

The Role of the Religious Delegations in Yazd during The Holy Defense Period

Majid Kashani*¹, Amir Massoud Amir Mazaheri², Mohammad Hassan Zareian Baghdadabadi³

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Abstract

With the beginning of the Holy Defense, religious bodies, as one of the popular and religious institutions, began extensive cooperation with the Basij resistance force during the Holy Defense. In the meantime, the role of lament singers was prominently manifested in various fields. By creating epic laments, they established a new type of lament singing that, unlike the traditional and mourning-oriented laments of the Islamic Revolution era, was full of passion, epicness, and boasting. With themes such as obedience to Imam Khomeini (RA), dispatching fighters, longing for pilgrimage, preparation for operations, seeking martyrdom, liberating Jerusalem, and popular support, these laments were considered an effective tool for motivating forces and strengthening the morale of fighters. The present article examines the key role of religious bodies in the spiritual and cultural support of the fronts in a review-analytical manner, relying on written, audio, and video sources, and interviews with lamenters during the war. Finally, the findings show that religious groups, by utilizing the enormous potential of young people, have played a significant role in preserving, promoting, and consolidating the values of sacred defense, and lament singers have a special place as pioneers of this cultural movement.

Keywords: : Sacred Defense; Religious Delegations; Lamentations; Holy Defense.

1. Department of Social Sciences, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. (fahmm@yahoo.com)

2. Department of Social Sciences, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. (a.amirmazaheri@gmail.com)

3. Department of Social Sciences, Cultural Sociology, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran. (zareian53@gmail.com)

1. Introduction

The Holy Defense period can be considered one of the most important and influential historical junctures in the life of religious delegations and assemblies in Iran. With the beginning of the imposed war, a new type of religious delegation emerged under the title of revolutionary delegations, which, compared to traditional delegations, underwent transformation both in content and structure and were able to establish themselves as an independent and dynamic current in the cultural and religious atmosphere of society. Features such as the centrality of supplications and pilgrimages, the shift in the orientation of speeches from popular topics to political and value-laden issues of the day such as defense of the homeland, the Islamic Revolution, the statements of Imam Khomeini (RA), and the explanation of ethics and self-purification, are among the main characteristics of these delegations in that era (Mazaheri, 1390).

Religious delegations in this period, by linking Ashura concepts and the discourse of revolutionary Shi'ism to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, played an effective role in the fronts and behind the fronts. These delegations operated in two forms: private and public. Private in the homes of fighters and families of martyrs, and public in places such as martyrs' cemeteries, military bases, and martyr funeral processions. Lament singing also took on a new form influenced by the atmosphere of war, and a type of lament called epic laments emerged, which was a combination of sorrow, epic, anthem, and boasting, and helped to motivate fighters and strengthen their morale. The main issue of the present article is to examine the position and function of religious delegations and epic laments during the Holy Defense; this research seeks to explore the content of these laments and to address the cultural, propagational, and spiritual role of these delegations through the collection and content analysis of written, audio, and video texts, interviews with lament singers of the war era, and the collection and compilation of materials (in two objective and subjective dimensions) during the war. Therefore, the main objective of the article is to identify and analyze the social, religious, and psychological functions of religious delegations during the Holy Defense and also to examine the dominant themes in the laments of that period.

Accordingly, the present study attempts to answer two main questions: What were the functions of religious delegations during the Holy Defense? What themes did the laments of the Holy Defense period include?

2. Research Background

The laments of the Holy Defense, as one of the prominent cultural and religious manifestations of the imposed war era, are part of the literature of resistance, which has so far been less comprehensively and analytically studied independently. Despite the undeniable role of laments in motivating and strengthening the morale of fighters, most studies have addressed this category implicitly or sporadically, and fewer studies have been specifically devoted to examining the structure, function, and themes of the laments of the Holy Defense period.

