

The Philosophy of Ziyarah & its Details

by Shaikh Murtaza Alidina

We begin in the Name of Allah, Who is the absolute perfect being. To Whom belongs the beautiful and excellent attributes. Who is Rahman, Whose love and Mercy reach out to each and every thing in the universe and Who is Raheem, Whose extra love and Mercy is reserved for the believers & good doers.

Ziyarah basically means to visit the Shrine of the Holy M'asum (as).

This visit has several etiquette & manners that need to be observed in order for the ziyara to be successful.

The Imams of the Ahlul Bayt (as) & the Prophet (s) have highly emphasized the importance of Ziyara, so that their followers/shia are able to come closer to the Masumeen and are able to learn from their character and thus improve their own lives.

In order for a Zaer to make this trip successful he/she needs to ask & understand several issues:

A – One needs to understand what is ziyarah?

B – Why is it that the Imams have emphasized a lot on the ziyarah?

C – What does the pilgrim have to do before he embarks on the journey?

D- How the pilgrim should conduct themselves on this holy journey?

E – How his interactions with others should be once he arrives in the city of Ziyarah?

F – What should be his manner as he walks on the streets in the city?

G – How should one approach the Shrine?

H – How should one enter the Shrine?

I - What thoughts should be crossing his mind as he is inside the Holy sanctuary and purified atmosphere of the Shrine?

J – How should he talk to the Imam?

K – What should he ask from the Imam?

L – What benefit should he be looking for as he is sitting or standing near the Shrine?

These are some of the important questions that need to be answered for a Zaer before he embarks upon this great journey.

The condition for an amaal to have a reward is that the amaal should have been accepted by Allah (swt)
Reward is secondary to acceptance by Allah.

"INAMA YATAKABALLAHU MINAL MUTAQEEN" "Allah (swt) accepts only from those who guard (against evil)"
[5:27]

Allah accepts the amal, ibadah, the worship and the good acts of that person who has TAQWA. If one performs a deed without Taqwa, it is not accepted by Allah (swt) and therefore there is no thawaab and reward for that action.

Thawab means reward, & reward can only be given after that act has been accepted.

Etiquettes of entering Shrine

- The intending pilgrim to the shrine of the Holy Masumin must observe some physical etiquettes:
- Once the pilgrim arrives in the Holy city where the Shrine of the Holy Ma'sum is located, before proceeding to the Shrine one should perform Ghusl and during his niyyah should be that as he is cleaning my physical body, he should also make the niyyah of cleaning ones heart from all spiritual diseases, as one is now proceeding to the presence of a Ma'sum who is not only is aware of our physical being but is also fully aware of our spiritual being.
- One should wear their best clothes and apply good perfume. As he comes out from his place of stay towards the shrine he should walk with dignity, humility, reverence and with a mind filled with memories and images of the Ma'sum.
- The Zaaer should be in a constant state of Dhikr and must try and avoid vain, useless & time wasting speech.
- Dhikr can take various shapes such as Allahu Akbar or La ilaha ilallaah or SubhanaAllah.

On arrival at the entrance of the Shrine there are certain specific rituals to be performed;

Izn Dukhool / Entering the Shrine

- Allah (swt) says in Suratul Ahzaab [33:53] *"Ya ayyuhal lazina amanu Laa tadkhulu buyutin-Nabii' Illaa an-yuzana lakum" O believers, you should not enter the house of the Holy Prophet unless permission has been granted unto you.*
- We should therefore seek permission before entering the Shrine of the Holy Prophet or of anyone of the Holy Ma'asumin
- We have been taught to seek the permission in the **following words**:

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem, Allahumma Inni waqaftu alaa babim-min abwabin buyutin-Nabiyik (salawatullahi alayhi wa alihi) O God I stand here at the gate of one of the houses of the Prophet (s).

Waqad Manaatannasa an-yadkhulu Illaa biiznih, and you have forbidden people from entering this holy house except with their permission.

- At this stage you should mention the name of the Imam whose shrine you are visiting.

- *Wal Malaekatihil muwakkilina bihadhihil buq'atil mubarakati thalitha:* And I humbly seek the permission of the specific angels who have been allocated to this holy Shrine I seek the permission to gain entrance.

Aadkhulu Ya Rasulallah? O Prophet may I please enter?

