

# Anthropologic Study of Religious-Dramatic Ritual of Nakhl Gardani in Tileben Village

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**ABSTRACT:** Since the recognition of religion's roots is less anthropologically considered, analyzed and interpreted by the researchers in the field of anthropology research, and on the other hand, entrance of industry and modernity in people's culture have concerned academic community and universities, the research has been collected by the goal of studying ritual of carrying symbolic coffin analysis and the signs of palm in the village of Tileben, Mazandaran province. In this regard, Bronislaw Malinowski theories of Functionalism, Clifford Geertz Interpretivism and Clarke Whistler diffusionism has been used. researchers has made an effort to fulfill the important issue of anthropology through interview, cooperative observance, the use of field study, document and research tools like image, movie and Walkman. Findings of the research indicate that palm is symbol of sacred thing. Belief in holiness of the coffin among Tileben people is a religious reason that they deserve Imam Hussein and they want their needs be fulfilled by God and religious readers, and many existing elements has symbolic aspect.

**Keywords:** Iran, Tileben, carrying symbolic coffin, dramatic ritual, Ashura.

## INTRODUCTION

Codec and figurative statement of religious behavior and application of symbolic objects in religious ceremonies contain special meaning that their evaluation is partly difficult through criteria out of religious thoughts. Palm-coffin handling ceremony is among symbolic mourning bands. Palm handling is a religious ceremony in Muharam which is annually held for the funeral ceremony of the top martyr, Imam Hussein. Coffin handling of martyrdom and palm handling in mourning bands refer to fighter army of martyrs who manifest the presence of divine power among mourners and victory of null to righteous corps and eternal life, authority and sacred magnificence of martyrs. Making figurative coffins of martyrs have a very far background. Commonality of the ceremony and palm reputation is more than other customs and ceremonies across Iran and we can state with regard to studies and observations that at most part of Iran, people have the coffin or know it. The extent of presence and performance of this ceremony has passed borders of Iran and it is held as extensive as world and culture of Shia Muslims. By performing the ceremony, people can regenerates sacred events of the past days in their daily life (Esanloo, 2009, 11). Turning wooden empty chamber with especial ceremonies which has an old root, it is currently performed at some scattered points of Iran including Naein, abyaneh, shahveh, Tafresh, Anjedan, Yazd and ... Small and under populated village of Tileben, Chahardangeh district, Mazandaran province is one of remote area in Iran that respect to this traditional dramatic ceremonies. For economical and livelihood reasons in different season of the year, most residents leave the village and will depart there for entertainment in summer-spring. People of Tilebon hold the religious-traditional ceremonies with special magnificence and they decorates palm with their special signs, symbols and figurative, put together in Tilebon Ashura annually and perform palm handling along with mourning in Moharam moon. In this research, we study anthropology, traditional dramatic ceremony of palm handling in Tilebon village and level of belief Tilebon people to palm and intersection of imagination and superstitions with their beliefs. Our method is analytical-descriptive method and we intend to through interview, direct and cooperative observation, and by the use of field research methods, documental, content analysis through image, movie and voice record.

**Faith:**

Primary anthropologist's perception of faith is that human first believe in forces that they apparently had food and other sources which they were dependent on it. Because such humans had no bright perception of nature's factors, they attribute them with magic and super-natural forces. Therefore, they search for tools to draw support and they found a certain relation between the ways they applied and result that they expect overtime. Then, these methods were repeated, polished and recognized until they changed to a ceremony. In this step, all group or tribe usually performed the ceremony. So, they are called rituals.