In the meantime, some written sources have indirectly addressed the cultural and artistic dimensions of laments. Among them, one can mention the book *Culture of the Front: Customs and Traditions* by Seyyed Mahdi Fahimi (1381) and the

book *Culture of the Front: Slogans and Rajaz* (1370) by the same author, which provide valuable information about the cultural atmosphere governing the fronts, including the use of laments and rajaz in dispatch ceremonies, operations, and commemorations of martyrs. From a psychological-spiritual perspective, the article "The Impact of Spiritual Factors on the Combat Power of Islam's Fighters during the Holy Defense" by Abolfazl Barati Ahmadabadi (*Journal of Islamic Revolution and Holy Defense History Studies*, 1391) addresses the role of religious and spiritual components in increasing the motivation and resistance of fighters, which implicitly refers to the position of laments. In the field of resistance literature, the article "Style of Resistance Poetry with Emphasis on Symbols" by Hojjatollah Moniri (*Journal of Literary Criticism and Stylistics Research*, 1379) and the article "A Look at the History of Resistance Poetry and Its Examination in the Holy Defense Period" by Amir Ali Azimzadeh (*Misbah Journal*, 1386) both analyze symbols, themes, and expressive styles of resistance poetry, but lament as an independent form has not been examined in them. Also, the article "The Role of Religious Delegations in Promoting the Culture of Sacrifice and Martyrdom" (Mohammad Reza Qaedi and Reza Mohammadian, presented at the First National Conference on Promoting the Culture of Sacrifice and Martyrdom) focusing on the position of religious delegations, emphasizes the impact of these institutions' activities on the front and behind the front and explains the cultural contexts of popular participation.

A review of the background shows that in existing sources, either the role of lament has been sporadically addressed as part of the cultural atmosphere of the front, or the main focus has been on resistance poetry, religious delegations, or spiritual factors of war. However, so far, no independent and purposeful research has specifically analyzed the structural, content, and functional characteristics of the laments of the Holy Defense, especially in interaction with religious delegations. Therefore, the main gap of the present research is in comprehensively addressing the category of epic laments of the Holy Defense not as part of war literature, but as an effective cultural-religious media during the imposed war. The present study seeks to fill this gap with an analytical approach based on audio, written sources, and oral narratives.

3. Theoretical Framework

The present study, in explaining the function and role of religious delegations during the Holy Defense, has benefited from Charles Tilly's theoretical framework regarding collective organizations and social networks. Tilly in his theory defines social groups usually in two main forms: categorical and network. Categorical groups are formed based on shared identity characteristics such as religion, ethnicity, or religious beliefs, while network groups are organized based on social relations and stable in-group communications among members. According to this framework, religious delegations are a clear example of combined organizations that have both categorical features (such as belief in Shi'ism and love for the Ahl al-Bayt, peace be upon them) and operate based on strong social networks (such as relations among members, eulogists, clerics, and the audience of the delegation). This combination has led to the formation of a kind of cohesion,

discipline, and internal solidarity that in junctures such as the Islamic Revolution and the Holy Defense has been effectively manifested in social and cultural mobilization.

During the Islamic Revolution, religious individuals including clerics, merchants, and revolutionary forces, by utilizing the capacity of religious ceremonies such as Fatimiyya, Muharram, and Safar, and mourning delegations, created social circles with a revolutionary identity. These circles played an important role in expanding the discourse of the revolution, motivating the people, and providing grounds for participation in political and revolutionary activities (Bagherinia and Ghaffari Heshjin, 1400). This model continued during the Holy Defense, so that religious delegations became a base for strengthening religious beliefs, the spirit of resistance, and promoting the values of sacrifice and martyrdom. Based on Tilly's analysis, religious organizations such as delegations gain their power and effectiveness through categorical cohesion in beliefs and network solidarity in human relations. From this perspective, delegations during the Holy Defense were not only purely religious institutions but active socio-political actors that transmitted Shi'a identity and revolutionary ideals to the body of society in the form of ceremonies and epic laments (Ghaffari Heshjin and Khodadadi, 1391).

4. Methodology

The present study is qualitative with a content analysis and grounded theory approach. The overall design of the research is descriptive-analytical and based on data collection through in-depth interviews and analysis of written, audio, and video sources related to religious delegations and laments of the Holy Defense period. The specific method of conducting the research is also based on three stages of open, axial, and selective coding, adapted from the principles of grounded theory methodology.

