

Editorial

Liberated Is The One Who Grasps The Greatness Of "Hurr"

In the vastness of the planets and celestial inhabitations, some lofty spirits, who were the best of creatures and who had been created by Allah the Almighty as the essence of the aim of the universe and were the means for Divine recognition, were busy in the glorification, adoration and veneration of their Lord. Thus, when the infallible Imam (a.s.) was asked about his (a.s.) creation, he (a.s.) replied,

"We were created before the creation of the angels. We were watching the creation of other celestial creatures from the silence of non-existence, when none existed except us."

When this earth, with all its adornments, had opened up its lap to receive the inhabitations of the children of Adam (a.s.), its relations were bonded with the infallible Imams (a.s.) to prepare and train the powers of mankind's seeing and hearing.

In the creation of mankind, the Creator has instilled an element that keeps jolting its wisdom and understanding time and again and keeps drawing his attention towards his Lord. Humanity deliberated on the evident principles and gained the ability to distinguish between good and evil; to take an account of his profit and loss, he used all the beautiful efforts available at his disposal.

When the talk arose of profit and loss, there were differences and disagreements between the good and the evil; armies were lined up; spears were shining on the kingdoms of emperors from the battlefields; swords were sharpened and the infantry and the cavalry were arranged. The tents of peace and contentment were uprooted from the earth, now divided into countries and emirates. When the foundations of emperors' palaces developed any weakness, they were strengthened with the blood of the weak and the helpless; the downtrodden and demoralized were thrown into barren, infertile and unproductive lands. It seemed as if a storm of the oppressed had erupted before the oppressors and the tyrants. An unknown, harsh, offensive, scary, stinging, terrifying and frightening cry exposed a secret of the planets that this shriek was that of the Satan, the erstwhile member of the celestial world. On hearing this cry, innocent children hurried into their mothers' laps. Oppressed women gave up their lives in order to protect their chastity and modesty. The bones of the youth were crushed in the mills of tyranny and cruelty.

When Satan initiated his vices and the forces of oppression of cruel tyrants like Namrood, Firaon, Haamaan and their clones raised their ugly heads, Allah - the High and the Mighty - sent His emissaries, Prophet Ibraheem (a.s.) and Prophet Moosa (a.s.) with the message of humanity and revealed unto them His laws through His proximate angels. The residents of the celestial

MOHARRAM 1427 A.H.

world became the anchor of the earth's ship, thereby shoring it to safety from the tumultuous waves of the ocean of tyranny and oppression. Then followed the series of divine Prophets (a.s.) and Messengers (a.s.) to calm the earth. But would the negligent man, intoxicated with the power of rebellion, heed anybody's advice?

Autocrats bearing the nature of Firaon, Namrood and Qaaroon were born in every era with new proportions of despotism and repression. Bribery became the order of the day and the deep but filthy nets of conspiracies spread far and wide. It appeared as if this was the only cover enjoyment of life, the very aim of existence. All permissible and prohibited traits like truth, nobility, sympathy, friendship, humanity, amity, selflessness, sacrifice, etc., were stitched and worn under this system, as per the political demands and considerations. As a result, threads of ostentation appeared all around. But Allah the High had promised that the more the people of the Book would try to conceal its realities, the more He would unveil them, guide them with His open signs and grant contentment to their hearts. No matter in what disguise these political and evil Machiavellians appear, they will fail to hide their tarred faces; the greater the power, the longer will be their period of chastisement and talks of disgrace and degradation will be commonplace. Thus, Allah the High will bring out His virtuous servants from the darkness of deviation to the light of guidance.

From Rome to Persia, the reigns of the so-called Muslim governments of the Syrians and the Arabs were such that they made the tyrannies and cruelties of Firaon and Namrood appear like minor, non-cognizable offences. The slyness, deceits, conspiracies and licentiousness of Moaviyah, the Emir of Syria, had fallen to such pits that the evils of the past seemed like trivial misdeeds. Labeling all vices as Islamic, the accursed Satan had decorated them in the palaces of every Muslim ruler and chief. A storm was about to erupt in the sea of blood, when the grandson of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (a.s.) prevented it through his peace treaty with the spiteful Emir. After the death of Moaviyah, his son Yazid indulged in such dirty play that will reveal the writing of a bloody Syria on every coming era till the Day of Judgment. Every coming morn will appear wearing its shroud, as if each ray of the sun is penetrating the heart of justice with the despots' spear of tyranny.

It was the first day of the first month of the year 61 A.H. The first morning dawned, screaming and calling out to the holy souls that had descended from the habitat of the celestial world. It was calling out to Adam, the chosen one of Allah, for help; beseeching Nuh (a.s.) to provide the parts of the Ark; imploring Ibraheem (a.s.) to exercise patience, supplicate and plead with Allah; to provide the awe of Moosa, the addressee of Allah's speech; requesting Eesa (a.s.) to spread out his prayer-mat on the Divine Throne; the grandson of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.), the beloved of Hazrat Zahra (s.a.) is about to reach the barren and infertile land of Nainava (the other name for Karbala) and in the process, ripping apart Hurr's army. In a short span of ten

MOHARRAM 1427 A.H.

days, a war between truth and falsehood will take place; in which, the small but extremely loyal army of Imam Husain (a.s.) will clash with the huge multitude of Kufans and Syrians. The past Prophets (a.s.) will be in a state of confusion and perplexity and invoke the Almighty, 'O Lord! Grant a clear victory to our heir!'

When the morning of Aashura dawned, the chapter of the biggest victory in history was opened. Hurr placed the standard of freedom on his shoulders and ordered that his hands be tied behind his back and he be blindfolded. His son, brother and slave accompanied him. Despite being among the earthly creatures, the embodiment of repentance, Hurr, managed to stir amazement in the celestial inhabitants. His feat was so enormous that till date the handkerchief of the Lady of Paradise, Hazrat Zahra (s.a.), is adorning the his forehead. The fact is that Hurr salvaged the pride of all of us, the monotheist inhabitants of the earth.

Come! Let's all try to comprehend the magnitude of Hurr's act and deliberate over his value and worth. Let us cast a glance at the vastness of Hurr's conscience. Let us examine the attributes of courage, bravery and willpower in our own selves and analyze our level of repentance in the mirror of Hurr's historical sacrifice. Let us measure our acts on his scale and then we lovers of Imam Husain (a.s.) can exclaim, "We earthly creatures also have value and are loved by Allah the Almighty."

Exegesis Of Ziarate Waaretha Of Imam Husain (a.s.)

In the previous Al Muntazar issue of Muharrum al-Haraam (1424 AH), we had commenced discussion on the exegesis of Ziarate Waaretha. In this issue, we continue the discussion and hope to take it to its logical conclusion with Allah's Help.

(١٥) أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ كُنْتَ نُورًا فِي الْأَصْلَابِ الشَّامِخَةِ وَالْأَرْحَامِ الْمُطَهَّرَةِ لَمْ تُنَجِّسْكَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةُ بِأَنْجَاسِهَا وَلَمْ تُلْبِسْكَ مِنْ مَدِّ لِهَمَّاتِ نِيَابِهَا.

'I bear witness that you were a light that resided in eminent loins and in pure wombs. Ignorance did not tarnish you with its impurity, nor did you ever don its mantle.'

1. Eminent loins and pure wombs

This statement of Ziarate Waaretha underlines the exalted status of the Ahle Bait's (a.s.) creation. There are several traditions that extol the virtues of the Ahle Bait from the viewpoint of their extraordinary creation. Interested readers can refer to Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 15 p. 102-104, Chapter: History of our Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Initiation of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) creation and events related to it..

However, to give readers a brief idea about this subject, we have discussed a couple of traditions on the creation of the Ahle Bait (a.s.).

Janabe Abu Zarr (r.a) narrates - I heard the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

'Ali (a.s.) and I have been created from the same light. We were glorifying Allah (tasbeeh) on the right side of the Arsh two thousand years before Adam's creation. When Allah created Adam, He deposited this light in his loin. Then Adam resided in Paradise while we were in his loin. When Hazrat Adam (a.s.) erred in his judgment (tarke awlaa), we were in his loin. When Hazrat Nuh (a.s.) boarded the ark, we were in his loin. When Hazrat Ibrahim (a.s.) was flung :: in the fire, we were in his loin. Allah kept transmitting us from eminent loins to pure wombs. This continued till the time we were in the loin of Janabe Abdul Muttalib (a.s.), Inside his loin, Allah separated this light in two parts. I was placed in the loin of Hazrat Abdullah (a.s.), while Ali was laid to rest in the loin of Hazrat Abu Talib (a.s.). Prophethood and divine... blessings were granted to me, while Ali (a.s.) was conferred with eloquence and intelligence. Then He named us with His Names. So He being the owner of the Arsh is Mahmood (محمود) and I am Muhammad; He is Alaa أَعْلَى and this is Ali (a.s).'

(Ma'ani al-Akhbaar p. 21 by Shaikh Sadoog (r.a.), Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 15, p. 11, tradition 12)

In another tradition Janab Mufazzal b.. Umar (r.a.) relates from Sadeq-e-Aale Muhammad - Imam Jafar Sadeq (a.s.):

'Indeed Allah, the Almighty; created fourteen lights 14,000 years before the creation of Adam (a.s.). These lights were our souls.'

A person asked Imam (a.s.) - 'O son of the Prophet, who are these lights (souls)?' Imam (a.s.) replied,

'Muhammad (a.s.), Ali (a.s.), Fatema (s.a.), Hasan (a.s.), Husain (a.s.) and nine Imams "from Husain's (a.s.) progeny. The last of them is the Qaim who shall rise after being in occultation (Ghaibat). He shall slay Dajjal and shall purify the earth from every tyranny and oppression.'

(Kamaal al-Deen wa Tamaam al-Ne'man by Shaikh Sadooq (a.r.) Chapter 33)

This statement of the Ziarat is a pointer to this reality.