**Rituals:**

Duty of performing such teaching undertaken by special ceremonies that are mentioned as a rituals and they are called traditions, rituals and rite. Therefore, rituals can be known special kind of regular action and speech that are rooted from religious teachings or to express religious feelings, and due to high precedence, they are bonded with tradition and history of people and they have become part of daily and undeniable culture (Abedi, 2007, 24). In doing each of rituals, human body and objects are applied with special skill and workmanship, like: palm handling, flagellation with chain, and chest slapping. People have interaction during ceremony and such ceremonies cause this interaction. Different objects are frequently used in every drawing that usually have symbolic aspect and sometimes the whole ceremony spin around the same symbolic element, like cross, Alam and palm. Literature that used in rituals is usually of special kind and it is different from official literature. Rituals are mostly bonded with special place and time like Muharam, Christmas, and pure celebration. Caution and avoidance is the common element of rituals so that people avoid special action and speech when performing such ceremonies and take hold of specific object. Such avoidance may intensify concept and situation of a ceremony and give it more sanctity like sweet, celebration and music... at the time of Tasua and Ashura as well as night of Qadr. Non-empirical issues and supernatural beings form the basis of many ceremonies. Generally, Iranian rituals can be classified into five groups, the first group includes ancient, mystical and seasonal faith that is celebrations like: Norouz, tirgan, Mehrgan, Yalda, Sade and ... the second group include religious faith like: Eid ghadeer, Eid al-Fitr, ghorban, birthday, mourning and death of Imams. The third group includes national, patriotic and national ceremonies. The fourth group is regional ceremonies that are unique to a specific tribe or region and they are not held in other part of a country. Such as: crop harvesting celebration or sharveh khani ceremony or wind meeting that are held in other part of a country. And finally the fifth group includes family ceremonies related o birth, marriage, circumcision, poverty, pilgrimage and death... which is held differently in various families and tribes. According to the definition, just the second group can be regarded as rituals; because there is a belief to a sacred thing and it is performed by a series of religious ceremony. One of the other religious ceremonies is mourning in Safar and Muharam month, especially ashura and Tasua days that can be known a symbol of Iranian rituals that moral values are not being surrounded against oppression.

**Dramatic tradition:**

The dramatic traditions include all the traditions, customs and behaviors that own the same primary features, while they are being held in dramatic form. If so many speeches, behaviors or attitudes are expressed in a form of wrappers and symbol, or if they directed the nature into a visual utterance that can provide the mental and moral immunity for audience, called the dramatic tradition (Aref, 1391. P.31).After the fall of Sassanid dynasty and the prevailing of Islam in Iran, consequently the political and military enforcement of Arab statesman on Iran, the Iranians forced to accept the Islam and obey the Islamic state. But immediately after the prophet Mohammad demise, the injustice was begun to increase among society gradually, particularly between people and statesman, and the situation was reversed to before Islam period again. Jafarian said that the Ashura mourning tradition happened in a wide scale in Dailamites era (326). Off course, the Shia community of Iran has been kept the memory of Imam Hussein and their passion after Ashura incident, and they held mourning ceremony stealthily in Tasua and Ashura days (Muharram 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> day). Since the Umayyad government announced the Ashura as a celebrity day, it caused the Shia community insisted on that ceremony increasingly and despised the killers and enemies of their Imam more and more. After Islamic Revolution, the religious drama and plays has been gained lots of credits from people and officials that every year in Muharram time various group hold and play religious drama (Taziye in Persian) in parks, large areas and religious house under the direct watch of state organizations like the Organization of Islamic Propagation and Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Farid, 1386, p.162).

**The anthropological theory of tradition:**

In order to reach a conclusion based on visual anthropology knowledge and its dark side, we debate on some theory respecting the Palm Handling local dramatic ceremony:

The theory of Bronisław Malinowski functionalism: this theory was appeared in 19<sup>th</sup> century in a reaction to evolutionism. Upon this theory, every social behavior should be considered with respect to its relation or relations with the whole society. In other word, the behavior or act are truly recognized by comparing with the other acts and attitudes of social communities from the portion and functionality aspects. Function includes meeting of a need due to an act from Malinowski view (Navabakhsh, 2003.p.73). The functionalism mainly is aimed to specify the social organization by means of realizing the mutual relations among the members and sections (Ruh al Amini, 1995.PP. 121-122). Malinowski believes that traditions and bizarre acts bear specific duties and functionalities in the cultural context of the society, so in this respect, there is not any phenomenon without function and even they cannot sustain with lack of function (Garbarino, 1998.p.87). Two main concepts of functionalism in Malinowski theory includes: needs and communities. The need to belief is referred to biologic essence of human, so that the primary level of needs is common among humans and the other creatures. The second principle concept of Malinowski is community. The community is bullied the basis of culture. Each community consists of sets of elements and mechanisms such as: chart, employees, regulations, material framework, activity and function (Fakuhi, 2009.pp. 167-168). Malinowski poses a psychological vision toward the function, and it can be defined in this way: the satisfaction of an organic incentive via a correct act or behavior; the form and function are integrated to each other.

