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# **Yearning to Meet**

## **Pilgrimage and its Innermost Aspects**

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## **Publishers' Note**

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Paying a pilgrimage to the holy sites is a common practice for all the nations over the world; however, in Islam, it is described as an important devotional act and special ritual as it provides many individual, social, and spiritual benefits.

Presence in the blessed sanctuaries, which embrace the Holy Mausoleums of the Last Prophet (S.A.W.) and Infallible Imams (A.S.), is accompanied by reciting ziyāratnāma (a pilgrimage prayer) and the rules of conducts that if one is familiar with will enjoy a very soulful and delighted pilgrimage. Details of these rules as well as responses to the misconceptions concerning pilgrimage (ziyārat) to [the graves of] the dead, analysis of the issues brought up in ziyāratnāmas, and other related discussions are what make the innermost aspects of Shawq-i Dīdār (Yearning to Meet), with a beautiful and impressive description of pilgrimage and its historical course presented at the outset of the book.

These instructive discourses authored in clear and articulate penmanship has led to five reprints of

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Shawq-i Dīdār in 1362/1983 and its reception by neoteric thinkers.

Given the great interest cherished by the Grand Custodian of Astan Quds Razavi in Islamic research and cultural-propagational services for the pilgrims to the heavenly threshold of Imam ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (upon whom be the best benedictions and the praises), the Islamic Propagation and Relations Directorate of Astan Quds Razavi placed an order with the Islamic Research Foundation to summarize the book and publish it in more copies to be kept at the disposal of that directorate for a widespread distribution. Fortunately, in the beginning of the new [solar Hijra] year, the respected author managed to put together a summary of Shawq-i Dīdār in a more eloquent prose. It is hoped that this edition is didactic to the pilgrims, and is leading them to figure out the high status of the Imam (A.S.) and the importance of pilgrimage, prompting them to embrace this good practice (sunnat al-ḥasana) as a means of pleading to the Exalted Allah for the strength and dignity of the Muslims by seeking assistance from His Holiness Ḥujjat b. al-Ḥasan [Imam Mahdī] – may Allah hasten his reappearance – in light of the wisely guidelines of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei – may Almighty Allah prolong his life.

Farvardin 1386/April 2007

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## Preface

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Although there is no doubt in the rationality of some religious rituals and customs, they have not been of much interest to the contemporary people. That is because they have not been expressed in a language suitable for the present era and with an analysis befitting the present time culture; whereas, God says, ﴿We did not send any apostle except with the language of his people, so that he might make [Our messages] clear to them.﴾<sup>1</sup> Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) relates from the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) who said, “We the group of messengers are missioned to talk to people according to the capacity of their intellects.”<sup>2</sup> On the basis of these teachings, we mention:

One of the Islamic customs is visiting the graves of

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1 Q. 14:4. (the English translation of the Qur’ānic verses are adopted from: *The Qur’ān, with an English Paraphrase*, tr. Sayyid ‘Alī Qulī Qarā’ī, the Center for Translation of the Holy Qur’ān, Qum, 2003.)

2 Al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, *Al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, 2 vols. Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, Tehran, 1/23.

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the faithful, and the mausoleums of the religious leaders [Imams (A.S.)] and sending peace and blessings to their sacred souls, performing *ṣalāt* (ritual prayers), doing supplications, and reciting the Holy Qur'ān in the vicinity of their shrines, which has its own rules and requirements. The present book is intended to explain in the contemporary language the above rules, the real meaning of pilgrimage, and the importance of its reward and goes on to give a reasonable answer to the deniers of pilgrimage and intercession. In addition, analyzing the contents of the pilgrimage prayer would present a clear portray of them. It is hoped that reading this book may bring about a deeper knowledge of the Imam (A.S.) and a more enthusiasm for their pilgrimage.



## Section One



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# Pilgrimage and its Rules of Conduct

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### Pilgrimage

*Eyes with tainted vision fail to see the face of the Beloved  
To see His face, look through a cleansed mirror. (Hafiz)*

Pilgrimage is an enthusiastic visitation, by getting into the presence of friends of God and Imams (A.S.) of Guidance. It is a presence in sacred places and facing with the leaders and guides of the spiritual realms, which starts with moving away from one's homeland yearning to meet; a move apparently through space and time but actually within the heart and the soul.

Pilgrimage is enjoying a heartfelt relationship with Allah's Authority (*hujja*), and surrendering the

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innermost corners of oneself to the jurisdiction of the Imam's (A.S.) sanctity and blessed emanation.<sup>1</sup> Imam (A.S.) is a transcendent human being, with extensive existential dimensions, who receives his spirituality from the Creator and acts as an intermediary for delivering mercy and felicity to the creatures.

Pilgrimage is achieved by the pilgrim's being present in the Imam's (A.S.) mausoleum; however, the reality of pilgrimage, which is a spiritual bond and an enthusiastic meeting, is achieved only when there is a spiritual state of mind and soul and an inner communion with the Imam (A.S.). This will not be achieved unless after recognition of the Imam (A.S.) and the importance of his pilgrimage and having knowledge about the spiritual stations and heavenly virtues and excellences of those Godly chosen ones, the details of which will be provided in the latter parts of the book.

### **Pilgrimage in Historical Dimension**

Pilgrimage has a long history in Islam, since the initiator of visitation or pilgrimage to the Muslims' graves has been our great Prophet (S.A.W.), the details

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1. Wherever in this book mention is made of Imam in general, first, it is meant to be the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and then the twelve Infallible Imams (A.S.); because the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), besides having the rank of final Prophethood, enjoyed the position of Imamate and leadership, as well.

of which have been given in books of *sīra* and *ḥadīth*. It is implied that this visitation has been coupled with enthusiasm and eagerness, sufferings and mourning; enthusiasm of faith, eagerness to visit the grave of the beloved, suffering of travel, and mourning for the bereavement of the loved ones. Some examples of them are as follows:

1. The Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.) visitation of the grave of his noble mother – Āmina bint Wahab<sup>1</sup> – which took place out of his innate motive and deep heartfelt attraction for his mother is related by Muḥammad b. Sa'd in his *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* as follows:

“In the expedition of al-Ḥudaybiya [in the year six AH], the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) visited the grave of his mother and wept over it and repaired and renovated it.”<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, after *Ḥajjat al-Widā'* (the farewell pilgrimage to Makka by the Holy Prophet – S.A.W.),

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1. The burying place of Āmina, the Holy Prophet's mother, is a village called Abwā', which is located midway to Makka and Madīna at a 27 mile distance to Juḥfa. (Mūsawī Bujnurdī, Kāzīm, *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī*, Markaz-i Da'irat al-Ma'ārif, Tehran, 1367 sh/1989 onwards, vol. 5, Abwā').

2. The same reference, under Abwā'. Also, see: Āyatī, Muḥammad Ibrāhīm, *Tārikh-i Payāmbār-i Islām*, revised by Dr. Gurjī, Tehran University Publication, 1361 sh/1982; Majlisī, Muḥammad Bāqir, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 110 vols. Dār Iḥyā al-Thurāth al-'Arabī, Beirut, 1403/1982, 10/441 – the tradition here is related from Shaykh Muḥfid.

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he hastened to visit Āmina's grave and wept there as he remembered his childhood memories.<sup>1</sup>

2. It is related from Abū Hurayra that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) visited his mother's tomb and then wept there, making those around him weep, too. Then, he said, "I asked permission from my Lord for visiting her grave, for which I was permitted. Therefore, [you too] visit graves, because it would remind you of death."<sup>2</sup>

3. It is related from 'Abbād b. Abī Ṣāliḥ that "the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) would visit the graves of the martyrs of the Uḥud [battle]<sup>3</sup> and prayed for them with these words: ﴿salāmun 'alayku, bi mā ṣabartum fa ni'ma 'uqbay al-dār﴾ ﴿Peace be to you, for your patience. How excellent is the reward of the [ultimate] abode!﴾." The narrator adds that Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān (as Caliph) would also go to visit the martyrs of Uḥud....<sup>4</sup>

5. Bayhaqqī and other *ḥadīth* scholars have related that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) visited the graves of the martyrs in Uḥud, and then said, "O Allah! Your

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1. *Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif-i Buzurg-i Islāmī*: vol. 5, Abwā'.

2. Muslim b. Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabī, Beirut, 1407/1987, 4/46.

3. Uḥud is a mountain near Madīna, near which one of the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.) battles (*ghazwa*) took place three years after *hijra*. In that battle Ḥmaza, the Prophet's uncle, and 70 other Muslims were martyred.

4. Samhūdī, Nūr al-Dīn, *Wafā' al-Wafā bi Akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafā*, 4th edition, Egypt, 3/932.

servant and messenger testifies that these are the martyrs [in Your way], and whoever visits them or say *salam* to them till the Resurrection Day, they will answer his *salam*.<sup>1</sup>

6. It is related from the fifth Shī‘ī Imam, Abū Ja‘far [Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn – A.S.] that Her Holiness Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima, daughter of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) would visit the grave of Ḥamza (*ra*) and would repair and tidy up, marking it with a stone. Yahyā adds to this report, “Then, he would perform prayer there, invoke Allah, and cry, [this was her *sīra*] until she died.”<sup>2</sup>

Ḥākim has also related this tradition from Imam ‘Alī (A.S.), with the difference that, “Fāṭima (A.S.) would visit the grave of her uncle, Ḥamza, every Friday”.<sup>3</sup> That is to say, the day of visitation is reminded in this tradition.

7. Among the ones who had travelled to make a pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet (S.A.W.) was Bilāl b. Rabbāḥ, the *ṣaḥābī* and muezzin of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.). Ibn ‘Asākir has related this tradition with a sound *sanad* (chain of transmission) and views the dream that Bilāl had had as the reason for it: He saw the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) in a dream telling him, “O Bilāl! What is this unkindness? Is it not the

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1. Ibid, 3/932-933.

2. Ibid, 3/932.

3. Ibid.

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time yet to come visit me?” Bilāl woke up frightened and sorrowful. He mounted his horse and left Shām for Madīna. When he reached the sacred tomb of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), he rubbed his face on the grave, wept, and poured out his heart, until Ḥasan (A.S.) and Ḥusayn (A.S.) went toward him. He embraced them both and kissed them...<sup>1</sup>

8. We read in *Kashf al-Asrār wa ‘Uddat al-Abrār*, a commentary written by Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī in 6<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century, “It is reported in books that Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī (A.S.) went off to visit Fāṭima’s grave; he was weeping and stating:

What has happened to me that I have tarried on graves and greeted the grave of my beloved, but she does not answer me?

The evidences we related from the earliest Sunnī sources – however few from among plenty – imply that visitation of the graves of the deceased – especially the graves of the chosen Friends of Allah and one’s relatives – is an Islamic tradition initiated by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and followed by his reverend daughter, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭima (S.A), and dignified companions (*ṣaḥāba*). This practice was common in the time of the Infallible Imams (A.S.) and afterwards continued by the religious scholars (*ulamā*) up to the

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1. Ibid, 4/1356; Amīnī, Abd al-Ḥusayn, *Al-Ghadīr*, 2nd edition, 10 vols. Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, Tehran, 1372 sh/1993, 5/147.

present day and is not a newly devised Shi‘ī doctrinal practice. Truly, the Shi‘as have preceded the Sunnīs in keeping this tradition alive and practicing it, particularly as pilgrimage, like elegy reciting and mourning for the grandson of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.), i.e. Imam Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (A.S.), is among the factors of promoting and reinforcing the Shi‘a school of thought.

In relation to the subject, we would point to the way pilgrimage was made to His Holiness Imam Ḥusayn’s (A.S.) tomb in the early years of his martyrdom and will discuss it in further details in section two.

History tells us that the pilgrimage to [the tombs] of Imam Ḥusayn (A.S.) and his companions in Karbalā in the early years was so passionate and revolutionizing and was so clearly revealing of the infidelity and tyranny of the Umayyads that the ruling system had no alternative than to prevent the pilgrims from visiting the Imam Ḥusayn’s (A.S.) *ḥā’ir*.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose, they ordered to set up watch posts around Karbalā and appointed strong guards to bar people’s way [to the holy tomb]. However, love for Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and encouragement of Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) and Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) to make pilgrimage to His Holiness as well as the impact of the martyrs’ blood were so high

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1. *Hā’ir*, according to Yāqūt Ḥamawī in *Mu‘jam al-Buldān*, means Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī’s (A.S.) grave; however, when it is meant to be Karbalā, it is used without addition. (Egypt edition, 3/203).

that the Shī'as would go on the pilgrimage in the dark of the night. Nevertheless, some would be arrested and severely punished.<sup>1</sup> It is in such circumstances and conditions that the real meaning of Imam al-Ṣādiq's (A.S.) *ḥadīth* comes to light that when Ibn Bukayr declares his fear of the Sultan and the secret informers and the border guards, the Imam (A.S.) tells him, "Ibn Bukayr! Do you not like that Allah may see you scared in our way? Do you not know that everyone who stands fear for our sake, Allah would give him shelter in the safe of the Divine Throne (*'Arsh*), and his companion under the Divine Throne would be Ḥusayn (A.S.), and Allah would secure him from any fear and discomfort on the Resurrection Day."<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, from the year 61/680, when Abā 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and his companions were martyred, until 132/749, when the shameful and tyrannical downfall of the Umayyads' rule took place, the pilgrims of his holiness were maltreated and thwarted in various ways. However, it was the Muslims' faith and belief in pilgrimage of the mausoleum of the Master of the Martyrs as well as the encouragement by the Shī'a Imams (A.S.) to this holy

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1. Kilid Dār, Dr. 'Abd al-Jawād, *Ta'rikh Karbalā wa Ḥā'ir-i Ḥusayn (A.S.)*, trans. Muḥammad Ṣadr Hāshimī, Thaqafī Bookstore, Isfahan, 1337 sh/1958, 60-61.

2. Ibn Qūlawiyya, Abū al-Qāsim Ja'far b. Muḥammad Qūlawiyya, *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, ed. Abd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī, Najaf, 1356/1937, 126.



mission that perpetuated the *sunna* of making pilgrimage – particularly to the Holy Shrine of Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.) – among the Muslims and prompted his ardent lovers to set out fearfully but eagerly to visit the blessed mausoleum of Imam Ḥusayn (A.S.) either alone or in groups, covertly or by night, and to make the real pilgrimage while heartily connecting to the Imam (A.S.) and practically following him.

### **Answering a Misconception**

Now that we learned the meaning of pilgrimage and its paradigms in the expanse of history, we would find out how shortsighted, uninformed, or spiteful and malignant are those who have regarded this passionate visitation as worship of the dead and intended to portray it as a superstitious and foolish act, neglecting the fact that human life would not come to an end after death and degeneration of the body.

Death is the gateway to a world where the real life exists.<sup>1</sup> “Death is not non-existence of man; it is development and transformation. It is leaving one realm of being and entering another... Man would not die an absolute death; it is losing a mode and achieving another mode and, like any other development, is a

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1. We read in āya 64 of *Sūrat al-‘Ankabūt*, ﴿...the abode of the Hereafter is indeed Life, had they known!﴾

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relative annihilation...”<sup>1</sup> In view of the Holy Qur’ān, death means being taken [being received]; i.e. at death, man is thoroughly and in his entire personality and reality delivered to the Divine agents<sup>2</sup> and they would receive him.”<sup>3</sup>

By this logic – which is believed by all religious people of the world – pilgrimage is not the worship of the dead but visitation of the living with the eyes of the heart and establishing a spiritual relationship with the one we have set out to pay pilgrimage to.

Besides the philosophical and scientific reasoning for the survival of the spirit or the soul, everyone knows in their inner nature and innate disposition that their “self” upon which human personality is dependent, is something non-material that stays the same during the life and constitutes our personality. It is this same part of our being that will remain eternal, after the death and decomposition of the body, with all the good and evil actions that it has acquired and incorporated as its

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1. Muṭahharī, Murtaḍā, *‘Adl-i Ilāhī*, Ḥusayniyya Irshād, Tehran, 1349 sh/1970, 12. For more information about discourses related to the reality of death and the answer to the misconceptions in this regard, see the above source, part 4 – death and mortality.
  2. For taking the soul, the Holy Qur’ān uses the word *tawaffā*, which means thoroughly taking something, and the erudite author of the book has referred to this same word.
  3. Muṭahharī, Murtaḍā, *Zindigī-yi Jāvid yā Hayāt-i Ukhravī*, Qum, Daftar-i Intishārāt-i Islāmī, 1362 sh/1983, 11.

faculties.<sup>1</sup>

These discourses are off the subject of the present book; therefore, it suffices to mention that this misconception reflects the lack of faith and impiety of the ones maintaining it, i.e., those who deny the eternity of spirit and the Hereafter and have to delve into it. Nevertheless, as the Holy Qur'ān has asserted and every Muslim believes it, those who have been killed in the way of Allah are not dead and annihilated; rather, they are alive and enjoying the special favor and blessings of the Lord.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, not only the Imams of Guidance (A.S.) and the Friends of Allah, but also the martyrs are alive enjoying Divine blessings and doing favor to those who come to visit them.

### The Wide Dimension of Pilgrimage

Believing that the spirit is immortal and death occurs in the body, and that the deceased ones,

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1. Faculty (*malaka*, pl. *malakāt*) is a firm attribute in the soul (Al-Khūrī al-Shartūtī al-Lubnānī, Sa'īd, *Aqrab al-Mawārid fi Fuṣḥ al-'Arabiyya wa al-Shawārid*, offset printed by Rashīdiyya.), a disposition and attribute that man has owned and has become part of his nature. It is these faculties that are man's existential assets in the worldly life, which are materialized for him in his life Hereafter, turning him happy or unhappy and creating for him the Paradise or the Hell.
  2. Q. 3:169-170; ﴿Do not suppose those who were slain in the way of Allah to be dead; rather they are living and provided for near their Lord, exulting in what Allah has given them out of His grace...﴾.

especially the holy spirits of the Prophets and our Infallible Imams (A.S.) as well as the martyrs, are aware of those who visit their graves and of the charitable gifts they offer, it is recommended to visit the graves of the faithful, in particular the Infallible Imams (A.S.), especially because these visitations are admonitory and educational, too. Furthermore, as we respect the religious leaders and scholars in their lifetime, it also behooves us to pay due respect to their spirit and personality after their death by visiting their mausoleums and burial places and express our gratitude for the invaluable services they had rendered in their lifetime. This has been the motivation behind pilgrimage in all ancient and modern nations, prompting the creation of the expansive pilgrimage dimension in the world and the construction of the religious sites and places of pilgrimage in all countries.<sup>1</sup>

### **Pilgrimage to the Graves and its Impact on the Psyche**

Humankind connects to the world around him through his eyes and ears; and whatever he hears or sees would leave a considerable impact on his psyche, and naturally would motivate him to love or to hate doing something. Given this natural state, in order to

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1. For more information, see: *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings, vol. 10.

remove heedlessness from the human soul and to prevent him from drowning in materialism and egocentrism, it has become a praiseworthy tradition and a preferable (*mustahab*) practice in Islam – which is an instructive school – to go to the cemeteries and visit the Muslims' graves because it has a considerable impact on remembering the eternal abode and tearing oneself away from the vanities of the material world and encouraging to good deeds and charitable service. When we see the eternal resting place of those who once were hard-working in earning livelihood and avaricious in achieving personal gains, how can we resist losing interest in love of the world and changing our direction in life? How deaf has to be the one who will not hear these silent souls crying out so deafeningly?

What eyes are there that cannot see the silence and serenity of those who used to create such rabble-rousing and mayhem all over the world? What happened to all those beauties and magnificence? Where is their dominion and glory? ...

This awareness and awakening in the process of visitation to the Muslims' graves cemeteries is general. However, these significant benefits are to be added to the outcomes achieved by making pilgrimage to the holy mausoleums of any of the Prophets and Imams of Guidance (A.S.), whose blessed tombs are places where God's Mercy and Grace descend; places where heartfelt

connection is made with those sacred souls who are living and present, and conscious of the pilgrim's affair.

### **The Imam's (A.S.) Place of Pilgrimage is the Place for Worship and Divine Knowledge**

Although places are equal in nature, because of the relation they acquire with the Exalted God (e.g. we know the mosque as God's house and the Ka'ba as Bayt Allah, i.e. house of Allah), they are sacred and respected. Thus, besides the Holy Makka and mosques, our Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.) house and the shrines of the Infallible Imams (A.S.) are noble and venerated places. They are landing spots for angels and the descending places for Divine Mercy, and specifically a place for worshipping and praising God and acquiring Divine knowledge.

In fact, the mausoleum of the religious leaders is a true evidence of the verse, ﴿In houses Allah has allowed to be raised and wherein His Name is celebrated, He is glorified therein, morning and evening, by men whom neither trading nor bargaining distracts from the remembrance of Allah, and the maintenance of prayer and the giving of *zakat*.﴾<sup>1</sup>

Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī, a Sunnī scholar, relates in his *Tafsīr Durr al-Manthūr* that a man asked the Apostle

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1. Q. 34:36-37.

of Allah (S.A.W.), “What houses (*buyūt*) are these?” His Holiness said, “The houses of the Prophets (A.S.)” Then Abū Bakr stood up and said, “O Apostle of Allah! Perhaps one of these houses is the house of ‘Alī and Fāṭima?” The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) answered, “Yes, one of the best of them.”<sup>1</sup>

According to what was said, the pilgrims of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Infallible Imams (A.S.) should hold the pilgrimage places in respect, observe the right behavior in pilgrimage, and be thankful for the love (*wilāya*) of the Infallible Imams (A.S.) and true knowledge about them.