- If at this stage, tears start flowing from your eyes, your heart feels soft, you should take this as the sign that the Imam has spiritually granted you the permission and that you may now enter the Holy Shrine. With these feelings you should then slowly proceed in small steps as if you are a slave, who has come to the court of his master. You should walk with your head down in constant dhikr, remembering the greatness of Allah, taking short steps with humility and reverence proceeding slowly with tearful eyes into the Shrine closer to the Dharih.
- Once in the surroundings of the Holy precincts you must remind yourself that this is a holy place.
- We are told in the hadith that there is no creature that Allah (swt) creates more plentiful than the angels. Everyday 70,000 angels descend to the *BAYTUL MA'AMUR* in the heavens and do its tawaf following which they descend upon the Ka'bah, then proceeding to the grave of the Holy Prophet (saws) and after greeting him they then go to the grave of Imam Ali (as) and greet him, after which they proceed to the grave of Imam Hussain (as) in Karbala and greet him after which they ascend and never return till the end of the world.
- Therefore keep reminding yourself that you are in the company of the angels, who are constantly ascending and descending. Remind yourself of the holiness, purity and sanctity of the holy precinct.
- And so one must try and purify their thoughts, keep their minds clean and feelings pure. The Zaaer should try and avoid vain talks and should remain engaged in the constant dhikr of Allah (swt).
- The Quran in Surah 49 Verse 2 says : *"YA AYYUHAL LAZINA AMANU LAA TARFATU SAUTAKUM AS-SAUTIN-NABII"* O people who believe, do not raise your voices above that of the Holy Prophet. When you are in the presence of the Holy Prophet and of the other Ma'sumins therefore, you should keep your voice and tone low and observe extreme reverence, humility, respect, with feelings of love and obedience and yearning to get closer to the Ma'asumin so one is able to get the maximum advantage from their presence to ask for whatever needs one may have, to present to them one's problems, and to seek their final solutions from them.

Philosophy of Ziyarah

Why have our Imams laid such a high emphasis and recommendation for the Ziyarah?

- For e.g. Imam's tell us that whoso ever comes for our ziyarah:

1. His/her duas will be accepted
2. His/her sins will be forgiven
3. One who visits us is just like the one who has visited the Holy Prophet (saws)
4. The reward for visiting us is that of a thousand Haj/ a thousand Umrah
6. Whosoever comes for our ziyarah deserves Sha'fah / intercessions for their major sins on the day of Judgement

7. Or our shrines is part of Jannah

8. Or in our shrines numerous angels keep on descending and ascending

9. Or in our shrines sins are forgiven just like the day you were born

- In order to understand these hadith and their emphasis, it would be better to consider the Shiite perspective on Sha'fah in Qiyamah

- Anything that will appear on the day of judgement, will have to be produced by our actions in this dunya. So for e.g., we are told that Qiyamah is the day when all reality will be manifested. '*Yauma Tublas-saraaeer*' - The day when your hidden secrets will come out in open.

- Regarding Sha'fah the Qur'an says: "*Laa Yashfauna illaa Limanir-rtadha*" '*No intercessor will ever intercede but for that person with whom Allah is pleased*'. Therefore if we are going to deserve Sha'faa on the Day of Judgment through the agency of our Imams, it is only after we have raised our status so that Allah is pleased with us.

- And this reality can only be manifested if in the dunya we have brought about a change in ourselves so that God is pleased with us.

- So if we go for ziyarah, and if after ziyarah there is a change of heart, if after ziyarah there is a revival of our spirit, if after ziyarah there is a rejuvenation of our faith, if after ziyarah there is a development in our character, if after ziyarah there is an improvement of our behavior, if there is a determination to transform our lives for the better, in essence if we decide after ziyarah, to introduce in our lives, God's will and God's pleasure, ahead of all our decisions, the Imams pleasure in front of all our decisions, the Qurans instructions ahead of all our decisions, then truly the ziyarah will work its effects and then this change will manifest itself in Qiyamah in the form of Shafa'a of our Imams.

- Therefore it is now important for us to consider, how is it that the ziyarah will bring about a revolution within ourselves?

- In principle it is brought about by two steps:

- Firstly, we go to the Shrine, and declare, announce and remind ourselves, the HIGH status enjoyed by the Imams: that they are perfect models, lovers of truth, that they are examples of nobility, justice, good character, good minds, pure thoughts, pure feelings, cooperation, love for humanity, and of all noble and perfect virtues.