The research population includes lament singers active during the Holy Defense who participated in religious delegations related to the fronts or rear support activities. From this population, 22 experienced and active lament singers of that era were purposefully selected and semi-structured interviews were conducted with them. The selection criteria included continuous activity in wartime delegations, direct participation in front or rear ceremonies, and possessing historical memory regarding the research topic.

Two main tools were used for data collection: in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected lament singers, designed and conducted to access their themes and lived experiences in delegations and the content of laments; and analysis of written, audio, and video documents including published works related to lament singing and activities of religious delegations during the Holy Defense, such as audio tapes, eulogy collections, books, and publications of that era. To increase the validity of the research, triangulation was used; thus, the information obtained from interviews was compared and validated with textual and visual data. Also, the review of extracted themes by a number of interviewees and experts in the field of religious studies and Holy Defense was conducted to ensure the accuracy and precision of the qualitative data.

Data analysis was performed in three stages of open, axial, and selective coding: In the open coding stage, key concepts were extracted from the interviews and collected sources, and an attempt was made to use the expressions of the interviewees to be closer to the text. In axial coding, the extracted concepts were organized into sub-categories and main categories to determine the relationship between codes and categories. In the selective stage, axial categories were converted into central categories and the theoretical framework of the research was formulated.

The results of the analysis showed that the function of religious delegations during the Holy Defense can be categorized in two main areas: Behind the fronts: including organizing popular aid, preparing posters and banners, holding funeral ceremonies, dispatching forces, and participating in logistics. Within the fronts: including holding mourning ceremonies and speeches, performing epic laments by well-known eulogists, and strengthening the morale of fighters. Also, the themes of the laments were categorized into two dimensions: objective (such as obedience to Imam Khomeini (RA), preparation for operations, propaganda, and Hussein mourning) and subjective (seeking martyrdom, creating passion, motivation, and resistance). These findings indicate that religious delegations played an effective and unparalleled role in preserving and transmitting the cultural and spiritual values of the Holy Defense.

Table 1: Eulogists Sent to the Fronts During the Holy Defense from Yazd

Row	Name and Surname	Responsibility	Purpose of Presence in the Fronts
1	Abu al-Fath	Eulogist	Boosting the morale of fighters
2	Seyyed Mahdi Beheshti	Eulogist	Boosting the morale of fighters
3	Kazem Rokni Samad	Eulogist	Presence in the fronts of truth against falsehood
4	Mohammad Ali Azadehmoghadam	Eulogist	Presence in the fronts of truth against falsehood
5	Hassan Naser Bafqi	Lament singer	Presence in the front, longing for martyrdom
6	Kazem Asiabchi	Lament singer	Presence in the fronts of truth against falsehood

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Row	Name and Surname	Responsibility	Purpose of Presence in the Fronts
7	Ali Farhangdust	Lament singer	Boosting the morale of fighters
8	Reza Zolfaqari	Lament singer	Serving the fighters
9	Kazem Ahramian	Lament singer	Serving the fighters
10	Hojjat al-Islam Torefti	Lament singer	Responding to the call of Imam Khomeini
11	Hossein Golab	Lament singer	Responding to the call of Imam Khomeini
12	Hossein Abyari	Lament singer	Preserving the achievements of the Islamic Revolution
13	Ali Asghar Tahan	Lament singer	Serving the fighters as a relief worker
14	Gholamreza Zare Khormizi	Lament singer	Serving the fighters as a training instructor
15	Seyyed Reza Hosseini	Lament singer	Serving the fighters
16	Mohammad Hossein Najarian	Poet	Composing poems during the Holy Defense
17	Hossein Moqaddas	Lament singer	Logistics in propaganda in the front
18	Mohammad Ali Farhazadi	Head of delegation	Coordination behind the fronts
19	Abdolhossein Beheshti	Head of delegation	Training forces both in the fronts and behind the fronts