### **Pilgrimage Places, the Focal Points of Every Cities**

As the Holy Ka‘ba was set up in dry and desolated land and was the first monotheistic place of worship for monotheism for people to turn to by the will of God, and finally was the birth place of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the place of Revelation, little by little developing into an international city and economic-devotional center. Similarly, a look at the history of development of such cities as Madīna, Najaf, Karbala, Mashhad, and Qum indicates that the blessed

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1. See: Al-Ṭabāṭabā‘ī, Al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn, *Al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 20 vols, Mu’assisat al-A‘lamī li al-Maṭbū‘āt, Beirut, 1393/1973 (Persian translation), 29/205. The above tradition is related in Shī‘ī interpretations, too.

sanctuaries have been so impressive that initially a village or a town, they have each turned into a large city with a dense population. A part of their inhabitants consist of those who in their first pilgrimage have delightedly found their wishes fulfilled so much so that they moved away from their hometowns and chose to settle down as neighbors of the Imam (A.S.). Obviously, this increase of population and traverse – all due to the Imam’s (A.S.) spiritual attraction – provided for the development and expansion of the pilgrimage city and creation of homes, hotels, airports, mosques, schools, hospitals and other living facilities, in which the Holy Shrine of the Imam (A.S.) is the focal point of urban development. What is meant here is to draw the attention to worldly and material benefits of pilgrimage and pilgrimage places as well as their spiritual benefits. Now, following is a description of “Mashhad al-Riḍā” an example of such place:

### **Historical Background of Mashhad al-Riḍā**

The present city of Mashhad, earlier called as Mashhad al-Riḍā (A.S.)<sup>1</sup>, reflecting the martyrdom

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1. For instance, Shaykh Ṣadūq (Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn b. Bābwayh, d. 381/991), has referred in his *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā (A.S.)* to the burial place of His Holiness as “Mashhad”, i.e. the place of martyrdom. Similarly, Abū al-Faḍl Bayhaqqī (d. 470/1077) has in two points in his

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place of His Holiness, is the center of the large Khurāsān province with a population of over two million. At the beginning of the third/ninth century, the central part of this great and developed city was “Sanābād”, in which the pleasant garden of the then governor – Ḥumaid b. Qaḥṭaba – was located. After the martyrdom of Imam ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.) in the end of Safar 203/September 818, he was respectfully buried by order of the Abbasid Caliph Ma‘mūn in a mausoleum in that garden – where the latter’s father, Hārūn al-Rashīd was also buried. With the passage of time as the Abbasid rule began to weaken and the Buyid dynasty emerged, several truths were uncovered and some miracles appeared that caused more hearts to be attracted to the holy grave of the Prophet’s (S.A.W.) grandson and thereby some real estate lands were endowed for the construction and expansion of the resplendent mausoleum. Thereupon, not only the name Mashhad prevailed over Sanābād and Nawghān and Ṭūs, but also Mashhad al-Riḍā turned into a metropolis and Nawghān is now one of its neighborhood and Sanābād one of its avenues, with the Golden dome of the Eighth Imam’s (A.S.) Holy

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*Tārikh* used the phrase *Mashhad ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā* (A.S.) and mentioned that some dignitaries have financially contributed to the construction of that mausoleum or been buried there (Bayhaqqī, Abū al-Faḍl Nuḥammad b. Ḥusayn, *Ta’rikh Bayhaqqī*, ed. Dr. Fayyāḍ, Ferdowsi University, Mashhad, 531, 712).

Shrine as its most significant and resplendent monumental landmark, which overshadows other monuments and buildings in the city.

Imam al-Riḍā's (A.S.) spiritual and scholarly illuminations and the events of the time, and above all, Divine providence were in such a way that the eighth radiating gem of Imamate would be buried far away from Madīna (his birthplace). His mausoleum is, thus, a safe haven and shelter for the Shī'as in the land of Khurāsān so that the lovers of Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) from all corners of the world can travel to Mashhad al-Riḍā and enjoy the grace and blessings of pilgrimage to that benevolent Imam (A.S.).

### **The Rules of Pilgrimage Etiquette**

*Let us implore God to guide us to proper conduct,  
One who lacks proper conduct is deprived of the grace of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>*

To keep proper conduct or ethical norm (*adab*) is to maintain the limits of everything and to practice good sociability; it is a characteristic specific to humankind, especially the well-mannered and discerning human beings.

It is clear that in observing *adab* and holding respect, the religious, scholarly, and social dignitaries are accorded more importance and priority, since

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1. Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlawī (Rūmī), *The Mathnawī*, trans. Reynold A. Nicolson, So'ad Publisher, Tehran, 1381/2002, vol. 1, p. 12.

respecting them is like dignifying knowledge and spirituality and honoring the Religion of God.

It is according to this rational and moral principle that social rules of conduct are created, religious traditions are devised among the world's nations, and special religious, national, and ethnic ceremonies are held for commemoration of the clerics and scientists.

Therefore, in order that the pilgrimage could be performed in the best way it has to follow some rules of conduct and fulfill some conditions to create the necessary spiritual benefits and not to end up as a useless practice.

What follows are the rules of conducts and instructions, related from our religious leaders, for a sound visitation of the one being visited as the object of pilgrimage, which have benefits that if one wants to avail, it is necessary to follow those rules and instructions. Otherwise, the pilgrimage would turn into a soulless practice and a pastime excursion or watching the walls and doors of the mausoleum and nothing else.

### **Rules of Conduct for Presence according to the Holy Qur'ān**

In order for the readers to find out that observing rules of conduct in the presence of the religious leaders is clearly stated in the Holy Qur'ān, we proceed to quote some verses that each include a (tradition) *sunna*

and an ethical norm (*adab*).

Of course, given the ideological principle that death for the Prophets, martyrs, and perhaps human beings does not mean annihilation, it becomes essential to apply these ethical norms in the sacred mausoleums of any one of them just as they were applied in their own houses and during their living time:

1. ﴿Indeed I am your Lord! So take off your sandals. You are indeed in the sacred valley of Tuwa.﴾<sup>1</sup>

According to this verse, Prophet Moses (A.S.), the great Prophet of God is commanded to take off his shoes for entering the region where he hears the Divine voice and it is the place of Revelation, and to enter bare-footed. Obviously, the ordinary people are all the more so required to take off their shoes, discard their personal interests, and humbly walk into the sacred sanctuaries.

2. ﴿O you who have faith! Do not enter the Prophet's houses unless permission is granted to you.﴾<sup>2</sup>

The above verse prohibits the faithful from entering the Prophet's houses<sup>3</sup> without asking for permission. Given the fact that they enjoy eternal life, observing rules of conduct in entering their mausoleums and reciting entrance permission (*idhn-i dukhūl*) are as necessary as asking permission for entering their

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1. Q. 20:12.

2. Q. 33:53.

3. What is meant by houses is what we call today as rooms.

houses.

3. ﴿O you who have faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet (S.A.W.), and do not speak aloud to him as you shout to one another.﴾<sup>1</sup>

This verse reminds us of the proper conduct in speaking before our Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), enjoining softness of voice in speaking, which is somehow a kind of respecting and honoring the addressee; and thus it is recommended not to read the *ziyaratnāma* out loud.

4. ﴿Indeed Allah and His angels bless the Prophet (S.A.W.); O you who have faith! Invoke blessings on him and invoke Peace upon him in a worthy manner.﴾<sup>2</sup>

### The Best Place for Invoking Blessings

What is noteworthy is that since Divine Grace is persistent and perpetual, His blessing and mercy upon the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) – who is the best of His creatures – is also perpetual,<sup>3</sup> and the present form of *yuṣallūn* (bless) implies that as well. Therefore, the salutation of the faithful to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), which follows the command of the Lord as per the above verse, is befitting to be continued.

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1. Q. 42:9.

2. Q. 33:56.

3. As it is not intellectually proper that the Absolute Bestower of Grace (*fayyāḍ*) cut off His Grace from the receiver and object of Grace.

Therefore, the pilgrimage prayers (*ziyārāt*) that are recited in the holy shrines of the Infallibles (A.S.) and most of which begin with *al-salāmu alayk* (peace be upon you), are in fact obeying the command in the above verse and an evidence to it. Thus, reciting pilgrimage prayer is not only innovation in religion, but in a sense is an implementation of the Exalted Allah's decree and acting according to the unequivocal verse of the Holy Qur'an.

The other point is that according to the traditions transmitted from the Sunnīs and Shī'as, when reciting *ṣalawāt* to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), his household is also to be included, which consists of the twelve Shī'a Imams (A.S.), who are infallible (*ma'ṣūm*) and indisputable (*manṣūṣ*).<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that the above-mentioned verse expresses the most important rule of conduct for being in the presence of the religious leaders and Divine

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1. For these traditions, see different books of interpretation such as *Al-Mizān*, 16/366; *Majma' al-Bayān*, 8/369. Now, following is the tradition quoted from al-Suyūṭī's *Al-Durr al-Manthūr* in *Al-Mizān* and the author of *Majma' al-Bayān* has related it with another chain of transmission from Shī'as: Ka'b b. Ujra says: [When the verse of *ṣalawāt* – 33:56 – was revealed] A man said, "O Apostle of Allah! We now know what invoking blessings upon you is; but what is invoking blessings upon your household?" The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said, "Say *Allāhumma ṣall-i alā Muḥammad wa Āl-i Muḥammad kama ṣallayta allā Ibrāhīm wa Āl-i Ibrāhīm innaka Ḥamīdun Majīd* (O Allah! Bless Muḥammad and the Household of Muḥammad, just as You blessed Abraham and the Household of Abraham. Verily you are Praiseworthy and Sublime)."

authorities, that is peace and blessings and asking for mercy from the Almighty Lord for them. Furthermore, as their heavenly spirits and sacred souls are eternally alive and present and receiving the endless mercy of the Exalted Truth, the mausoleum of each one of them is the best place and the transmitted pilgrimage prayers (*ziyārāt*) are the most expressive phrasings for fulfilling this salutation and veneration.

### Rules of Conduct for Pilgrimage

Now, we will explain and rewrite in contemporary language the most important rule for pilgrimage to the Infallibles (A.S.) that is to be observed in their pure and sacred thresholds and that our tradition experts have quoted in the introductions of the books of pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup>

1. Having performed minor and major ablutions (*wuḍū* and *ghusl*). It is generally implied from studying the chapter on the acts of devotion (*‘ibādā*) in Islamic jurisprudence that in this primordial ritual, purification is prior to act of devotion. This purification is achieved through major and minor ablution after the body is cleaned of impurities. Since outward acts have special impacts on human soul, external washing and

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1. Adopted from Qummī, Shaykh ‘Abbās, *Mafātiḥ al-Janān (Kulliyāt)*, Islāmiyya Bookstore, quoted in the introduction of Book of Pilgrimage – chapter three.

purification that should be carried out with the intention of proximity is effective in creating internal purity and spiritual joy as well as external cleanliness and removal of bad body odor.

2. Putting on clean and new clothing, which is better to be white in color; and perfuming the body except when making pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.).

3. Giving up idle and vain talk and avoiding disputes and hostile arguments.

4. Walking with dignity and calmly while going toward the sacred mausoleum, moving with humility and submissively and not paying attention to the surrounding so that one may gather the required concentration and presence of the heart for the pilgrimage.

5. Engaging one's tongue in remembrance (*dhikr*) and one's heart in God's Majesty by praising and glorifying the Exalted Creator. Also, showing gratitude to the leadership and guidance of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.) and his household (A.S.) by invoking blessings (*ṣalawāt*) upon them.

6. Asking for entrance permission: As soon as you arrive at the holy mausoleum and threshold of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) or the Imam (A.S.) you are to halt and ask for permission to enter, i.e. entrance permission, as God says, ﴿O you who have faith! Do not enter the Prophet's houses unless permission is



granted to you.)<sup>1</sup> It behooves the pilgrim to know the meaning of entrance permission and is able, by understanding it, to recall the spiritual stations and intellectual grandeur of the Divine authorities.

7. As for kissing and touching the doors of the shrine or the burial chamber (*darīh*), it is necessary to clarify that Islam is an inherent religion and its rulings are compatible with man's natural emotions and intellect. Obviously, one of the ways for expressing your interests in a friend, relative, or someone respectful in our view, is kissing them or their pictures or the things belonging to them. Therefore, kissing the doors and walls of sacred places intending to be blessed or to express our love to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Imams (A.S.) is a natural practice and an indication of fervent affection and commemoration of those dignitaries among the Almighty God's elect servants.

In fact, as the pilgrims in their enthusiasm to visit their respected and noble Imam (A.S.) turn toward his Holy Mausoleum and find no access to him in person, they display their passionate love and alleviate their inner sadness by kissing whatever is ascribed to his holiness. Then, how ignorant and passionless are those who regard such common veneration as impermissible, whereas they themselves do proceed to kiss the photo

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1. Q. 33:53.

and smell the shirt of their travelled son, or honor their friend's keepsake!

In addition to what we said, it is related from Ibn Ḥajar (one of the Sunnī scholars) that, "Some scholars have implied from the legitimacy of kissing the Black Stone (*ḥajar al-aswad*) that kissing whatever that is honorable – whether human or non-human – is permissible."<sup>1</sup> Anyway, except for prostration (*sajda* = touching one's forehead to the ground), which is done only for the Glorified God and is not permissible for other than the God Almighty, observing other courtesies and veneration is upright and credible.

8. When one sees the sacred mausoleum, before reciting the pilgrimage prayer, they should say *Allāhu Akbar*, acknowledging the greatness of the Exalted Allah. As some of our scholars have pointed out, the true reason behind *takbir* (saying *Allāhu Akbar*) before reciting the pilgrimage prayer is to prevent from appearance of a state of exaggeration or ignorance from the majesty of the Exalted Allah.

9. The unfamiliarity of the common people with the genuine Islamic rituals and traditions has created in most of them the presumption that pilgrimage means circling around the *zarīḥ* and touching and kissing it, so that if because of the large crowd they do not manage to do so, they would regard their pilgrimage as

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1. *Al-Ghadīr*, 153/5.

incomplete and become sad. Whereas, pilgrimage is accomplished through the pilgrim's standing in the presence of the God's authority.

In fact, the very heartfelt attention paid to the Imam (A.S.), the respect and salutation expressed to him, and the inner bondage made with him is regarded as the true pilgrimage. However, reciting the pilgrimage prayers is intended to create knowledge (*ma'rifa*) and such states and spirits as mentioned above.

Therefore, not circling around the sacred *zarīḥ* and rubbing one's hands on it, although desirable if done when it is not too crowded, does not do any harm to the very pilgrimage itself, especially since such a great dignitary figure as 'Allāma Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī has considered [the appropriateness of] circling around the *zarīḥ* as subject to deliberation.

10. If the pilgrims do not have an excuse for standing on their feet due to pain or weakness, they should recite the pilgrimage prayer while standing.

11. When reciting the pilgrimage prayer, they should stand facing the resplendent tomb and back to the *qibla*, and when finished, they should touch the *zarīḥ* with their cheeks and engage in supplicating and praying. Then, they should go to the upper part of the grave, stand facing the *qibla*, and pray.

12. Recite the *ziyāras* related from the Infallible Imams (A.S.) and avoid reciting the fabricated phrases made up by ordinary people.

### 36 □ Yearning to Meet

13. While reciting the pilgrimage prayer, they should not raise their voice, as per the verse quoted above.

14. They should perform two *rak'as* of prayers with the intention of pilgrimage and had better perform it at the upper part of the sacred tomb.<sup>1</sup>

15. After prayers, they should recite the transmitted supplications (the ones recommended by the Infallibles – A.S.), or what they remember to ask from the Exalted God for themselves, for their relatives, and for those to whom they are obligated.

16. They should recite the Holy Qur'ān and present the reward to the holy soul of the Imam (A.S.). The late 'Allāma Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī in his *Tuḥfat al-Zā'ir*, clearly states the preference of reciting the Holy Qur'ān in the mausoleum of any of the Imams (A.S.).

17. If the pilgrim enters the mausoleum at the time of the congregational prayer, he should first perform his prayers and then recite the pilgrimage prayer. Similarly, if in the middle of the pilgrimage the ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*) begins, it is preferable that he stops the pilgrimage and performs the congregation prayer.

18. During pilgrimage, the women are to observe dress code and choose their passage way and place of pilgrimage in a way that it does not cause them to

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1. Since the upper part of the Imam's grave is limited and the pilgrims are many, it behooves the pilgrims to leave the place after performing pilgrimage prayers for the rest of the pilgrims to get the blessing.

intermingle with men.

19. The pilgrim is to do good and give out in charity to the poor and those who have been desperate, especially to the honorable who have become destitute away from their homeland.

20. When the pilgrim received his spiritual bliss from the pilgrimage, he had better leave the holy mausoleum rather than sitting in a corner for resting and engaging in worldly or idle talk.<sup>1</sup>

### **Assessment and Self-improvement**

The ultimate goal of pilgrimage is self-purification, self-improvement, and preparation of the soul for acquiring knowledge about the Exalted Lord and His chosen friends (*awliyā*); and this goal is fulfilled through pilgrimage. Therefore, it behooves the pilgrims to engage in self-assessment after carrying out the above rules of conduct and reciting the transmitted pilgrimage prayers and to see what they have acquired in exchange for all the pain of the travel and bearing various expenses for the honor of entering the presence of the Imam (A.S.):

Has the Imam's (A.S.) charisma had any effect on

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1. For more information about the views of the Sunnī scholars concerning the rules of conduct of travel and pilgrimage to the Holy Prophet's mausoleum and its similarity to what was said above, see: *Wafā' al-Wafā'*, 4/1388-1413.

his heart so that his carnal desires have reduced and his love for the Imam (A.S.) has increased?

Has he found the power to quit sins and change his undesirable behavior and indecent habits?

Has he become dedicated and hard working in fulfilling his social duties and participating in the campaign against tyranny, blasphemy, and support of Islam and the Muslims?

Furthermore, has his knowledge about and love for the Guardians of Religion and the Infallible Imams (A.S.) increased after reciting the pilgrimage prayer?

Has he fully accepted the guardianship, rule, and judgment of the Imam (A.S.) over him?

What obligation does he consider himself obliged to in the time of occultation of the Lord of Time Imam al-Mahdī – May Allah hasten his reappearance?

Does he accept the guardianship of the just and aware jurist who is well-informed of the current events as a general deputy of the Lord of Time Imam al-Mahdī (A.S.)? If not, whom does he know as his guardian and leader in all social issues?

In sum, he should renew his thought and belief, speech and action, and his social and individual life; i.e. he should turn the weaknesses into strengths, darkness into light, and especially make effort in acquiring knowledge about the Imam (A.S.) and increase his love toward him. He should also accept his guardianship and leadership over himself and his family and truly

obey his commands and prohibitions to prove to be truthful and honest in what he has recited as pilgrimage prayer, rather than his heart denies his tongue and his action contradicts his speech.

## Section Two



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### Pilgrimage in the Mirror of Traditions

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**Importance of Pilgrimage in Traditions:** If respecting and honoring the scholars, the pious, those in the service of human beings, the ones making *jihad* in the way of Allah, and those who are truly perfect and competent human beings is essential by virtue of human reason and convention, then, undoubtedly, the Prophets (A.S.) and their spiritual heirs (*waṣī*) are the most entitled for this honoring. Similarly, pilgrimage is indeed such an honoring that is carried out by one's attendance in their mausoleum, salutation, and paying homage to their pure spirits and enumerating their virtues, a practice that is greatly emphasized in our religious traditions. This emphasis and recommendation is defined as reward (*thawāb*), which



we will explain as follows:

### Reward for Pilgrimage

﴿... and Allah with Him is the best of rewards.﴾<sup>1</sup>

As the payment we make in the daily transactions is an indication of the value and benefit of the task, so also in acts of devotion the reward is an indication of its spiritual benefits or social outcomes and the importance that Allah the Glorified gives to those acts of devotion in this respect. Therefore, these rewards mentioned in the traditions for pilgrimage reveals the magnificence and high status of the person to whom the pilgrimage is made as well as the decency of the pilgrim's action.

Furthermore, since mankind naturally seeks recompense for their actions, the satisfaction of this natural desire is provided by setting rewards (*thawāb*). Thus, the rewards quoted to be set for pilgrimage are good incentive and encouragement for most of the people to turn to pilgrimage and thereby the names of those Divine authorities may perpetuate eternally and as the torches of guidance give off light on the pinnacles of knowledge and faith.

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1. Q. 3:195.

### Deserving Reward

By virtue of reasoning and according to the legal texts, gaining reward from pilgrimage and other good deeds is not exaggerated and unchecked and is not merely achieved by some lifeless and insipid physical practices – like kissing the doors and walls and watching works of art of the mausoleums.

We said that fortuitous and casual movements lacking the presence of the heart and inattentive of the Imam (A.S.) is not regarded as pilgrimage at all; rather, it is sightseeing and not an act of devotion, and naturally not acceptable to the Exalted Allah and thus not deserving any reward. That is because pilgrimage and rather every sound and accepted act of devotion should be coupled with knowledge and according to the command of the lawmaker and with the intention of proximity to the Exalted God and free from showing off and personal gains.<sup>1</sup>

Such an act of devotion gradually leaves some impressions on human spirit and soul, transforms his undesirable characteristics, adorns him with moral virtues, and makes him close to the exemplar and paradigm that is before him, namely, the Imam (A.S.).

When these merits and accomplishments settle in his disposition, i.e. turn into a constant qualification in his soul, he will carry with him these existential

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1. ﴿Look! [Only] exclusive faith is worthy of Allah﴾ (Q. 39:3).

resources to the eternal abode and obtain a proportionate reward. This is what is meant by deserving to be rewarded and being worthy of the otherworldly blessings and favors.

It is related in a tradition that the litanies (*adhkār*), “*SubhanAllāh wa al-ḥamduli Allāh wa lā ilāha illAllāh wallāhu akbar*” (Immaculate is Allah; praise be to Allah; there is no god but Allah; Allah is the greatest) turn into trees in the Paradise, but the sins and corruptions turn these into fire and would burn them down.<sup>1</sup>

The Holy Qur’ān says, ﴿The day when every soul will find present whatever good it has done; and as to whatever evil it has done it will wish there were a far distance between it and itself.﴾<sup>2</sup>

It further says, ﴿So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.﴾<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the rewards of the Day of Resurrection, Ayatollah Murtaḍā Muṭahharī wrote:

“The punishment in the Hereafter is the materialization of worldly actions; the Paradise and the Hell are the very good and bad actions that will materialize when the veil is lifted in the Hereafter.