**The Clifford Geertz theory of Interpretive-ism:** Geertz is famous by his special approach toward culture and converted it into a specific methodology. In his book "interpretations of cultures", he defined culture: composed of concepts that are uttered in form of symbols and let the humans to communicate with each other. He brings forward the interpretive demography. The anthropologist attempts to define and elaborate the symbols semantically from the local society view in this method. He tends to a literary approach in anthropology context. He opposed the visual theories contained the strict and inflexible rules in culture, or the ones elaborated the culture through the common psychologist characteristics in human. Upon Geertz view, culture should be recognized as a good produced by the history which is varied upon each society (Dvrtyh, 2003.p. 48).

**The Clark Wissler theory of Diffusion-ism:** Diffusion-ism like the evolutionism is a theoretical trend emerged in 19<sup>th</sup> and remained until 20 century. This theory stressed on geographical aspect aimed to indicate or find how a cultural phenomenon collectively "prevailing and moving" from one point to other point on the geographical axis. The concept of "cultural or civilization circle" is counted as one of the prominent terms and concepts proposed in this school. Finally, the goals of diffusion-ism include determination of studied cultural phenomenon, forming the cohere group of phenomenon, pinpointing the prevailing initiation points, the paths of prevailing and analysis of the path existence, the degree of prevailing extremity or lack of prevailing in every one of them (Fakuhi, 2009.pp. 145-146).

#### ***Tileben Village:***

Upon the quotation of wise old people, the early residents of the village used to live in north of the local village named "Ahe and Aghuzdeh" and they forced to migrate to the current location with full of water and potent agricultural lands because of geographical and climate triggers over the time. Some old people believe the migration happened after the martyrdom of Shia 8<sup>th</sup> Imam or after the death of holy shrine Mir Afzal, something about 800-900 years ago. This history of residence backed to 500 to 600 years ago in those two areas can be proved by two reasons:

- 1- The existence of holy shrine Mir Afzal (one of the six sons of Mir Emad, the lord of Hezar Jarib province) near the Tileben village, the large cemetery of Muslims around the holy shrine place and the other cemetery in the area, are the proofs to support the long residency in this village.
- 2- The existence of several big towers in different scales is another solid proof to support our idea.

The Tileben village people speak in Mazandaran language (Mazani or Mazruni, or Tabari). The family name of the village resident is "Musavi" and attributed to Imam Musa. There are other family names too such as Sadati, Hamidi, Asghari, Mohammadpur, Human, Derakhshani and etc. (Faghihe Bahr al Olum, 2007. PP. 455-465). The total number Tileben families are around 120 in which 110 of them are immigrant and 10 families as the local resident, and the total population is estimated around 400 people. The immigrants of this village are living in Mazandaran state (cities such as Sari, Neka, Behshahr and vicinity villages of these cities). Around 30 families of the immigrants are farmer and rancher, 30 families owns an industry, small business or worker, and 50 of them are employees in state or private sectors. Currently village student go to Shahid Dastqeb School for primitive school and in uptown and they are sent for further education in secondary school to surrounding cities. Most of population of Tileben village is literate and elders have Quranic literacy too.



Figure 1. Old picture of Holy Shrine Mir Afzal, summer 1951, excerpted from Sadva site

### ***Nakhl Gardani (Carrying symbolic coffin)***

Nakhl literally means Palm tree and by allegory it means any kind of tree and it may be a decorative tree that is carried in Mourning of Imam Hussein especially in Ashura day. However, in fact Nakhl is a wooden structure symbolizing the coffin which is adorned by colorful clothes, mirror, lamp, color glasses, wood, and metal and so on in first ten day of Muharram within mourning days. In this ritual, it is carried from a place to the main place of holding the mourning ritual. This carrying is together with mourning, lamentation and crying (Belukbashi, 2004).

In mythic and historic era, the exemplar ceremony of carrying coffin was for ritual of Siyavash's death. In Islamic era and in initial centuries one attributes the ritual of carrying coffin to formation of Shiite gather-ups of meetings of mourning for martyrs of religion (Imam Ali and Imam Hussein). In Safavid era, foreigner tourists such as (De la Vale and Olearius and Tavernie) and in Zand and Qajar era tourists such as Franklin, James Morie, Heinrich Brogesh) are among who mentioned the carrying symbolic coffin in their travel account. In modern era like ritual of ancient people some mourning processions start to move at the first ten days of Muharram and last ten days of Safar and in some cities in the anniversary of death of Imam Hussein and Imam Ali and based on culture of their own city they carry religious sign such as Alam (huge metallic sign), Nakhl (symbolic coffin) and flag and so on which one often mention them in Persian encyclopedias. The symbolic coffin is named Nakhl because it is made like Palm tree (Nakhl means Palm tree in Arabic). Adorning the symbolic coffin which takes place in the first ten days of Muharram is referred to adorning the coffin with mirror and a variety of silk shawls and precious clothes and lamp and portraits, sword, dragger, shield and hamlet and so on which is done mostly by incumbent of symbolic coffin. Symbolic coffins usually are moved in Muharram tenth day by special rituals from congregation hall and is carried in city and holy shrines (Blukbashi, 2001).