- Once we have realized fully, this high position of the Imams, we then try to provoke feelings in our hearts which God has naturally created, whenever we see beauty we are attracted, whenever we see perfection we are attracted, whenever we see models of goodness and justice, virtue, naturally we seek to follow

- So having reminded ourselves of the virtues of the Imams; we then pledge our allegiance; We then swear our obedience We then make a covenant to love them, to follow them, and to always keep their pleasure ahead of our pleasure.

- It is these ideas and themes that are of paramount importance. They i.e. the Masumineen should always be foremost in our minds as we participate in the rituals of ziyarah.

Imam Baqir(as)

1. Ideological education of the masses, especially by training certain experts: Like Hisham bin Hakam who used to engage in polemics especially on Imamat. Clarifying the true leadership of Imamat and how by following the Maasum and infallible Imam raises the dignity of human status.

2. The Imams spreads the true message of FIQH in contrast to the Fiqh of other Jurisprudence, who were giving messages tainted by the whims of the rulers.

3 – The Imam engaged in the spiritual training by educating morally the right akhlaq.

4 – The Imam supported the revolutionary uprisings which the Sadaat constantly carried out, thereby ensuring that constantly there was a disturbance to those people in power which were drunk in materialism.

5 – Tried to keep the memory of Aashura alive, thereby the revolutionary spirit of Islam always was kept thriving.

Supported literary efforts in the form of poetry or writing in fact there is a hadith by Imam Sadiq (as) which says that the Shia should teach their children the poet of Sufian Abdi because he is on the religion of God, so messages of truth, liberty, independence, justice, hatred for injustice were being spread by poetry and other means of communication with the encouragement of the Imams.

NAJAF AL ASHRAF

- NAJAF is the city wherein is located the shrine of Imam Ali (a.s.) in whose vicinity are also buried Prophet Adam and Nuh a.s.
- The pilgrim should fully realize that Imam Ali occupies the highest position next to only the Prophet (saws) in the excellence and nobility of virtues.
- He is the most superior in the creation compared to everyone else (after the Prophet saws))
- He is the gateway to the city of knowledge, *BABUL MADINATIL ILM*
- He is the most just judge after the Prophet (saws)
- He is the most knowledgeable one.
- He is the bravest.
- He is the most kind, loving Imam.
- Even amongst the Imams of Ahlul Bayt (a.s.) he occupies the most superior position, therefore it behooves the pilgrims of the maximum opportunity as he enters the holy precincts and sanctuary of the Shrine of this Imam.
- It is from here that the pilgrim should gain maximum benefit from the Grace of Allah swt.
- Also one should not lose the opportunity to visit the graves of the *ULAMA* who are buried in the vicinity, such as Allama Hilli, Muqaddas Ardabili, & grand Ayatullah al-Khui (ra).

- According to a hadith, whoever comes to the Shrine of Imam Ali a.s. and offers 2 or 4 raka'a salaah, and then prays to Allah (swt) to remove all the problems or worries, surely his prayers and supplication is answered.

According to Allama Majlisi (ra), the ziyarat which is famously known as *AMINULLAH*, is the most reliable, authentic ziyarah, which therefore is highly suitable to be recited in the rawdha of Imam Ali (as) and of all other Imams

- According to a hadith of Imam Baqir a.s. "Whosoever among our Shia recites this ziyarah and the dua at the Shrine of Amirul Mumineen a.s. and the Shrines of other Imams (as), then God would envelop this ziyarah and this dua in *NUR* and send it with the seal of the Holy Prophet (s) and elevate it to the spiritual realm, preserve it till the time of the 12th Imam a.s. to whom it will then be entrusted who would then receive that person with greetings, with glad tidings and with honour."

- In the Ziyarah we read, "Make my soul leave and avoid, refrain all those characteristics of your enemies, make my soul all the time busy, away from the world always praising You and thanking You."

At this stage the pilgrim is once again reminded to be aware of the fact that he is standing in the purified and Holy atmosphere of the presence of the Holy Maasum, who is aware of his ziyarah, and who not only knows what he says, but he is also aware of the thoughts and feelings crossing his mind and heart.

- Secondly, the pilgrim should be aware of the fact, that this ziyara & dua of AminulAllah is a special one in that it is being preserved by God. It is being sealed with the seal of the Holy Prophet (saws) and it is to be presented to the The Zaaer who makes the dua in this ziyara of Aminullah needs to observe the etiquettes of dua.