2. The impurity of ignorance and the intellect and knowledge of Imam

According to the Holy Quran and the traditions of the infallibles (a.s.) when the word ignorance is used, it has two opposites. One is intellect (Aql) and the second is knowledge (Ilm). It is important to first understand the meaning of **جهل** and **جاهليت**. According to Arabic literature the word **جهل** is derived from the scale of **فعل** and **جاهليت** is derived from the scale of **فَاعِلِيَّتْ**, Both are infinitives (**مصدر**) and have somewhat similar meanings. When Jahl is used as opposed to knowledge (**علم**), it means to be ignorant of the reality of a thing. Undoubtedly, this is a negative trait in a person. But more detestable is the second application of **جهل**, which is opposed to intellect. In other words, a **جاهل** (ignorant) in this context is the one who does not use the light of intellect. So, one type of ignorant person is the one who does not have knowledge, while the other kind is the one who does not use his intellect. While the Holy Quran has condemned both types of ignorance, lack of intellect has been denounced more emphatically than lack of ignorance.

Another point worth noting is that ignorance is a real and existing entity, not a non-existent trait. Some scholars are of the opinion that since ignorance is lack of knowledge, therefore it lacks existence. However, the aforementioned line of Ziarate Waaretha points out that ignorance is very much an existent trait. It is a darkness that casts its impurity on the one who is afflicted with it. There are many traditions that clarify this reality.

(For a detailed explanation refer to Volume 1 of al-Kaafi)

It is obvious that this impurity is not physical but spiritual. Its reality is known only to those with knowledge of the unseen viz, the infallible guides (a.s.). We will try to understand the impurity of ignorance through the traditions of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.) - the city of knowledge. Imam (a.s.) declares:

الْجَهْلُ مَوْتٌ

'Ignorance is death.'

(Ghurar al-Hekam by Shaikh Abdul Wahid Aamudi(a.r.))

When death overtakes man, it makes him impure. Therefore, the corpse must be given a ceremonial bath (Ghusl-e-Mayyit). Similarly, an ignorant person is spiritually dead as the impurity of ignorance strangulates his soul.

الْجَهْلُ مُمِيتُ الْأَحْيَاءِ،

'Ignorance puts to death the living ones.'

الْجَهْلُ أَصْلُ كُلِّ شَرٍّ.

'Ignorance is the root of all evil.'

الْجَاهِلُ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنْ كَانَ حَيًّا.

'An ignorant person is dead even while he is alive.'

There are plenty of traditions on this subject. But since brevity is of prime importance, we have mentioned only a few to impress our point that ignorance is death of the soul, an impurity, an overwhelming darkness and an existent trait.

That is why the impurity of ignorance can never touch the existence of Imam (a.s.). On the contrary, the existence of Imam (a.s.) emanates the light of intellect and knowledge.

The world owes its existence to the light of Imam (a.s.). The Imam (a.s.) is the root of all goodness and virtues. The Imam (a.s.) is not just the light of life; he (a.s.) is the light of existence. That is why the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) declared:

I am the city of knowledge and Ali (a.s.) is its gate.'

'I am the scale of wisdom and Ali (a.s.) is its interpreter.'

May Allah curse those who tried to shut this gate and silence this tongue! Given the Imam's exalted position, it is impossible for ignorance to cast its dark shadow on the Imam (a.s.).

A tradition of Imam Jafar Sadeq (a.s.) on this subject will prove conclusive. Imam (a.s.) declares,

'By Allah! I know the Book of Allah (Quran) like the back of my hand. In this Book is the news of everything on the heavens and the earth and everything in the past and the future. As the Quran itself asserts - '...We have revealed the Book to you in it is the explanation of all things...'

(Al-Kaafi, vol. 1, p. 229, tradition 4)

(١٤) وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ مِنْ دَعَائِمِ الدِّينِ وَ أَرْكَانِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّكَ الْإِمَامُ الْبَرُّ النَّقِيُّ الرَّضِيُّ الرَّكِيُّ الْهَادِي الْمَهْدِيُّ.

'I bear testimony that you are from the pillars of religion and the support of the believers, and I bear witness that you are the Imam, the righteous, the virtuous, the loved one, the pure, the guide and the guided one.'

1. دعائم الدين The pillars of religion

Here we witness that Imam Husain (a.s.) is from the pillars of religion. For any structure to survive, a pillar and support is necessary. The stronger the pillar, the more resilient the structure. Also an elaborate and sophisticated structure necessitates pillars and support that are equal to the task in upholding the structure. For instance, a twenty storey building cannot have the same pillars and support like that of a small hut. Likewise, those who considered their religion lightly and frivolously and held their Prophet (s.a.w.a.) in low esteem, took the most incompetent and unsuitable leaders as their support. On the other hand, those who had the highest regard for Allah's Religion and held it in great esteem, were careful to accept the best leaders, which they found in the persona of the Imams (a.s.) of the Ahle Bait (a.s.). On their part, the Ahle Bait (a.s.) lived up to the task of supporting the religion. They made all the sacrifices necessary to ensure that the great structure of Islam remained firm in the face of tumult and turmoil. In this regard, the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) warns:

إِنَّ أَيْمَتَكُمْ قَادَتُكُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ فَانظُرُوا بِمَنْ تَقْتَدُونَ فِي دِينِكُمْ وَ صَلَاتِكُمْ.

'Certainly your Imams are leaders who will guide you towards Allah. There be careful about who you obey in your religion and your prayers.'

(Behaar al-Anwaar vol. 23 p. 30)

مَنْ أَشْرَكَ مَعَ إِمَامٍ إِمَامَتُهُ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَيْسَتْ إِمَامَتُهُ مِنْ اللَّهِ كَانَ مُشْرِكًا بِاللَّهِ.

'One who considers the divinely appointed Imam to be equal to the one who is not divinely appointed, has indeed associated partners with Allah (Shirk).'

(Behaar al-Anwaar vol. 23, p. 30)

These traditions are categorical in their implication that considering someone to be equal to the Ahle Bait (a.s.) in Imamah (leadership) and Wilayah (love and mastership) is the same as considering someone equal to Allah, which amounts to polytheism, the greatest of all sins. This is because Allah has appointed the Imams (a.s.) as leaders for the Muslims. When one ignores these Imams (a.s.) and selects some other Imam (a.s.) for himself, he has disobeyed Allah and

made his own Imam (a.s.) a partner in divine leadership along with Allah's Imams (a.s.). That is why Imam Reza (a.s.) proclaimed:

..... وَ أَمْرُ الْإِمَامَةِ مِنْ تَمَامِ الدِّينِ

'The affair of Imamate is from the perfection of religion.' ..

(Tafsir Noor al-Thaqalain by Allamah Huwaizi (r.a.) vol.1, p. 589)

إِنَّ الْإِمَامَةَ أَسُّ الْإِسْلَامِ النَّامِي

'Surely Imamate is the strong pillar of Islam.'

(Al-Kaafi by Shaikh Muhammad b. Yaqoob Kulaini (r.a.) vol.1, p. 200 tradition 1)

2. اركان المؤمنين Support of the Believers

Over here we bear testimony that Imam Husain (a.s.) was the support of the believers. But for him (a.s.) the morale of the believers would have been shattered. The enemies would have tried to destroy them and would have succeeded in their endeavor.

Imam Reza (a.s.) informed,

إِنَّ الْإِمَامَةَ عِزُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ.

'Surely the Imamate is.....the honour of the believers.' If the Imam : (a.s.). Would not have been there, the world would have humiliated and disgraced the believers. In this regard Imam-e-Asr (a.t.f.s.). narrated,:

إِنَّا غَيْرُ مُهْمِلِينَ لِمَرَاعَاتِكُمْ وَلَا نَاسِينَ لِدِكْرِكُمْ وَلَوْلَا ذَلِكَ لَنَزَلَتْ بِكُمْ الْآوَاءُ وَاهْتَلَمَكُمُ الْأَعْدَاءُ.

'Surely we are not negligent in remembering you and never forget you. If it had been like that (i.e. we had neglected you) surely calamities would have descended upon you and the enemies would have crushed you.'

These and hundreds of other such traditions talk about the innumerable favors of the Imams (a.s.) upon us. Our existence, our honour, our religion, rather everything we possess is due to their (a.s.) grace.

3. بِرٌّ Virtuous Ones

According to Arabic literature بِرٌّ is صفتٌ مُشَبَّهَةٌ بِالْفِعْلِ. It is derived from بر. Imam Sadeq (a.s.) declares,

نَحْنُ أَصْلُ كُلِّ خَيْرٍ وَ مِنْ فُرُوعِنَا كُلُّ بِرٍّ فَمِنَ الْبِرِّ التَّوْحِيدُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالصِّيَامُ وَ كَظْمُ الْعَيْظِ وَالْعَفْوُ عَنِ الْمُسِيئِ وَ رَحْمَةُ الْفَقِيرِ
وَ تَعَهُدُ الْجَارِ وَالْإِقْرَارُ الْفَضْلُ لِأَهْلِهِ فَكَذَبَ مَنْ زَعَمَ أَنَّهُ مَعَنَا وَهُوَ مُتَعَلِّقٌ بِفُرُوعِ غَيْرِنَا.

'We are the roots of all goodness. And from our branches emanates every virtue. Then from the virtues are Tauheed, prayers, fasting, controlling anger, forgiving the sinner, compassion for the poor, regard for neighbours, acknowledging the superiority of the meritorious ones...then he has lied who considers himself to be from amongst us, while he adheres to our enemies in religious laws. Readers would have observed that the Imam (a.s.) is behind every virtue in this world. He is the upholder of morality and goodness. Then one who considers himself to be a Shia should mirror the Imam's (a.s.) character and ethics.

4. 'التَّقَى' Fearing Allah

This means that a person's entire existence is filled with Allah's fear. There is nothing else in his existence except this fear. **تَقَى** is derived from **وَقَى**. Then according to the rules of Arabic grammar the **و** is converted into **ت**. **تَقَى** is on the scale of **فَعِيلٌ**, which means to have excessive fear. For a detailed discussion on this subject readers are requested to refer to books of Akhlaq.

5. الرِّضَى One with whom Allah is pleased

This is **اسم مفعول**, which means the one with whom Allah is pleased. It is on the scale of **فَعِيلٌ**, like **نَبِيٌّ**, which means the one who has received divine news or has been elevated to a high position. Undoubtedly, the Imam (a.s.) is the 'contented soul' who is pleased with Allah and with whom Allah is pleased.