Ritual of carrying symbolic coffin can be seen in the west sign of Iran central desert (Kavir plain) as well as surrounding of Bandar-e Abbas, Khomein, Sirjan and Mashhad. In Mazandaran province in most counties and surrounding villages this ritual is held. Similarly, in Yoosh village which is one of villages of Baladeh district of Noor count, and in Kajur village at 60 Km south of Noshahr county, Nova village and Karangum in southeast of Amol and also in Ortasht village in Mahmud Abad southeast (Asanlu, 2010). In a lot of regions one has not seen neither symbolic coffin nor anyone is heard anything about it, however some objects in the small size standing for symbol of Ali-Asghar cradle is carried out by procession, though it is similar to the symbolic coffin, but it has nothing to do with it (Saeidi, 2007).

Carrying symbolic coffin represents the martyrdom of Imam Hussein in battle of Karbala near 1400 years ago and it is held in Muharram days especially in tenth day. History of this symbolic coffin in Tileben village based on verbal quotes from people of village dates back to third generation and roughly 250-300 years ago. Ritual of symbolic coffin of Tileben village is held since long time ago in Imam Hussein congregation hall. This coffin is made by three men. One is named Master Agha Jan from Qal'eh village, a carpenter from Perim region (Perim is a village in center of Dodangeh district of Sari county), a men from Damghan with collaboration of region carpenters and by financing of Mir Abdollah Mir Emadi known as Haji Khan and undertook to make this symbolic coffin (Benafti, 2005). Among villages of Chehardongeh region of Sari, only Tileben Village has the coffin and the ritual of carrying the symbolic coffin is held every year in this village. People of this region have not any clear information about origin of this coffin, its symbolic meaning and history of the coffin in the procession ritual, and they regard it as an old ritual remaining from ancestors. This justification is general and is based upon what has been heard and said throughout years from ancestors to current era. In long time ago, 28<sup>th</sup> day of Safar, day of death of Islam Prophet, ritual of carrying the symbolic coffin is held and since 70 years ago to date this ritual is held only in Ashura (tenth day of Muharram). The ritual of carrying symbolic coffin and Alam and flag in mourning procession is not originated from Quran and Sunni of Prophet and Hadiths, but people aiming to hold the ritual with a special zeal and enthusiasm have established a set of either true or false innovation in the mourning procession, such as hitting themselves by dragger (on the forehead) and chain, carrying coffin and so on, meanwhile negative effects and inducing false thoughts are seen less in the ritual of carrying coffin.

Broadness of presence and holding the ritual of carrying symbolic coffin prevailed throughout of Iran boundaries and is held across Muslim world. The common essence of all of these rituals is commemoration of Imam Hussein coffin and shrine. These rituals have some differences in different places and are mostly related to ceremonies and used names for objects and rituals, and the symbolic coffin in Iran is named as Nakhil, in India as Tamie, in Caribbean, Take and in Indonesia is named coffin. In counties close to Karbala such as Iraq, participants carry a coffin standing for coffin of Imam Hussein. In some places which are farther to Karbala, such as Caucasus and India, instead of symbolic coffin, an imaginary model of dome and shrine of Imam Hussein is carried in this procession which denotes coffin as well as shrine of Imam Hussein (Saeidi, 2007). In Iraq, Najaf, this procession is held every year in Ramadan 21, the anniversary of Martyrdom of Imam Ali. Muslims of Indonesia, especially those who inhabit in Sumatra Island, in tenth day of Muharram make a symbolic coffin of Imam Hussein and carry it around the city. Based on their old traditions of mourning procession, they hold the procession with zeal and enthusiasm. Even Christians take part in this procession in different forms. From long time ago and every year, i.e. Palm Sunday or the Sunday before Easter day, they have had ritual of carrying the symbolic coffin. This ritual is held for memory of victorious advent of Jesus Christ and some of his followers to Jerusalem. However, today, the ritual of carrying olive is held among Syrian Christians. They carry a huge olive tree to church and they leave it by special rituals. Then, everyone seats its child on the sacred tree and they carry it with exclamation of happiness around the church. People pluck some branch of the tree for sacredness and bring them home.

