

Guidebook for *When All the Horses Cried*

Thank you for your interest in *When All the Horses Cried*. The goal of this guide is to promote further engagement with the philosophy and wisdom of Ashura and expand spiritual and heart-based understandings of Imam Hussain's sacrifice. Part of this initiative is rooted in discovering new and diverse teaching methods that move beyond traditional pedagogical activities used to teach about their religion. This guide is thus intended to supplement critical education on Islamic philosophy and Ashura.

In particular, this guide seeks to explore the philosophical and mystical themes present in the story *When All the Horses Cried*. The following guide takes meaningful messages from the literary story and creates a more accessible path for the youth and adults alike to understand the deeper esoteric significance surrounding Ashura while maintaining its religious and emotional weight. As such, these writings are considered supplemental materials that ease greater engagement with *When All the Horses Cried*.

Themes & Symbols:

- Zuljanah
- The twins Foad and Noor (Foad is a Qur'anic term referring to the eye of the heart that sees light; Noor means light in Arabic)
- True Love versus false love
- The Sacrifice of Hussain
- The meaning of prayer
- Mi'raj
- The Becoming story of Foad (the awakening of the eye of the heart)
- Ma'rifa of the Imam
- The nature of humans and creation
- Dignity
- Traveling and migrating (hijra)
- Homecoming
- Sleep
- Cleansing the heart/Purification
- Pollutants of the heart (fame, power, lust, wealth, friends, false love)
- Carrying the Light
- Sacred Oath
- Servitude

Questions and Answers:

1. Why does Imam Hussain sacrifice himself for Islam? What does that mean and what did that sacrifice entail? How does the Zuljanah explain it?
2. What is the significance of love in this story? And why does Hussein represent love?
3. What is true and false love? What are the dangers of false love? How do we commonly see false love in society and culture around us?
4. Why is the sacred oath to God? And why is it significant?
5. What is the Light Verse in the Quran? What does it represent? What does Zuljanah say about carrying the Light?
6. What is the heart important in Islam? What do the twins Foad and Noor represent, as alluded to by their very names?
7. What is the Becoming story of Foad? How does knowledge of the significance of his name and its symbolism in the narrative add to your understanding of the story?
8. How does one keep the heart pure? And how does one acquire True Love?
9. What is the Miraj? What does it represent in this story? How is it linked to Karbala in Zuljanah's understanding?
10. What is the significance of prayer? Why is worship important? And what is significant about the Muslim form of prayer specifically?
11. What is the nature of humankind in terms of their creation and their potential for good and evil? How is this linked to the Shi'a belief in Imamate and our own personal life stories? Why does knowledge (ma'rifa) of Imamate matter in religious faith?
12. What is Zuljanah's wish and prayer at the end of the story? What does he want to see? Why is this important?