6. الزَّكَاةُ Pure

This is also **اسم مفعول**, which means the one who is made pure. **هادى** means the one who guides the people. **مهدي** means the one who is rightly guided. **هادى** is a **اسم فاعل** while **مهدي** is **اسم مفعول**.

(١٧) وَ أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ الْإِمَامَةَ مِنْ وُلْدِكَ كَلِمَةُ التَّقْوَى وَ أَعْلَامُ الْهُدَى وَالْعُرْوَةُ الْوُثْقَى وَالْحُجَّةُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا.

'I bear witness that the Imams from your progeny are the word of piety' and the standards of guidance and the firm rope and Allah's Proof upon (the people of) the world.'

Until now we were addressing Imam Husain (a.s.) himself. Now we address the Imams (a.s.) from his progeny. Over here we give witness that the infallible Imams (a.s.) from Imam Husain's

(a.s.) progeny are the 'word of piety'. Now let us understand the meaning of some of these words.

1. ائمة Imams (a.s.)

The word ائمة is the plural of Imam. It is on the scale of افعلة like اسئلة and اجوية. ولد is the plural of ولد. This statement states categorically that all the Imams (a.s.) will be from Imam Husain's (a.s.) progeny and not from someone else's lineage. This is also a pointer to the fact that Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) is the ninth son of Imam Husain (a.s.) and not Imam Hasan (a.s.) as some people believe.

2. كلمة التقوى Word of piety

This term is from the traits of the infallible Imams (a.s.). The Holy Quran declares in Surah Fath (48), verse 26:

وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَىٰ وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا.

...and made them keep the word of guarding (against evil), and they were entitled to it and worthy of it...'

Here, readers must note that this verse discusses the believers (momineen) and not the Muslims. It means that only the believers will adopt piety and guard against evil, not the Muslims in general. What is the difference between a believer and a Muslim? This is a discussion that merits a detailed explanation. Inshallah, in an appropriate article we will explain the subtleties of this debate. With regards to the 26th verse of Surah Fath, Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) relates that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) narrated: ::

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَاهَدَ إِلَيَّ عَهْدًا فَقُلْتُ رَبِّ بَيْنَهُ لِي،

'Surely Allah took a covenant from me. I said - O my Lord, explain it to me.

قَالَ: اِسْمَعْ

'He said - Listen.'

قُلْتُ، سَمِعْتُ

'I replied - I am hearing.'

قَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ إِنَّ عَلِيًّا رَأَيْتُ الْهُدَىٰ بَعْدَكَ وَ إِمَامُ أَوْلِيَانِي وَ نُورٌ مِّنْ أَطَاعِنِي وَ هُوَ الْكَلِمَةُ الَّتِي أَلْزَمَهَا اللَّهُ الْمُتَّقِينَ فَمَنْ أَحَبَّهُ فَقَدْ أَحَبَّنِي وَ مَنْ أَبْغَضَهُ فَقَدْ أَبْغَضَنِي فَبَشِّرْهُ بِذَلِكَ.

'He said - O Muhammad! Surely Ali is the flag of guidance after you. He is the leader (Imam) of my friends and the light of the one who obeys Me. He is the 'word' whose adherence I have made obligatory on the believers. Then the one who loves him, loves Me and the one who hates him, hates Me. Then give glad tidings to him about this.'

(Amaali of Shaikh Tusi (r.a.), vol. 1, p. 250)

In another tradition, Imam Reza (a.s.) narrates , ' The word of piety (كلمة تقوى) is the Wilayat of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.)!

(Tafsir al-Burhaan by Sayed Haashem Burhaani (r.a.))

These traditions clearly mention that the mastership and love of Ahle Bait (a.s.) is the word through which Allah the Almighty has made obligatory the obedience of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) upon the believers.

3. أَعْلَامُ الْهُدَى Standards of guidance

أَعْلَامُ is the plural of عَلمَ, which means flag, standard.

الْأَيْمَةُ مِنْ وُلْدِ الْحُسَيْنِ مَنْ أَطَاعَهُمْ هُدًى فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَ مَنْ عَصَاهُمْ فَقَدْ عَصَى اللَّهَ هُمْ الْعُرْوَةُ الْوُثْقَى وَ هُمْ الْوَسِيلَةُ إِلَى اللَّهِ.

'The Imams are from the progeny of Imam Husain (a.s.). One who obeys them has most certainly obeyed Allah and one who disobeys them has most certainly disobeyed Allah. They are the firm rope and a means towards Allah.'

In these traditions and scores of other traditions like Hadith-e-Thaqalain, we have been, urged to hold fast unto the Ahle Bait (a.s.). A point that merits mention is that in the present age of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) occultation, attaching oneself to the Ahle Bait (a.s.) is no easy task. That is why when the narrator asked Imam (a.s.) about why the Holy Quran and the Ahle Bait (a.s.) are referred to as the Thaqalain, Imam (a.s.) replied: ...

لِأَنَّ التَّمَسُّكَ بِهِمَا ثَقِيلٌ.

'Because hold fast unto them is very difficult.'

(Tafseer al-Burhaan, Third Preface)

But this difficult task becomes easy when we beseech the Ahle Bait (a.s.) to accept us as their Shias and to protect us from the whisperings of the accursed Satan. We should plead and beg with the Master of our age - Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) to protect our faith in these volatile times and keep us steadfast on the Thaqalain.

4. الْحُجَّةُ عَلَى أَهْلِ الدُّنْيَا Proof on the people of the world

Hujjat means proof or argument. The Holy Quran declares:

قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ.

'Say: Then Allah's is the conclusive argument...'

(Surah An'aam (6): Verse 149)

The infallible Imams (a.s.) are Allah's Proofs. The Imam (a.s.) is the focal point for those who are thirsty for guidance. Every Imam (a.s.) is the standard of guidance for the people of his era. It means anyone who turns towards the Imam (a.s.) in search for guidance and adheres to his commands has been guided; the one who turns away from the Imam (a.s.) is misguided.

5. الْعُرْوَةُ الْوُثْقَى Firm rope

فَمَنْ يَخْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا.

'...therefore, whoever disbelieves in the Shaitan and believes in Allah he indeed has fastened unto the firmest handle, which shall not break off...'

(Surah Baqarah (2): Verse 256)

وَمَنْ يُسَلِّمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى.

'And whoever submits himself wholly to Allah and he is the doer of good (to others), he indeed has taken hold of the firmest thing upon which one can lay hold...'

(Surah Luqman (31): Verse 22)

While explaining the meaning of 'firm rope' the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) informed:

مَنْ أَحَبَّ يَتَمَسَّكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى الَّتِي لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا فَلْيَسْتَمْسِكْ بِوَلَايَةِ أَخِي وَوَصِيِّ عَلِيِّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ فَإِنَّهُ لَا يَهْلِكُ مِنْ أَحَبِّهِ وَتَوَلَّاهُ وَلَا يَنْجُو مَنْ أَبْغَضَهُ وَعَادَاهُ.

'If one wishes to hold fast unto the firm rope that shall not break should hold fast unto the guardianship of my brother and my successor Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.). Then the one who loves him will never be destroyed, while the one who hates him will never gain salvation.'

(Ghaayah al-Maraam by Sayyid Hashim Bahraani (r.a.) p. 244, Chapter 39, tradition 1)

In another Quranic verse, Allah the High proclaims,

لِنَلَّا يَكُونُ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ.

...so that people should not have a plea against Allah after the (coming of) apostles...'

(Surah Nisa (4): Verse 165)

A point worth noting is that when the Ziarat says that the Imams (a.s.) are divine proofs on the world, they are not just proofs for the material world, rather they are proofs over all the imaginable worlds. Here, the world refers to all creatures, those that are , visible to the naked eye as well those that are hidden from the eyes. This is the irrefutable belief of the Shias as far as the Imam of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) is concerned.

In his invaluable compilation - Behaar al-Anwaar, Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has discussed this subject in detail. Interested readers can refer to the 27th volume, chapter 15:

بَابُ أَنَّهُمُ الْحُجَّةُ عَلَى جَمِيعِ الْعَوَالِمِ وَ جَمِيعِ الْمَخْلُوقَاتِ.

Chapter: They are the proofs upon all worlds and all creatures.'

In this chapter Allamah Majlisi (r.a.) has discussed 10 traditions on this subject. We have mentioned one tradition for the readers by way of illustration.

Imam Sadeq (a.s.) informs:

إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ أَلْفَ عَالَمٍ، كُلُّ عَالَمٍ مِنْهُمْ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ سَبْعِ سَمَوَاتٍ وَ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ، مَا يُرَا عَالَمٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنَّ لِلَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ عَالَمًا غَيْرَهُمْ، وَ إِنِّي الْحُجَّةُ عَلَيْهِمْ.

'Surely for Allah, the Almighty, there are 12,000 worlds. Each of these worlds is larger than the seven skies and seven earths. These are the worlds than can be seen (by the human eye). Apart from these worlds there are several worlds that can't be seen (by the human eye). I am Allah's Proof on all these worlds.'

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 7 p. 41 narrated from al-Khesaal vol.2, p.171-172)

Note that the worlds that are beyond human comprehension are also under the guardianship of the Ahle Bait (a.s.).

The Imams (a.s.) are referred to as Proofs. The following tradition of Imam Sadeq (a.s.) clarifies this:

مابا

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَا مِنْ أَدَمِيٍّ وَلَا أَنْسِيٍّ وَلَا جِنِّيٍّ وَلَا مَلَكَ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ إِلَّا وَنَحْنُ الْحُجَجُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ خَلْقًا إِلَّا وَقَدْ عَرَضَ
وَلَا يَتَنَا عَلَيْهِ وَاحْتَجَّ بِنَا عَلَيْهِ فَمُؤْمِنٌ بِنَا وَكَافِرٌ وَجَادِدٌ حَتَّى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ.

'There is no creature be it a human, mortal, jinn, angel in the heavens except that we are the Proofs upon them. And Allah has not created any creature but He presented our guardianship before it and completed the proof upon it through us. Then the believer is a believer through his belief in us and the disbeliever and denier is a disbeliever and denier through his denial of our guardianship. Similarly the heavens, earth and the mountains were examined through us.'