Row	Name and Surname	Responsibility	Purpose of Presence in the Fronts
20	Habibollah Rezaei	Head of delegation	Propaganda and cultural activities
21	Seyyed Ali Mohammad Ziya Kashani	Head of delegation	Cultural activities
22	Abbas Ali Khabiri	Head of delegation	Participation behind the fronts

5. Research Findings

This research was conducted with the aim of identifying the structure, themes of poems, and function of religious delegations during the Holy Defense. Data were extracted and analyzed through interviews with 22 lament singers of the war era, content analysis of audio, video, and written texts, and grounded theory method in three stages of coding (open, axial, selective). The findings are categorized into three main axes: "Structure of Religious Delegations," "Characteristics of Poems and Laments," and "Functions."

1. Structure of Religious Delegations during the Holy Defense

The structure of delegations in this period underwent fundamental changes mainly due to the special conditions of the imposed war. These characteristics include the following:

1-1. Structural simplicity: Due to the field conditions of war and the necessity of holding ceremonies quickly and repeatedly, the structure of delegations moved away from formalities and toward simplicity and efficiency. In the religious delegations of this period, for reasons such as the continuation of the war and the increased need to hold religious assemblies, delegations became simpler day by day, to the extent that no trace of cumbersome formalities and the complex customs and rules of previous traditional delegations remained. Therefore, the religious delegations of this period had little quantitative organization and had a simple and uncomplicated organization.

1-2. Weak organizational stability: The fluid structure of delegations, due to the requirements of the front, caused the organizational stability of these delegations to be less than traditional delegations. The low organization of the political delegations of this period caused the small and simple organization of these delegations to lack much stability. The instability of these delegations can also be related to the variable and intermittent nature of their holding times.

1-3. Emergence of new spatial norms: The religious delegations of the war period can be divided into two categories: private and public, and examples of each of these two categories have their own specific places and locations. Public religious delegations, according to their size and extent, were formed in large, public places and also had a revolutionary aspect. Therefore, the previous spatial norm governing traditional delegations underwent change. Because as a result of

adding the factor of having a revolutionary aspect, in addition to mosques and Hussainiyas, new places such as martyrs' shrines, the place of dispatching fighters to the front, and political gatherings were also included in the list of places for holding religious assemblies and delegations.

1-3-1. Private delegations: Formed in the homes of martyrs, areas of force dispatch, martyrs' cemeteries, resistance bases.

1-3-2. Public delegations: Held in mosques, Hussainiyas, military places, and public ceremonies such as funerals.

1-4. Temporal continuity: The prolongation of the war caused religious delegations to be continuously active in the fronts and to create a spiritual and morale-boosting atmosphere on the nights of operations. The prolongation of the imposed war and the direct relationship between it and religious delegations required that the temporal norm of the delegations' activities be broken and occasional and non-fixed occasions such as the night of operations and revolutionary occasions also be included among the reasons for holding religious assemblies. As a result, religious delegations were held more or less continuously throughout the year.

2. Characteristics of Poems and Laments

The laments and poems used in the Holy Defense delegations had a structure distinct from the pre-revolution era. Three prominent features were identified in these poems:

2-1. Accompaniment with media and official current-making: Simultaneously with the beginning of the war, laments and anthems were broadcast from the national media that strengthened the jihadist and value motivations of the fighters. The poetry of the Holy Defense from the beginning of the imposed war was formed with the broadcasting of poems and anthems from the national media in praise of the bravery of Islam's fighters. This poetry, utilizing the realities of war, paid less attention to symbolic images and more to the direct reflection of battle scenes and the concepts of sacrifice and martyrdom (Rastegar, 1373). The continuation of this type of poetry until today has caused a transformation in contemporary Iranian literature and by blending old and new forms, has created epic and rich content; words such as "martyr," "Basiji," and "Allahu Akbar" have found the opportunity to appear in this context (Tajlil, 1373). The poetry of the revolution and Holy Defense, due to its religious and political roots, has blended belief concepts such as belief in God, guardianship, and resurrection with poetic elements and has provided the ground for the creation of new collective symbols (Gh. Moniri, 1397).