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1. See: Ḥurr ‘Āmili. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan, *Wasā’il al-Shr’a ilā Taḥṣīl Masā’il al-Sharī’a*, Beirut, 1391/1971, vol. 2.

2. Q. 3:30.

3. Q. 99:7-8.

Recitation of the Holy Qur'ān will take on a beautiful face and stands next to the person; the backbiting and irritating others will become food for the dogs of the Hell.

In other words, our actions have a terrestrial form that is transient and it is what appears in this world as speech or another action, and a celestial form that after emanating from us will never vanish and remains as our inseparable belongings and offspring.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, people most deserving the reward of pilgrimage and prayer are the ones who by persevering in these acts of devotion have achieved God-consciousness and purity of heart in His remembrance. They are the ones who have turned into refined and well-mannered Muslims who avoid sins, particularly sins related to the people's right so as the blessings and benefits of pilgrimage from their souls may not be effaced.

### **Pilgrimage and Renewal of Covenant with the Imam (A.S.)**

1. We start this discourse by a ḥadīth from among the luminous sayings of Imam 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā – upon whom be thousands of salutations and praises – whose scholarly radiance is much brighter than the sun

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1. *'Adl-i Ilāhī*, 153-157.

shining in Khurāsān<sup>1</sup> and giving light to the hearts of the Shi'as:

There is a pledge of allegiance to the Imam (A.S.) for his friends and followers. Fulfilling this pledge is perfect when their mausoleums are visited. So, if someone eagerly visits the Imams' [mausoleums] and affirms what they favor and desire, the Imams (A.S.) will intercede for them with God on the Day of Resurrection.<sup>2</sup>

Explanation: the first instruction of this valid ḥadīth is that pilgrimage is complementary to the fulfillment of the pledge that every follower has made to his Imam (A.S.), and in today's language, it is a vote of confidence for his spiritual leader and head of state who is appointed by God. With a little deliberation, we can figure out that the enthusiastic visitation of the Imam's (A.S.) mausoleum and the recall of their virtues and excellences while reciting the pilgrimage prayer is in fact a renewal of his affection and belief in Imamate, and a reminder of the duties that the pilgrim has

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1. Khurāsān means *mashriq* (east) i.e. the place where the sun rises, and it is the name of a well-known province, which is called so because it is located on the east of Fars and Iraq. (Muḥammad Ḥusayn Khalaf Tabrīzī, *Burhān-i Qāṭi'*; 5 vols. ed. Dr. Muḥammad Mu'īn, Amīr Kabīr.) Originally, Khurāsān had been Khurāyān, meaning, "where the sun rises".
  2. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, 10/253; *Bihār al-Anwār*, 100/116. Mr. 'Alī Asghar Farzāna has cooperated with me in compilation of the traditions, for which I hereby express my gratitude to him.

towards Allah's authority on earth.

The second instruction involves the specific state of mind that the pilgrim has to have, i.e. great willingness to visit the Imam (A.S.), which is of course the outcome of his knowledge of the Imam's (A.S.) various personality dimensions and the right knowledge of him. We can briefly introduce him as the God's vicegerent on earth,<sup>1</sup> the representative of the Creator among the people, and the justice-spreader Imam (A.S.) and leader who establishes justice.

The third instruction is the pilgrim's confirmation of what the Imam (A.S.) demands and cherishes. If we remember that the Imam (A.S.) do not have any wishes and demands other than the demands and pleasure of the Exalted God, we would conclude that the pilgrim has to seek Divine pleasure and obedience to that Exalted Essence.

In fact, the Imam (A.S.) will intercede for a pilgrim with such spiritual understanding.

2. Zayd Shaḥḥām says, "I said to Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.), 'What will be the reward for anyone who visits you [your tomb]?' The Imam (A.S.) said, 'It is like the one who visits the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.).'"<sup>2</sup>

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1. The narrator said, "I heard Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) saying, 'The Imams are the Almighty and Glorious Allah's vicegerents on earth (*Al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, Kitāb al-Ḥujja, 1/193).

2. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, 10/246; The importance and reward of visiting [the shrine

3. Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) related from the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) who said, “Whoever visits me or any of my children I will visit him on the Day of Resurrection and rescue him from the fears of that day.”<sup>1</sup>

### Pilgrimage to the Leader after Pilgrimage to the House of Allah

It is related in some traditions that after the completion of Hajj pilgrimage and remembrance of the sincere endeavors of Abraham (A.S.) is that afterwards the pilgrim should have the honor of visiting the Holy Apostle (S.A.W.) and the Imams (A.S.), too:

1. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar quotes the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) as saying, “Whoever performs Ḥajj and then visits my grave after my death, is like a person who has visited me in my lifetime.”

The late Allāma Amīnī has related this ḥadīth from 21 Sunni memorizers and experts of ḥadīth.<sup>2</sup>

2. Similarly, ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar quotes the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) as saying, “Whoever sets out to visit the House of God but does not visit me, has wronged me.”<sup>3</sup>

←

of] the Holy Prophet will soon be discussed.

1. *Wasā’il al-Shī’a*, 10/259.

2. *Al-Ghadīr*, 5/98-99.

3. *Ibid*, 5/100. This ḥadīth is mentioned in 9 books of the Sunni sources.

These two traditions –which have other versions as well – imply the great importance of pilgrimage to the Prophet of Mercy (S.A.W.) and a reason for the necessity of making pilgrimage to the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) and receiving grace and blessing from his mausoleum, just as from his house in his lifetime.

3. Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) said, “When one of you [Shī‘as] make Ḥajj pilgrimage, you should end your Ḥajj with pilgrimage to us, since this [pilgrimage] is the final part of Ḥajj.”<sup>1</sup>

4. The tradition that Abū Ḥamza al-Thumālī related from Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) clarifies the meaning of the traditions related in this regard and an explanation about the above-mentioned traditions:

Abū Ḥamza says, “While I was sitting with Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad al-Bāqir – Bāqir al-‘Ulūm (A.S.) – at the door of Masjid al-Ḥarām [in Makka] and watching the people circumambulating, he told me:

“O Abā Ḥamza! What are they commanded to do?”

“I did not know what to answer. Then, the Imam (A.S.) himself said:

Verily, they are commissioned to circumambulate the Ka‘ba [i.e. the house made of stone], then to come to us proclaim their (wilāya) to us.”<sup>2</sup>

Proclamation of Wilāya. First the time and place of

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1. *Bihār al-Anwār*, 100/139.

2. *Wasā’il al-Shī‘a*, 10/254.



this saying has to be taken into consideration, which are the House of God [Ka‘ba] and the time of performing Ḥajj pilgrimage, namely, the best of time and place. Politically speaking, it is the beginning of the Abbasid rule; the rule of those who called the Muslims to allegiance in the name of the household of ‘Alī (A.S.) and then treated the Imams (A.S.) and their pilgrims in the worst possible way. It is in such socio-religious milieu that Imam Bāqir al-‘Ulūm (A.S.) uses the massive presence of Muslims in the Masjid al-Ḥarā in Makka and makes an excellent remark that is the kernel of the Ḥajj rituals and the spirit of devotion: “Knowledge about the Imam (A.S.), cognition of the leader and the guide, and proclaiming his friendship and following him.”

It is likely that the demagogic propaganda of the despots in any era and the superficiality of the people who have been distanced from Divinely endowed scholars and Divine leaders, would gradually introduce the circumambulation around the Ka‘ba and the specific body movements as all the purpose of Ḥajj pilgrimage and would make people satisfied that they have performed the “devotional act”! Whereas, the bodily actions – even in prayers – are the signs, symbols, and allegories of esoteric knowledge and certain realities such as: expressing humility before the Worshipped, finding out the greatness of the Creator, distancing from arrogance and megalomania, self-

purification, helping the unity of the world Muslims, unity in devotional acts, promoting brotherhood and cooperation and solving each others' problems, assisting righteousness and piety, fending off tyranny and the tyrants, fighting against the intruders, rebels, and wealth-accumulators, and in a word, the sublimating the declaration of Monotheism (Tawḥīd) and unification of the Islamic creed.

Now, there arises the question as to who would act on these sublime doctrinal teachings? Who would have a sound understanding and can introduce them correctly? Would that be anyone except the insightful and well-informed guide? That is, the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.), Imam 'Alī, and his Infallible children (A.S.), which Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) phrases as “proclamation of wilāya” in their presence.

### **Pilgrimage to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Proximity to His Holiness**

We are starting this discourse with a *ḥadīth* related by 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar, which indicates the importance of pilgrimage according to the Sunni scholars.

1. The Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) said, “Whoever visits my grave, my intercession is guaranteed for him.”

The renowned scholar, 'Allāma 'Abd al-Ḥusain Amīnī, has mentioned 41 authentic Sunni references with the names and the death date of the authors who

have related the above *ḥadīth*.<sup>1</sup>

The Shī'as have also related the above-mentioned *ḥadīth* with almost similar wordings or with some addenda, which leaves no doubt concerning its authenticity.<sup>2</sup>

2. Our Infallible Imams (A.S.) have quoted the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) as saying, “Whoever visits my grave after my death is as those who migrated toward me in my lifetime. So, if you do not have the ability of pilgrimage [at close quarter], send salutations to me [from afar]; it will reach me.”<sup>3</sup>

### Tawassul and Seeking Intercession

﴿O you who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and seek the means of recourse to Him.﴾<sup>4</sup>

Among the esoteric rules of conduct for pilgrimage applicable to the presence in the Holy Mausoleum of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) and martyrdom places of

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1. *Al-Ghadīr*, 5/93-96; *Wafā' al-Wafā bi Akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafā*, 4/1336. After relating the *ḥadīth* from Dārquṭnī and Bayhaqqī, the author of the book – Nūr al-Dīn Samhūdī – writes, “Subkī has seen the tradition in authentic texts and authenticated the narrators.
  2. See: *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, chapter 2, 12-15; as well as other Shī'ī *ḥadīth* collections.
  3. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 14, *ḥadīth* 17. Samhūdī has narrated a tradition almost similar to the above meaning as follows: The Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) said, “Whoever visits my grave after my death is as those who visited me in my lifetime.” (*Wafā' al-Wafā*, 4/1341).
  4. Q. 5:35.

the Infallible Imams (A.S.) is seeking their intercession with the Exalted Allah and presenting one's request.

It is natural for someone to seek help from another for fulfilling his needs and to seek the intercession of someone who is well esteemed and close to the fulfiller of his needs. Similarly, the pilgrim engages in self-examination for self-improvement in the spiritual atmosphere of the sacred places and visualizes the past events of his life. Undoubtedly, the indecent and unfavorable scenes of his life would bring tears of remorse into his eyes, but he would not find a way to get rid of the aftermaths of his evil acts, except that he plead the Forgiving Lord to excuse his sins and erase the evil deeds and depravity from his records for the status and proximity that the one buried in the mausoleum enjoys with Him. Thus, the pilgrim blesses<sup>1</sup> his own retrogressive and sinful personality with the Seal of the Prophets (S.A.W.) or the Imams of Guidance (A.S.), who are the manifestations of Divine Mercy, close to God, and approved by Him, so that by this means – which the Merciful Allah has set aside – he may attract His mercy and forgiveness and get prepared for finding proximity to the Exalted Lord.

Therefore, generally speaking, not any kind of

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1. The above comment is stated with the literal meaning of *shafā'at* (i.e. intercession), whose root is *shafā'a*, meaning associating and joining of an inferior personality with a superior one (see: *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān*).

“intercession”, which is the “pleading” of those brought near to God (*muqarrabūn*) for fulfillment of the needs or forgiveness of the sins of a servant who has invoked them can be ethically regarded as condemned. What is condemned is the unlawful and illegitimate request or appealing to incompetent people for fulfilling that request.

Although looking for an intercessor and seeking intercession in this concept is not rationally and scripturally prohibited, but the Wahabis have unfortunately considered it as contradictory to the Unity (*Tawḥīd*) in devotional act (*‘ibāda*). The solution to this disagreement and the way to achieve reality in such religious issues is referring to the foremost and safest ideological resource of the Muslims, i.e. the Holy Book of Allah, considering all the verses revealed on this issue and employing all the interpretations of the learned scholars of the Holy Qur’ān and the Prophetic traditions. For the sake of brevity and due to the extensive resources,<sup>1</sup> we put forward just a brief account of the Qur’anic and exegetical evidence and say:

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1. For the verses in relation to intercession and the related exegetical discussions, see: Al-Ṭabāṭabā’ī, Al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn, *Al-Mizān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 20 vols., Mu’assisat al-‘Alamī li al-Maṭbū‘āt, Beirut, 1393/1973, vol.1, under the verses 47-48, *Sūrat al-Baqarah*. Besides, the Holy Qur’ān has approved the intercession that has been permitted by God: ﴿Who (is) that who mediates at Him, except with His permission?﴾ (Q. 2:255)

The erudite scholar Ayatollah Murtaḍā Muṭahharī (ra) has performed a scholarly research on intercession and given answers to the misconceptions of the opponents.<sup>1</sup> Following is a brief part of that well-reasoned discussion:

**All Intercession Belongs to God.** The basic difference between the true intercession and the false one is in that the true intercession starts from God and ends with the sinner, but in the false intercession it is presumed to be the other way round.... In the false intercessions, examples of which exist in the world, the intercessor has acquired his “being a means” from the sinner, since it is the latter who has evoked the means and caused to intercede. However, in true intercessions, which are rightly attributed to God’s provision (Divine means), the intercessor’s “being a means” is only with the permission of God....

The verses of the Holy Qur’ān that state it is not possible for the intercession to take place unless with God’s permission are concerned with this point; and in particular, there is an interesting and strange phrasing in this respect as follows:

﴿Say, “All intercession rests with Allah.”﴾<sup>2</sup>

**Tawḥīd (Monotheism) and Tawassul (Appealing for Help).** From what we have said we can deduce a very important and outstanding point in devotional monotheism. That is, when having recourse to and seeking intercession from someone, it is to be verified that it has been to and from someone whom God has appointed as a means. The Holy Qur’ān says, ﴿O you

1. See: *‘Adl-i Ilāhī*, 165-191.

2. Q. 39:44.

who have faith! Be wary of Allah, and seek the means of recourse to Him.<sup>1</sup>

In general, it is all right to seek recourse to means and seek means (*tasbīb*) given the fact that it is God who has created means and it is God who has made it a mediator and has wanted us to use these mediators and means. It has nothing to do with polytheism; rather, it is the very Monotheism (*Tawhīd*) and in this respect, there is no difference between the material and mental means, nor is there any difference between the external and spiritual means, either. However, the nuance is that in material means it is through experience and scientific experiment that one could find out what the means is, and in spiritual means it is to be figured out through the very religion via Revelation, the Scripture, and the Sunna.

Secondly, when one is invoking intercession, his attention has to be focused on God and through God to the means and intercessor, because as we said, the real intercession is that God has evoked the intercessor for intercession and the intercessor intercedes since He has wanted and conceded, contrary to the false intercession in which the attention is mainly focused on the intercessor in order to be efficient. Then, if the attention were genuinely focused on the intercessor and not through attention to God, it would be a devotion overshadowed by polytheism.... That is why the Almighty God has instructed the sinners to go to the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.) house and, while pleading God for forgiveness, ask him to plead forgiveness for them from God. The Holy Qur'ān puts it this way:

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1. Q. 5:35.

﴿Had they, when they wronged themselves, come to you and pleaded to Allah for forgiveness, and the Apostle had pleaded for forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah all-clement, all-merciful.﴾<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, the righteous act and piety alone cannot be relied on. As the Holy Apostle (S.A.W.) stated in his sermon in the latter days of his infallible life, “There is no Savior except one’s deeds and then Divine Mercy.

**Response to the Objections.** With the interpretation we made of the intercession for forgiveness, the answers to the objections with intercession are given as follows:

1. Intercession is in contradiction neither to devotional *Tawhīd* nor to the Unity of Divine Essence, because the intercessor’s mercy is nothing but a ray of God’s Mercy; and the intercession and mercy are actually emanated and resulted from God.
2. As belief in God’s forgiveness does not cause insolence and boldness (to commit sin) and simply creates hope, so also belief in intercession does not contribute to and encourage committing sins. Paying attention to the fact that forgiveness and intercession are proclaimed to be contingent upon Divine providence and God’s pleasure clarifies that the efficacy of this belief is so extensive that it delivers the hearts from despair and constantly keeps it in fear and hope of God.
3. Intercession is of two types: false and true (or sound), and the reason why in some Qur’ānic verses intercession is known to be rejected while in others it

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1. Q. 4:64.



is approved is that there are two impressions on intercession, and the Holy Qur'ān intends to direct the minds away from false intercession toward the true one.

4. Intercession is not in contradiction with the action itself, because action is regarded as receptive cause and Divine mercy as the efficient cause.

5. In the true intercession, there is no conception as to God being influenced, because true intercession is a descending trend.

6. There is no exception and discrimination in intercession and forgiveness, because God's Mercy is limitless. Deprivation is on the side of the receiver as the difference between capabilities (of the receivers) is essential and a requirement for the world order.

**The Reward for the Pilgrimage of Amīr al-Mu'minīn  
'Alī (A.S.) and the Construction of the Imams' (A.S.)**

**Mausoleum**

1. Wahab al-Baṣrī said:

I entered Madīna and arrived in Imam al-Ṣādiq's (A.S.) presence and told him:

“May I be your ransom! I arrived in your presence, but I did not visit (made pilgrimage to) the tomb of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.).”

The Imam (A.S.) said, “How badly you acted! Were it not that you are definitely one of our followers (Shī'as), I would not look at you. Do you not visit the one whom the Exalted God and the angels visit?”

I said, “May I be your ransom! I did not know that.”

He said, “Know that Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.) is indeed superior to all Imams (A.S.) in the sight of Allah.<sup>1</sup>”

2. The Apostle of Allāh (S.A.W.) said, “O 'Alī! Whoever visits me in my lifetime or after my death, or visits you in your lifetime and after your death, or visits your two sons – Ḥasan and Ḥusayn – in their lifetime

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 38.

or after their death, I guarantee to rescue him from the fears and hardships of the Resurrection Day so much as I promote him to my own rank.<sup>1</sup>

3. Abū 'Āmir, the preacher from Ḥijāz said:

I arrived in Imam al-Ṣādiq's (A.S.) presence and told him:

“What is the reward of someone who visits the tomb of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.) and endeavors in making his mausoleum prosperous?”

The Imam (A.S.) said, “O Abā 'Ammār! My father related from his father who related from his grandfather Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (A.S.) narrating to him that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said to 'Alī (A.S.):

“I swear to God, that you will be killed in Iraq and buried there.”

I said, “O Apostle of God! What would be the reward for the one who visits our tombs, makes it prosperous, frequent it, and keep it up?”

The Prophet (S.A.W.) told me, “O Abā al-Ḥasan! Verily God has made your grave and those of your children a superior piece of Paradise and an extent of its extensions. God has indeed made the hearts of the noble among His creatures and His selected servants inclined towards you. These chosen tolerate every persecution and abasement for your sake, flourish your

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1. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, 10/257. Similar to this *ḥadīth* is also related in *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 100/141 and *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, p. 11.

mausoleums, and frequently visit your graves for finding proximity to God and for the love and affection they have for His Apostle.”

“O ‘Alī! My intercession is dedicated to them; they enter the Pond of Kawthar,<sup>1</sup> and these are the ones who are my pilgrims in Paradise tomorrow.<sup>2</sup>”

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1. Kawthar is a pond in Paradise and is also interpreted to be any “plentiful goodness” such as the great number of the Holy Prophet’s progeny and his followers as well as abundant knowledge. For more information on this issue, see: Sharī‘atī, Muḥammad Taqī, *Tafsīr Nuwīn*, Shirkat-i Sahāmī-yi Intishār, 1346 sh/1967, 355-363; Fayḍ Kāshānī, Muḥammad b. Al-Murtaḍā also known as al-Muḥsin, *Al-Ṣāfi fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān*, 5 vols. Mu’assisat al-A‘lamī li al-Maṭbū‘āt, Beirut, 1402/1981, 857.

2. *Wasā’il al-Shī’a*, 10/298 slightly abridged.

## **The Importance of and Reward for the Pilgrimage to Sayyid al-Shuhadā's (A.S.) Mausoleum**

**Introduction.** Although our religious leaders and the pure household (*'itrah*) of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) were all martyred – as we read in their pilgrimage prayers – and history of Shī'ism has from the beginning been written in the blood-stained script of martyrdom, the way Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (A.S.) was martyred was so cruel, tyrannical, heart-rending, brutal, and sorrowful that his name found an eminent and lofty status in the list of the Muslim martyrs.

On the other hand, the true intention, divine motive, and self-sacrifice of Abā 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and his companions and relatives, and His Holiness' opposition and resistance against Yazīd's infidel and usurping rule, and other advantages of this martyrdom were so great that the Imam (A.S.) was named as Sayyid al-Shuhadā (the Master of the Martyrs). Thus, the terms "martyrdom" and "martyr" found a new meaning with the holy uprising and *jihād* of His Holiness.

Upon the sorrowful martyrdom of Imam al-Ḥusayn

(A.S.), pilgrimage began to flourish again and the pilgrims to His Holiness' mausoleum found a sublime status and a heavenly countenance; Karbala turned into a source of blessing toward which the noble-spirited would face and the noble sanctuary of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) was favored by the God of the martyrs, comparable only to the noble Ka'ba.

What follows portrays the importance and the great emphasis placed on the pilgrimage to the mausoleum of Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.) and its reward.

1. It is related from Abū Ja'far Bāqir al-'Ulūm (A.S.) who said:

“Enjoin our Shī'as to visit the tomb of Ḥusayn (A.S.), as it is obligatory upon any believer who admits the appointment of al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) to Imamate by the Almighty and Glorious God.<sup>1</sup>

Given what we know about the greatness of Imam Ḥusayn's (A.S.) martyrdom, the reader is not to be amazed to learn that of making pilgrimage to His Holiness is obligatory.

2. Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) said:

“If one of you makes Ḥajj pilgrimage all his life but he does not make pilgrimage to Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), he has renounced a right of the rights of God and His Apostle (S.A.W.), because the right of Ḥusayn (A.S.) is an obligation preordained on every Muslim by

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 121.

God.”<sup>1</sup>

3. Umm Sa‘īd Aḥmasiyya quotes Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) as saying to her:

“O Umm Sa‘īd! Do you visit tomb of Ḥusayn?”

I said, yes. Then he told me:

“Do visit him, as the pilgrimage to the Ḥusayn’s (A.S.) tomb is obligatory for men and women.”<sup>2</sup>

According to the above *ḥadīth*, paying pilgrimage to Sayyid al Shuhadā (A.S.) is incumbent and obligatory on women, too.

### **Fearful Pilgrimage**

Pilgrimage to Sayyid al Shuhadā (A.S.), just like mourning for him, is a Divine practice that was very desirable and indispensable in view of the Apostle of God (S.A.W.) and the Infallible Imams (A.S.). Thus, it is so highly emphasized and encouraged that even when the tyrannical rulers posed serious problems for the pilgrims, they were to carry it out. It is these emphases that has made the Shī‘as attracted to the holy sanctuary and purified mausoleum of Abā ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) with facination, to the extent that constant pilgrimage to his Mausoleum has never been ceased since his martyrdom – despite all the barriers and hurdles in its way – and this unbreakable spiritual

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1. Ibid, 122, *ḥadīth* 4.

2. Ibid, 122, *ḥadīth* 3.

cord has always bound the hearts of the faithful to the noble mausoleum of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.).<sup>1</sup>

### The Angels' Pilgrimage

According to the Qur'ānic principle that the Perfect Man is the vicegerent of Allah on earth and the representative of God in this world and superior to the angelic beings, the angels eagerly visit the purified mausoleum of Abā 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and get blessed, as it is quoted from Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) who said:

“Husayn's (A.S.) grave is a garden of the gardens of paradise with an area of twenty cubits (*dhirā'*)<sup>2</sup> by twenty cubits, from where there is the *mi'rāj* (ascension) to Heaven. All the chosen angels and prophets invoke God to grant them the pilgrimage of the mausoleum of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.); [permission is granted to] a group of them who descend and the group from them (who have performed the pilgrimage ascend to the heaven.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, the angels – as spiritual beings – ask mercy and forgiveness from God for the pilgrims of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.).<sup>4</sup>

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1. For the traditions related in this respect, see: *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 116, 125.

2. An ancient unit of length, equal to the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, approximately 43-56 cm.

3. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 114, 115.

4. *Ibid*, 119, five traditions are narrated in this regard.



## A Discussion Concerning the Value of Forgiving Sins

The theme brought up in many traditions related about pilgrimage to the Infallible Imams (A.S.), especially Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), is forgiving sins. Perhaps this valuing and rewarding does not display its real importance to those who are unfamiliar with the Islamic knowledge, in such a way that it may sometimes create misconceived questions in their minds such as, “What is sin that forgiving it is of such importance?”

The brief answer is based on the fact that we should already accept the Islamic ideological principles, according to which man is a wise, intelligent, thoughtful, and possessing a certain degree of freewill.<sup>1</sup> This man has an All-Wise and Merciful Creator that has created him according to His Wisdom and Mercy to uplift him to his deserved perfection and to bless him in His grace and compassion. However, achieving perfection and enjoyment of such grace and

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1. Although man is not obliged in unnatural issues, his freewill is limited and specified, that is to say, “There is no determination nor freewill; rather, there is an intermediate position.” For more information about the guidelines of the Holy Imams (A.S.) on this complicated intellectual problem, see: Al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, *Uṣūl Kāfi*, 4 vols. trans. And commentary Dr. Sayyid Jawād Muṣṭafawī, Daftar-i Nashri Farhang-i Ahl-i Bayt, Tehran, (Chapter on: *Al-jaqbr wa al-qadar wa al-amr bayn al-amrain*), 1/215-224.

compassion is not perfunctory and fortuitous. The Wisdom and Justice of the Exalted God demands that His best of creatures [i.e. man] be tried in different stages of his life in various crucibles to find out how he would react in different circumstances and how he would use his existential assets – i.e., intellect, knowledge, freewill, and the executive power that he possesses – in order to be deserving reward or punishment. Nevertheless, Divine trial here is not like the tests that human beings give to figure out the degree of knowledge of others or their quality of action; rather, the Divine trial is intended to actualize the potentials that are hidden in every person, leading to the emergence of human personality.

In other words, there appears a dilemma for everyone in his lifetime in which he has to choose between two ways set before him. All that matters is this choice. The crucial moment is when he thinks, evaluates, reckons, and looks into the future, to step onto one of the two ways. Is it a way that is for the good of the people or his personal benefit? Is it a way that contains fleeting pleasures and carnal joys or the exalted desires and spiritual perfections?

It is in this stage that sins and rewards play a very pivotal and significant role, because the Wisdom and Justice of the Exalted God demands that the good deeds and rewarding actions prepare the way for attracting God's pleasure and Divine Grace for further

guidance, just as the evil acts, violation of the rights of one's fellow human beings, carnal desires, and pleasure-seeking – and in one word, committing sins – paves the way for losing blessings, being forsaken and left to oneself, and encountering various predicaments in this world and the Hereafter. This is one of the most important principles of the Holy Qur'ān's teachings.<sup>1</sup>

Although Allah's authority over human beings is fully completed and there have always been Prophets and their successors (*waṣī*) around for their guidance in any period of time, and the intellect and common sense have been as inner prophets and guides to all mankind, yet, the animal nature, the carnal desires, and the pleasure-seeking of human beings force them towards sins, violation of the rights of their fellow human beings and wronging themselves and others. These sins produce two definite reactions: one in human society and environment, which causes social corruption, oppression, persecution, and violation of the rights of the fellow human beings. The other one is the inner reflection created in soul and heart of the sinful and

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1. The Word of Allah declares man as responsible for his actions and views the worldly and otherworldly punishment or reward as the natural consequence and materialization of one's deeds; like the following verse, ﴿That is because Allah never changes a blessing that He has bestowed on a people unless they change what is in their own souls, and Allah is all-hearing, all-knowing﴾ (Q. 8:53). ﴿That is because of what your hands have sent ahead, and because Allah is not tyrannical to the servants.﴾ (Q. 3: 182; 8:51).

criminal person, which we refer to as the hardness of the heart, melancholy, and ruthlessness. Whether in the outer world or in the mind and the inner world, sins create disturbances and debasement, because they cause corruption in the society and create various types of crimes and abnormalities. They also impair the ground for acceptance of truth, rightfulness, and sound recognition in the person – e.g. the youth who possesses a God-given sound innate disposition – and turns the sinner into a dark-hearted, illogical, and deceptive person. These are realities that are represented both in transmitted doctrine (*naql*)<sup>1</sup> and intellect (*‘aql*) and confirmed in the psychology of delinquency. Furthermore, a brief look at the life, behavior, and the social life of the great reformers and notorious criminals of the history clearly and sensibly indicates that the good and evil actions leave noticeable impact on human psyche and behavior, as much as it leads this wonderful creature and prodigy of all existence on two sides of good and evil, dignity and meanness, virtue and depravity, and obedience and disobedience.<sup>2</sup> Why should it not be as such, whereas

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1. *Surat al-Rūm*, verse 10, ﴿Then the fate of those who committed misdeeds was that they denied the signs of Allah and they used to deride them.﴾.

2. We do not mention historical figures such as Nero, Attila, Genghis, as examples; rather, we mention people such as Saddam, the dictator, who was a typical example of atrocity, massacre, and destruction in its most brutal form. Does such a repulsive and evil person understand such

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the world is the arena for cause and effect and action and reaction and that man is mostly impressionable and flexible? Where the combination of elements and their actions and reactions cause changes in nature, how would it be possible that man's conscious and voluntary actions may not be effective in an individual and a group and not produce an ugly or beautiful, useful or harmful outcome? Divine Wisdom and Justice demand that all our actions or even intentions be effective and have repercussions, some of which we have observed in our lives. It is truly said that:

*Never be negligent of the Punishment for your actions;  
As wheat grows out of wheat and barley out of barley.*

Therefore, it is clarified that what ominous and detrimental outcomes "sins" will have. Forgiveness of sins here means removing these negative effects off the sinner's soul, effacing the impurities from the heart of the wrongdoer who has been awakened and repented and wishes to bow his head to God's commands.

Pilgrimage to the Infallible Imams (A.S.), being in the presence of those close associate of Allah, and pleading with them are among the factors that prepare the ground for the mercy and forgiveness of the Compassionate God and makes the repentant pilgrim befitting forgiveness and purification from the impurities.

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← concepts as justice, compassion, God, and the Day of Resurrection, at all?

The last point to make is that forgiveness of the sins, purity of the heart, and earning rewards – and similar phrases – are not merely empty terms with illusory meanings; rather, they are achievable realities that if fulfilled, their impact will be observed in the pilgrim. Then, not only himself but also others would notice his high morale and good deeds; unless until such impacts are not seen in the person, there is no certainty that his pilgrimage and forgiveness have been accepted.

### **The Importance of Recognition of the Imam (A.S.)**

The true pilgrimage and the great rewards resulting from it in fact takes place in case it conforms to the conditions mentioned in *aḥādīth* and the observance of its external and internal rituals. The most important condition narrated in the traditions concerning pilgrimage is “recognition of the rightfulness of the Imam (A.S.)” and knowing his lofty terrestrial and heavenly status. This, of course, would not be achieved unless the Imam (A.S.) is taken into consideration in his existential entirety rather than in a couple of his personality dimensions.

The significance of our Infallible Imams (A.S.), who are the successors appointed by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), is in that they concurrently enjoyed a strong spiritual and heavenly dimension and in this position were always envisioning Divine Beauty and cherishing the Grace of the Lord, fulfilled their social and didactic

duties, undertook the training and education of the talented, and made the necessary efforts in establishing Divine Sovereignty and implementation of the precepts of the Holy Qur'ān in society.

Such comprehensive and real knowledge (*ma'rifa*) about the Imam's (A.S.) personality demands the cognition of the right that he has over his followers and pilgrims. The first right of the Imam (A.S.) over his follower is that they know him as the one whose obedience is obligatory (*muftariḍ al-ṭā'a*) upon them; i.e. regard his obedience as essential, listen to his words and accept his teachings, and know that this is one of the most important innate rules of conducts and the end result of his recognition. Now, here is a tradition on the value and reward of such a pilgrim.

'Abd Allāh b. Maymūn Qaddāḥ said he asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.):

“What is the reward of the one who comes to visit the holy mausoleum of Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (A.S.), while being aware of his right, without disobeying [his commands] and showing vanity?”

His Holiness (A.S.) replied:

“For such a pilgrim, [rewards equal] a thousand approved Ḥajj pilgrimages and a thousand faultless 'Umra pilgrimages are written [in his record of deeds]; and if he is ill-fated, he will turn prosperous and well-

ending and will always be embraced in Divine Mercy.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Yearning for Pilgrimage to Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.)**

The issue being dealt with here is pilgrimage; however, pilgrimage to the Master of the Martyrs and the chosen among the free-spirited of the world cannot be separated from the tragedy of his martyrdom and his martyrdom is not apart from his love for the Exalted Worshipped One. Thus, the story of His Holiness Abā ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) cannot be analyzed apart from the component of love. However, to my opinion this love is nothing but “faith”, because when love is directed towards the spiritual Beloved or Divine Object of love, it is the very “faith” that is intermingled and reinforced with great passion, emotion, and deep affection. In other words, it is the religious belief and contentions that is accompanied with purified sentiments and lofty human compassion, permeated in the heart, and the heart is attached to it, which we call “faith”.

In examining the traditions about pilgrimage, we encounter some traditions that talk about “yearning to visit” and the “pilgrim’s loving kindness”. It is true that the pilgrimage to the pioneer of the Divine love may

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 145, *ḥadīth* 3.



not be performed except by yearning passion toward His Holiness; and it is this same longing that is a means to create “love of God” in the hearts of the pilgrims for placing them among those whom the Noble Qur’ān describes as, ﴿... the faithful have a more ardent love for Allah...﴾<sup>1</sup> Following are some traditions in this respect:

1. It is related from Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) that, “Whoever wishes to have his residence in Paradise, should not give up the pilgrimage to the *mazlūm* (the tyrannized one).” Abū Baṣīr, the narrator of this *ḥadīth* said. “I asked who he was.”

The Imam (A.S.) said, “Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī, the owner (*ṣāhib*) of Karbalā. Whoever gets the honor to enter his presence while longing to visit him and performs this pilgrimage for the love of the Apostle of God (S.A.W.), Fāṭima (A.S.), and Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī (A.S.), God will seat him at a table of food (*mā’ida*) from the Paradise having food with them while other people are being called to account [for their acts].<sup>2</sup>

2. It is related from Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) that, “Whoever wants to know whether he is an

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1. Q. 2:165. The translation of the whole verse is as follows, ﴿Among the people are those who set up compeers besides Allah, loving them as if loving Allah but the faithful have a more ardent love for Allah though the wrongdoers will see, when they sight the punishment, that power, altogether, belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment.﴾

2. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 137, *ḥadīth* 2; also 141.

inmate of Paradise or not, he is to present our love to his heart and soul, then if they accept it he is faithful; and whoever loves us he should [necessarily] be willing to [perform] the pilgrimage of Ḥusayn (A.S.). Thus, the one who is the pilgrim of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), we, the Ahl al-Bayt know him as our friend and he is an inmate of Paradise; however, the one who is not a pilgrim of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) is deficient in his faith.<sup>1</sup>

3. Given the fact that the Exalted Creator has *ḥubb* (love) and some affairs are *maḥbūb* (beloved) to Him and some are *makrūh* (detested) and unpleasant, we quote the following *ḥadīth*, which opens the way to solving some problems concerning the spiritual value and excellence of the “holy premises” or the sacred soil of Imam al-Ḥusayn’s (A.S.) tomb:

Abū Hāshim Ja‘farī says:

“I entered the presence of Abū al-Ḥasn ‘Alī b. Muḥammad – al-Naqī – (A.S.), as he had fever and was sick.”

“The Imam (A.S.) told me, ‘O Abā Hāshim! Send one of our freed slaves (*mawālī*) to Ḥā’ir (tomb of Imam al-Ḥusayn’s – A.S.) to call God and pray for me.”

“When I left his presence, I encountered ‘Alī b. Bilāl. I told him what Imam al-Ḥādī (A.S.) had told me

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1. Ibid, 193, *ḥadīth* 4.

and told him to be the one who should go to Ḥā'ir. He said, 'I would obey [what the Imam (A.S.) had ordered] but I say that the Imam (A.S.) is definitely superior to Ḥā'ir, because he is as someone who is in Ḥā'ir and his own prayer is superior to the prayer that I offered for him in Ḥā'ir.'

'I informed the Imam (A.S.) of what 'Alī b. Bilāl had told me. He told me to tell him: 'The Apostle of Allah was superior to the House of Allah (Ka'ba) and the Black Stone, but he would turn around the Ka'ba and touch and kiss the Black Stone.<sup>1</sup> Verily, for the Exalted God there are some distinguished pieces of land (*buqā'*) on which He wishes prayers to be offered and answer the prayers of the those who pray there [and grant their wishes]. One of these pieces of land is the *ḥā'ir* of Ḥusayn (A.S.).<sup>2</sup>

Yes, the holy *ḥā'ir* of Abā 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) is a shrine to which the Exalted Allah has given the advantage that a prayer is answered and the care and grief is removed there. Why should not it be so, whereas that noble Imam (A.S.) has made the greatest sacrifice in the way of Allah's religion? That is because, it was his uprising that disgraced the tyrannical and rebellious rule of the Umayyads and prevented the total

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1. i.e. *istilām al-ḥajar*, meaning to rub the stone with one's hands or lips (*Ghiyāth al-Lughāt*).

2. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 274, chapter 90. This tradition has been related in two other ways in this same chapter.

distortion of the Holy Qur’ān’s precepts – especially in the issue of caliphate – and this is a kind of reward to His Holiness by the All-grateful God, as expounded below:

One of the Exalted Creator’s attributes is the “All-grateful” (*Shakūr*), that is, he greatly rewards the sincere acts of his servants and thus appreciates and “thanks” His pious and truly sincere servants.

The attribute *Shakūr* demands that the innocent martyr who made a matchless sacrifice and gave up all his possessions in the way of his Beloved with absolute sincerity and devotion to be rewarded deservedly; a reward befitting the greatness and expansion of Divine Mercy and the attribute *Shakūr* rather than being suitable for that sacrifice. This, in fact, is the reward for the excellences and advantages that the “pilgrimage”, the “pilgrim”, and the “pilgrimage place” of the Master of the Martyrs (*sayyid al-shuhadā*) has and is mentioned in traditions.

Interestingly enough, the Merciful God has regarded such reward as a right (*ḥaqq*)<sup>1</sup> for the pilgrims of the

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1. In two traditions this right is phrased by *ḥaqqun ‘alā Allā*, i.e., a right upon Allah. (*Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 312, *ḥadīth* 2; and 168, *ḥadīth* 5). To my opinion, such phrasings are similar to the statement in *Sūrat al-An‘ām*, verse 12, ﴿He has made mercy incumbent upon Himself.﴾ in which God has made mercy incumbent upon Himself, otherwise no one can dare demand any rights from God for himself! All man has in his possession belongs to his Lord.

mausoleum of Imam Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (A.S.) and promised to fulfill it. Verily, how kind and loving is our Creator and how negligent and forgetful of His blessings are we! How prepared is the means for attracting Divine mercy and forgiveness, yet how ignorant we are!

### Seeking Healing from the Sanctified Soil of the Master of the Martyr’s (A.S.) Tomb

Among the advantages that the sanctified tomb of Imam Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (A.S.) has is that the Exalted God has provided healing in the soil of his tomb. To elucidate this issue we would relate the following *ḥadīth* from among the various traditions narrated in this regard and then explain it.

The narrator of the *ḥadīth*, Ibn Abī Ya‘fūr, says he told Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.):

“Someone takes soil from the tomb of Ḥusayn (A.S.) and benefits from it [in healing], and another takes from it and does not enjoy any benefit. The Imam (A.S.) said, ‘No! I swear by God other than whom there is no god that there is no one who believes that God would provide him benefit by means of that soil, unless God would make it a means for his benefitting from [healing by] it.’<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 274, *ḥadīth* 1.

As it is clearly stated in the above *ḥadīth*, the main condition for using the sanctified soil of Abā ‘Abd Allāh’s tomb is belief in its healing power. This same belief – along with the impact of the psyche on the body – would help treatment.

However, what is worth mentioning and every monotheist believes in it is the fact that influence and effect are from God. The effect that the medicinal herbs and the chemical medicines have on the body is not from their producer who combines them or who has discovered their properties. Then, what is the role of the pharmacologists and physicians?

The answer is that their role is to discover the secrets of nature, which they achieve after doing various researches and, in itself, is an important and appreciable endeavor.

Therefore, with a little attention and fairness, we would understand that the Creator of all the properties and effects of the things and the healer of all the pains and maladies is only God; and that the physicians, the pharmacists, and the medicines are all means and instruments. Moreover, of course, they are essential in the specific order of this world – which is the world of means.

Yes! One is to enjoy a monotheistic intuition to be able to go beyond the superficial means in order to see the Cause of the causes. Contemplation and breaking the fabricated idols in one’s mind, is the prerequisite

for this intuition. Do we really have the power for such an endeavor?

### **A Discussion about Weeping for Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.)**

Among the issues worth mentioning in relation to the pilgrimage to Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and related in traditions is weeping for that Holy Imam (A.S.). Several issues are to be explained in this respect:

1. Weeping and laughing are natural human emotions and are among man's passive states, which happen along with some preludes of sorrow or joy and delight and follow these two emotions. Thus, they are rarely subject to command and prohibition, i.e., legal obligation. Whatever of good and evil and the limits of laughing and weeping related in religious teachings and ethical instructions are connected with this same preludes and their psychological motivations, which represent our sound or corrupt beliefs and attachments and indicate human personality and character, as it is said, "you are what you are concerned with."

2. Weeping and laughing are windows to the dark corners of our souls, because these two "passive" emotions represent an action motivating them. Following examples explain the above.<sup>1</sup>

We know that weeping requires psychological

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1. Since the main topic here is weeping, we would avoid talking and giving examples about laughing.

instigator. This instigator typically includes sorrowful events such as death of one's beloved son or other loved ones, or it can be an illness, loss of property, and other misfortunes.

Weeping may be for being separated from a pious friend or a learned advising scholar, i.e. those who have been a source of intimacy and friendship or training and educating for us. This motive appears only in those who seek perfection and step onto the way to self-purification and not the general public.

3. Sometimes great sorrow and weeping find a superior and more important motive, and that is when it is for the martyrdom and the tragedy befallen one's Imam (A.S.) and ideological leader. The same is true for the loss of a community's intellectual and political leader, on whose guidelines one's intellectual and social life is dependent.

4. Sometimes the prelude of weeping is enthusiasm and delight and not sorrow and sadness, like when one bursts into tears upon first seeing his or her child returning from a long journey, albeit a cheering weep; or when on one's first visiting of the Imam's (A.S.) mausoleum one sheds tears of happiness and their hearts leap with joy.

Now we proceed to carry out a critical assessment of weeping – i.e. its psychological motives that enlighten human character.

With a little deliberation, we find out that what



causes weeping is either selfishness and self-love or seeking excellence and love of perfection and benevolence for the public:

1. Our sorrow for the loss of our child or suffering a pain or material loss is in fact due to our losing personal possessions and individual attachments, which in its higher and appreciated level is manifested in affection for one's competent friend or spiritual master. The sorrow for separation from a pious friend or a master of ethics may be due to one's interest in piety and morality; so, its ethical value depends on its motive, which is to be figured out by psychoanalyzing the person in question to see whether the "self" is intended or piety, benevolence, and perfection.

2. However, in the third type, which relates to sorrow for the loss of a Divine Imam (A.S.) or a social and ideological leader, the reason [for that sorrow] is one's interest in virtues and perfections that we see manifested in their speech, deeds, and the self-sacrifices that they have made for defending the rights of humankind.