(Kitab al-Sarair, p. 473, Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. . . 27, p. 26 tradition 7)

This tradition reveals that every creature was examined through the guardianship of the Ahle Bait (a.s.). The one who accepted them became a believer and the one who denied them became a disbeliever. Of course some 'enlightened' individuals and antagonists of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) may find such traditions bizarre and incredible. We would like to reply to them in a befitting manner, however at this stage we can only direct them to the 72nd verse of Surah Ahzaab. If however, they do not want to discuss this topic through the Holy Quran, then we have nothing to do with them.

(١٨) وَ أَشْهَدُ اللَّهَ وَ مَلَائِكَتَهُ وَ أَنْبِيَآئَهُ وَ رُسُلَهُ أَنِّي بِكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ وَ بِبَيَابِكُمْ مُؤَقِّنٌ بِشَرَائِعِ دِينِي وَ خَوَاتِيمِ عَمَلِي وَ قَلْبِي لِقَلْبِكُمْ
سَلْمٌ وَ أَمْرِي لِأَمْرِكُمْ مُتَّبِعٌ صَلَوَاتِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ عَلَى أَرْوَاحِكُمْ وَ عَلَى أَجْسَادِكُمْ وَ عَلَى أَجْسَامِكُمْ وَ عَلَى شَاهِدِكُمْ وَ عَلَى
غَائِبِكُمْ وَ عَلَى ظَاهِرِكُمْ وَ عَلَى بَاطِنِكُمْ.

'I take Allah, His Angels and His Prophets and His Apostles as witnesses that I have believed in your guardianship and am certain of your return with the laws of the religion and completion of my actions. My heart is submissive to your heart and I am an adherent to your command. Divine blessings be upon you and your souls and your bodies and your present ones and your absent ones.'

1. أَشْهَدُ I take witness

From the aspect of. Arabic grammar, this is the 13th formula (صيغه) of باب افعال. In this last sentence of Ziarate Waaretha, we take Allah, His Angels, His Prophets and His Apostles as witnesses to confess the following points:

- a) Our faith on the Ahle Bait (a.s.) is firm
- b) Along with the laws of our religion and the completion of our actions, we have complete certainty on their return (i.e. resurrection in this world after death).
- c) Our hearts are totally submissive to the hearts of the infallibles (a.s.).
- d) We are always compliant to the commands of the Ahle Bait (a.s.) in every aspect of our lives.

If these points have to be summarized in a few words, then they are faith, certainty in the return, submission and obedience...

2. ایمان Faith

Our faith with regards to the Imams (a.s.) must be as Imam Reza (a.s.) said:

'The 'Imam is the most brilliant individual of his era. None can attain his position and status. No scholar or genius can rival him. None can replace him or substitute him. All these traits are especially for him, but he has not sought them nor has he acquired them (through effort). Rather this is a merit endowed on him by Allah, the Almighty.' (Al-Kaafi, vol. 1, p. 287)

3. رجعت Return

For more details on this topic, readers are requested to refer to the special Shabaan al-Muazzam issues of Al Muntazar.

4. Submission and Obedience

To submit before the infallible Imams (a.s.) and to obey their commands is akin to submitting to Allah and His Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and obeying their commands. This is apparent from the tradition of Imam Jafar Sadeq (a.s.):

After the recognition of the Prophet, recognition of the Imam, whose obedience is obligatory, is necessary. At any rate, you should know his characteristics, his conditions and his name. Whether you are in difficulty or in ease, you must have this basic recognition of the Imam. The minimum recognition of the Imam that you must have is that except for the status of Prophethood he is equal to the Prophet and is his successor. Obeying him is the same as obeying Allah and His Prophet. In every affair you must submit to the Imam and refer to him. You must accept his commands and know that Ali b. Abi Talib (a.s.) is the successor of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and after him is Hasan (a.s.) and after him Husain (a.s.)...

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 36, p. 407, tradition 16)

This tradition defines the basic recognition of Imam (a.s.). It clearly mentions that recognition of Imam (a.s.) is based on faith, submission and obedience. The obedience should be comprehensive and unconditional. One should not obey the Imam (a.s.) to suit his own motives, or out of greed for a position or to impress his superiority over the people so as to draw a benefit from them.

Our most fundamental responsibility is to seek divine proximity through the door that Allah has appointed for us. If we approach Allah through some other door, then we stand to forfeit all our

MOHARRAM 1427 A.H.

supplications and worship. We shall become just like that worshipper from Bani Israel who tried to gain divine proximity while he harboured doubt about Hazrat Esa's (a.s.) prophethood. When his supplications were repeatedly snubbed, he approached Hazrat Esa (a.s.) and inquired about the failure to acquire divine grace despite persistent supplications. Hazrat Esa (a.s.) performed ablutions, prayed namaz and sought out the answer to the problem from Allah. Soon he got the reply:

At the end we seek benediction on the Imams (a.s.), their apparent and their hidden.

O Allah! We beseech You for taufeeq to recite Ziarate Waaretha on the sacred grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) in Karbala. We beseech You to accept our tears in Imam's (a.s.) way. We beseech You to make Janabe Zahra (s.a.) pleased with us for shedding tears in her beloved son's (a.s.) way.

At the end we beseech You to hasten Imam-e-Zamana's (a.t.f.s.) reappearance and to include us amongst his helpers and supporters. Amen!

Ziyaarate Aashoora – Importance, Rewards & Effects

You have already read numerous articles written in the previous Muharram al-Haraam special issues of Al Muntazar on the topic of 'Importance of Ziyaarat (visitation) of Imam Husain (a.s.) and its benefits in this world and the hereafter.' The importance of Ziyaarate Aashoora has also been dealt with in some detail in the previous Al Muntazar issues. To know more on this topic, you can refer to the following articles - 'Ziyaarat of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.)' (Muharram al-Haraam special issue - 1411 AH), 'Ziyaarat Arbaeen' (1412 AH), 'The visitors of Imam Husain's (a.s.) grave on the Day of Qiyamat' (1414 AH), 'The conditions for the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.)' , (Muharram al-Haraam special issue - 1417 AH), 'The visitors of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.)' (1422 AH), 'The status in the hereafter and the significance of Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.)' (1424 AH)

However, it is a firmly established fact that just as it is impossible to comprehend and grasp the greatness, excellence, position and status of Ahle Bait (a.s.), it is impossible for us to comprehend the connotations, implications and significance of their words and statements in their entirety. Of course, we can have some basic understanding of their words, which makes us realize their high stature and distinction. Ziyaarate Aashoora too falls in a similar category. Its greatness, benefits and rewards cannot be entirely comprehended or enumerated. Hence whatever is being written in this article concerning Ziyaarate Aashoora is like taking a few drops from a vast ocean. As the old Arabic cliché goes, 'If the entire ocean cannot be encircled and seized, then at least take from it to the extent of your thirst.'

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Hadith-e-Qudsi

What else could be a greater merit for this Ziyaarat than to be the 'Word of Allah' (Hadithe Qudsi)? No other Ziyaarat bears this eminence and superiority. The difference between the Holy Quran and Ziyaarate Aashoora is the same as the difference between the Holy Quran and Hadithe Qudsi. If the words from Allah claim to be a miracle from the aspect of meaning and concept, then they are the verses of the Holy Quran. But if there is no claim of miracle from the aspect of meaning and concept, then these divine words are called as 'Hadithe Qudsi'. And if the concept is from Allah, but the words are those of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), then it is called as 'Hadith'. However there is no doubt that this Ziyaarat is Hadithe Qudsi.

Safwan (r.a) narrates that Hazrat Jibraeel (a.s.) conveyed this Ziyaarat to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) on divine command. We will narrate this incident in detail in the end of this article. What is important at this point is to appreciate that this Ziyaarat is Hadithe Qudsi and it has reached Imam Baqir (a.s.) through his noble ancestors who received it from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a). Imam Baqir (a.s.) made 'public' this Ziyaarat for the first time. This is because like all other

divine laws that were delayed, the delay in the communication of Ziyaarate Aashoora in the public domain also had a divine rationale.

(Shifa al-Sudoor, p. 51 by Abul Fazl Tehrani)

We will narrate the importance of Ziyaarate Aashoora in the light of traditions later in this article. Now let us take a look at some incidents that highlight the significance of Ziyaarate Aashoora and its recitation.

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Importance

The great and pious jurist, Marhoom Shaikh Jawad b. Shaikh Mashkoor, was a leading jurist of Najaf who died at the age of 90 years in 1337 A.H. He is buried next to his father in a room in the blessed courtyard of the grave of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). This great scholar dreamt in the night of 26 Safar 1332 A.H in which he saw Hazrat Izrael - the angel of death (a.s.). He did salaam to the angel of death and asked him from where he was coming. The angel of death replied 'I am coming from Shiraz after having seized the soul (Ruh) of Mirza Ibrahim Mehlaaki.' Shaikh asked him 'In what condition is his soul in Barzakh?' The angel of death replied 'He is residing in the most beautiful garden and is in the best of the conditions. Allah has appointed 1,000 angels at his beck and call.' Shaikh asked him 'For which action has he received such a great reward - for his high level of knowledge? Or for the large number of students he had trained?' The angel of death replied, 'For none of these reasons'. Shaikh asked, 'Then for leading the congregational prayers and explaining the religious laws to the people?' The angel of death replied in the negative. So Shaikh asked, 'Then on what basis did he receive such a great position?' The angel of death said 'For reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora.' Mirza Mehlaaki recited Ziyaarate Aashoora regularly in the last 30 years of his life. And if due to an illness or any other reason, he was unable to recite the Ziyaarat, then he would appoint a representative to recite the Ziyaarat on his behalf.'