The fundamental conditions of this dua is that it should be a sincere DUA i.e. it should be from the bottom of one's heart, one should beseech and implore, beg and ask, not just speak of words whose meanings one is not aware of.

- According to hadith of Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as), "Whoever amongst our Shias cannot come to visit our grave and instead goes to visit of the virtuous people from our Shias then you will get the same thawab and reward as like visiting us", and the hadith continues to say: "and whosoever cannot come and do good to us instead goes and does good to the virtuous people amongst our Shias will get the same thawab and reward of doing good towards us."

MASJID KUFA

- It is a place, where according to riwayat, most of the Prophets, more than a thousand and seventy Prophets and their successors have prayed.
- It is the place where 12th Imam will come and pray after his reappearance.
- We have been told that if people were to know all the excellences and the virtues of this mosque then they would come to it even crawling.
- It is reported to be a portion from the garden of the Heaven.
- Even to sit in it without making any dhikr or reciting any Quran, gets one the thawab of Ibadah.
- It is the place where the Prophet Nuh constructed his ark.

- It is a place where the TANNUR started gushing forth from which water which started flooding.
- After arriving at the Masjid and entering it there are several spots where it is recommended to pray Salah and ask for one's Hajah. They are in sequence as follows:
 - The 1st place is Maqame Ibrahim (as) where one should pray salat & recite Tasbih-eZahra & recite a ziyara, praising the Prophets, greeting the Prophets and then declaring ones love and obedience for the Imams.
 - Next is Dakkatul Qadha – The court room of Imam Ali (as) where there was a manifestation of the Ayah '*Innallaha yamuru bil adli wal ehsaan*', here one is recommended to pray salah and make tasbih of Fatima Zahra (as) and then make dua for ones hajah.
 - Next is the maqam of Baitut Tasht – Where Imam Ali (as) is reported to have passed his famous historical judgement, again one must perform Salah followed by Tasbih and asking for ones Hajah
 - Next one should proceed towards the centre of the mosque also known as Dakkatul Me'raj. When the Holy Prophet passed over here during his ascension from Mecca on his way to Jerusalem, Gabriel showed him this place, and he then requested for permission to stop over and he prayed salah here.
 - Next is Maqame Adam (as) where it is reported that Hz. Adam received the taufiq to make tauba, it is reported that every day 60,000 angels descend here and pray salah.
 - Next is Maqame Gabriel, here one is recommended to pray salah, and do dua for one's hajah.
 - Next is Maqame Imam Zainul Abideen (as), where one is recommended to pray Salah, make tasbih of Zahra, and to make dua for Hajat.
 - Next is Babul Faraj which is known as Maqame Nuh, where one has to pray salah, tasbih Zahra & dua for the Hajat.
- Generally speaking, the historical significance for Masjid al-Kufa behooves all the Zaairs and the pilgrims to remember that all the Prophets have come here and prayed salah and therefore when one offers salah at different spots one should try to gain the spirituality of those Prophets and therefore pray slowly with sincerity with concentration with feelings of humility, with feelings of lowliness in front of God in realization of HIS greatness.
- Further more as one recites the dua and as is promised that these duas of hajat will be accepted one should try to fulfil the conditions of making Dua, which is to try pray, ask and supplicate with concentration and try to pray sincerely to God alone and try to remove all kinds and sources of distraction from one's mind.
- Finally as one recites the ziyarats at the various spots, one sends greeting upon the past Prophets, one also declares the WILAYA to the Imams and announces ones love & obedience to them. Again the ideas of feeling of responsibility, feelings of respect of loving them and following them practically should cross the mind. One's sinfulness must make one sorry and he/she should sincerely ask for forgiveness and renew their determination to change their life, to improve one's behavior, & to become better people in future God willing.
- Finally the zaer should go to the Mihrab of Amirul Mumineen (a) – Where the final deadly blow was struck by the sword of Ibn Muljim (la) on the head of Imam Ali (as).