Our belief and faith in our twelve Infallible Imams (A.S.), who are the best practical examples of the Islamic school of thought, is of this latter type. They are those whose lights of guidance shine on all the people and whose blessed emanation embrace all the public, not being restricted to a specific tribe or nation; rather, encompassing all time and place and all the

expanse of human history.

Their martyrdom is not the loss of one person; rather, it is the loss of virtue and the bereavement of all humanity. Therefore, the sorrow and grief of the pilgrim for the Imams of Guidance (A.S.) and their tragic martyrdom is a sign of his or her theism and respect for man and his perfection and the love that they feel for such divine leaders. As a result, their enthusiastic or sorrowful emotions are evoked while performing the pilgrimage and tears run down their cheeks. Thus, the nature of such mystical weeping is different from that of normal weeping, which is why it is so much valued in traditions to the extent that a drop of such tears would put out the flaming fire of Divine wrath.<sup>1</sup>

3. The other point that is to be more clearly explained is the time limit that a tragedy or sorrowful incident can extend. If the tragedy and predicament is individual or familial, it can remain heart-rending and sorrowful for one or two years – depending on its importance – and may sometimes bring sad tears into one's eyes. Nevertheless, if the tragic event is related to the Holy Prophets, Imams of Guidance (A.S.), and

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1. It is related from Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.), “There is nothing that it is not weighed with a measure and scale except for the running tears, a drop of which would extinguish seas of fire... (Al-Kulaynī al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Ya‘qūb, *Al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, 2 vols. Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyya, Tehran, chapter on *bukā’*, 2/451-482).

founders of sound ideologies and if the reason for such incidents is the opposition and enmity of a few arrogant tyrants with those illuminators of the way to happiness and saviors of the community, then the sorrow and sadness for their loss will remain in the hearts of the lovers of justice and dignity and there will be spiritual motive for weeping and remorse as long as the truth and falsehood is in the world, the oppression and the oppressed is in the society, and the light and darkness linger in the horizon.

Thereby, throughout fifteen centuries of Islamic history, the Shī'ites have constantly been afflicted and sorrowful for the great tragedy of Imam Ḥusayn's (A.S.) martyrdom, remembering that painful event with much lamenting and shedding tears.

4. Holding mourning services (*rawḍa khānī*) and recitation of eulogies for Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.) is a basis for weeping. The benefits we enumerated for weeping are resulted from holding such ceremonies, especially when it is accompanied by an introduction of preaching and instruction, analysis of social issues, and ethical remarks. The painful remembrance of that heart-rending tragedy, especially during 'Āshūrā (10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram on which Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and seventy two of his loyal companions were martyred), which is recalled with strong fervor and passion and with tears and sighs, would refine the soul and evoke the feelings. It is also the best incentive for making the

mourners follow that martyred Imam (A.S.) and combatant in the way Allah. Most of the Shī'ī movements have been motivated by the extended mourning ceremonies and lamentations for the afflictions of Imam Ḥusayn b. 'Alī (A.S.) in every Muharram and the remembrance of the innocent state and resistance of His Holiness in the way of truth and righteousness. This was abundantly exemplified in defending the Islamic revolution in Iran against the invasion of the infidel Saddam's forces in the battlefronts. We frequently heard that the motive of our combatants in defending against the invaders and superpowers was the passion and longing for visiting the Holy Shrine of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) in Karbala and following in the footsteps of his holiness. As we know, they have acquired this precious spiritual asset from this same mourning ceremonies and weeping for His Holiness.

Therefore, mourning and weeping for Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.) is also of great value in such dimensions as politics and warfare and is a factor in great social changes, creating high resistance morale as the great combatant jurisperdient, Imam Khomeini (R.A.), said, "We are a nation of political weeping, causing floods to flow with tears and smashing all the barriers standing against Islam."

Obviously, in achieving these results, the scholarly character and the sound insight of the preacher and

eulogist and their proper comprehensive grasp of the uprising of Abā ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) is very effective.

5. Weeping is the talking tongue of a human being who has been tyrannized and whose rights are violated; it a language that no power can cut it off.

In a time when it is not possible to confront the tyrants and oppressors with the military forces and the pressures and strangulation is so intense that even the verbal criticism is banned, then the firearm of weeping is effective and can display the hatred and disgust of the tearful eyes toward the actions of the criminals. This, in fact, is the second political dimension of weeping that we notice particularly in the life of Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (A.S.), as it will be explained in the following.

6. After weeping – especially if it is resulted from sublime human emotions rather than personal desires – an exalted feeling would overwhelm the person and the psychological complexes would burst open and subside, as it is stated:

*“When a drop of tear fell from my eyes, my heart was healed; happy is the pain that a drop of tear would heal.”*

It is as if after weeping the nerves begin to rest, the sorrow and morose recede, a state of tenderness and purity of heart comes about, and remembrance of God overwhelms the heart and the mind; contrary to

laughing that normally occurs out of ignorance and negligence of the truth, duty, and responsibility and its joy is fleeting and superficial. It is concluded that contrary to what initially seems to be the case, weeping has a higher moral and educational value than laughing and is not always indicative of weakness, debasement, or grief and trouble of the weeper; rather, it is a psychological need that begins with a prelude of intense sorrow of enthusiasm and is called “cry of eagerness”. An evidence of this is the weeping that happens out of the yearning for visiting the mausoleum of the Imam (A.S.) and the blessing of presence in his sanctuary.

7. Mourning for Abā ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and mentioning his misfortunes and tragedies that are always performed with heartfelt sorrow and flowing tears, is a praiseworthy practice that has been done throughout the history of Shī‘ism. It has served as a spiritual link binding the hearts of the Shī‘as together and all of them with the lofty and radiant soul of that innocent martyr and instilled a deep love for him in their hearts. The flood of tears that has flowed down the eyes of his brave son, Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (A.S.), his sister, Ḥaḍrat Zaynab (S.A.), and other relatives, followed by the tears welling up in the eyes of his devotees have turned into a boundless ocean of Mercy from the most Compassionate and Most Merciful God. Because it is watered from the clear springs of the

devoted broken and burnt hearts and a combination of divine knowledge and affection that would naturally bring about the Divine Mercy, an ocean that every repented sinful person can enter and cleanse their impurity of sins and vile acts.

According to the author, the spiritual value of weeping for the Imam (A.S.) and the impact it has on effacing the negative effects of sins and purifying the heart is the outcome of this spiritual bond that is established between weeping and His Holiness (A.S.) and creates a kind of harmony between the belief, the goal, and the move,<sup>1</sup> so that the demand of the devoted Shī'a of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and the mourner for his heart-rending martyrdom is the same as the Imam's (A.S.) demands, which is the optimum perfection and the meaning of following the Imam (A.S.).

Now, it is time to relate our Imams' (A.S.) statements on this issue:

1. It is related from Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.):

Verily, weeping and restlessness for whatever that causes discomfort for the servant [of God] is repulsive and indecent, except for crying and restlessness for the [martyrdom of] Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), which is rewarded.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Because if there is no such harmony in belief, goal, and move, no sorrow and remorse would appear as a prelude to weeping.

2. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 100, *ḥadīth* 2, for a deeper understanding of this *ḥadīth*, we remind you of what we stated in item two above.

2. Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) said, “Any believer who shed tears for the martyrdom of Ḥusayn (A.S.) so that it flows down his cheeks, God will have him reside in the dwellings of Paradise, where he can live eternally.<sup>1</sup>

3. More grief and weeping are reported in the life of Imam Zayn al-‘ābidīn (A.S.), who was a witness to the genocide of the Umayyads and the tragic murder of his noble father, as it is natural due to the recentness of the occurrence of the Karbala event. Among the related traditions is a *ḥadīth* related from Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.):

Imam ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) was mournful and tearful for a period of twenty years for his father Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (A.S.) and he would burst into tears whenever food was placed before him so much as his servant told him, “O son of the Apostle of Allah! May I be your ransom! I am very concerned with your health lest you may die by too much weeping.” The Holy Imam (A.S.) said, ﴿I complain of my anguish and grief [in the language of tears] only to Allah. I know from Allah [’s unending favors and grace] what you do not know.﴾<sup>2</sup> I never remember the massacre-place of the children of Fāṭima (A.S.) except that tears of sorrow would [press my throat and] strangle me.<sup>3</sup>

**Commentary:** If we remember the temporal

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 104, *ḥadīth* 9.

2. Q. 12:86.

3. *Ibid*, 107, *ḥadīth* 1.



closeness of Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (A.S.) to the heart-rending tragedy of Karbalā – especially that he witnessed the battlefield in person – and that the Imam’s (A.S.) human emotions are more powerful than the common people, especially towards such a father, then our amazement for the extent of his anguish and sorrow would decrease. However, what is worth mentioning is that although the sorrow of the heart and tearful eyes had been spiritually natural for that Holy Imam (A.S.), it has had a great advantage from the social and general point of view, as well. Because, by action – not by words – the greatness of that uprising, the seriousness of the crime, the intensity of the oppression inflicted upon the household of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), and finally the propaganda by Yazid and the Yazidis and the infidelity of the Umayyads were exposed and the negligent and deceived Muslims were awakened to and informed of realities. Thus, the perpetuating sorrow and flowing tears of that Martyr son of a Martyr”, was in itself a loud cry in silence, a sedentary uprising, and a propagation so far as possible. May the blessings of God be upon his radiant soul, as he truly followed in the footsteps of his father.

Addenda: Besides performing pilgrimage to the Sacred Mausoleum of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Twelve Imams (A.S.), visiting the tombs of the scholars, the pious men, and sons of the Imams (A.S.)

is also a praiseworthy practice, the reward of which is stated and confirmed in narrations.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The traditions related in this part of the present volume, which are the sayings of our Imams (A.S.) concerning pilgrimage, can be summed up as follows:

1. Pilgrimage is a renewal of covenant with *ḥujja* (authority) of God and strengthening the bond of affection and obedience to the Imam (A.S.), who is one's ideological and spiritual leader.

2. Pilgrimage is a complementary component of Hajj and a proclamation of the devotion of the Hajj performer towards the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and his pure progeny (A.S.), who are our great teachers of Divine Knowledge and religious precepts.

3. Pilgrimage to the Imams of Guidance (A.S.) – especially to Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.) – if performed while recognizing their rightfulness and accepting their doctrines and with enthusiasm and sincerity, will be more rewarding than pilgrimage to the Glorified Makka, without being substituted with Hajj and its alternative. Perhaps it was because learning the rules of pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah, knowing the Lord of the House, and the other enlivening and constructive teachings of Hajj are all from the radiance of their guidance and the branches of their teachings that, out of respect for the Holy House of Allah and

avoiding his murder in that Holy sanctuary, Sayyad al-Shuhadā (A.S.) changed Ḥajj to ‘Umra and sadly left Makka.

4. Pilgrimage to His Holiness Sayyad al-Shuhadā (A.S.) bears more spiritual fruit and naturally provides more rewards in the Hereafter.

5. For His attribute of the All-grateful, the Exalted Allah takes upon Himself to grant a special worth and influence to the Mausoleum and soil of Imam al-Ḥusayn’s (A.S.) tomb for his sincere self-sacrifice and deep devotion, so that the fond devotees have always benefited and are benefitting from its blessings.

6. After performing pilgrimage, such a spiritually understanding pilgrim will be forgiven of his sins and his heart will be cleansed of all defilement and his actions improved. Obviously, the sins other than polytheism and people’s rights will include this forgiveness, but forgiving the violation of people’s rights is dependent upon ensuring those people’s satisfaction, as asserted by all jurists.

7. The tragic and sorrowful martyrdom of Abā ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.) and his companions is an unforgettable historical event rather than a transient and personal one; as Karbalā is a manifestation of the battle of truth against falsehood that has an example in any time and space. Therefore, repeating and reiterating it in the form of reciting elegy is fruitful, impressive, and instructive.

Remembering those tragedies would sadden and bring to tears any person of compassion – let alone the followers and devotees of His Holiness. The tears that are the mute eloquence and indicative of the Shī‘a’s affection and devotion towards the Imam (A.S.) and in line with his goals, are effective in removing the negative effects of sins and purification of the soul. However, weeping is never the sole objective of Sayyid al-Shuhadā’s uprising and revolt, because, as it is mentioned in the words of the Imam (A.S.) himself, his motivation has been to revive the *Sunna* (precedent) of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and *sīra* (lifestyle) of Imam ‘Alī (A.S.), not to bow one’s head to the tyrant rulers, and to implement Allah’s command of enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong.

### **The Excellence of Pilgrimage to Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.)’s Holy Shrine**

After pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Sayyid al-Shuhadā, Imam al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī (A.S.), it seems the most emphatic recommendation has been made concerning pilgrimage to Imam al-Riḍā’s (A.S.) Holy Shrine. The reasons for this, as implied from traditions, are as follows:

First, it is because the Holy Mausoleum of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) is far from the origin of Islam and the homeland of the Imams (A.S.) and the Muslims, i.e., Makka and Madīna. Given the great difficulty and

dangers of travelling, naturally the pilgrimage to that Holy Sanctuary is more emphatically recommended so that a greater population of the Shī'as would travel to the East of Islamic world – namely, Khurāsān – and promote of Shī'ism in these regions.

Secondly, given the various sects emerging in Islam and that the Twelve Imams (A.S.) did not approve all of them – such as the Ismā'īlis and the Waqifites – those who accepted the Imamate of this Eighth Imam (A.S.), who was ordained and authorized by God and His Apostle, also accepted the Imamate of the rest of the twelve Imams (A.S.), finding their way into the genuine and pure Islam through *wilāya* (guardianship of the Imams – A.S.).<sup>1</sup> Following are some relevant traditions:

1. Imam Ja'far al-Šāfiq (A.S.) quotes his forefathers as relating from the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) who said, “Soon, a part of my body will be buried in Khurāsān, no believers would go there on pilgrimage, except that Allah will surely destine them to Paradise, and their body will be forbidden (*ḥarām*) to the Hell-fire.”<sup>2</sup>

2. 'Abd al-Salām b. Šāliḥ Hiravī quotes Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) as saying: “There will soon come a time when Ṭūs will become the frequenting place of my

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1. See: *Bihār al-Anwār*, 102/39, under No 35.

2. *Safinat al-Bihār*, published by Islamic Research Foundation, 2/492.

Shī'as and visitors. Know that, whoever visits (makes a pilgrimage to) me away from my homeland [Madīna] in Ṭūs, will be with me in the same rank on the Resurrection Day, while their sins will have been forgiven.<sup>1</sup>

3. The magnanimous Imam 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.) said:

“Whoever visits me while being far away from home, I will come to them on three occasions on the Day of Resurrection to relieve them from the horrors of that Day: when records of deeds are giving to the left and right hands<sup>2</sup>; at the *Ṣirāṭ* (the bridge over Hell leading to Paradise) and where actions are judged (at *Mīzān* = Balance).”<sup>3</sup>

4. 'Abd al-'Azīm Ḥasanī relates from Abū Ja'far Imam Muḥammad Taqī (A.S.) who said, “I guarantee the Paradise on behalf of God for the one who visits [the Shrine of] my father in Ṭūs while recognizing his rightfulness.”<sup>4</sup>

5. 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh quotes Qaṭrab as saying, “One day Imam Mūsā b. Ja'far's (A.S.) children had gathered

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1. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, 10/438.

2. Records of the deeds of the righteous will be given to their right hand and the records of deeds of the malevolent will be given to their left hand, as asserted in the Holy Qur'ān, 69:19, 25.

3. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 102/4. This *ḥadīth* is related in *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt* (p. 304) with other *sanads* and slightly different context.

4. *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, 10/435.

in his presence when his young son – ‘Alī [Imam al-Riḍā – A.S.] – passed by. The Imam (A.S.) said:

This son of mine will die in a strange land [away from Madīna]. Whoever visits him while surrendering to his command and recognizing his rightfulness, is like the martyrs of the Battle of Badr in the sight of the Almighty and Glorious Allah.<sup>1</sup>

### Recognizing the Imam’s (A.S.) Rightfulness

Now, the question is raised as to the meaning of “recognizing his rightfulness” (*‘arīfan bi ḥaqqih*) as related in many traditions.

We find the most sensible answer in the context of the traditions, because the same question is asked from Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣāfiq (A.S.) as follows: What is meant by “recognizing the Imam’s (A.S.) rightfulness”?

The Imam (A.S.) answers, “It is to know that he is an Imam, whose obedience [on behalf of God] is obligatory and incumbent; he is away from home<sup>2</sup> and is a martyr.”<sup>3</sup>

In a *ḥadīth* concerning the great reward for pilgrimage to Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.), there is a meaningful expression stating its condition:

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 3-4. Meanwhile, the appellation of martyr for such a pilgrim is also noteworthy.
  2. This statement (i.e. *gharīb* and away from home) is used here since the *ḥadīth* is about pilgrimage to the Eighth Imam (A.S.).
  3. *Wasā’il al-Shī’a*, 10/435.

“Recognizing his rightfulness and taking him as an Imam to be followed.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, in respect to the pilgrimage to Abā ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), he states the pilgrim’s *ma‘rifa* as follows:

“He should recognize his rightfulness and reverence and guardianship (*wilāya*).”<sup>2</sup>

### **Explanation of the Imam’s (A.S.) Rightfulness**

The writer considers as sufficient this much of the Infallible Imams’ (A.S.) sayings for explaining the meaning of “recognizing the Imam’s (A.S.) rightfulness. However, what is to be stated in brief is the significant issue of *ḥaqq* (right or rightfulness) in Islam, which demands a detailed explanation, encompassing a vast expanse beginning from Allah’s right (*ḥaqq Allāh*) to the right of the mounting animal and the land that one has in his possession – and has to make it prosperous.<sup>3</sup>

What is meant here by “right” is the duty and responsibility that the Muslims have toward the Creator, the family, the working and living places, the

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 139.

2. *Ibid*, 138, *ḥadīth* 3.

3. For more information about these rights, which include the obligatory and social duties of a Muslim, see: Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn’s (A.S.) *Risālat al-Ḥuqūq*, *Tuḥaf al-‘Uqūl*, Persian translation published by Islāmiyya Bookstore, p. 260 onward.



society, the ruling authorities, the means of living, and, in sum, whatever God has made available to them. In this respect, we have most often heard about the rights of the father, mother, neighbor, and teacher; but the very important right that we have not heard of is the right of the Imam (A.S.), i.e., the religious leader and the intellectual and the ruling leader.<sup>1</sup> It is for this reality that the tyrannical rulers fear the trust of the people in it and prevent its promotion and that is why it is scarcely talked about.

As a reality, it is accepted by the Shī'a that the leadership and guardianship of the authorized and appointed Imam (by the Apostle of Allah – S.A.W.) applies in all the dimensions of the followers' life.<sup>2</sup> As the Imam (A.S.) is the intermediary of Divine Grace to the servants and as he is the proselytizer of the legal rulings and aware of the inner and outer aspects of the Holy Qur'ān and the reality of affairs, so is also his obedience obligatory upon his followers in all aspects of their life, management of their society, and maintenance of the policy of the Islamic rule.

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1. Imam Zayn al-'Ābidīn (A.S.) says, "The most obligatory among these rights is the right of your leaders. Then, there are the rights of the vassals and after that the rights of the next of kin. The rights of the leaders upon you are of three types, the obligatory one is the right of the ruler, in whose hands lies the management of your affairs. Then, the right of your teacher..." *Tuḥaf al-Uqūl, Risālat al-Ḥuqūq*, p. 261.

2. For more information about various dimensions of the Infallible Imams' guardianship, see: Murtaḍā Muṭahhari's *Wilā' wa Wilāyatuhā*.

**Note:** We said that after the pilgrimage to Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), the most emphasis is made on the pilgrimage to Imam ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā (A.S.). This emphasis and encouragement prompted the Shī‘as to resort to the pilgrimage of the Eighth Imam (A.S.) in the East of the Islamic countries – i.e. Khurāsān – promoting Shī‘ism as its auspicious consequence.

With the advent of the Safavids in Iran and after the formal recognition of Shī‘ism and the attention was paid by the statesmen to the prosperous development of the Holy Shrine of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.), setting up endowments, establishment of religious schools, and libraries, and the presence of great literary and religious scholars, Mashhad turned into one of the important central bases for Shī‘ism.

After the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran, this trend has, thanks God, had significant progress; especially the pilgrimage places and the cultural and medical services in the Holy Shrine have had considerable expansion, which suggests the sound and efficient management of Astan Quds Razavi. Praise be to Allah, the Guardian of Blessings.

### **Similarity of the Pilgrimage to the Imams of Guidance (A.S.)**

So far we have related some examples of traditions concerning the excellence of pilgrimage to the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī (A.S.), Imam

al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), and Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.). Now, we relate some traditions about pilgrimage to other Imams (A.S.), each one of which contains something remarkable and instructive:

1. Hishām b. Sālim relates from Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) that a man entered his presence and said:

“Should we go to the pilgrimage of your father – Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.)?”

“Yes.”

“What is the reward for the one who visits him?”

“Paradise, if he has accepted his Imamate and followed him.”

“What punishment befalls the one who negligently gives up his pilgrimage?”

“Sorrow and pity [for this refused blessing] and the regret about it on the Resurrection Day [which is the Day of Regrets].<sup>1</sup>

2. Ḥusayn b. Yasār Wāsiṭī said he asked from Imam Abū al-Ḥasan al-Riḍā (A.S.):

“What reward does the one who visits the tomb of your father – may God’s blessings be upon him – have?”

“Paradise. So, visit him.”

“What excellence does visiting him have?”

“The reward and excellence of his pilgrimage is like the pilgrimage to the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.).”

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1. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 100/145.

“What if I fear [performing the pilgrimage] and entering his Holy Shrine would not be possible for me?”

“Salute him from behind the wall of the mausoleum.”<sup>1</sup>

This *ḥadīth*, like other *aḥādīth*,<sup>2</sup> implies the strictness and severity of the usurping rule of the Abbasids and the misdemeanor of their state agents towards the pilgrims of the Mausoleum of Imam Mūsā b. Ja‘far (A.S.) and reveals the sensitivity of the ruling system about the pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines of the Imams of Guidance (A.S.).