2-2. Diversity of literary forms: Classical forms such as ghazal, mathnawi, and qasida were used alongside folk and local folkloric poems to attract more diverse audiences. In the religious delegations of the war period, like traditional delegations, classical forms such as qasida, mathnawi, and ghazal were still more or less used. However, gradually, the form of half-verse poetic pieces also entered and became widespread. An important point is the emergence of folk and folkloric poems in the literature of religious delegations of this period, which for the

first time led to the use of song poetic forms in the literature of religious delegations.

Sample:

"Whoever wants to go to Karbala must go through the fronts
Let him go there and see the youth, sit beside them for a moment
Let him see the light of God in the fronts, the grace of the Truth is everywhere our
refuge

Comrades sit beside the trench, they see the dome of Hussein"

2-3. Mystical and revolutionary themes: The laments, influenced by the discourse of the Islamic Revolution and the spirituality of the fronts, carried mystical, epic, and anti-tyrannical concepts within themselves. With the victory of the Islamic Revolution, eulogy, like other social arenas, underwent transformation and a new type called "political/revolutionary eulogy" emerged, which was specific to the religious delegations of the Holy Defense period and was clearly distinct from traditional examples (Mazaheri, 1401). Mysticism in the poetry of the revolution found meaning in the heart of the battlefields and fronts of light; where the seekers of the path of truth consciously chose the path of martyrdom and depicted mystical concepts in an epic and revolutionary form (Azimzadeh, 1386).

2-4. Linguistic characteristics (entry of non-historical everyday concepts and terms):

"Our exalted cleric, you were Saduqi, our divine scholar, you were Saduqi
Look and see, it is time for prayer, our hearts are burning and melting"

3. Functions of Religious Delegations

The functions of religious delegations in this period are categorized into two levels: behind the fronts and within the fronts.

3-1. Behind the Fronts:

3-1-1. Dispatching forces and creating jihadist motivations among youth and Basijis: Given the military situation at the beginning of the war and internal conflicts, it was believed that only the self-sacrifice of the people could stop the enemy, and since the people fought for their faith and belief, the poets of the Holy Defense tried to call them to the fronts by likening the front to Karbala and appealing to religious concepts and people's beliefs. For example: "We are seekers of the path, the red path of Hussein, we are of the lineage of the brave of Badr and Hunayn
All shrouded, ready for jihad, until the old man of Khomein commands us (Bigi, 1382)"

Regarding dispatching forces to the fronts of truth against falsehood, in the first stage, it began with lament singing and mourning, and the role of lament singers was to create passion in the forces and to see them off and accompany them until they boarded the bus. (Zare Khormizi, interview, Khordad 1403). Coordination regarding the participation and dispatch of forces to the fronts of truth against falsehood, and the collection of popular aid for fighters was through mosques. (Tahan, interview, Mordad 1403).

3-1-2. Collecting popular aid voluntarily and in an organized manner: Most of the activities of religious delegations behind the fronts of truth

against falsehood were aimed at collecting popular aid for fighters, holding mourning ceremonies to offer condolences to the families of martyrs and comfort them (Abyari, interview, Tir 1403). Attracting benefactors to help the fronts, sewing clothes by women of the delegation in Basij resistance bases, packaging and sorting popular aid, and providing homes by Yazdis to accommodate war-affected people who had come to Yazd from Khuzestan, Khorramshahr, and Abadan (Ziya Kashani, interview, Mordad 1403).

3-1-3. Holding religious and ritual ceremonies for martyrs and revolutionary events: During the imposed war, when bombing and missile attacks were carried out on Iranian cities including Tehran by the Ba'athist regime of Iraq, when our compatriots were martyred, the religious delegation would hold lament singing and mourning in their homes to console the families of the martyrs. (Davoudi, interview, Mordad 1403). Holding lament singing and mourning ceremonies in the funeral processions of martyrs to console the families of the martyrs. (Tahan, interview, Mordad 1403). Visiting the families of martyrs, holding special mourning ceremonies for the martyrs since most of them were members of the delegation, holding supplication ceremonies with the least cost, which had made young people and adolescents interested, collecting popular aid for the front (Abyari, interview, Tir 1403). During the funeral of a martyr in Yazd, all religious delegations would participate enthusiastically in the ceremony. Especially when a martyr belonged to the Imamzadeh Ja'far neighborhood of Yazd, all members of the religious delegation would come to the Imamzadeh, and the pure and purified body of the martyr would be buried in the Imamzadeh, and then mourning and lamentation would be performed. After the funeral ceremony, all members of the religious delegation would go to the home of the martyr's parents to console them. (Farhazadi, interview, Tir 1403).