The next morning, Shaikh Jawad went to Ayatullah Mirza Mohammed Taqi Shirazi and narrated his dream. On hearing this, Ayatullah Mirza Mohammed Taqi began weeping. When people asked him the reason of his grief, he replied 'Mirza Ibrahim Mehlaaki was a pillar of jurisprudence and he has departed from the world.' People said 'But this news was only a dream, while we don't know the fact as yet.' Ayatullah Mirza Taqi replied, 'This was not the dream of an ordinary individual, it was the dream of Shaikh Jawad.' The very next day there was letter informing the residents of Najaf about Mirza Ibrahim Mehlaaki's demise. In this way, the veracity of Shaikh Jawad's dream proved to be true. Subsequently many scholars learnt of this incident from the late Ayatullah Syed Abdul Hadi Shirazi who in turn had personally heard about it from Shaikh Jawad.

(Ziyaarate Aashoora by Nasir Rasti Lahejaani, p. 27)

This incident highlights the significance of reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora regularly.

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Consequences and benefits

Shaheed-e-Mehraab, Ayatullah Dastghaib Shirazi (r.a.) narrates an incident from Ayatullah Uzma Shaikh Abdul Kareem Haayeree (r.a.), the founder of the Hauz-e-Ilmiyyah in Qum. Janab Haayeree (r.a.) narrates, 'I was residing in Samarraah to pursue religious studies. Once, the city was struck by a deadly plague. Scores of people were dying every day. During those days, a group of religious scholars had gathered at the house of our teacher late Syed Mohammed Fesharki (r.a.). At that time, Janab Mirza Mohammed Taqi (r.a.) too came in that meeting. The talk turned towards the topic of plague and the devastation it was causing in terms of loss of lives. Marhoom Mirza Taqi (r.a.) said, "If I command you to perform an action will all of you obey me?" Everyone replied "Yes, of course, we will obey whatever you say." Marhoom Mirza (r.a.) then ordered "Tell every Shia of Samarraah to recite Ziyaarate Aashoora for the next ten days and to gift the reward of the Ziyaarat to the soul of the mother of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), Janabe Nargis Khatoon (s.a) so that the people remain safe from this disease." All those who were present in that gathering passed this information to the Shias of Samarraah, who all began reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora. From the very next day, there was no news of any Shia death. Only the news of the death of the Ahle Sunnat was being reported. Gradually the Sunnis realized this and asked some of their Shia friends as to the reason that why none from the Shias were dying of plague. The Shias said that they were reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora. On hearing this, the Sunnis too began reciting the Ziyaarat. Consequently, they too were secured from the perilous effects of the plague.'

(Ziyaarate Aashoora - Effects & Miracles, p. 24)

Conclusion

- 1) This incident not only highlights the effects and consequences of reading Ziyaarate Aashoora, but also the importance of the Ziyaarat itself.
- 2) People usually recite Ziyaarate Aashoora on behalf of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s). This incident further highlights the great position of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) mother, Janabe Nargis Khatoon (s.a)
- 3) The Sunnis vehemently oppose reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora. Yet by reciting the Ziyaarat, even they acknowledged that the Ahle Bait (a.s.) are the 'Dispellers of calamities'.

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Emphasis of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)

The emperor of the era, the friend of Allah, the chief of the universe, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has forcefully stressed the importance of reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora in his letters and sayings.

In his masterpiece, Mafaateeh al-Jenan, the pillar of traditionalists, Shaikh Abbas Qummi (r.a) has mentioned an incident from his teacher, Janab Mirza Husain Tabarsi (r.a) - famous as Mohaddis Noori (r.a). We will not narrate the entire incident but mention only that portion where Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has emphasized the regular recitation of Ziyaarate Aashoora .

This incident pertains to Janab Syed Ahmed bin Syed Hashim bin Syed Hasan Musawi Rashty. He was a trader from the city of Rasht. He says 'I left the city of Rasht with the intention of going for Haj and came to the house of Haji Safarali Tabrezi. I was a little worried as there was no caravan scheduled for Haj at that time. When I saw that another friend Haji Jihad Jaludar Isfehni has packed his luggage and is all set to leave for Haj, I too decided to leave with him and hired a mount for the journey ' (For more details of this incident, the separation of Janab Rashty from his group and being left alone - losing the way in a snowstorm and the darkness of the night - meeting Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) in this state of distress who led him to his destination etc please refer to Mafaateeh al-Jenan, Incident of Syed Rashty & Najm al-Thaaqib, chapter 7).

In this incident, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), in the beginning mentions, 'Recite Naafelah Shab' Then he says 'Recite Ziyaarat Jaameah' and then he says 'Recite Ziyaarate Aashoora ' Syed Rashty did not know either Ziyaarat-e-Jaameah or Ziyaarate Aashoora by heart. But the moment Imam (a.s.) asked him to recite them regularly, he knew both these Ziyaarats by heart.

Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) helped Syed Rashty to reach his destination. On the way, Imam (a.s.) once asked him rhetorically, 'Why don't you recite the Naafelah prayers?' Then he (a.s.) repeated thrice 'Naafelah, Naafelah, Naafelah!' Again, Imam (a.s.) asked him, 'Why don't you recite Ziyaarate Aashoora?' Then Imam (a.s.) reiterated, 'Aashoora, Aashoora, Aashoora!' Once again, Imam (a.s.) asked Janab Rashty, 'Why don't you recite Ziyaarat-e-Jaameah?' And then Imam (a.s.) emphasised thrice, 'Jaameah, Jaameah, Jaameah!'

Conclusion:

This incident underlines the extraordinary importance of Ziyaarate Aashoora. The fact that Janab Syed Rashty; who had lost his way met Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), shows his distinction. But the emphasis of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) on the regular recitation of Ziyaarate Aashoora and Ziyaarat-e-Jaameah points to the fact that Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) desires that his (a.s.) followers should always remember the tribulations of his grandfather Imam Husain (a.s.) and they should always be aggrieved and anguished by the events of Karbala.

'How fortunate are those who have the taufeeq of reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora regularly.'

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Repealing of chastisement

The significance of Ziyaarate Aashoora can be gauged from yet another incident. The previous incident reveals the benefit of Ziyaarate Aashoora for the one who recites it regularly. But the following incident depicts a really strange benefit of Ziyaarate Aashoora. It shows that the one who recites Ziyaarate Aashoora becomes a cause of the forgiveness of sins committed by others!!!

Marhoom Mohaddis Noori (r.a.) narrates an incident from Al-Haaj Mulla Hasan Yazdi, who was a pious and virtuous individual and was the caretaker of the shrine of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). He was very religious and was always preoccupied in worship and Ziyaarat. Mulla Hasan, in turn narrates about Mohammed Ali Yazdi who too was a very respectable, devout and virtuous person. He too would always spend his time in acts of worship and in matters related to the Hereafter. Janab Mohammed Ali used to spend his nights in worship in a particular place in Yazd known as "Mazaar" where many prominent and pious scholars are buried. He had a neighbour who was his good friend. Both of them had grown up and studied together. His friend started doing the work of "Ghassari" (tax collection). Few years later this friend died and was buried in this very 'Mazaar' where Janab Mohammed Ali used to spend his nights in worship. One month after his friend's demise, Janab Mohammed Ali saw him in a dream. His friend was looking very handsome and smart. Janab Mohammed Ali asked him 'I very well know the kind business in which you were involved. There was nothing in that business that you did hiddenly or openly that would merit this great reward that you have received. In fact nothing except punishment could be expected from the kind of work you used to do. Then how did you receive this great position and reward?' The friend replied 'You are absolutely right. In fact, from the time I died, till yesterday I was involved in a painful chastisement. But yesterday, the wife of Ustad Ashraf Haddad (blacksmith) died and was buried a few meters away from here. Last night Imam Husain (a.s.) came to visit her thrice. On the third visit, he (a.s.) ordered that the punishment from the entire graveyard be removed. Hence, now you see me living a life of easy and comfort.'

Aga Mohammed Ali got up with a start from his sleep. He did not know who Ashraf Haddad was nor did he know where he lived. He went to the iron market, inquired about him and reached his house. Janab Mohammed Ali asked him 'Did you have a wife?' He replied 'Yes. She died last night and I buried her at so and so place' Janab Mohammed Ali asked him 'Had she gone for the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.)?' The man replied 'No. But why are you asking me all this?' Janab Mohammed Ali narrated to him the dream that he had seen. After hearing the entire incident, the blacksmith said 'My wife was very particular and regular in reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora' .

(Daarus Salaam, Mohaddis Noori (r.a.), vol. 2, p.268; Shifa al-Sudur; p. 52 - Persian Translation; Mafaateeh al-Jenan)

'O Allah! You bestow such an honour to my grave that it too a place of Imam Husain's (a.s.) visits! O Allah! Grant me the taufeeq. to recite Ziyaarate Aashoora regularly!'

Ziyaarate Aashoora: In the light of traditions

The above incidences clearly convey the virtues and significance of Ziyaarate Aashoora - both in this world and the Hereafter. Now let us have a look at those traditions that indicate and highlight the merits of reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora and also substantiate the above incidents.

حديث ١: قَالَ عَلْقَمَةُ ابْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ الْحَضْرَمِيِّ: فَقُلْتُ لِأَبِي جَعْفَرٍ (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ): عَلَّمْنِي دُعَاءً أَدْعُو بِهِ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمَ إِذَا زُرْتَهُ.....الخ

Alqamah bin Mohammed ibn Hazrami (r.a.) narrates 'I requested Imam Baqir (a.s.) to teach me a dua that I should recite on the day of Aashoorah after the reciting the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.) - from near his (a.s.) grave or from a distance.' Imam (a.s.) replied

'O Alqamah, whenever you wish to recite the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.), you first perform two units of prayers. Then turn towards the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) and while pointing towards it, you first say 'Salam' and then 'Takbir'. Thereafter, you recite this Ziyaarat (Ziyaarate Aashoora). If you do so, then as if you have recited the supplication read by the angels while visiting the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.). Moreover, when you recite this Ziyaarat, then (a) Allah will increase your grade ten lakh times (b) You will be included among those people who were martyred along with Imam Husain (a.s.) (c) On the day of Judgment, you will be included among the martyrs (d) You will get the reward of all the Prophets (a.s.) who have visited the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) from the day that he (a.s.) was martyred till date. And the way of reciting the Ziyaarat is like this...'

(Then Imam (a.s.) recited the entire Ziyaarate Aashoora for Alqamah (r.a.))

