in bringing Islam to the world. Overall, the passage reflects a deep sense of loss and mourning for the Prophet, and a recognition of his profound significance in Islamic tradition.

During the Şadr al-Islām period, women poets composed elegies not only for the Prophet but also for historical figures who were closely associated with him or for warriors who were martyred in wars. One such example is Hind bt. Uthātha b. ‘Ibād b. al-Muṭṭalib (d. 10/631 [?]), who composed an elegy for ‘Ubayda b. al-Hārith b. al-Muṭṭalib (d. 2/624). This highlights the broader tradition of mourning and commemoration among Muslim women, which

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<sup>24</sup> Abū Ishaq İbrāhīm b. ‘Alī al-Ḥusrī al-Qayrawānī, *Zahr al-ādāb wa thamar al-albāb*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (s.l.: Dār Iḥya’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyya, 1372/1953), 1/32.

extended beyond the Prophet to include other important figures and events. The composition of elegies for these individuals also reflects the cultural and literary practices of the time, in which poetry was an important means of expressing emotions and conveying social and political messages. The poem in question reads as follows:

1. "لَقَدْ ضَمَّنَ الصَّفْرَاءُ مَجْدًا وَسُودُدًا وَحِلْمًا أُصِيلًا وَافْرَ اللَّبِّ وَالْعَقْلِ
2. عُبَيْدَةَ فَابِكِيهِ لِأَضْيَافِ عَرَبِيَّةٍ وَأَرْمَلَةً تَهْوِي لِأَشْعَتِ كَالْجَذَلِ
3. وَبِكِيهِ لِلْأَقْوَامِ فِي كُلِّ شَتْوَةٍ إِذَا احْمَرَّ آفَاقُ السَّمَاءِ مِنَ الْمَحَلِ
4. وَبِكِيهِ لِلْأَيْتَامِ وَالرِّيحِ زَفْرَةً وَتَشَشِيبُ قَدِيرٍ طَالَمَا أَزِيدَتْ تَغْلِي
5. فَإِنْ تُصْبِحُ النَّيْرَانَ قَدْ مَاتَ ضَوْءُهَا فَقَدْ كَانَ يُدْكِيهِنَّ بِالْحَطَبِ الْجَزَلِ
6. لِطَارِقِ لَيْلٍ أَوْ لِمُلْتَمِسِ الْقَرَى وَمُسْتَبِحِ أَصْحَى لَدَيْهِ عَلَى رَسْلِ

"1. *al-Ṣafrā'* (the area located between Mecca and Medina) has embraced honor, respect, wisdom, nobility, courage, and intellect (i.e. 'Ubayda)...

2. ... (Because) 'Ubayda (was buried there). Cry for him, on behalf of the guests who come from afar and on behalf of the widow who leans over the disheveled man.

3. When the horizon of the sky turns red due to drought every winter, cry for him on behalf of those who are in need.

4. When the wind blows violently, cry for him because he used to light the fire under the pot that would boil and bubble.

5. When the light of the fire goes out, he would light it again with thick sticks...

6. ... (He kept the fire alive) for those who knock on his door at night, for those who want to be entertained, and for those who bark to guide dogs because they lost their way. They would easily stay with him."<sup>25</sup>

The elegy by Hind bt. Uthātha is a tribute to the generosity and virtuous

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-Nabawiyya*, 2/41-42.

character of 'Ubayda, a person buried in a specific place called al-Şafra'. The poet implies that the place has become a symbol of honor, respect, wisdom, nobility, courage, and intellect because of 'Ubayda's presence there. The elegy highlights how 'Ubayda had a positive impact on those around him, including a grieving widow and guests he entertained during his life. The third and fourth verses depict how he helped those in need during times of famine and how he persevered in harsh weather conditions. In the fifth and sixth verses, the poet emphasizes how 'Ubayda welcomed and assisted those who came to him in need, including travellers seeking shelter. Overall, the elegy celebrates the virtues of 'Ubayda and how his presence has positively influenced the place where he is buried.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the importance of rithā' or lamentation poetry during the Şadr al-Islām period is of utmost significance. This genre of poetry, which originated in pre-Islamic Arabia, was instrumental in conveying grief, sorrow, and mourning, and served as a tool for coping with trauma and devastation. The use of vivid imagery, symbolism, and metaphors by poets enabled them to capture the essence of human emotion and create a lasting impact on their audience. The period of Şadr al-Islām was a time of great upheaval and social change in the Islamic world, marked by political instability, economic uncertainty, and religious tension. Rithā' poetry was vital in expressing grief and mourning, and it also affirmed the values and beliefs of the Islamic faith. Many rithā' poems included religious themes and references to the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, underscoring the importance of piety, devotion, and submission to God. This helped to shape the religious and cultural identity of the Islamic community during the Şadr al-Islām period. Lamentation poetry remains a testament to the enduring power of art and expression and a reminder of the human capacity to find beauty and meaning in even the darkest of circumstances.

The predominance of elegies composed by male poets during the Şadr al-Islām period can be attributed to the numerous wars that took place during this era and their impact on the elegiac literary form. Elegies were commonly used to mourn the loss of life on the battlefield, and this culture of war had a lasting effect on the elegiac tradition throughout the Şadr al-Islām period. In fact, the practice of taking oaths to avenge the deaths of warriors and intimidate adversaries was a recurrent feature of elegies composed during the Jāhiliyya period, and this practice persisted among Muslim poets such as Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 60/680 [?]) and Ka'b b. Mālik (d. 50/670) during the Şadr al-Islām period. Similar traditions can be observed in the poetry of other poets

such as Umayya b. Abī al-Şalt (d. 8/630 [?]), ‘Abdullah b. al-Ziba’rā (d. 15/636 [?]), and Dīrār b. Khattāb (d. 12/633 [?]), who aligned with the polytheist forces for a certain period. Several Arab scholars have put forth the argument that Arab women exhibited superior compositional skills in the genre of rithā’ poetry compared to their male counterparts. This phenomenon has been attributed to women’s heightened emotional sensitivity, and it finds support in evidence that demonstrates the continued participation of women in the art of rithā’ during the Şadr al-İslām period. Historical records indicate the presence of numerous women poets who were actively involved in the creation of elegiac poetry during this era, with the elegies composed by female relatives of the Prophet Muḥammad being particularly noteworthy.

In summary, the art of lamentation poetry has played a crucial role in the cultural and social life of the Arabian Peninsula, spanning from the pre-Islamic era to the Şadr al-İslām period. The capacity of elegiac poetry to articulate sorrow, grief, and mourning has provided comfort and consolation for individuals and communities. Additionally, the religious motifs within these poems have been instrumental in shaping the cultural and religious identity of the Islamic community.

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