3-1-4. Producing and distributing leaflets, posters, and cultural-propaganda content: Honoring the lofty status of the martyrs of the Holy Defense of Yazd with the utmost respect for the martyr's family, installing placards and banners, placing wedding decorations at the door of the martyr's family home. (Rezaei, interview, Mordad 1403).

3-1-5. Basic military training for Basijis through coordination with resistance bases: Given the widespread military training courses held in the army, voluntarily for training Basijis and youth in Basij resistance bases and mosques to prepare forces for dispatch to the fronts, and also attending Basij resistance bases in Yazd to pave the way for the formation of the twenty-million army by the command of Imam Khomeini. (Beheshti, interview, Tir 1403).

3-2. Within the Fronts:

3-2-1. Holding mourning, supplication, and elegy delegations in trenches, garrisons, and the battlefield: In the early days when the Al-Ghadir Brigade was not formed, Yazdi soldiers were stationed with Isfahani forces in the Imam Hussein (AS) Division at Jundishapur University of Ahvaz. During the formation of the Al-Ghadir Brigade of Yazd, fighters were active in a jihadist manner. There, lament singing was performed for the forces behind the front and for Yazdi fighters

in the front and sometimes for other brigades (including Kerman). (Golab, interview, Khordad 1403).

3-2-2. Lament singing, eulogy, and chest-beating with the presence of nationally known figures

3-2-3. Collective supplication ceremonies such as Dua Kumayl, Ziyarat Ashura, and intimate supplications with a mystical atmosphere: During the Holy Defense, cooperation and participation with the Hizbullah and Jundullah group of Yazd, who were stationed as water and land forces in Shushtar. The program of chest-beating and lament singing was held every morning. (Zare Khormizi, interview, Khordad 1403).

4. Themes of the Laments of the Holy Defense Period

The laments of this period are content-wise divided into two categories: objective and subjective, which pursued different emotional and semantic goals:

4-1. Objective Themes:

4-1-1. Obedience to the leadership and Imam Khomeini (RA) as the axis of national unity: One of the spiritual factors and the most prominent among the spiritual and cultural factors influencing the resistance and victories of Islam's fighters in the Holy Defense was the guardianship of the jurist and heartfelt and practical commitment to it. A significant share of this influence was due to the affection and love of the fighters for him. The leadership of the guardianship of the jurist was pure and unquestioning obedience to the leadership of the system, which turned all forces into a single united front. The leadership of the system in the Holy Defense had two characteristics. First, the guardianship of the jurist, in line with the deputyship of the infallible Imam, is obligatory to obey. Second, the charismatic leadership of Imam Khomeini (RA) had fascinated and made everyone obedient to him. The clear example of obedience to the leadership and guardianship of the jurist was the Qur'anic verse "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you." (Barati Ahmadabadi, 1401).

In this sensitive and fateful time, with the sacrifice of the fighters and the presence of the people on the scene, dear Islam and the Islamic Revolution of Iran shone throughout the world. At this time, a group of eulogists of the Ahl al-Bayt of the city of Yazd responded to the call of Imam Khomeini, the great leader of the Islamic Revolution and the hope of the oppressed of the world, and set off for the fronts of truth against falsehood, hoping that, God willing, the fighters and brave men of the Islamic Revolution would soon reach their desired Kaaba, Imam Hussein (AS), and through that, reach beloved Jerusalem and its liberation. (Hojjat al-Islam Torefti, 1362).