***Carrying the symbolic coffin in tenth day of Muharram in Tilebon Village:***

Tilebon village holds this Muharram ritual in Chehardongeh region in Mirafzal holy shrine. As for ritual of carrying symbolic coffin and its general belief and doctrine on which this ritual is established, different behaviors are shown from people that each one of these behaviors takes place based on some beliefs and doctrine. By belief of Tilebon people, owing to the fact that the corpus of Imam Hussein was refrained to be buried at the sunset in 680, Muharram 10, for respect to Imam Hussein and to reviving grief of that bloody event, they each year make a pseudo-coffin for Imam Hussein named as Nakhil and is escorted on the hand of participants. Same belief prompts them to adorn the coffin with pure heart and honesty and they pray with pure heart and by intercession of this corpus and pseudo-coffin for their longings. This belief is even held for native people too. If someone dies in the village and had not gotten married or of it is lost and funeral is not held for it, people hold a funeral and morning for the corpus. In the same manner, near 70 years ago a newly married girl and boy named Beni Musavi and Reza Musavi died one in Muharram 9<sup>th</sup> day and another in 10<sup>th</sup> day (both are holy days) and in their ceremony the ritual of carrying symbolic coffin is held. At the 10<sup>th</sup> night of Muharram people carry the coffin. Some people vow to sleep beside the symbolic coffin in the case of their beloved one gain its health or achieving to a dream. Some women for having child and fertility sleep in congregation hall beside the coffin overnight with complete purity. Or some people vow to read Quran beside the coffin in the event of realizing their needs or solving their problems. By some narration of village people, many years ago village people have seen that the coffin has moved toward Mecca, and they said it was escaping and people asked it to turn back by shouting Oh Hussein. People who live in Tileben village believe that if they do harm to the Nakhil (symbolic coffin) or if it breaks down, it will bring ominous signs and one of the wise men will die. Therefore they ask young men to help them bring the Nakhil out of Hussainiya (congregation hall) in a cautious manner. Then they carry and bring it to the mourners gathering. Carrying Nakhil (symbolic coffin) has no specific rule. This ritual tradition dates back to the time when three members of Bagher, Mir Yaghoub, and Jalal Mousavi families were responsible for this ancestral responsibility because they were skillful and strong enough to carry the Nakhil. Now (2014), their grandsons, Reza, Haj Ali, and Jalal Mousavi follow this tradition. The generous manner and self-respect of rural people, give everybody the chance to be a volunteer to carry the Nakhil. Some young and strong men go under the Nakhil, hold its handholds, and pick it up while they're crying out "Oh Hussein". They put the handholds on the fabric cushion which is put on their shoulders. Those who want to put their shoulders under the Nakhil and pick it up, put some cotton, wool, straw, fabric or any other soft thing in big sized handkerchiefs and tie them to their shoulders to avoid the Nakhil to do harm to their shoulders and bear the pressure of the Nakhil weight. Normally three persons are enough to carry the Nakhil toward Mir Afzal Holy shrine. These men tie colorful fabrics that is brought in front of their chests from the back of their necks and then from their underarms to their backs which distinguish them from others. They have the responsibility of carrying, putting down, and protecting the Nakhil.



Figure 2. Clothes of carriers of the coffin/Sepideh Hamidi/2 Km away from Tilebon Village/ (04/08/2014) /cameraman: Sepideh Hamidi

All the people regardless of their age or gender do their best to arrive at Hussainiya when they hear the sound of horns, cymbals, and trumpets to join the mourners gathering. The mourners go toward the congregation hall while crying out “Oh Hussein, Oh Hussein” and then Nakhl-Gardans (carriers of symbolic coffin) bring out the Nakhl. People go toward the Nakhl and go under the Nakhl for several times. Tileben people believe that through this work their wishes will come true. For example they believe that if a barren woman goes under the Nakhl, she will get pregnant and her wish will come true or if someone passes him/her child through the Nakhl, the child will be cured. Going under the Nakhl and carrying it are considered as ways through which their wishes come true. Those who have a wish (Nazr) go to Tilebon congregation hall on Ashura, 10<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar month of Muharram in order to distribute charity foods and drinks among the people.