- It is recommended to recite salah here, make dua, tasbih al-Zahra (as) and recite Munajaat-e-Imam Ali.
- Adjacent to Masjid e Kufa is the shrine of Muslim ibn Aqeel (as) who was the ambassador of Imam Husayn (as) to Kufa in order to assess the situation in Kufa before the arrival of the Imam.
- The zaeer goes to his shrine and reads the ziyara in which he/she declares that Muslim (as) was a sincere person, who established prayers, gave zakat, enjoined goodness, forbade evil, fought in the way of God righteously. The zaer then declares Muslim was sincere, honest and obedient to his Imam and was always ready to help him. The Ziyarah goes on to ask God to send his la'naa upon those people who killed Muslim and who behaved with him unjustly (especially those people who swore him allegiance)
- Finally the zaeer says I am aware of your true station in front of God, I have declared my obedience to you. I am of the same path as you, you are my support and my help is ever ready for you, And I am always with you and ready to fight against your enemies, may Allah raise you in the station of the Shuhadaa of Badr, and may Allah raise you in the company of the Prophets and the siddiqeen and the virtuous people on the Day of Judgment.

Al-Mukhtar ath-Thaqafi

- Next the Zaeer should proceed to the Ziyara of Mukhtar bin Ubaydullah ath-Thaqafi, who was a Shia of Imam Husayn but was imprisoned in the dungeons of Ibn-e-Ziyad in Kufa during the period of the massacre at Karbala.
- Later on when he was released and heard of the heinous atrocities committed by Ibn Ziyad and his commanders, Mukhtar organized an army and chased and pursued many perpetrators of the massacre of Karbala and brought them to justice.
- This movement did indirectly receive the approval of the Imam and therefore the zaer should offer his greetings and salutations to this supporter and helper of the cause of the Ahlulbayt a.s.

Hani Bin Urwah

- The Zaeer then proceeds to the ziyara of Hani Bin Urwah al-Muraadi, who was a Shia of Imam Husayn (as) in Kufa, and who supported the ambassador of Imam Husayn (as) Muslim Ibn Aqil, and due to this support he was martyred by Ibn Ziyad.
- In the recommended ziyara, the zaeer says: 'O Hani bin Urwah, peace & salutations be upon you, you were a virtuous person in support of the Prophet (s), Ali, Hasan & Husayn. You were killed unjustly, may God curse your killers. I testify that you are a martyr and may Allah raise your soul in the company of the Prophet & of his progeny. And I testify that you did your best to support the cause of God and that of His Prophet (saws) and that you have sacrificed your whole being for the sake of Allah and for the sake of His pleasure. May Allah have mercy on you.

Kumayl Ibn Ziyad an-Nakhaee

- Kumayl Bin Ziyad an-Nakhaee was one of the closest companions of Imam Ali (as), to whom Imam taught special secrets including the secrets of the nafs and its reality.

Imam Ali (as) also taught him the dua of Khidhr which is otherwise famously known as dua e Kumayl, the recitation of which brings about the benefit of protecting us from the evil mechanism of the enemies, increases rizq and brings about forgiveness of ones sins.

Maitham Bin Yahya at-Tammar

- Located near masjid e kufa is the rawdha of Maitham bin Yahya at-Tammar. He was a date and a very special and close companion of Imam Ali (as), such that Imam Ali (as) shared with him secrets including the matter of how Maytham would be tortured and finally martyred for his deep love of Imam Ali (as). Although the tyrant tried to falsify Imam's prophecy, because Maitham was praising Imam Ali (as) continuously the tyrant was forced to cut off the tongue of Maitham which was exactly the way Imam Ali had prophesized the martyrdom of this close companion of his.

Masjid – e – Hananah

- Is historically reported to be the Mosque wherein the head of Imam Husayn (as) was kept temporarily during his journey from Karbala to Kufah. Also it is the mosque whose walls had reportedly risen in humility, respect and grief during the passage of the Janaza of Imam Ali (as) from Kufah to Najaf.

- This is not surprising, because according to the Qur'anic teachings we are taught that the elements and the particles of the universe have a life of their own whereby they are aware of the events happening and also they have the capacity to respond to these events

Masjid al-Sahlah

- According to riwayat: historically it has been the house of various Prophets, including the Prophets Idrees (as), Prophet Ibrahim (as), Prophet Khidhr (as) and it is also the place from where Dawud (as) preceded forth for his fight against Jalut. Also in the past all the Prophets have prayed here.

- Imam Sadiq (as) has reported to have said that: "When the 12th Imam makes his reappearance he will come to this mosque with his family and make it his place of residence."

- It is reported that whoever stays in this mosque will get the thawab of staying in the tent of Holy Prophet (s).