4-1-2. Longing for the pilgrimage of Imam Hussein (AS) and connection with Ashura culture: One of the notable points in the mourning poems of the Holy Defense is their epic nature, which emphasizes jihad, defense, and continuing the path of the martyrs. These mourning poems often have an Ashura color, and sometimes the poet in the mourning poems has blended the partisanship and sacrifice of the fighters with the sacrificed loyal companions of Imam Hussein (AS) as if they were the same. One of the most successful mourning poems of the Holy Defense is the poem "Western-like" (Companions, how strangely they left

this house) by Parviz Hassan Bigi Habibabadi. A poem that from the very beginning of its composition met with public acceptance and during the Holy Defense was sung as a lament in the traditional chest-beating of the fighters. Although sorrow and grief are wrapped throughout this poem, the poet calls the listener to resistance until the end of life (Azimzadeh, 1386). Another theme used abundantly in epic laments was the longing for the pilgrimage of Imam Hussein (AS). The front was a place where there were windows to the pilgrimage of the Imam of Love. Windows facing the sun of Karbala. In the front, the fragrance of the pilgrimage of the Beloved reached the soul, and what drew these caravanners so eagerly and lovingly to the land of the fronts was the longing for pilgrimage. One of the famous laments performed in 1361 had the theme "We are going to Karbala" repeated abundantly.

4-1-3. Preparation for military operations and mobilization of forces: Slogans, laments, and religious rituals such as mourning and chest-beating were among the important elements of the front culture during the Holy Defense, which were formed with the deep religious roots and God-seeking spirit of the fighters and played an effective role in strengthening their morale and readiness for operations. Laments sometimes contained operation codes, and even the enemy had realized their impact. The start of operations was usually accompanied by religious ceremonies and epic passion, and love for Imam Hussein (AS) created a strong motivation for sacrifice and selflessness among the fighters (Hosseini, Zare Khormizi, 1403; Tape Implementation, 1366).

4-1-4. Propaganda use and symbol-making to strengthen public morale: Religious delegations during the Holy Defense played an effective role in attracting forces and explaining war issues to the people and were considered one of the most effective propaganda tools of the fronts; to the extent that their absence could have troubled the war process (Jafari Baghdadabadi, 1396). These delegations, in addition to strengthening dependence on the Ahl al-Bayt school, through symbols such as headbands, lament singing, images of Imam Khomeini (RA), and supplications, helped create a collective identity and boost the morale of the fighters (Tahan, Najarian, 1403).

4-2. Subjective Themes:

4-2-1. Seeking martyrdom and psychological motivation for self-sacrifice in the way of God: The cultural package of the Holy Defense, centered on entering the fronts, included lament singing, chest-beating, and rajaz, which played an important role in motivating and strengthening the morale of the fighters. Lament singers such as Ahangaran and Yazdi eulogists with their passion prepared the fighters for operations, to the extent that these delegations and eulogists on the front line were sometimes more effective than war equipment themselves (Golab, 1403; Hosseini, 1403).

4-2-2. Creating passion, hope, and jihadist motivation in the hearts of the fighters: The poets of the Holy Defense tried to encourage the fighters to persist in the fronts with an epic tone and without ambiguity and complex imaginary imagery. In the poetry of the Holy Defense, all poetic forms had taken on an epic color, but short forms such as couplets and quatrains were the most effective

forms for this purpose. The Ashura culture during the Holy Defense was the main inspiration for the spirit of martyrdom-seeking, sacrifice, and resistance of the fighters. Ceremonies such as lament singing, Ziyarat Ashura, and Dua Kumayl played an important role in the spiritual motivation of the forces and preparation for operations. The fighters, following the example of the martyrs of Karbala, consciously chose martyrdom and eagerly went to meet it. This culture not only strengthened the fronts but also, with the funeral of the martyrs' bodies in the cities, created double motivation for the presence of the people and youth in the war.