In the meantime, he instructs pilgrimage from afar and from behind the wall while being in a state of *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation).

3. In response to ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muslim, who had asked about the excellence of pilgrimage to one of the Imams (A.S.) over the other, Imam Mūsā b. Ja‘far (A.S.) said, “Whoever visits (does a pilgrimage to) the first of us is like having visited the last of us, and whoever visits the last of us is like having visited the first of us. Whoever accepts the guardianship (*wilāya*)

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 299, *ḥadīth* 5.

2. Imam al-Jawād (A.S.) said in response to someone who had asked about pilgrimage to the Imam (A.S.), “It does not behoove to perform it in these times because there is the fear for you and I that the Sultan may do us harm. (*Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 306). It is to be noted that Sultan is usually applied to a ruler who has dominated by coercive force.

of the first of us has indeed accepted the guardianship of the last of us, and whoever accepts the guardianship of the last of us has indeed accepted the guardianship of the first of us. Whoever fulfills the needs of one of our friends and followers, it is as if he has fulfilled the needs of all of us.<sup>1</sup>

4. Also, according to a *ḥadīth* that Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) quotes from Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh Anṣārī on the authority of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), “Pilgrimage to *ḥaḍrat* Fāṭima (S.A.) is like pilgrimage to her noble father, as the pilgrimage to any of the Five Purified Ones (*panjtan*) and their Infallible progeny is just like pilgrimage to another one of them.”<sup>2</sup>

Now, the question arises as to how the few above traditions can be justified given the superiority that the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) and Imam ‘Alī (A.S.) have over the other Infallible Imams (A.S.).

We find the answer in the revelatory statement that Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) addressed to Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Qummī, “Whoever visits the tomb of my father [Imam Mūsā b. Ja‘far] in Baghdad<sup>3</sup> is like the one who visits the tomb of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) and the tomb of Amīr al-Mu‘minī ‘Alī (A.S.), except that the specific excellence and special

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 336.

2. *Biḥār al-Anwār*, 100/124, summarized translation.

3. It is meant to be Kazmain, which had not been then called by this name yet.

superiority of the two over other Imams (A.S.) remains intact.<sup>1</sup>

According to these explicit words of Imam al-Riḍā (A.S.) the equality of the Imams' (A.S.) pilgrimage is not incompatible with the specific status and the special excellences of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) and Imam 'Alī al-Murtaḍā (A.S.) who is the father of the Imams (A.S.) [*Abū al-A'imma*].

Our belief about the Twelve Imams (A.S.) is that they are all one light. Each one of them is a luminous beacon lighting the way for the people, which is adopted<sup>2</sup> from the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.) lamp-niche. The difference is in the time and place they lived in and the appropriate reaction they had against the rulers, society, and people, as expedient by their divine duty and legal obligation.

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1. *Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, 336, 299-300; *Wasā'il al-Shī'a*, 5/428.

2. *Iqtibās*, meaning adopting fire, derived from *qabasa* meaning a flame of fire, getting light.

## Section Three



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# **The Innermost Concept of Pilgrimage Prayers and their Analysis**

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### **The Innermost Concept of Pilgrimage Prayers**

Now we should take a general look at the pilgrimage prayers related from the Infallible Imams (A.S.) to get informed of the content and innermost concept of what is to be recited at their mausoleum since this knowledge is very influential in our proper insight into this Islamic practice.

Naturally, when we manage to meet with a great figure, after greeting we go on to talk to him:

We pour out our heart to him, we express our affection and longing for him, we talk of his kindness and favor and enumerate his virtues and excellences, and ask mercy and high status from the Almighty God

for him...

What should one say when visiting the beloved leader and the Infallible (A.S.), except for greeting and saluting and expressing one's affection and obedience and his virtues and excellences and asserting his Imamate and leadership entrusted by the One God?

In the innate Islamic doctrine, as the proper pilgrimage – which is rooted in man's primordial nature – is praiseworthy and recommendable, so also its rules of conduct conform and are compatible with man's pure natural emotions and common sense. Thus, it behooves that while in the Holy Shrine of the Holy Imam (A.S.) and our Divine leader we are not content simply with our physical presence or merely attending the heart; rather, speak out our heart's content. Therefore, we start our words with greeting, proclaim our friendship and obedience to the friend of God, renounce his opponents and enemies, and declare our Shī'ism and following the Imam's (A.S.) teachings. Similarly, we make use of the spiritual atmosphere to ask for mercy for the Imam (A.S.) and praying and supplicating for oneself and others.

The pilgrimage prayer related from the Infallible Imams (A.S.) have some innermost concepts such as the above. However, it is just a profile of "pilgrimage", whereas we find another luminous and more beautiful profile, which is the spiritual and heavenly countenance of the Imam (A.S.) and the Allah's authority (*hujja*). It



is revealed from within the eloquent and instructive phrasings of the pilgrimage prayer: the history of the Imam's (A.S.) spiritual life and virtues, the excellences that Creator has bestowed only upon the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W.) and his progeny (peace be upon them all) in order to be paradigms for the Muslim *umma*.

It is in this profile of pilgrimages that we find Unity of God and knowing the Imam (A.S.) markedly interrelated and see the knowledge about God and the *ḥujja* of God closely related. We will find more details in this respect in our study and careful examination of the texts of the pilgrimage prayers.

In this section, the writer considers several well-known pilgrimage prayers as an overall collection of teachings of Islamic school of thought and worthily explains their constituent elements in order to reveal the lofty concepts making up this Heavenly Table Spread and being repeated in various wording in all of them.

### **An Example of the Pilgrimage Prayers**

Before explaining the meanings and the subjects related in the pilgrimage prayers one by one, we present here the translation of the "fifth pilgrimage prayer" from among the exclusive pilgrimage prayers of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.), which, despite brevity, contains all the elements and concepts we mentioned

in previous pages and will see the details later on:

Peace be upon you, O Friend of God! You are the first oppressed one [from among the Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.) progeny] and the first one whose right was usurped. You tolerated [this oppression to preserve the Islamic unity] and considered it as a provision for your [life] Hereafter until your heavenly departure came.

I bear witness that you met Allah while being a martyr.<sup>1</sup> May Allah torment your murderer with various kinds of punishment and repeat the torture for him. I am a bitter enemy<sup>2</sup> to your enemy and anyone who has tyrannized you.<sup>2</sup> [I hope] I will meet my Lord with this belief, if God wishes so.<sup>3</sup>

O Friend of Allah! Verily, I have committed many sins; so, be my intercessor and mediator before your Lord, as you have a distinct position with Allah, and you have reputation and high position and the right for intercession with Allah. The Exalted Allah Himself has said, ﴿and they do not intercede except for someone He approves of﴾<sup>4</sup>

### Salām, the Islamic Motto

Since the pilgrimage prayers usually start with

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1. Up to here is praise, salutation, and description of the Imam (A.S.).
  2. It is cursing the murderer of the Imam (A.S.) and disavowing oneself from his enemies, as well as expressing the Imam's (A.S.) guardianship and recognizing his rightfulness.
  3. This statement and the next ones are prayers and asking for the Imam's intercession that ends with the latter part of verse 28 of *Sūrat al-Anbiyā*.
  4. *Mafātīḥ al-Janān*, 481. The late Kulaynī has related this pilgrimage prayer from Imam 'Alī al-Naqī (A.S.).

*Salām*, which is a greeting and homage by the pilgrims addressing the object of pilgrimage, it is befitting first to assess the semantic distinction of this frequently used word and say, “The *salām* literally means sound, secure, and free from defects.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, it is from this aspect that the Exalted Lord is also called *Salām* (Securer),<sup>2</sup> as mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān.<sup>3</sup> *Salām* is also the noun form of the infinitive *taslīm*, meaning surrender.<sup>4</sup>

Among the Pagan Arabs, *salām* had sometimes been used as greeting; however, with the advent of the sublime doctrine of Islam, greeting and welcome got restricted to it<sup>5</sup> and saying *salām* turned into a preferable (*mustahab*) religious act and its response an obligatory one. Similarly, in prayers, which is the most important devotional practice in Islam, performing *salām* following the last *rak‘a* of the prayers has become obligatory to end the prayers with.

As it is asserted in the Holy Qur’an, the greeting of the faithful to one another in the paradise is *salām*

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1. See: Ṣafīpūr, ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, *Muntahā al-Arab fī Luḡhat al-‘Arab*, Islāmiyya and Ibn Sīnā Bookstore, offset, 1377/1657, *sa li ma* (س ل م).
  2. Meaning that the Sacred Sanctuary of the Creator is free from the defeats and shortcomings that befall the creatures.
  3. Q. 59:23.
  4. See: *Aqrab al-Mawārid*, *sa li ma* (س ل م).
  5. Shubbar, Al-Sayyid ‘Abd Allāh, *Al-Anwār al-Lāmi‘a fī Sharḥ al-Jāmi‘a*, Al-Gharyy Publication, Al-Najaf al-Ashraf, 11.

(peace).<sup>1</sup>

This way, *salāmun alaykum* turned into the Muslims' motto, which is a prayer meaning: may you be secure from the ravages of the world and the torments of the Hereafter; or, may the Peace and Mercy of God be upon you, which is more appropriate to be addressed to the religious leaders.

*Salām* from man is "statement", i.e. greeting and compliment, and when stated by God, it is "action", meaning to grant soundness of the body and to bestow man security from calamities and torments.<sup>2</sup> As we said, the perpetual motto of the Muslims when encountering one another is *salāmun alaykum*, which is summed up as *salām*, meaning to ask soundness and security from injury and harm for one's brother in faith. It is also assuring the receiver of *salām* that he is secure by all means on the side of the one who is saying *salām* and that his benefit and good is meant for the receiver and not evil and loss. This, in fact, is the most important message in strengthening and improving people's social relationships and fair interaction. By repeating "*salām*", pilgrimage reiterates this meaningful motto and inscribes it in the minds of the pilgrims.

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1. Q. 14:23.

2. See: *Aqrab al-Mawārid, sa li ma* (س ل م).

### ***Salām* and Description of the Imam (A.S.)**

*Salām* as greeting is among the most common words uttered in pilgrimage to the Imam (A.S.) and Allah's authority; it could not be otherwise, because courtesy demands that after pronouncing the name of God and reciting *Allāhu Akbar* and praising Him, according to the Islamic tradition we start our talk with *salām*.

Furthermore, the Holy Shrines of the Great Prophet (S.A.W.) and his Infallible progeny (A.S.) are the best and most appropriate places for executing the command of the Holy Holy Qur'ān, that is to invoke *ṣalawāt* (benediction upon the Holy Prophet – S.A.W.) and to ask the Bounteous God mercy and sublimity of rank for those Leaders.<sup>1</sup>

However, it is worth mentioning that during these salutations (*salāms*), the Imam (A.S.) is addressed by his attributes and not his names; the status that God has bestowed upon them as well as their excellences or their relation to the Prophet (S.A.W.) are mentioned.

Thus, the texts of the pilgrimage prayers, whose main parts are salutations to the Imams (A.S.), are in themselves luminous volumes of the spiritual positions and the attributes and virtues of our Noble Prophet (S.A.W.) and his pure progeny. They are books of

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1. For more details, see: *Sūrat al-Ahzāb*, 56, and section one of the present book: Pilgrimage and its Rules of Conduct, The Best Place for Invoking Blessings.

deeds that have recorded their endeavors in raising the Standard of Unity, promotion of the Holy Qur'an, spreading of justice and commanding right and forbidding wrong, or in other words, knowing the Imam is live and instructive, and expressed with eloquent and charming phrasings. Following are some examples:

1. In the pilgrimage to the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.), we say:

Peace be upon you, O establisher of justice.

Peace be upon you, O commencer of goodness. Peace be upon you, O the mine of revelation and descent of the Qur'an.

Peace be upon you, O the preacher from the side of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the radiant lamp.

Peace be upon you, O the herald of glad-tidings.

Peace be upon you, O the Warner.

Peace be upon you, O the light of Allah, through which thw masses get illumined.

2. We read in the pilgrimage prayer to the Holy Imams (A.S.) buried in Baqi' cemetery in Madīna:

Peace be upon you, O Imams of Guidance. *Peace* be upon you, O people of piety.

Peace be upon you, O proofs of Allah on the people of the earth. Peace be upon you who were steadfast in dealing with people with justice.

Peace be upon you O people of the chosen one.

Peace<sup>1</sup> be upon you the family of the Apostle of Allah.

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1. *Mafātih al-Janān*, Chapter 3, *Ziyarat* of the Imams (A.S.) of Baqi', p. 446.

3. In *Ziyārat Amīn Allāh*<sup>1</sup>, we salute the Imam (A.S.) as follows:

Peace be upon you, O trusted guardian, appointed by Allah on earth and his proof to His servants. Peace be on you, O Amīr al-Mu'minīn. I testify that you made utmost efforts, as it should be, in the cause of Allah, acted upon His Book, followed the way of life of His Prophet, (blessings of Allah be upon him and his progeny, to the last moment of your life, until Allah invited you to come unto Him, and used His discretion to take you away...

4. In "Description of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.)" the contexts of the salutations we send to him include:

Peace be upon the father of the Imams (A.S.), the intimate friend of Prophethood, and the exclusively marked by fraternity (with the Holy Prophet).

Peace be upon the head of the religion and faith, and the word of the All-beneficent Lord.

Peace be upon the Scale of the deeds and the sword of the Lord of Majesty.

Peace be upon the most righteous of the believers, the inheritor of the Holy Prophet's knowledge, and the judge on the Judgment Day.

Peace be upon the tree of piety, Peace be upon Allah's conclusive proof, His flowing boon, and His forceful punishment.

Peace be upon the clear-cut path, the patent star, and the advising leader. May Allah's mercy and blessings be upon him.<sup>2</sup>

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1. The pilgrimage prayer known as *Ziyārat Amīn Allāh*.

2. *Mafātīḥ al-Janān, Ziyārat Muṭlaqa-yi Amīr al-Mu'minīn (A.S.), Ziyārat 4, 480.*

5. Yet in another pilgrimage prayer, the excellences, reformative services, and religious guidance of Imam ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb (A.S.) are enumerated and the verses revealed in description of his holiness as well as the prophetic traditions introducing his spiritual stations are all quoted. Following is an example:

O ‘Alī! You were exactly as the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) said about you: modest in your body and strong in carrying out the orders of Allah, humble in yourself and enjoying a great standing with Allah, great in the Heaven.

None could ever find fault with you, and none could ever speak evil of you, you never desired for anyone, and you were never lenient (unfairly) to anyone. The weak, humble one was strong and mighty in your view until you gave him back his right, and the strong, mighty one was weak in your view until you took the others’ rights from him. In administering such a justice, the near and the remote were equal in your view...<sup>1</sup>

6. Similarly, in Ziyārat of Abā ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn (A.S.), *salām* is always accompanied with an attribute of the Imam (A.S.); however, as His Holiness is the *Sayyid al-Shuhadā* (Master of the Martyrs), he is described in a specific revolutionary climate: colored

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1. *Mafātīḥ al-Janān*, 515. This feature of the Imam (A.S.) is the best approach for the rulers of the world in any era. It is worth mentioning that one of the reasons that the Iranians and the non-Arabs inclined toward his holiness has been this very observance of social justice and not preferring the Arabs to the non-Arabs – which was the practice of the Umayyads.



with blood and the melody of martyrdom. Now, an example of the above:

Peace be upon you, O proof of Allah and the son of His proof!

Peace be upon you, O you who have been killed in the way of Allah and the son of he who was killed in His way!

Peace be upon you, Oh martyr who Allah seeks vengeance on his murderer, and son of the person who Allah seeks vengeance on his murderer.<sup>1</sup>

Peace be upon you, Oh lonely martyr – in the heaven and earth – whose relatives were killed.<sup>2</sup> I bear witness that your blood was settled in the Eternal Paradise, and the “Shadows of the Throne”<sup>3</sup> were shaken for it and all the people cried for it...<sup>4</sup>

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1. It is the translation of this part of the *ziyārat*: *Al-salāmu ‘alayk yā thār Allā wa ibn-i thāra*. *Thār* means revenging for blood, vengeance for the murder of, and blood; so the above statement may also be translated as, “Peace be upon you, O blood of God and the son of His blood.”
  2. The Arabic words are as follows: *Al-salāmu ‘alayk yā witr al-mawtūr fi al-samāwāt wa al-’ard*. *Witr* also means, “Not seeking vengeance on one’s murderer.” *Mawtūr* means, “One whose relatives are killed and has not revenged for their blood.”
  3. It is the translation of *Azillat al-’arsh*. *Zill al-’arsh* is interpreted in *Muntahā al-Arab* as Mercy of God, paradise, and the shadow of Divine Mercy. It is not impertinent to regard the “Shadows of the Throne” in the above statement as “Paradise”, which is in itself the center for Divine Mercy or the shadow of Divine Mercy and the cause for the shaking of the Throne is the placement of that “Blood of God in Paradise, which is mentioned in the statement before that.”
  4. *Mafātīḥ al-Janān, Ziyārat Muṭlaqa-yi Imam Ḥusayn (A.S.)*, the first *ziyārat*. It is to be mentioned that similar to related *salāms* is also mentioned in other pilgrimage prayers for his holiness, including *ziyārat*

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It is worth mentioning that adding words such as *hujja* (proof), *qatīl* (killed), *thār* (blood), and *witr* (one whose relatives are killed and his revenge is not taken) to Allah in view of the exegetes and ideologists is called honorary relation; that means the noun governing (*muḍāf*) acquiring honor and esteem from the noun governed (*muḍāfun ilayh*). This kind of relation is frequently mentioned in the Holy Qurā'n, like: *nāqat Allāh* (she-camel of Allah)<sup>1</sup>, *baytī* (My House)<sup>2</sup>, *rūḥī* (My Spirit)<sup>3</sup>, and *rūḥanā* (Our Spirit).<sup>4</sup>

7. In the *ziyarat* of Imam al-Mahdī (May Allah Almighty hasten his reappearance), which is related in the form of a signed comment (*tawqī'*) and is of a special style, *salām* is expressed with the following descriptions:

Peace be upon you the family of Yāsīn!

Peace be upon you; the caller to Allah and the interpreter of His Verses!

Peace be upon you; the door to Allah and the applier of His religion!

Peace be upon you; the viceroy of Allah and the backer of His right!

Peace be upon you; the proof of Allah and the sign of His volition!

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<sup>1</sup> *'Arafa* and *'Ashūrā*.

1. Q. 7:73; 11: 64; 91:13.

2. Q. 2:125; 22/26.

3. Q. 38:72.

4. Q. 19:17.

Peace be upon you; the reciter and the interpreter of the Book of Allah!

Peace be upon you at the hours of the night and the two ends of the night!

Peace be upon you – what remains of Allah’s provision (*Baqīyyat Allāh*)<sup>1</sup> on His lands!

Peace be upon you—the covenant of Allah that He has made and confirmed!

Peace be upon you—the Promise of Allah that He has assured!

Peace be upon you—the sign raised and the knowledge poured, the aid and the expansive mercy, and verily a promise that shall never be belied!

Peace be upon you whenever you stand (or undertake the mission)!

Peace be upon you whenever you sit!

Peace be upon you whenever you recite and elucidate!

Peace be upon you whenever you offer prayer and supplicate!

Peace be upon you whenever you bow down in prayer and prostrate (yourself for Allah)!<sup>2</sup>

Peace be upon you—the secured Imam (A.S.)!

Peace be upon you—the favored and the awaited!

Peace be upon you to the ultimate meaning of ‘peace’!<sup>3</sup>

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1. *Baqīyyat Allāh* is an expression adopted for the Holy Qur’ān (11:86), meaning the remaining of Allah’s provision and interpreted as the blessed existence of the Great Divine Guardian, His Holiness Ḥujjat b. al-Ḥasan – may Allah hasten his reappearance.

2. That means continuous salutations to you in whatever state you are in and whatever action you are engaged.

3. After that comes the bearing witness to the Unity of Allah, the Prophethood of the last of the Prophets (S.A.W.), and the Imamate of the

8. *Ziyārat al-Jāmi'a Kabīra* is a pilgrimage prayer that can be recited in the Holy Shrines of all the Infallible Imams (A.S.) and enjoys a specific eloquence and fluency as asserted by our great scholars.<sup>1</sup> It also contains features that we have recounted concerning the recorded pilgrimage prayers such as: full description and introduction of the Prophet's Household, expression of the Divine knowledge and monotheistic concepts, bearing witness to the virtues of the Imams (A.S.) of guidance, praying and beseeching to God, acceptance of the guardianship and love of the Imams of Light (A.S.), and despising and acquitting oneself of the leaders of Hellfire, as well as others among the Islamic learning (*ma'ārif*).

Peace be upon you O the family of the Prophet, the seat of the Divine mission, the resort to which the Angels turn, the destination of the Divine revelation, the originating source of mercy, the treasures of knowledge, the foremost in forbearance, the foundation of generosity, the leaders of all nations, the distributor of the bounties, the elements of virtues, the pillars of goodness, the directors and guides of mankind, the protectors and supporters of lands, the doors to faith, the trustees of the All-beneficent Allah, the distinguished descendants of the Prophets, the choice descendants of the Messengers, the Household of the most favorite of the Lord of the

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Twelve Imams (A.S.). See: *Mafātiḥ al-Janān*, 674.

1. Ibid, *Ziyārat al-Jāmi'a Kabīra*, 706.

worlds, and upon you be the mercy and blessings of Allah.

Peace be upon the Imams of Guidance (A.S.) to the Right Path, the lanterns in darkness, the patterns of piety, the actual ones endowed with understanding, the possessors of sound knowledge, the shelters for people, the inheritors of the Prophets, the perfect exemplars, the most excellent calling unto the good, the decisive proofs of Allah to the inhabitants of the world, the Hereafter, and the by-gone generations, and upon you be the Mercy and Blessings of Allah.