- It is a mosque, according to riwaya, towards which every muslims heart is naturally attracted to.

- It contains a stone which stores the images of all the Prophets.

- Whosoever prays here, with a sincere heart surely Allah will accept his / her prayer. Especially if a person is grief stricken and comes on Tuesday night and makes dua between Maghrib and Isha, his / her grief will be removed.

- Whoever has any sort of hajat, if he comes to this mosque and prays that hajat will be fulfilled.

- Whosoever comes here to seek security, whatever fear he / she has, will be granted that security.

- In this mosque it is reported that angels descend and ascend in their thousands.

- It is recommended to recite dua e tawassul on Tuesday night at Masjid e Sahla. It is basically seeking the intercession of the Holy 14 Masumeen (as) to get our prayers answered by God. One repeats 14 times the

following phrase "O Masum we are turning our attention to God through you, and we are approaching God through you. And we seek your intercession before God, you are the ones who occupy the higher ranks in Gods eyes, kindly intercede on our behalf before God and get our prayers answered

KARBALA

- Karbala is the place wherein is located the Shrine of the Chief of the Martyrs *SAYYIDUSH SHUHADAA ABA ABDILLAHIL HUSAYN* (as).
- Imam Husain's (as) ziyarat has been promised with tremendous thawab (reward), to the extent that Imam Baqir (as) is reported to have said: 'If people knew the reward for the ziyarat of Husayn surely they would have died out of love for it. When it was inquired as to what exactly the thawab of the ziyarah is?
- Imam explained that whosoever goes for the ziyarah has been given the thawab of; 1000 Haj, 1000 Umrah, 1000 martyrs of Badr, 1000 reward for fasting, 1000 reward of sadaqa, ألف ألف من العتق of freeing 1000 slaves, He/She is protected for the whole year, an angel will be appointed to protect him from all sides, behind, front, left, right, above & below and when he dies the angels will attend his burial ceremony, they will pray for his forgiveness, and he/she will be protected from the squeeze of the grave.
- Questioning in the grave by munkar / nakir will be facilitated for him, and the gates of heaven will be opened up for him, the book of deeds will be presented to him in his right hand, he will come on the day of judgment full of light and this light will stretch from the East to the West and an announcer would call out this is a zaer of the grave of Husayn, and at that time there will be no one in the field of Qiyama but that he would wish that he was a zaer of Imam Husayn (as).
- On the other hand we have also been warned that whosoever fails to visit the grave of Imam Husayn without any genuine excuse then indeed he has failed in his obligation to pay the respects to the Holy Prophet (s) and to Islam. Indeed he is announced to be weak in his faith.
- However it should be noted, that all this tremendous thawab that is promised for the ziyarah, can only benefit that individual who performs it with the proper physical and spiritual etiquette.
- As far as the spiritual etiquette is concerned, we have already emphasized the necessity of the recitation of Iznud-dhukhul the necessity of realizing that one is in the presence of the Holy Imam, who is fully aware of our thoughts, feelings, our actions, and our past deeds, and therefore as the Zaeer presents himself he ought to remember his past, confess his sins, and make a determination to change his life, to always to keep the teachings and the requirements of the Imam in view in future.
- At this time the Zaeer should take the opportunity to think about why all this thawab has been promised for the ziyara of Imam Husayn a.s.;
- If one realizes the supreme sacrifice that Imam Husayn made of his life, of all his possessions, of his relatives and of his companions for the sole sake of saving the true teachings of Islam, then by visiting Imam Husayn and making his ziyara, the Zaeer tries to make the spirit of sacrifice alive in his heart and thereby shows his readiness to sacrifice all his life and possessions for the sake of Islam. Indeed the revival and the rejuvenation of Islam should be the goal of the ziyara of Imam Husayn
- It is not surprising therefore that we find the tyrants of Bani Umayya & Bani Abbas tried their best to stop people from coming for the ziyara of Imam Husayn a.s.