(Kaamil al-Ziyaarat, Ibn Qoolwayh, Ch. 71, p.194)

At the end of this tradition, Imam Baqir (a.s.) says

'O Alqamah, if you can, then recite this Ziyaarat every day send salutations to Imam Husain (a.s.). You will get all the rewards (of the one who recites it on the day of Aashoorah).'

حديث ٢: عَنِ الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ لِيَوْمِ عَاشُورَاءَ أَوْ بَاتَ عِنْدَهُ كَانَ كَمَنْ اسْتَشْهَدَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ.

'The one who visits the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) on the day of Aashoorah or spends the night near his (a.s.) grave, then it is as if he attained martyrdom along with him (a.s.).'

(Kaamil al-Ziyaarat, Chapter 71, p. 191)

(Many Ziyaaraat have been mentioned that can be recited on the day of Aashoorah. But the Ziyaarat mentioned by Janab Safwan (r.a) is more common and it is Hadis-e-Qudsi).

حديث ٣: عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: مَنْ زَارَ الْحُسَيْنَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ وَحَجَبَتْ لَهُ الْجَنَّةُ.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) informs, 'The one who does the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.) on the day of Aashoorah, then paradise is obligatory upon him.'

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 101, p.104)

حديث ٤: عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ: مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ عَارِفًا بِحَقِّهِ كَانَ كَمَنْ زَارَ اللَّهَ فِي عَرْشِهِ.

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) mentions, 'The one who visits the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) knowing his right (of Imamate) then it is as if he has done the Ziyaarat of Allah on the Arsh.'

(Kaamil al-Ziyaarat, Chapter 71, p. 192)

5. Abdullah bin Fazl narrates, 'Once I was in the presence of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) when a person from the city of 'Toos' came to visit him (a.s.). He asked, 'O son of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.)! What do you have to say for the one who visits the grave of Aba Abdillah (a.s.) on the day of Aashoora?' Imam (a.s.) replied

يَا طُوسِي مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرَ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ إِمَامٌ مُفْتَرَضُ الطَّاعَةِ عَلَى الْعِبَادِ غَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَقَبِلَ شَفَاعَتَهُ فِي سَبْعِينَ مَدِينًا، وَلَمْ يُسْأَلِ اللَّهَ جَلَّ عَزَّ عِنْدَ قَبْرِهِ حَاجَةً إِلَّا قَضَاهَا لَهُ.

'O Toosi! The one who visits the grave of Aba Abdillah (a.s.) while he : acknowledges that his (a.s.): obedience is obligatory from the side of Allah, then all his past and future sins shall be forgiven. He will be granted the right of intercession for seventy sinners. There will be no supplication that he shall ask from Allah near the grave of Aba Abdillah (a.s.) except that it shall be accepted.'

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 101, p. 23)

As we are discussing about the fifth personality of the five holy personas (a.s.), we will suffice with the narration of five traditions. Those who would like to go deeper in this topic can refer to 'Kamil al-Ziyaarat, Behaar al-Anwaar vol. 101, Thawaab al-A'maal and 'Shifa al-Sudur'.

. When we ponder over the above traditions, we realize the miraculous nature and effects of Ziyaarate Aashoora. These traditions also bear testimony to the veracity of the earlier incidents.

'Door of Imam Husain (a.s.)' - Universal Door of Mercy

In the sermon of 'Shabaniyyah', Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while explaining the greatness of the month of Ramdhaan says: In it the doors of paradise are open....' Elucidating this statement of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Shaikh Jafar Shushtry (r.a) brings forth a very subtle point. About the 'doors of paradise' he says 'If you are unable to reach the 'doors of paradise' (i.e. you are unable to enter paradise due to your bad actions) then there is yet another door that leads to paradise. No one is deprived of it and it is very easy to reach that gate. Anyone, wherever he is or in whatever condition he is in, can reach to the infinite mercy of Allah through this door. Do you want to know the name of this door so that you can enter paradise? It is door of Imam Husain (a.s.). And the way to reach it is through humility and mourning for Aba Abdillah (a.s.)' Shaikh continues, 'If you cannot find the path to paradise through repentance (as there are conditions for repentance and our bad actions act as hurdles) then the love of Imam Husain (a.s.) is an enormous grace. Regardless of the extent of a person's sins and his non-repentance in the true sense), yet no one is turned away from paradise because of this bounty (of the love of Imam Husain (a.s.)) he will not be deprived of Allah's compassion.'

(Ziyaarate Aashoora ; Nasir Rashty, p. 35)

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي عِنْدَكَ وَجِيهًا بِالْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ.

O Allah! For the sake of Imam Husain (a.s.), you grant me honour and nobility near You in this world and the Hereafter!

A Journey Through Maqtale Abi Mikhnaf

The cultural and social revolution of Islam was born in Mecca and blossomed in Medina. As it progressed from adolescence to youth, selfish forces began to prey on Islam and perceived it as a medium to achieve their material and social motives. The sole objective of these destructive groups was to latch onto the growing popularity of Islam to seize power and further their individual motives. .

The effect of these self-centered forces was seen within a period of half a century of the demise of the Holy Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.a.). A web of fabricated traditions was carefully laid. Thousands of so called "traditionalists" busied themselves in creating and manufacturing sham traditions and narrations. The market for such phony traditions, encouraged by despotic governments, was hot. The young voice of Islam was in danger of being drowned by the sound of money which was fuelling these fabricated traditions. However, even in such a hostile environment, there remained a few individuals in whose hearts the true spirit. of Islam continued to remain alive. While the repressive government in Shaam (Syria), headed by the despotic Moawiyah was on an upswing, the one in Kufa, led by Hazrat Ali (a.s.) remained the sole protective shield of Islam.

These were truly testing times for the young religion of Islam. The death of Moawiyah in Shaam paved the way for his depraved son Yazid to ascend the caliphate. The Ahle Bayt (a.s.), after the martyrdom of Hazrat Ali (a.s.), shifted their base from Kufa to Medina. It would not be wrong to assert that for Islam and its adherents, this era was one of extreme imprisonment and severe captivity - an unfriendly era where the threat of the sword loomed large over the necks of the true believers. .

The book on the martyrdom of Imam Husain (a.s.) and the subsequent uprising of Hazrat Mukhtar-e-Thaqafi (r.a.) (terminologically referred to as 'Maqatal) authored by "Abu Mikhnaf" is a reliable and factual mirror of the events of history. The book, famous by the name "Maqatal-e-Abi Mikhnaf" is considered as a trustworthy account by all. To steer a boat of truth through a sea of deceit characterized by violent and tumultuous waves systematically generated by the Machiavellian politicians in power is no mean task. More creditable is the task of ensuring that the boat is guided safely to the shore in a fashion that it inspires future generations and becomes a beacon of guidance for those seeking the right path. Abu Mikhnaf has managed to achieve. all this and more. The book, "Maqatal-e-Abi Mikhnaf" lies open before me and as I turn its pages, I am mesmerized by the life and times of its author. I therefore consider it appropriate that I enlighten my readers about Abu Mikhnaf before proceeding to his narration.

The name of Abu Mikhnaf was Lut. Yahya bin Saeed bin Mikhnaf. bin Saleem bin Thalbah bin Ad-daul bin Saad bin Manaat bin Aaed Gamaedi's son was Arjumand; he became famous by the

agnomen of Abu Mikhnaf. There is no doubt that he was a Shiah - Allamah Maamqaani (r.a.) in his compilation Tanqeeh al-Maqaal, Allamah Sayyed Sadiq'e Aal Bahrul Uloom (r.a.) and Shaykh Abbas Qummi (r.a.) in his Rauzaat al-Jannaat have mentioned and thrown light upon this aspect. Najaashi, Jamoudi, Tabarsi and others have, in their books of Rejaal (genealogy), mentioned that Abu Mikhnaf was a companion of Imam Hasan (a.s.), Imam Husain (a.s.), Imam Sajjad (a.s.), Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s.) and Imam Sadiq (a.s.). The elders of his family were companions of Imam Ali (a.s.). His respected father was Mikhnaf bin Saleem who lived in Iran and Iraq during the period of caliphate of Hazrat Ali (a.s.). Abu Mikhnaf enjoys a unique distinction among historians to the extent that Tabari and Ibne Katheer have reported narrations from him in their books without any alterations. He was the leading authority among historians in the Iraqi city of Kufa. His views were sought for clarifications in history and his opinions considered trustworthy in this regard.

Abu Mikhnaf has opened several doors to Shiah history. It is estimated that he has authored close to thirty books on the subject. The atrocities rendered upon Hazrat Zahra (s.a.) after the demise of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), the wars fought during the rein of Hazrat Ali (a.s.), the crimes of Ibne Ziyaad and Hajjaaj bin Yusuf, the unlawful confinements and arrests of the Shiahs of Hazrat Ali (a.s.) - to summarize; all those difficult circumstances confronted by Ahle Bayt (a.s.) and Bani Hashim are clearly outlined in his writings. His meticulous compilation of such events would have undoubtedly been arduous. Nevertheless, they have opened up the doors of recognition for those blessed with intellect - those who question their conscience and seek certainty for the Hereafter. They are those who ponder over history and are blessed with guidance for their efforts.

"Maqatal-e-Abi Mikhnaf" was authored no less than 1,300 years ago. This first-ever chronology of the events of Karbala remains fresh till date. Time has not diminished its effect and its appeal remains unaffected by the passage of history. Its fragrance continues to captivate the intellects of mankind. Its text has been translated into several languages, prominent among these being Urdu and English. Karbala is the name of that ocean of grief, the force of which has not diminished over time, will never diminish in future and will continue to quench the thirst of humanity forever.

The Preface of the Struggle between Good and Evil - the Peace Treaty of Imam Hasan (a.s.)

The effect of the truce between Imam Hasan (a.s.) and Moawiyah was more pronounced in Kufa. The elders of the city were shocked by the decision. Abu Mikhnaf narrates from Abul Manzar Hashem : Muhammad bin Siayeb, who reports that Abdur Rahman Jandab narrated from his father that Sulayan bin Sardokhzai, Mosayyeb Bin Bakheer and Saeed bin Abdullah Hanafi presented themselves before Imam Hasan (a.s.) and expressed their displeasure and unhappiness over the turn of events. After they took his leave, they paid a visit to Imam Husain

(a.s.) who remarked, "This (the peace treaty) was such that I felt that my body was torn to shreds by a knife and its pieces were being cut into small parts by an axe. However, I preferred to pursue the obedience of my brother who is the Imam for the Age over opposition over my own desires and inclinations."