Peace be on the media of Divine knowledge of Allah, the habitation of the blessings of Allah, the treasures of the supreme wisdom of Allah, the custodians of the secrets of Allah, the bearers of the Book of Allah, the successors to the Prophet of Allah, the descendants of the Apostle of Allah and peace and blessings of Allah be Upon them...

As it is noticed, *salām* is accompanied by introducing the Imam (A.S.) and a recount of his spiritual stations. Thus, the pilgrimage prayer turns into a lesson of knowing the Imam (A.S.) with an easy method in the presence of the Imam (A.S.), while attributing all those virtues and excellences to the Bounteous God, as follows:

### **Pilgrimage Prayer as a Manifestation Place for Monotheism (*Tawḥīd*)**

Although in the first place, the pilgrimage prayers are for commemorating and remembering the religious leaders and the Friends of Allah, since Islam is a

monotheistic code of conduct and there are no acts – especially devotional acts – done by the real Muslims that are not related to the One God and are not regarded as a blessing and bounty, therefore, in the related pilgrimage prayers the religious leaders are named and praised by various interpretations of the Exalted Allah. Some examples are translated as follows:

Entrance permission, which is recited in all the noble sanctuaries, is performed in the form of supplicating and asking for permission from the Exalted Allah:

O Allah! I am standing at the door of one of the houses of your Prophet and the family of your Prophet, peace be upon him and his family. You have prohibited the people from entering his house except by the permission of Your Prophet and You said: ﴿O you who believe do not enter the house of the Prophet unless permitted to do so﴾<sup>1</sup>. O my Lord! I seek your permission firstly; then I seek permission of Your Prophet, peace be upon him and his family...<sup>2</sup>

At the upper part of the tomb of the Apostle of Allah (S.A.W.) as well as in distant pilgrimage to his holiness, the *ziyāra* begins with *shahādatayn* (the two Muslim professions of faith).<sup>3</sup>

In the *ziyāra* of Imam ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib ‘Alī (A.S.), as soon as the pilgrim arrives in Kūfa, he begins

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1. Q. 33:53.

2. *Mafātīḥ al-Janān*, chapter 2 on *idhn-i dukhūl* (entrance permission), 427.

3. *Ibid*, 432.

articulating with reciting *Allāhu Akbar* (Allah is most great), *taqdīs* (sanctification of Allah), and *tasbīḥ* (glorification of Allah), and utters the best monotheistic phrases.<sup>1</sup>

As the pilgrim step into the city of Najaf-al-Ashraf , he should say:

Praise be to Allah Who has brought us here; as we, on our own, could not come if Allah had not guided us. Praise be to Allah Who made me travel in His land...<sup>2</sup>

When he reaches the first door of the Mausoleum, he should say:

O Allah! I stand at Your door, set foot in Your courtyard, hold fast to Your rope, ask for Your mercy, appeal to Your friend, Your blessings be on him, so welcome my visitation and give favorable answer to my prayer.<sup>3</sup>

Inside the courtyard and when entering the Holy Sanctuary, the pilgrim proceeds to praise the Exalted Allah – Who has granted His *ma'rifā* and that of His Messenger (S.A.W.) – and pronounces *Allāhu Akbar* and *lā ilāha illallāh*, and when he is inside the Holy Shrine, he remembers Allah as Follows:

In the name of Allah, with (relying on) Allah, in the cause of Allah, following the religion of the Apostle of Allah, blessings of Allah be on him and on his progeny. O Allah! Forgive me, have mercy on me,

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1. Ibid, 437.

2. Ibid, 462.

3. Ibid, 464.

accept my repentance! Verily You are the Oft-forgiving Merciful.<sup>1</sup>

In the pilgrimage prayer to Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.), after the pilgrim pleads with Allah to bless the Apostle of Allah, he says:

O Allah! Send blessings and peace upon Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Your servant and the best of Your creatures after Your Apostle, the brother of Your Apostle and the successor to Your Beloved [the Holy Prophet – S.A.W.], whom You chose from among Your creatures as an evident proof for the one whom You raised to spread Thy Message.<sup>2</sup>

At the upper part of the Holy Grave, the pilgrim expresses his devotion (*wilāya*) to the Imam (A.S.) with the following words:

O my master! I have come to your presence and I appeal to my Lord through you to achieve my goal, and I bear witness the one who appeals to you would not become hopeless, and the one who with spiritual understanding makes a request from you would not be denied fulfillment of his requirements. Therefore, be my mediator to Allah as your Lord is my Lord in fulfilling my requirements, easing my tasks [difficulties], removing my hardships, and forgiving my sins...<sup>3</sup>

We would clearly see an intermingling of knowing God with the spiritual understanding of the Imam (A.S.) and the relation of these two notions with the

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1. Ibid, 466.

2. Ibid, 466.

3. Ibid, 469.



*ziyārat* of Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.):

Whoever wants Allah, achieves His goal through you. Allah would disclose lies through you and through you He would drive out hard and tormenting days. Allah would open up the way to guidance by you and by you He would close it. Allah would efface whatever He wishes (of the fate of affairs) through you and through you He would establish whatever He wishes [and deems as expedient]. Through you, He would untangle the yoke of abasement from our necks, and by you He would demand the [revenge of] unduly shed blood of any believer...<sup>1</sup> The Lord's will for predestining affairs would descend in your houses and ascend from your houses...<sup>2</sup>

The latter statement is considerable in representing the grandeur of the Infallible Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) with the Exalted Lord, summing up to the conclusion that they are the executor of the Lord's will and receptacle for Divinity.

*Ziyārat Jami'a Kabīra*, which includes the most eloquent and complete descriptions of the excellences of the Infallible Imams (A.S.), contains the best connotations of Unity of God and Monotheism, indicating in a clearly impressive way the relation between Unity of God and Imamate. It introduces the virtues of the Imams (A.S.) all as Bounties and Blessings of the Exalted Lord, as the glorious word "Allah" is seen in most of the lines and leads to the

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1. Ibid, *Ziyārat-i Muṭlaqa-yi Imam Ḥusayn (A.S.)*, 561.

2. Ibid.

Glorified Allah.

For example, some parts of *Ziyārat Jami‘a Kabīra* are translated as follows:

Peace be on you who invite people unto Allah, guide with clear arguments unto that which wins Allah's pleasure, abide by the laws of Allah, love Allah from the bottom of the heart, sincerely believe in the One and Only Allah, make clear [through your *aḥādīth*, sermons, and debates] that which is made lawful and that which is made unlawful by Allah...

In another part of the same *ziyārat*, we describe the Imams (A.S.) as follows:

Allah preserved you guiltless and free from error, kept you safe from disturbances, repelled impurity from you, and cleansed you with a thorough cleansing. So, you have glorified His majesty, declared great His magnificence, venerated His glory, and perpetuated His remembrance...

These attributes, which are all known to be relating to the Exalted Creator, clarify the close proximity of these most sacred Essences to the Exalted Allah and are recounted to the point where the pilgrim says:

He who loves you is a friend of Allah; he who turns against you comes in conflict with Allah; he who loves you is a beloved of Allah; he who bears a grudge against you holds Allah in contempt; and whoso takes refuge with you takes asylum with Allah...<sup>1</sup>

**Prayer for *ziyāra*** is among the rules of conduct of

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1. For the selected parts of *Ziyārat Jami‘a Kabīra*, see: *Mafātiḥ al-Janān*, 699-706.

*ziyāra*,<sup>1</sup> which consists of two *rak'as* and is performed after reciting the supplications related to *ziyāra*. The supplication that is to be recited after ending the prayer best represents the purpose of the prayer performer in monotheism. Following is the translation of this supplication recited after the prayer performed for the *ziyāra* of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.):

O Allah! I performed these two *rak'as* as a gift to my master and guardian, the Commander of the Faithful, and the master of the successors (*awṣiyā*), 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who is Your friend (*walī*) and brother of Your Apostle, upon whom and his progeny be peace and blessings of Allah.

O Allah! I prayed only for You and to You alone I bowed and prostrated in prayer as You are One and have no partner and as the prayer and bowing and prostrating is for none but You, for You are Allah except Whom there is no god.

O Allah! Send Your peace and blessing upon Muḥammad and his progeny, accept my *ziyāra*, and grant me my wish,<sup>2</sup> by the truth of Muḥammad and his pure household.

The writer does not deem it necessary to explain how this supplication and other similar ones, which are merely the pilgrims' verbal and non-verbal expression

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1. In *ziyāra* of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.), this prayer is in six *rak'as*, of which two *rak'as* are presented to His Holiness and the other four to Prophets Adam and Noah (peace be upon them).

2. *Mafātīḥ al-Janān*, 472. Similar supplication is also related to be recited after the prayer for *ziyāra* of Imam al-Ḥusayn (A.S.). See: *Mafātīḥ al-Janān* the end of sixth *ziyāra* from among the *Ziyārāt Mutlaqa*, 567.

of devotion and faith, refute the accusation of association (*shirk*) on the pilgrims and that it displays how the two ideological principles of *Tawhīd* (Unity) and Imamate are related. We clearly understand that worship is exclusively directed to the One Creator and the reward resulted from it is presented as a gift to the Imam (A.S.), the one who is the greatest monotheist servant of God and the best representative of God to us.

### *Tawallā wa Tabarrā*

﴿Say, “I do not ask you any reward for it except love of [my] relatives.”﴾<sup>1</sup>

From among the subjects brought up in pilgrimages is *tabarrā* (despising and dissociation) from the founding rulers of tyranny and corruption and the enemies of the Imams of Guidance (A.S.), which follows *tawallā* (solidarity with) and expression of love and felicitation to the religious leaders. Thus, pilgrimage is a place of manifestation for *tabarrā* and *tawallā*.

Since these two mental states are among the significant human emotions that have great impact on moral training of individuals and his political and social activities and motivate many of decent and indecent behaviors, first we give some explanation of

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1. Q. 42:23.

this issue and then go on to quote evidences from the texts of the pilgrimage prayers.

Willingness and repugnance, affection and enmity are among the passive states of mind and emotions of humankind, which naturally exist in them and are researched on in psychology.

A sincere Muslim devoted to faith cannot have similar emotions in the heart towards his ideological opponents and proponents, because the true belief in a school of thought requires preferring and defending it as well as devotion towards its leaders and hatred of and dissociation from its opponents. For, if the advocate of that school does not enjoy such state of mind, the opponents would undoubtedly not be free from antagonism and enmity towards him and his school, as we are observing now in the present political and social events.

Furthermore, the instructions of Islam, as an inclusive and perfect religion, are never restricted to bodily organs and outward acts; rather, it includes ordinances and recommendations concerning human intentions, as well. It presents guidelines about such strong human emotions as affection and enmity, suggesting the wisdom and realistic attitude of its doctrines.

The secret and importance of the matter lies in the fact that man – apart from exceptions – is more and more following his sentiments and emotions rather

than abiding by reasoning, logics, and knowledge. That is why most of his behaviors are motivated by his attachments and heartaches, or the spirit of imitation of the current customs and following in the footprints of the elders of their clan.<sup>1</sup>

For this reason, in the Holy Qur'an and traditions, friendship and enmity are judged upon by Divine ordinance as stated in the following verse: ﴿O you who have faith! Do not befriend your fathers and brothers if they prefer faithlessness to faith.﴾<sup>2</sup>

In fact, "peace with all" indicates lack of firm and established opinion. The Almighty Creator and His Apostle (S.A.W.) repudiate the polytheists,<sup>3</sup> i.e., their polytheism and spiteful and corrupt opinions. Following traditions are evidence to this issue:

Fuḍayl b. Yasār says: I asked Imam al-Ṣādiq (A.S.) whether love and hate are part of faith.

The Imam (A.S.) answered: Is faith anything other than love and hate? Then, he recited the following verse: ﴿Allah has endeared faith to you and made it appealing in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you faithlessness, transgression, and disobedience. It is such who are the right-minded.﴾<sup>4</sup>

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1. One of the dimensions of the significance of governments and state administrators is that they are greatly influential in ameliorating or corrupting the common people and they are willy-nilly imitated by them.

2. Q. 9:23.

3. Q. 9:3.

4. Q. 49:7. For the *ḥadīth*, see: *Uṣūl Kāfi*, translated by Ḥāj Sayyid Jawād

Even this state of loving the beneficent and their good deeds and hating the evil-doers for their actions is introduced as a touchstone for the person's good and evil:

Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) said, "Once you want to know if there is goodness in you, see into your heart. If you love the people who are obedient to Allah and hate those who disobey Him, there is goodness in you and Allah likes you, too. [But] If you hate those who obey Allah and love those who disobey Him, then there is no goodness in you and Allah dislikes you; [indeed] man is with what he loves.<sup>1</sup>

The latter statement of this *ḥadīth* "man is with what he loves" (*al-mar'u ma'a man aḥabba*) is to be further deliberated on and suggests an ideological principle in Islam, because human spirit, which in the childhood is more receptive of any role, would fully form in the course of his life while encountering the good and evil events and scenes of life and his personality is built up, being associated with those same entities that he has been preoccupied with and dependent upon: i.e., God or vain desires; truth or falsehood.

Now that we know why "man is with what he loves", we better understand the value of *tawallā* (associating with) and *tabarrā* (dissociating with) in

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Muṣṭafawī, 3/190.

1. *Uṣūl Kāfi*, 3/192.

human education and in determining his intellectual direction and inner tendency. Here, the importance of the pilgrimage prayers (*ziyāratnāmas*), which directly inculcate love of the Ahl al-Bayt (A.S.) and recount the curse<sup>1</sup> and contempt of their oppressors and usurpers of their rights – especially in the *ziyāra* of Sayyid al-Shuhadā (A.S.) – is better appreciated.

Following are some examples that instruct *tawallā* and *tabarrā*. We read in the *ziyāra* of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.):

O Allah! Curse upon the assassins of Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('Alī b. Abī Ṭālib). O Allah! Curse upon the assassins of Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. O Allah! Curse upon the assassins of the Imams (A.S.) and punish them with a painful punishment, such as You have not punished any of the people of the world like that; a punishment that is copious, incessant, unabated, and unending [why?] because they defied the guardians of Your authoritative command; and prepare for them a punishment that you have not inflicted on none of your creatures yet....

Most often, *tawallā* and the pilgrim's enchantment with the Imam (A.S.) is mentioned after expressing his virtues and excellences so as to further prompt the love and affection that he has for those righteous holy

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1. *La'na* (curse), derived from *la'ana*, means driving away and rejecting from Divine grace and mercy; as in verse 44 of *Sūrat al-A'rāf*, ﴿May Allah's curse be on the wrongdoers!﴾.

2. Translation of the first part of *Ziyārāt Muṭlaqa-yi Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.)* in *Mafātīḥ al-Janān*, 469.



figures.

We suffice here to quote a sample of Imam al-Husayn's (A.S.) *ziyāra* on the day of 'Arafa:

You are the gateway to guidance, the pious Imam, the safe bond, the decisive proof (of Allah) for the mankind, and one of the five people of "*Kisā*".

The hands of Mercy fed you, the bosom of Faith nursed you, the genius of Islam trained you, frankly I am very unhappy on account of your departure, (because) there is no doubt that you are alive. Blessings of Allah be on you, and on your forefathers, and on your descendants.

After a few salutations, the pilgrim expresses his friendly sentiments as follows:

O son of the Apostle of Allah! May my father and mother be your ransom.

O Abā 'Abd Allah! May my father and mother be your ransom.

Indeed, terrible was the calamity, and your suffering casts gloom upon us, and upon all the people of the earth and the heavens. So, curse of Allah be on those who saddled and bridled their horses, gave reins, and got ready to fight against you (May they remain deprived of Divine Mercy).<sup>1</sup>

These enthusiastic notions, expressing the virtues of the descendants of the Holy Apostle (S.A.W.) and wishing for their company and cursing their oppressors and enemies, are constantly reminded and inculcated in the minds of the pilgrim and embolden and strengthen

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<sup>1</sup> *Mafātiḥ al-Janān*, 595-596. Also, see: *Ibid*, 561 and 565.

his spiritual power. They kindle the flames of a sacred indignation in his heart, which would burn up the roots of any tyranny and flare the hatred and despise against despotic rulers;<sup>1</sup> the rulers who are either from the seed of the same spiteful tyrants as the Umayyads, with the same rascality and meanness, or, politically and intellectually from among the ruthless despots of the Abbasid dynasty. In either case, they are the enemies of knowledge and piety and human excellence that is manifested in the Household of Prophet (S.A.W.).

The most cursing and despising statements against the enemies of the Pure Household and the opponents of Imamate and the rule of Imam ‘Alī (A.S.) and his progeny (A.S.) are expressed in *Ziyāra* of *Imam al-Ḥusayn* (A.S.) on the day of Āshūra. A part of it is translated as follows:

O Abā ‘Abd Allāh! Unbearable is the sorrow and nerve-racking is the agony you put up with for us and for all the (true) Muslims, crimes committed against you also shocked and unnerved the dwellers of the heavens, one and all.

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1. In *Ziyārat al-Jāmi‘a Kabīra*, the pilgrim supplicate in the following words: “I am at peace with those who make peace with you and I take the field against those who march against you.” Also, in this *ziyāra*, the pilgrim expresses his *tawallā* and *tabarrā* as follows: “From the bottom of my heart I surrender to you; your opinion is my opinion; I am prepared and ready to stand up for you till Allah, the Supreme, gives a new life to His Religion through you...” (*Mafātiḥ al-Janān* 703).

May Allah condemn and damn the people who laid the basis and set up the groundwork, to wander astray and turn aside from not only you and your family but to take liberties and bear hard upon you. May Allah condemn and damn the people who tried to obscure and deny your office and status, willfully neglected your rank and class that Allah had made known in clear terms.

O Abā ‘Abd Allāh! I make peace with those who make their peace with you, I make war on those who go to war against you, till the Day of Judgment.

May Allah condemn and damn the family of Ziyād and the family of Marwān; may Allah condemn and damn the group and the tribe of Umayyads, one and all, altogether; may Allah condemn and damn Ibn Marjāna; may Allah condemn and damn ‘Umar b. Sa‘d; may Allah condemn and damn Shimr.

May Allah condemn and damn the people who saddled and bridled [their horses] and put on masks to fight against you....

What is worth-mentioning in these damnations is the strong emphasis made on them, which discloses the malice and vileness of the damned and condemned people and their irreparable crimes that they committed against the rule of righteousness and justice and diverted the course of history. Therefore, there is no talk of personal enmity of two tribes or an ended war in a specific time and place; rather, it is a battle between the truth and falsehood and the justice and injustice throughout humankind’s history, which we witness today with all its manifestations.

Then, as long as tyranny is going on in the world,

this condemnation goes on and as long as an invasion is perpetrated, this damnation is being leveled at them.

This incessant cursing and condemnations would naturally arouse the reciter of the *ziyāra* of ‘Āshūrā against those tyrants and their followers – who are always found – and keep aflame in his heart the fire of a sacred indignation against any intrusion, partiality, and injustice, leaving in his heart an irreconcilable revulsion toward any sin, oppression, and vileness in himself. It is also natural that this pilgrim with such spiritual understanding would never be tainted with treachery and crime; and this is the practical and educational effect of *tawallā* and *tabarrā*.

### Supplication and Ziyāra

﴿Your Lord has said, " Call Me, and I will hear you!"﴾<sup>1</sup>

In all the Revealed religions, there is supplication and invocation to God, and in Islam, it is more extensive and voluminous. Given the importance and the extent of supplication in our religion, it is natural that it includes the major part of the *ziyāras* and all the benefits that it provides are also reflected in *ziyāras* too, adding up to its spiritual benefits.

Supplication statements are more or less brought up in all pilgrimage prayers; even some well-known pilgrimage prayers such as *Amīn Allāh* and *Ziyārat*

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1. Q. 40:60.

*Rajabiyya* are all replete with supplications. There are many supplications narrated to be recited after *ṣalāt al-ziyāra* (prayer performed after *ziyāra*), which best instruct Islamic ethics and traditions with their sublime contents. Therefore, we can assuredly say that supplication (*du‘ā*) and visitation (*ziyāra*) are two Islamic didactic and instructional schools that enjoy a high status in Shi‘ism and are given special significance according to the Prophetic tradition. Most of the Islamic teachings related to *Taiwhīd* (Monotheism) and knowing the Imam (A.S.)<sup>1</sup> *m’ārif* have been expressed in supplication language or in the pilgrimage prayers. In this respect, Imam Khomeini (R.A.) said, “The Infallible Imams (A.S.) have mostly stated the spiritual matters, the metaphysical issues, the accurate Divine themes, and whatever that relates to the knowledge concerning Allah in the language of supplication. However, we read through the supplications and pay no attention to these notions and basically do not grasp what they want to say.”<sup>2</sup>

### A Brief Talk about Supplication

“Supplication is the key to salvation and the means to prosperity, and the best supplication is that which

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1. It is reiterated that the term “Imam” is intended in its general sense and include our Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and his Infallible successors.
  2. The new version of *Tahrīr al-Wasīla*, chapter on “Devotional Act and Self-improvement, 1/130.

arises from a sublime chest and a pious heart.”<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, numerous books have been written about the importance and effects of supplication; however, it behooves the writer to briefly express his feeling in this regard so as the reader may be given a short introduction of “Supplication”:

**Supplication (du‘ā’)** is yearning for and interest in Allah. It is a heartfelt attraction driving the servant toward the compassionate Creator, establishing an ultimate relation with the Beloved Lord, whispering prayer to and communion with Allah, the Beneficent, in a friendly language fraught with expectation and begging, looking forward to the fulfillment of one’s wishes and satisfaction of one’s needs.

**Narrational (ma‘thūra) supplications**, which are related from the religious leaders are kindly and sincerely expressed, which instruct many of the Divine knowledge and epistemological stations in a pleasant language. The supplicant talks to the “proximate and responsive” Allah, but not with language of logic and argument since he sees Allah despite His Grandeur and Sublimity closer to himself than the jugular vein; rather, he would sincerely commune with Him in the secret of his heart and beg Him to resolve his problems. In the depth of his inner nature, the supplicant finds his intrinsic requirements and

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1. *Al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, Book of Supplication (*Kitāb al-Du‘ā*), 2/486.

hopefully expects the responding to and resolving of his problems by God, Whose power and mercy are infinite and Who hears and grants his needs.