Figure 3. Ashura Morning, the Nakhl is in congregation yard/Tileben congregation hall/ (04/08/2014)/photography: Sepideh Hamidi

Tileben people march toward Mir Afzal Holy Shrine from 9 to 10 p.m. with mourning equipment like Alams, horns, cymbals, flags, Zuljanah (a bloody horse in black clothes), and the Nakhl which symbolizes Imam Hussein (AS). Elders and wise men stand in front of procession. A group of people who beat themselves by chain (Zanjir-zan) are normally young people who do this in two queues behind the Alam and wise men. Chest beaters stand in two or four queues and women stand in the last queue. Mourners march behind the Nakhl.



Figure 4. Elders & Wise men in front of procession/ holy shrine Road/ (04/08/2014)/Cameraman: Sepideh Hamidi

Tileben procession and other groups from other villages (Baladeh, Ghale, Pain Deh, and Vavsar) arrive at holy shrine at the same time. These villages are not distant (1.5 km). Holy shrine is located between Baladeh, Tileben, Ghale, and Pain Deh villages. 100 km away from Holy Shrine, village mourning gatherings join together to make a great procession. Mourning ceremony consists of Nakhl-Gardani and Zuljanah reading continues for about one hour and after that all the people say Ashura-noon-prayer.



Figure 5. Mourning procession of other Villages Marching toward the Holy Shrine (Baladeh, Ghale, Pain Deh, Vavsar)/100 km away from Holy Shrine/(04/08/2014)/Cameraman: Sepideh Hamidi

After noon Azan and when Ashura ceremony finishes and while two men in front of the Alam and one behind it, hold the Alam, people who carry the symbolic coffin walk around Holy Shrine with other people three times and as fast as they can as they're crying out "Hussein, Hussein" and express their condolence to the Holy Shrine.



Figure 6. Carrying the symbolic coffin around Mir Afzal Holy Shrine/Mir Afzal Holy Shrine/ (04/08/2014)/Cameraman: Sepideh Hamidi

When ritual of carrying the coffin finishes, people who carry it take it to the North East of Holy Shrine, put it on the ground, and put Alams near the coffin. Tilebon people gather around both the coffin and Alam and distribute their charities. Some people give financial help to the Holy Shrine or tie fabric or scarf to the coffin. Holy Shrines provide people with these fabrics. Some people distribute tea, date, bread, different kinds of sweetmeat, apple, pomegranate and other fruits-of-the-season among mourners and disperse Efsand burn around the coffin, pilgrims, and people who carry it.

In Tileben village, Sacrificing or slaughtering sheep tradition will be done only under Alams and when those who have vow (Nazr) are there. Sacrificing animal is not done in public. Some Tileben people put apples or pomegranates or three to four peacock feathers on tip of the wooden beams as a symbol of consecration. The number of peacock feathers is not important. People sit on the ground near the coffin and three people who carry the coffin protect it.



Figure 7. Putting apples on the coffin/Mir Afzal Holy Shrine/ (04/08/2014)/ Cameraman: Sepideh Hamidi

At about 2 o'clock, they move Nakhil toward Tileben Village while women holding back of the coffin until exit of the holy shrine and cross under the coffin several times to do their vow and their need being satisfied (by Allah). A person walking in front of the coffin sings an elegy: "oh, martyred Hussein/ thousand times curse Yazid". Then every group of mourning procession go toward their own village, the coffin is carried in the alleys of Tileben village, in the front yard of mosque and Hussainiya people do chest beating and then apple and pomegranate are distributed among people for pleading (from Allah) and consecration. At the end they put the coffin in its special place. After eating lunch they rest for a while. Around evening, each village begins the ceremony of Shame Ghariban (night of strangers) in the locale.

## CONCLUSION

Because the symbolic coffin and carrying it is one of Iranian traditional, symbolic dramatic ceremonies of Ashura, and it is performed in Tileben, a village in Mazandaran, so we can know that Nakhl (the symbolic coffin) has a very old root in the Iranian culture and doesn't belong to a special region. Up to now, none of anthropological researchers can clear the root of this old ceremony. Most people don't have accurate knowledge about the geographical and ceremony origin of the symbolic coffins, their meanings and background of carrying different coffins by mourning groups. They know the carrying of coffins as an old tradition survived from their ancestors. People justify such rituals according to their hearings from their ancestors, and generally is based on public logic and collective consciousness rooting from old beliefs and oral narratives. In this study we couldn't find the root of Nakhl and carrying Nakhl.

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