The sentences of Imam Husain (a.s.) outline the entire philosophy of Imamate. The responsibilities of Imamate are such that some of the decisions make their effect known only in the future. After the martyrdom of Imam Hasan (a.s.), his brother Imam Husain (a.s.) bore the political machinations of Moawiyah with resolve till such time that Moawiyah passed away and was succeeded by his son Yazeed. Subsequently, the same Imam (a.s.) declined to pay allegiance to Yazeed and preferred to leave Medina rather than see the bloodshed of innocent Muslims.

The Journey of Imam Husain (a.s.) towards Mecca

Amongst the first decrees passed by Yazeed after ascending to the caliphate was to governor of Medina, Waleed Bin Utbah wherein he ordered that he seek allegiance from Abdullah Ibne Umar, Abdur Rahman Bin Abi Bakr, Abdullah Ibne Zubayr and Imam Husain Ibne Ali (a.s.). If any of them were to decline allegiance, then Waleed was ordered to behead him and send his severed head to Yazeed as a souvenir. Waleed made preparations for complying with the orders. History has recorded that Imam Husain (a.s.) refused to pay allegiance and preferred to leave Medina. Consequently, he left Medina along with his family members on the road frequented by travelers and covered well known cities. When he was questioned about his decision to choose the much-frequented road over one which would take him out of Medina secretly, he replied,

"When man finds no helper to protect his respect, family and his children, he becomes feeble and vulnerable. If Yazeed seeks something (my death) from me, he will find me a willing swimmer in the oceans of death in the East and the West. We will strike such a deadly and fatal blow with our swords that even a lion who confronts us will not be able to stand his ground."

Imam Husain (a.s.) continued on his chosen path till such time that he reached his destination...

The journey through "Maqatal-e-Abi !.. Mikhnaf" expands the horizons of I knowledge and understanding; opens the doors to intelligence and discernment and furthers the boundaries of one's insight and comprehension. The mission and purpose of Imam Husain (a.s.), which hitherto was in veiled signs and signals now becomes illuminated in our hearts; his objective clearly outlined for our understanding. On the one hand, we have the letter of the accursed Yazeed ordering the beheading of any person (clearly mentioned in the letter) who declines allegiance and on the other hand we have Imam Husain (a.s.) preferring to migrate from

MOHARRAM 1427 A.H.

Medina and move towards Mecca along the path frequented by travelers through prominent cities. This bold step of Imam Husain (a.s.) is a shining example of his courage and bravery, which will remain unmatched till the day of Judgment. The reason for this is clear - it was not that Waleed bin Utbah and Marwan were mute spectators or that the armed forces were weak. On the contrary, the army was well equipped to carry out the orders of Yazeed; however none dared to confront the caravan of Imam Husain (a.s.).

Abdullah Ibne Maleeh recommended that Imam Husain (a.s.) should stay back in Mecca. He apprised the Imam (a.s.) about the situation in Kufa and followed his counsel with a warning that these were the same people (of Kufa) who not too long ago had killed his respected father. Subsequently, the Holy Imam (a.s.) settled in Mecca where he was swamped with invitation letters from the people of Kufa. In response to these letters, Imam Husain (a.s.) dispatched his cousin, Muslim Ibn Aqeel (r.a.), to Kufa as his representative. Muslim reached Kufa and spent the night at the house of Sulayman bin Sardukhzaayi or Mukhtar bin Abi Abdullah Thaqafi (r.a.). The very next day, an announcement was made to the people of Kufa seeking their allegiance to Imam Husain (a.s.) through his representative Muslim Ibne Aqeel (r.a.). At that time, the governor of Kufa, No'man bin Basheer made a public announcement, "I will not attack the one who does not attack me." Abdullah ibne Shobah Hazarmi wrote to Yazeed suggesting the weak leadership of No'man and urged him to replace him with a ruthless governor who would control the impending rebellion. He minced no words in his letter indicating that if this was not done, then Kufa would no longer remain under his control. Further to this letter, Yazeed dismissed No'man and wrote to Ibne Ziyad, who was the governor of Basrah to take up the responsibility for both Kufa and Basrah.

During this period, a letter from Imam Husain (a.s.) to Manzar Ibne Jaarood, whose daughter was in love with Ibne Ziyad. Manzar handed over the messenger of Imam Husain (a.s.) to Ibne Ziyad who immediately ordered his death. This messenger was probably the first in the battle of Karbala, who was killed for no fault of his.

It was towards dusk when Ibne Ziyad entered Kufa. Since his face was veiled, the people mistook Ibne Ziyad for the holy personality of Imam Husain (a.s.). Consequently, the residents of Kufa stepped out of their houses to offer the son of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) a rousing welcome. However, they were visibly disappointed to learn that the veiled visitor was Ibne Ziyad and not Imam Husain (a.s.). History goes on to narrate that the people of Kufa, save a few, intimidated by the threats of Ibne Ziyad, deserted Hazrat Muslim (r.a). Consequently, Hazrat Muslim (r.a) and Hani bin Urwah (r.a.) were martyred in Kufa and their bodies dragged through its streets. Members of the tribe of Mazhaj waged a war against the administration to secure the bodies of the martyrs and finally buried them.

Visitation Of Graves And Wahhabism

Visitation of graves and respecting them has been an age-old tradition, an act revered and considered absolutely important. The visitation of a pilgrim is widely accepted among the people and due to this they respect the pilgrim. This trait is found in all the religions and across all nations. People of the past and the present have always considered visiting graves as means of fortune and prosperity. Abu Hatim says that whenever Abu Mashur Abdullah Demeshqi Ghassani (died 218 A.H.) used to go towards the mosque people one after the other used to salute him and kiss his hands. Abu Sa'ad used to say that whenever Abul Qasim Sa'ad b. Ali Shaikh Haram Zanjani (died 471 A.H.) used to go towards the House of Allah (Kabaa) for circumambulation (tawaaf), people used to rise from their places to kiss his hands, many more times than they would kiss the Black Stone (Hajare Aswad). Ibne Kaseer in his Tarikh from pages 12-20 has mentioned the reason for their actions, saying, people by doing this used to seek an increase in blessings.

Whenever Abu Ishaq Ibrahim b. Shirazi (expired 476 A.H.) used to pass through a city, residents of that place used to approach him with their families in quest for blessings. They used to rub themselves against his bridle and grasp the sand from underneath his horse's hooves. When he reached the city of Savah, its inhabitants rushed towards him and wherever he would go, they would shower him with valuable gifts.

From these incidents, it is apparent that the devout find immense prosperity in visiting the graves of pious people and consider it a part of their creed. Religion permits, rather advocates, such an act. It certainly does not consider visitation of the pious' graves as unlawful, then how is it possible that it deems visiting the graves of the Prophets (a.s.) and Imams (a.s.) as 'unlawful? Those who claim that visiting the graves of Prophets (a.s.) and their successors is unlawful make a false claim that has no basis in Islam; rather it degrades the Prophets (a.s.) and lowers their position.

Doubts regarding the Visitation of Graves

Ibne Taimiyyah, who is considered to be a Mujaddid (reviver of faith) among the Wahhabis, while raising questions regarding the visitation of graves wrote that visiting graves is an innovation (bid'at) and is tantamount to polytheism. To strengthen his argument he quoted a tradition which has been narrated in three different versions.

(١) لَا تَشُدُّ الرَّحَالَ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ: مَسْجِدِي هَذَا وَ مَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى.

1. Do not travel for other than the three mosques - my mosque, Masjidul Haraam and Masjidul Aqsa. (Shifa Al Siqaam fi Ziarate Quboor)

(٢) إِنَّمَا يُسَافِرُ إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ: مَسْجِدِ الْكُوفَةِ وَ مَسْجِدِئِ وَ مَسْجِدِ اِيلِيَا.

2. Travelling is only for three mosques, Masjide Kufah, my mosque and Masjide Eeliyah

(Wafa Al Wafa vol. 4, pg. 1, 36)

(٣) تَشُدُّ الرِّحَالُ إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدَ.

-3. Traveling is undertaken only for three mosques.

Based on these traditions, the visitation of graves has been decreed as unlawful. Regarding the traditions that have been narrated in Hidaayat al-Saniyya they claim:

إِنَّ الْأَحَادِيثَ الَّتِي رَوَاهَا الدَّارُ قُطْنِي فِي زِيَارَةِ قَبْرِهِ كُلُّهَا مَكْذُوبَةٌ مَوْضُوعَةٌ عِنْدَ غَالِبِ أَهْلِ الْمَغْفِرَةِ مِنْهُمْ...

'The traditions that have been narrated with regards to visitation of graves are false and fabricated. Except for Daar Qutni, no other scholar has permitted it (visitation).'

Answers to the doubts

To prove the permissibility of visitation, many traditions can be quoted. We present a synopsis keeping in mind brevity.

1. Quran

Allah, the Almighty, declares:

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا...

'...and had they, when they were unjust to themselves, come to you and asked forgiveness of Allah and the Apostle had (also) asked forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah Oft-returning (to mercy), Merciful.'

(Surah Nisa (4): Verse 64)

Visitation means to be present. This term can be interpreted differently as 'to come', which can be either for seeking forgiveness or for the fulfillment of a demand. In other words, visitation does not mean to submit oneself (as one submits to Allah) or to put oneself in the hands of another (as one resigns himself to Allah).

Visiting the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is considered as a virtuous act by the Holy Quran. Then whether he visits the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while he is alive or dead is irrelevant; in both these situations, the visitation is a virtuous and commendable action. In his book Wafaa al-Wafaa (vol. 2), Sabki narrates from Mas'hoodi writes; 'Most scholars have considered visitation as a recommended

(mustahhab) act regardless of whether the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is alive or dead. This is the view of scholars of all the four religious sects of the Ahle Sunnah.