4-2-3. Defending the oppressed of the Islamic world such as the Palestinian nation and the liberation of Jerusalem: Today, the only way to save the Palestinian people is to continue the path of Hussein through the "Intifada," which has so far brought the Zionist regime to its knees to a large extent, and if it continues, it will be the only way to victory. In the fronts, slogans and lament singing were also formed in accordance with the mood of the fighters and were performed with a special order; slogans such as "Whoever has the desire for Karbala, in the name of God" began the collective passion, and the remembrance of "Amman Yujib" ended the supplication assemblies, and these traditions have been preserved until today (Hadith Lawh and Qalam Cultural Institute, 1394).

4-2-4. Persistence on the values of the Islamic Revolution and Shi'i-revolutionary identity: In the Holy Defense, the spirit of sacrifice and selflessness was one of the key spiritual factors of victory. The fighters not only gave up personal interests in difficult conditions but also provided the most service with the least facilities. Programs such as lament singing, Dua Kumayl, Ziyarat Ashura, and chest-beating in the trenches strengthened the morale of the forces. Eulogists and propaganda forces, by attending the fronts, both benefited themselves and gave motivation to the fighters. Even in very difficult areas such as Hawr al-Azim, the passion of Hussein and the laments were inspiring resistance and courage on the battlefield. Religious delegations behind the fronts provided the propaganda media of the Islamic system. Especially in those years when the popular and spontaneous aspect of religious and revolutionary propaganda still prevailed over its governmental and directive aspect. It was through these delegations and the speeches of their speakers that the concepts and values of the revolution such as simplicity, the war between poverty and wealth, and the fight against social corruption were promoted among the people. The religious delegations of this period also acted as a communication medium between the front and its people with the rear. This communication more or less resulted in the transfer of values and concepts of the front atmosphere to the rear atmosphere and as a result played a significant role in sanitizing social relations. One example of this is the promotion of the spirit of sacrifice among the people.

Table 2: Categorization of Research Findings on Religious Delegations and Laments of the Holy Defense Period

Row	Research Axis	Sub-axes / Characteristics
1	Structure of Delegations	- Simplicity and reduction of formalities - Weak organizational stability - New places (public/private) - Temporal and calendar continuity of ceremonies
2	Characteristics of Poems and Laments	- Use of classical forms (ghazal, mathnawi, qasida) - Emergence of folk and local poems - Presence of mystical and revolutionary poems - Media and propaganda role of poems
3	Function Behind the Fronts	- Dispatching forces and popular mobilization - Collecting aid and support resources - Holding ceremonies and rituals - Producing propaganda and educational content
4	Function Within the Fronts	- Holding mourning and supplication ceremonies on the battlefield - Performing lament singing in trenches and garrisons - Strengthening the morale of fighters through mobile delegations
5	Themes of Laments (Objective)	- Obedience to the leadership and Imam Khomeini (RA) - Longing for Karbala pilgrimage and Hussein mourning - Operational and military readiness - Jihadist propaganda and symbol-making

Row	Research Axis	Sub-axes / Characteristics
6	Themes of Laments (Subjective)	- Motivation and inspiration - Martyrdom-seeking and self-sacrifice - Liberation of Jerusalem and support for the oppressed - Preserving the values of the revolution and cultural resistance

6. Discussion and Conclusion

During the Holy Defense, the religious delegations of Yazd, by benefiting from the young, passionate, and committed human force, played a determining role in preserving, strengthening, and promoting spiritual and revolutionary values. These delegations not only played a role behind the fronts through collecting popular aid, holding martyr funeral rituals, and cooperating with the Basij in organizing and dispatching forces, but their direct presence on the front lines, especially through eulogists and lament singers, had a profound spiritual and psychological impact on the fighters. The laments, with themes such as obedience to the guardianship of the jurist, readiness for operations, longing for martyrdom, liberation of Jerusalem, and persistence, were able to combine Ashura concepts with war conditions and strengthen jihadist motivations. These activities turned religious delegations into an effective cultural-propaganda institution in the process of the Holy Defense. Despite the historical importance of this role, limitations such as the lack of audio and video sources and the death of many lament singers of that era have made access to accurate data challenging for today's field research. However, preserving and re-reading this cultural heritage is considered necessary and valuable for transmitting it to future generations and preserving the spiritual identity of society.

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