

Ethnography of Lamentation: Azadari as It Exists in the Tri-State Shi'i Community and Its Future in the American Milieu

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Abstract : This work seeks to understand the fundamental mourning ceremonies termed azadari in the tristate Shi'i community. Azadari, a name derived from the Arabic aza (mourning) and the Persian dari (commemoration) as it exists in the Tri-State Shi'i community has a unique relation to the hearts and minds of its adherents. It shows the development of the community from the various perspective offered by the participants of this work. This work seeks to analyze Azadari in the light of the Tri-State Shi'i community, which is a deeply diverse community, consisting of immigrants from various other countries, including Pakistan, India, Iran, and the Arab communities. At its heart, this work is an ethnography, it seeks to know the experience of those who are a part of the Muharram commemorations and it seek to see what the underlying psychological and the social foundations of Azadari are. Five people from each of the four communities were interviewed, and the aim was to have at least two men, two women, two youth, two elders, and one person from either of these categories. What was found was that the Shi'i community is scarcely a monolith in its mourning practices, and there is a great difference not only when comparing one cultural community to another, but also within the communities as well. This work seeks to analyze azadari from the various perspective of the Shi'i community in the tri-state area. This work seeks to analyze interviews from twenty people in total: two men, two women, two youth, and two adults from each of the communities of the Shi'i of the tristate area, for a total of twenty people. Two Priests were also interviewed for the sake of the paper as well.

Keywords : Ashura, Imam Husayn, Islam, Muharram, Shi'i

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