Ibne Asakir in his Tarikh and Ibne Jauzi in his famous work Al Sakin have narrated from Muhammand b. Harb Halali:

'I entered Medina and went to the grave of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and recited his Ziarat. After that I sat in front of the grave. I saw an Arab come and recite the Ziarat of the Prophet. Then he addressed the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) - "O Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) grave, certainly Allah has revealed upon you in the truthful book."

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَانُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا...

(Narrated from Kashful Irteyaab, p. 362)

2. Sunnah

Samhoodi in Wafaa al-Wafaa vol. 3, pg 394-403, among several other scholars, has narrated scores of traditions under this topic. We present below some of the most reliable traditions mentioned by Samhoodi.

Daar Qutni and Bayhaqi narrate from : Nafeh who relates from Ibne Umar that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرِيَّ وَجَبَتْ لَهُ شِفَاعَتِي.....

'One who visits me, then my intercession is obligatory for him.'

Suyooti in Jaame' al-Sagheer, Ahmad in his Musnad and Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi and Nesaaee have narrated the following tradition attributed to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) from Haarith.

مَنْ زَارَ قَبْرِيَّ بَعْدَ مَوْتِي كَمَنْ زَارَتْنِي فِي حَيَاتِي.

'The one who visits my grave is like the one who has visited me during my lifetime.'

In another tradition, this portion is also added,

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَزُرْنِي فَقَدْ جَفَانِي

'The one who has not visited me has done injustice upon me.'

Abul Fath Azdi has narrated from Haroon b. Kazath that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said:

مَنْ حَجَّ حَجَّةَ الْإِسْلَامِ وَزَارَ قَبْرِيَّ وَعَزَا عُرْوَةَ وَصَلَّى فِي بَيْتِ الْمُقَدَّسِ لَمْ يُسْأَلِ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فِيمَا افْتَرَضَ عَلَيْهِ.

'The one who has done the obligatory Hajj, visited my grave, fought in holy war (Jihad) and prayed at Baitul Muqqadas, Allah (on the Day of Judgment) will not question him about the obligatory actions or deeds.

Apart from this, many other traditions have been narrated on the virtues of visiting the graves. The claim of the author of 'Hadiyatul Sanniyah' that these traditions are false is completely baseless because the traditionalists (muhadditheen) and the masters in the field of Islamic knowledge and jurisprudence have endorsed the veracity of these traditions. His claim that Daar Qutni is the only one who has narrated these traditions is equally misleading as Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Nesaaee and Ibne Jauzi, to name a few scholars, have all narrated such traditions. Wahhabis have also objected to such traditions. The claim that the most important scholars are against the visitation of graves is again deceptive as all the relevant leaders of the Ahle Sunnah have been narrators of such traditions and considered visitation of graves as a recommended act and have compiled several books on this topic.

Apart from making such baseless and fallacious claims, Ibne Taimiyyah and his elders have also objected that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) replies to the people who salute him after his death. Sabki says that Samhoodi after presenting the arguments in support of visitation has said that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) hears the salutation made to him from near the grave, recognizes the identity of the sender and even replies to the salutation. This argument itself is sufficient to prove why Muslims from across the world spend a fortune and just for a glimpse of the Prophet's shrine.

3. Ijmah (Consensus)

From the time of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) till date, the entire Islamic nation (with the exception of the Wahhabis) is of the view that not only the visitation of graves of Prophets (a.s.), their vicegerents (a.s.) and the virtuous ones, rather visitation of all believers, is a commendable act. Right from the time of the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Taabeen (those who saw the companions but did not see the Prophet (s.a.w.a.)) and Tab' Taabeen (those who saw the Taabeen but not the companions) till date, the act of visiting graves is enumerated among the established principles of Islam. There is complete consensus (except for the Wahhabis) on this principle. Rather, the consensus is a lot broader as it extends to all the people of the world whether they are learned or ignorant, old or young, man or woman, rich or poor.

Samhoodi in Wafaa al-Wafaa vol. 2, p. 412 has narrated from Sabki saying that the scholars are united in their view that the visitation of the graves is a recommended act. In fact some scholars like Nauee are of the view that the visitation is among the obligatory acts of faith. Samhoodi in Wafaa al-Wafaa vol. 2, p. 410 wonders how some people in the past have objected

to the visitation of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) grave while the scholars have deemed the visitation of the graves of the believers as a recommended act. Then on the basis of the Prophet's (s.a.w.a.) superiority, his visitation is far more preferable and meritorious. ... Taqiuddin Abul Hasan Sabki's famous book Shifaa al-Seqaam, a dedicated book on this topic, writes in the preface that the visitation of the chief of believers and the grave of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) is a medium for attaining divine proximity. This is a concept that is well-known and well-acknowledged among the Muslims across eras and regions.

Ibne Hajare Makki in his book Jauhar Munazzam Fi Ziarate Qabre Mukarram writes - as has been narrated by the author of Kashful Zunoon who has brought many arguments supporting the visitation of graves on the basis of consensus. After that he writes that anyone who objects and questions why should one visit the grave of the prophet or travel for it or seek his needs from them and asks for proof based on the argument that Ibne Taimiyyah has objected to the visitation, I say - Who is Ibne Taimiyyah and why should his word be heeded and accepted in religious matters? Isn't Ibne Taimiyyah the one whose outlandish and deviated views have been questioned by the religious scholars who are of the opinion that he is astray and attributes falsehood to others?

4. Characteristics of historical figures

In Wafaa al-Wafaa vol. 2, p. 410 Samhoodi, while writing about the characteristics of a believer, has written that traditionalists and historians have narrated many incidents which indicate that the companions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to go for visitation of the graves; moreover the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) himself used to go for it. Ibne Majaa and Nesaaee have narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) visited the grave of his mother and cried over it and because of his crying the people around him also started wailing.

The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to visit the graves of Jannah al-Baqee and the martyrs of Ohod. Muslim narrates that whenever the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was at Ayesha's house, he (s.a.w.a.) used to visit the graveyard of Baqee in the latter half of the night and recite:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ دَارَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ وَآتَاكُمْ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ.

Ibne Abbas narrates that any believer who passes the grave of another believing brother who he knew when he was alive, salutes him, that person in the grave replies to his salutation. In another tradition it has been narrated the one who visits the grave of his parents or even one of them on a Friday, Allah enlists him among the good doers even though his parents would have disowned him in the world.

Apart from these, many other traditions have come regarding Hazrat Fatemah (s.a.) who used to visit the grave of her uncle Hamzah every second or third day. For deeper understanding, kindly refer to Allamah Sayyed Mohsin Ameen's (r.a.) Kashful Irtebaat.

5. Intellect

Every man's intellect bears witness to the fact that whosoever Allah wishes to grant greatness, he should be given due respect. Visiting the grave is like giving him respect. Visiting the grave of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) or bestowing respect in any other form is to respect the signs of Allah and those who respect the signs of Allah are truly pious. Intellect conforms to this rationale and does not consider it a misguided notion.

As for the question of the tradition to which Ibne Taimmiyah has objected, scholars have given a string of fitting replies in this regard.

1. In these three traditions the word of exception (حرف استثناء) is used, i.e. exception has been made. An exception can only be made regarding something else. So if that something else is not mentioned, then obviously it is implied so as to form a meaningful sentence.

So the tradition of travel to the three mosques can mean one of these two statements:

- a. Except for these three mosques travel for mosques should not be done.
- b. Under any pretext travel should be made only for these three mosques.

If we accept the second interpretation then the tradition disallows us to travel to any mosque other than the three mentioned in the tradition, but where does the tradition indicate that a person cannot travel/visit to places other than the three mosques?

One travels/visits religious schools, Imambargahs, factories, graves of martyrs and vicegerents. The odd part over here is that the objection is only for the visitation of graves! If we take into consideration the first meaning of the i tradition then apart from those mosques, no other mosque should be visited. It is not because it is prohibited to visit other mosques but because visiting these mosques has more merit as compared to others but if one visits other mosques with the intention to glorify Allah then his this act is not considered as prohibited. Also the argument given for the tradition under both the conditions is abrogated as in many other traditions it has come that the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) used to visit Masjide Quba sometimes on foot, at other times on a mount to perform prayers.

Therefore there is no comparison between this tradition and the tradition quoted by the Wahhabis (جها ي). Then one has to accept that either this tradition is not correct or has not been correctly narrated especially since the narrator of this tradition is Abu Hurairah. Probably

this was the reason that Ibne Taimmiyah claimed that the visitation of Masjide Quba is a recommended act only for the people of Madina. One should ask Ibne Taimmiyah whether the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was only sent for the people of Madina or whether the words and actions of the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) was only for the people of Madina or for that matter, did Islam only come for the people of Madina? If we assume that the exception for travel is strictly for these three mosques, then would a common Muslim accept the ruling that he can only travel to these three mosques and none other? Would a scholar pass a ruling on that in the present day? Don't Wahhabis visit mosques in their localities? Even then there can be a question raised that weren't the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his companions traveling during Hajj or other than Hajj to different places? Aren't there several verses of the Holy Quran and traditions urging Muslims to travel whether in the way of Allah, holy wars, meeting relatives/friends, spreading religion or for gaining knowledge? For instance in Surah Tauba (9), verse 122 Allah says:

فَلَوْلَا نَفَرُضَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَ لِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ.

'And it does not beseem the believers that they should go forth all together; why should not then a company from every party from among them go forth that they may apply themselves to obtain understanding in religion, and that they may warn their people when they come back to them that they may be cautious?'

Moreover, we have also been ordered to travel for sustenance. We finish our discussion by quoting the words of al-Ghazzali in Ehyaa al-Uloom in which he mentions the second type of traveling which is done for worship like pilgrimage, holy war and visitation to the graves of Prophets (a.s.), Companions, Taabeen, scholars and the pious. In the same way visiting a person carries some reward, the same reward is bestowed upon the one who visits him after his death, ispermitted and the tradition(لا تشد الرحال)doesnot stop him from doing so.

We beseech Allah, the Almighty through the mediation of His Last Proof (a.t.f.s.) to strengthen our faith and counter such doubts. We invoke Him to give us the opportunity to visit the graves of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) and his pure progeny (a.s.) and forgive our sins through their intercession (a.s.)!