**Motivation for Supplication** is feeling the need that the creature naturally has and the self-reliance and omnipotence that they see in the Exalted Allah. Although this poverty and needfulness is innate and intrinsic to human nature, most people are ignorant of it; hence, they would scarcely find a proper state of supplication. This needfulness is not to be limited to the inferior material needs. The Prophets (A.S.) and *awliyā Allāh* (chosen Friends of Allah), have found the Divine Majesty more clearly than we have and know man's weakness and poverty and the slippery places of spiritual wayfaring better than we do. They are the ones who, in their developmental course and approximation to the Almighty God, feel more need for supplication and take recourse in the Lord of Majesty and Generosity, since they are sensible and familiar with pain and suffering and are lovingly kind and dynamic.

**State of supplication** is a condition in which the heart and the senses are in a dominant presence and all the attention is focused on the Origin of being and the infinite Omnipotence and pervasive Omniscience of Allah. In this state, man leaves behind his own self, enters a spiritual state of being and a distinctive heavenly atmosphere, disconnects from others except

from Him, Who is “proximate and answers the supplicant’s call.”<sup>1</sup> This, in fact, is the spiritual state of supplication, which, like other states, is a personal feeling that can be found rather than transferred. This state and the motivation mentioned above are the quintessence of “supplication”, and such a supplication is “the heart of worship, the pillar of religion, and the light of the heaven and earth.”<sup>2</sup>

**Effects of supplication.** When supplication is performed under its proper conditions<sup>3</sup> and is persisted, it has great impacts on building sublime personality in man. It is because supplication, which is calling the Lord with gratitude and in His greatness and confessing one’s sins and asking for His forgiveness and mercy, brings about the best inculcating effects onto the soul; it uplifts the level of trust and confidence in Allah the Author of Causes; it mobilizes all one’s psychic power towards achieving decent human ideals. It is benevolence in strengthening the will power for making decision on the way of attaining human perfections and success for helping

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1. Adopted from the verse 186, *Sūrat al-Baqara*, ﴿I am indeed nearest. I answer the supplicant's call when he calls Me.﴾

2. *Al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, 2/468, *ḥadīth* 1.

3. Two conditions from among different conditions are worth mentioning: first, the lawfulness of one’s livelihood (*Al-Kāfi* 2/486, *ḥadīth* 9). Second, presence of the heart and being fully hopeful of answer to one’s prayer (*Al-Kāfi*, 2/473, chapter on *al-iqbāl ‘alā al-du‘ā*).



the left-behind servants of God.

Supplication increases the light of faith and hope in the heart of the supplicant and diverts his expecting away from other than God; thus, it makes him a servant of God and free from all attachments and flatteries.

The one who is familiar with supplication will gradually retrieve his own true inner nature and find out his own God-given dignity and honor. He will no longer be content to sell out his character and submit to tyranny and corruption in return for material or worldly needs. He will become a Muslim totally surrendered to the Lord's command, free from the bonds and chains of the worldly attachments, and indeed, a freed and perfected human being.

Such is the supplication and its impacts, which is present in the main parts of *ziyāratnāmas*, adds to their excellence, and renders them more beneficial.

**Translation of some Supplications from *Ziyāratnāmas*:** Although translation is unable to render the eloquence and elegance of the supplications' texts and can rarely bring the readers into their spiritual climate, the writer presents some selected translations of certain *ziyārats*, beginning with *Ziyārat Amīn Allāh* and hoping to reflect some gleams of that heavenly radiance:

1. O Allah! Let me be happy and satisfied with that which Thou consider good for me, let me agree with that which Thou decide for me, let me passionately

remember Thee, and invoke Thee. Let me be in love with Thy pure and sincere friends; let me be well-liked and respected on the earth and in the heavens.

O Allah!<sup>1</sup> Let me be unruffled and well composed in the midst of misfortunes, let me be gratefully thankful in prosperity, let me be mindful of much and more bounties. O Lord! Let me ardently desire for the heartwarming meeting with Thee; [let me be] well-equipped with piety to gain my end on the Day of Requital, let me follow in the footsteps of Thy friends. Let me disassociate myself from the mannerism of Thy enemies. Let me pass my time, in this world, by praising and glorifying Thee...

Imam Muḥammad al-Bāqir (A.S.) [who is the narrator of the *ziyāra*] said:

“Whoever among our Shī‘as recites this *ziyāra* and *du‘ā* at the Shrine of Amīr al-Muminīn ‘Alī (A.S.) and at the shrine of any of the Imams (A.S.), Allah would certainly envelop his *ziyāra* and *du‘ā* in light...”<sup>2</sup>

The writer does not know what the reader would understand of this interpretation of the Imam (A.S.). However, he deems it relevant to express his impression of such interpretations as follows:

**Concerning the interpretation of “light”**, our speech like our conduct has two aspects in the world: an external aspect, which is near, worldly, and that by

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1. This phrase is not included in the *ziyārat*; also, the verb is altered a little according to the context.

2. *Mafātīḥ al-Janān, Ziyārat Muṭlaqa-yi Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī (A.S.)*, second *ziyāra*, 478.

which we see and hear and we become happy or offended about it; and a hidden and internal aspect, which is heavenly and a reflection of the external and worldly influences, as explained earlier in Section Two (Pilgrimage in the Mirror of Traditions) under the heading “deserving reward”.

It is in relation to this same ideological principle that in Islam, as light in the apparent world illuminates life, so also what in the inner and spiritual world is the source of guidance and illumination and creates insight in man is referred to as “light”, like the light of intellect and the light of the Holy Qur‘ān.

In *Ziyārat al-Jāmi‘a* – which is among the valid pilgrimage prayers – the words of the Infallible Imams (A.S.), who are the enlighteners of the way of Allah and the removers of dark veils of misconceptions, is interpreted as “light”: “And you are the light [and the enlighteners of the path] of the virtuous and the guides for the righteous.”<sup>1</sup>

As we know, in the Holy Qur‘ān, the Exalted Creator, who is the Bestower of the light of life, the

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1. Also we read in *Ziyārat al-Jāmi‘a*: “Allah created you in the form of lights...” In the traditions related from the Infallible Imams (A.S.) that “light” in some verses of the Holy Qur‘ān is interpreted as the Imam, who is the illuminator of the straight path, such as, ﴿So have faith in Allah and His Apostle (S.A.W.) and the light which We have sent down, and Allah is well aware of what you do.﴾ (Q. 64:8); and, ﴿... and give you a light to walk by,...﴾, (Q. 57:28). It means the Imam whom you follow. (*Al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, 2/194-195).

Illuminator of the world of being, and the Guide of all creatures – by the creational and legislative guidance – is also interpreted as “Light”.

﴿Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.﴾<sup>1</sup>  
 He is Illuminator of the Beacon of Existence in the darkness of non-being and Bestower of light and guidance to the dwellers of the heaven and the earth.

Now, let us return to the main topic and say: *Ziyārat Amīn Allāh* – and the like from among the sayings of the Infallible Leaders – with its depth and semantic distinction as well as the truths it teaches, is in fact the enlightener of the mind and the heart. It resolves the intellectual perplexities and makes us familiar with some realities of this mysterious and complicated world. It also teaches us the best way to find peace of mind and feel at ease by way of being in the presence and trusting in God, just as the physical light enlightens our path at night and liberates us from misguidance and distress.

Therefore, reciting such enlightening words would illumine the heart and soul of the reciter in the heavenly and esoteric dimension just as they do in the exoteric and external dimension; and is reflected in the recording apparatus of the universe in the form of “light”: “A strip of light?” “A compact disc of light?”

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1. Q. 24:35. To learn more about various meanings of the *āya* and the aspects expressed about the meaning of light, see: *Majma' al-Bayān*, 7/142-144, as well as other interpretations.

Or as Imam al-Bāqir (A.S.) put it, “A parchment of light?” In any case, it would be recorded in a clear and pleasant way and lives on in the memory of the living and receptive of the world until the day when it returns to the owner in reward.

Another example of this type of luminous supplications is the supplication recited after performing pilgrimage to the Master of the Time Imam al-Mahdī (Aj.), the translation of the first part of it is as follows:

O Allah! I beseech You to send blessings upon Muḥammad, the Prophet of Your Mercy and the Word of Your Light, and to fill in my heart with the illumination of certitude, my chest with the illumination of faith, my intellect with the illumination of honest intentions, my determination with the illumination of knowledge, my strength with the illumination of work<sup>1</sup>, my tongue with the illumination of honesty, my religion with the illumination of clear insight from You, my sight with the illumination of brightness, my hearing with the illumination of wisdom [that I may not hear but words of wisdom], and my faculty of love with the illumination of sincere loyalty to Muhammad and his Household, peace be upon them, so that I, when I

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1. This phrasing of the supplication is interesting as we beseech Allah that our thought be accompanied with an illumined and pure intention and turned to action, and our determination and intention enjoy the illumination of knowledge so that we may not do something out of ignorance, and our strength not to remain idle, rather to be manifested and appear in a competent action.

meet You, will have fulfilled the pledge and covenant that I made with You and then Your Mercy will encompass me. O Protector! O Worthy of all praise!<sup>1</sup>

There are many supplications recited within the pilgrimage prayers, but since we intend to give an example of every type, we suffice here to present another example, that includes the final sentences of *Ziyārat al-Jāmi‘a Kabīra*, the translation of which is as follows:

O Allah! Had I found interceders who were nearer to You than Muḥammad and his Ahl al-Bayt, who are the chosen ones and the righteous Imams (A.S.), I would have made them my interceders. Therefore, for the sake of their just due which You have made incumbent for them upon You, I beseech You to include me amongst those who recognize them and their rightful places and also amongst the crowd of those blessed by their intercession, as indeed You are the most Merciful of the merciful ones.<sup>2</sup>

What is worth mentioning in conclusion to this discourse is that pilgrimage and supplication, repentance and return to God, are all means and tools in the disposal of man, who is encouraged toward blunders and sins by oblivion and the deceiving enchantment of the worldly gains, losing his human dignity and honor. However, the Compassionate God has left at his disposal such means and tools for him to

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1. *Mafātiḥ al-Janān*, 675.

2. *Ibid*, 706.

use for taking back his dignity and that luminous truth, engage in purification of his contaminated self by the pleasure seeking and lust, proceed to purge his darkened soul off the crimes, and treacheries.

Do we make use of the possibilities that the Compassionate Allah has left at our disposal? Is it not the time to become more familiar with the Friend of Allah and in this way to complete our Divine knowledge?

### The Literary Value of Pilgrimage Prayers

Having briefly studied the contents of the pilgrimage prayers, it necessitates referring to their literary and literal value, as well. Thus, we would say that eloquent speech and beautiful articulation is the characteristic feature of the Imams of Guidance (A.S.), and it should not be expected otherwise.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.), who was himself the most eloquent among the Arabs, and those who had been fostered by him, i.e. his purified progeny, have all had enjoyed this Divine blessing to its highest degree. Is it not true that Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī (A.S.) and his infallible descendants have all been memorizers of the Holy Qur'ān and learned in the exegesis (*tafsīr*), esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*)<sup>1</sup>, the succinct, and the

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1. *Tafsīr*: reporting, expressing, and clarifying the meaning of difficult words and stating God's intention of the verses of the Holy Qur'ān. *Ta'wīl*:

detailed of the Holy Qur'ān? Therefore, there is no wonder that the learned ones and the instructors of such a Book, which is literarily at the pinnacle of perfection, to be unmatched miracles in elocution and eloquence and displayers of that unique articulacy.

Is it not true that a collection of Imam 'Alī's (A.S.) sermons, letters, and aphorisms is named as *Nahj al-Balāgha* (The Path of Eloquence), which is a beautiful tableau and a guide for the articulators and authors?

Contrary to the initial assumption, upon careful deliberation, we find any of the supplications and pilgrimage prayers as a colorful curtain of eloquent words, novel phrases, beautiful similes, charming metaphors, and desirable images with highly artistic values.

Although sometimes the statements are synonym and the wording surpasses the meaning, this is proportionate to the state and position and prerequisite to eloquence, because the pilgrim has to have a comprehensive and deep knowledge of his Imam (A.S.); and this is not possible except by describing each and every virtue and excellence of the Imam (A.S.). Similarly, the devoted pilgrim speaks to the

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rendering one of the possible meanings of the verse into what conforms to the apparent meaning; it is the predication of the verse to one meaning – of the possible meanings – that approves and conforms to the Book and Sunna. (Adopted from the Introduction of *Tafsīr Majma' al-Bayān*, 1/13; *Kashf al-Asrār*, 2/20).



friend and wants to pour out his heart to him and to tell him of his whereabouts; and while expressing his devotion, he would tell him his needs and ask his assistance in becoming victorious in his greater *jihad*. He would also seek help for passing through the right path – in this world and the Hereafter – which is narrow and sharp. This, of course, may not be expressed, except in details.

Moreover, the pleasure of talking and associating with the beloved demands such repetition and elongation of the talking. However, since the prose is noble, the phrasings are various, and the meanings are pleasant, it is as if in any statement a new topic is expressed and no boredom or annoyance would take place since boredom is where there is no love or when the talk tends to fade into dullness and lassitude. Both of these are incompatible with the essence of pilgrimage, which is delightful meeting and supplication, which is friendly calling with a compassionate tongue.

Deliberation on the reported (*ma'thūra*)<sup>1</sup> supplications and pilgrimage prayers related from the household of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) implies that they are literarily charming and impressive, elegant and meaningful, melodious and rhymed in such a way that

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1. The reported (*ma'thūra*) supplication and *ḥadīth* is one that is since long ago been passed from one person to another.

the music of the phrases – particularly if recited loudly – would create a special melodious harmony and make a delightful tune, whose meaning is pleasant and listening to it is soothing.

Therefore, this pilgrimage and supplication is a religious song and a heavenly poem, which, with its excellent contents, takes the reciters to a heavenly journey and bestows on them a celestial pleasure. Thus, the instructive meanings and essence of the pilgrimage prayers and supplications are cast into a competent mould and a praiseworthy chalice that would make its drinker exuberant with the Beloved and give him a spiritual pleasure that is normally neither possible to taste nor to describe.

### **Rectifying the Culture of Pilgrimage**

Besides meaning “courtesy” and “knowledge”, culture is rendered as “a collection of rites and customs of a nation”, too. What we mean by the culture of pilgrimage is these same rites and customs that are common in any nation and among the followers of any religion and a brief and general comparison of them and what is common among the Shi‘as.

Previously, we said that pilgrimage is an age-old custom, common among the nations and races. Now, we say that these customs are fundamentally different from what is related in our manners of pilgrimage and with our belief about the object of pilgrimage, because

Islam is the religion based on Monotheism and other religions are more or less polytheistic. For more information, it suffices to take a look at the worshipping places of the Christians, Zoroastrians, and Buddhists and see the veneration and glorification they offer to the statues of their religious figures. Then, we will notice that there may be many pilgrimage places that are polytheistic, because the pilgrims exclusively worships the object of pilgrimage or regards him the son or relative of the Glorified God.

Their procedure of worship and pilgrimage is self-created, too: one group performs their religious rites with singing and music while another group does it with the incantations and spells that make no spiritual and epistemic sense. Even among the common Muslims, there are some who practice some kind of pleading (*tawassul*) by presenting their request by fastening padlocks and tie threads to the doors and windows of the sacred mausoleums, which is of course a fabricated and useless practice and a kind of superstition that has to be banned.

Unfortunately, superstition, which is born out of man's ignorance and short-sightedness has found its way into many pilgrimage customs; and it is natural that such an age-old custom common among all the nations and communities would be altered and distorted over time. Certainly, the lucid waters of supplication and pilgrimage – which flows from

within the depths of human inner nature – in its passing through the lands of thoughts and customs of every community intertwines with their personal views and national rules of conduct and has moved away from its original genuineness and purity.

One of the reasons for sending down Messengers and revealing Heavenly Books is to correct these procedures of worshipping God and the manners of paying respect to the religious leaders and purifying them of the invented rites and the polytheistic practices added by humans. For this reason, specific manners and rites for pilgrimage have been related from the Divine leaders of the Monotheistic religion of Islam that each includes instructive points or messages of sublime truths effective in self-purification and correction of society.

For an instance of superstitions and correcting them in Islam, we can point out the rituals of Ḥajj pilgrimage to the Holy House of Allah, during which, according to what is recounted in the Holy Qurʾān concerning the Pagan Arabs, ﴿Their prayer at the House is nothing but whistling and clapping.﴾<sup>1</sup>

It is related from Ibn ʿAbbās in interpretation of the above verse that, “Before Islam, the Quraysh used to circumambulate around the Kaʿba naked and whistle and clap their hands in the while, and did this pagan

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1. Q. 8:35.

practice in place of praying and glorifying the Lord.<sup>1</sup> However, Islam legislated *ṣalāt* with its obvious judicious and esoteric conditions that we know, and made *Hajj* pilgrimage a means for the congregation and meeting of the world Muslims in a specific time, when everyone prays to the Exalted Truth in one direction and praises Him in His Oneness. This oneness of time, place, and language and one-sidedness of devotion to the Worshipped One is a motivation for the unity and oneness of the scattered Muslims of the world, and, with the blessing of this congregation and concentration, acquiring more and more strength and splendor and hasten to assist one another and line up in union against the universal faithlessness.

Furthermore, attending to the manners of pilgrimage elaborated on in the first section can show us a perspective of its individual and social benefits, and considering the inner manners that are the spirit of pilgrimage as explained above, proves the basic distinction between pilgrimage in our school of thought and other schools. Similarly, discussion about “pilgrimage as the manifestation place of *Tawhīd*” opens up before our eyes the sublime and luminous horizon of Monotheism in pilgrimage; and, the “associating and dissociating” (*tawallā* and *tabarrā*) assists us in assimilating ourselves to the Imam’s (A.S.)

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1. *Tafsīr Majma’ al-Bayān*, 4/540.

character and morality and identification with the human paradigms.

A look at the basic concept of the pilgrimage prayers explained so far proves that there is an essential and real difference between these didactic booklets and what the other nations recite, because their incantations are made of human thought and are mostly polytheistic; whereas the pilgrimage prayers are developed out of Divine source of knowledge and center of guidance and stated in the Infallibles' tongue. The latter are all praising and glorification of the Creator and salutations to His authorized guides, who are the means to guidance and salvation for humankind. By Divine providence, their mausoleums upon their demise turned into a landing place for mercy and blessing and a place for answering to prayers, where the needy may take refuge, the devotees may find peace of mind, and their blessed emanation may ever perpetuate, not forgetting their objectives, path, and practical way of life (*sīra*).

In sum, visitation of the Friends of Allah and reciting pilgrimage prayers related from the Infallible Imams (A.S.) at their mausoleums is an educational and didactic school of thought, which is both veneration of the object of pilgrimage and instruction to the pilgrim. It is both respect and remembrance of God, who is the Guardian of all blessings and introduction of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and the

Imams of Guidance (A.S.), who are the perfect paradigms and exemplars for those who are on the path of self-improvement and seeking spiritual guides and mentors.

In fact, the one who is cognizant of his Master of the Time and leader Imam al-Mahdī (Aj.), has indeed found his paradigm and practical exemplar of his life and would no longer incline towards monasticism and Sufism or turn pro-Western; rather, their *tawallā* turns into a motivation for following the Infallible Imam (A.S.). Following the Imam (A.S.) is indeed following in the right path (*ṣirāt*)<sup>1</sup> that would lead us to the highest station in Paradise and the Presence of the Lord of the heaven and earth: ﴿and that the terminus is toward your Lord.﴾<sup>2</sup>

It would be a pity to end this book (*Yearning to Meet*) without expressing our longing to meet the Grand Guardian and Friend (*Walī*) of Allah, the Master of Time, Imam Ḥujjat b. al-Ḥasan al-Mahdī – may Allah hasten his reappearance – who is the intermediary for Divine Grace and Mercy in our time.<sup>3</sup>

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1. It is worth mentioning that the meaning of Imam in lexicons and pilgrimage prayers, besides the usual meaning of “leader” and the one who is followed, is also rendered as *ṣirāt* (*Muntahī a-Irb: a mā ma*), as in *Ziyārat al-Jāmi‘a Kabīra*, we address the Imams (A.S.) as such: “You are the more upright (*aqwam*) path”.

2. Q. 53:42.

3. *Wilāyat* is intermediacy for receiving blessed grace from the Exalted Source and blessed emanation to the world of being, which include both

He is the remainder of Allah's Authorities and Proofs and a precious provision that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and Amīr al-Mu'min 'Alī (A.S.) and other Holy Imams (A.S.) have given the glad tidings of his reappearance<sup>1</sup>, so that with his reappearance he would implement the doings and practices of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) and universal justice and establish the world government.

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the creational and legislative grace. For more information, see: Ḥakīmī, Muḥammad Riḍā, *Khurshīd-i Maghrib (Āthār-i wujūdi Ḥujjat dar 'aṣr-i ghaybat)*, Daftar Nashr-i Farhang-i Islāmī, 1360 sh/1981, 231-235.

1. Many reputable books have been written about the life in occultation of the twelfth Imam (for his protection against being killed by enemies of Islam) and the glad tidings of his reappearance on the basis of the related verses and the frequently related (*mutawātir*) traditions. Following are some especially important books written since fourth/tenth century up to the present time: Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm al-Nu'mānī, *Kitāb al-Ghayba (min A'lām al-Qur'ān al-Rābi')*; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Bābway al-Qummī (d. 381/991), *Kamāl al-Dīn wa Tamām al-Ni'ma*; Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. 460/1067), *Kitāb al-Ghayba*; Al-Sayyid Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Ṣadr, *Al-Mahdī*, whose traditions have all been related from the Sunnī sources; Ayatollah Luṭf Allāh Ṣāfi Gulpāygānī, *Muntakhab al-Athar fi al-Imām al-Thānī 'Ashar (Aj.)*, which consists of both Shī'ī and Sunnī traditions.



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