- And it is not surprising again that the Imams of the AhlulBayt emphasized the ziyara especially under such difficult circumstances, to the extent that: even for Hajj we are told that if it is dangerous, or it is not secure to perform the Hajj, then the Hajj is not wajib. However, for the ziyara we are told more the danger more the thawab promised for the Zaeer.
- This is so because the spirit of Islam is brought back to life by visiting Imam Husayn, by learning of his sacrifices and by pledging allegiance and love to him and by following the teachings of Hussain (as)
- As one enters the shrine itself one will see the dharikh of the loyal companion of Imam Husayn i.e. Habib Bin Madhafer. Having offered ziyara to this companion the zaeer then proceeds inside to recite Iznud-Dhukhul and enters the holy sanctuary of the Dharikh of the Abaa Abdillahil Husayn
- One should realize that he is in the Holy presence of the Imam, a place which is constantly visited by angels day in & day out. A place which is the centre of attraction for all the Prophets and therefore the Zaeer should try to maintain pure thoughts and feelings and respectful behavior in this Holy sanctuary.
- The arrangement of the dharikh is such that centrally located dharikh is of the Imam Husayn, towards his feet are the dharikh of Hadhrat Ali Akbar a.s. & Hadhrat Ali Asghar a.s. and next to them is the Ganje Shahidan where the martyrs among the relatives, companions of Imam Husayn are buried.
- It should be noted that in the ahadith we have been told that to pray one wajib salah in the Haram has the thawab of one Haj and one Umrah.
- Zaeer should take care not to miss the opportunity to gain the maximum from this holy spiritual place. Even if one may not be aware of the detail Arabic meaning of the Ziyara of which we are taught, the Zaeer should simply keep in mind the fact that he is in presence of the Imam who is aware of his behavior, his thoughts, and his feelings.
- One could communicate to the Imam in his own words, speak to him, present to him ones problems, confess ones wrong doings and hurting of Imams feelings which one may have done in the past, and sincerely beseech the Imam's love, kindness & mercy to forgive ones past mistakes. The Zaeer should then make a firm determination to always try and follow the Imam and attain his pleasure.

Janab Aun Bin Abdallah Bin Ja'far at-Tayyar

- A few kilometers outside the Haram of Aba Abdillahil Husayn a.s. is located the Dharikh of Janab Aun a.s. who was the son of Abdallah, the son of Ja'far at-Tayyar who is the brother of Imam Ali a.s.
- The Zaeer should offer his salutations to Janab Aun a.s. and should remember that Aun was firm in his Iman, that he fought his enemies bravely, out of love for Allah, and that he was fully practicing the teachings of the Quran.
- Finally the Zaeer should send LA'ANA on the killer of Aun who's reported to be Abd'Allah Bin Qataba an-Nabahani

Sons of Muslim Bin Aqeel @ Musayyab

- Muslim bin Aqil had two young sons by the name of Muhammad & Ibrahim whose Dharihs are located at a place known as Musayyab between Karbala & Kadhmain

- These two young children were brought up in the family of Ahlul Bayt under the supervision of Muslim Bin Aqeel, the devoted, loyal & loving companion and ambassador of Imam Husayn a.s.
- And therefore these two children grew up to love Islam, to love Allah, to love the teachings of Quran and realizing the importance of these values, these children were ready to sacrifice their lives for the cause of truth.
- It was precisely for these reasons that the enemies of Islam targeted them and history records that even at the last moments of their lives just before being martyred both these sons requested for a short respite to offer their salat as their expression of obedience to Allah.
- Hence the Zaeer should learn from the examples of such young children and remember that one should always keep the teachings of Quran & Islam ahead of one's life. One should always keep the love of Allah the supreme most guiding principle in one's life, as it is the only way which can lead to the true success.

Hur Ibn Yazid ar-Riyahi

- Located in the outskirts of KARBALA is the Rawdha of Hur Ibn Yazid ar-Riyahi (may Allah bless him)
- Historically speaking he was the commander of the contingent that came and intercepted the progress of the caravan of Imam Husayn as it was moving toward Kufa, and diverted it towards Karbala. However on the day of Ashura, Hur realized the error that he had made and he made the decision of moving away from the army of Umar as-Saad and crossing over to the army of Imam Husayn.
- He presented his case, and apologized for his mistakes and Imam Husayn graciously accepted him. Hur then immediately fought in defense of Imam Husayn and was martyred.
- The biggest lesson we can learn from this episode is the fact that however large a sin a person may have committed, so long as he realizes the seriousness of the mistake, really feels penitent and sorry in his heart and is determined to change and compensate for the mistake then truly Gods grace is abundant enough to accept him.
- And this is something that we have been promised in the Quran in Surat Zumar chapter No 39 aya number 53 onwards God says: *"Qul Ya Ibadiyallahina-srafu alaa anfusihim, Laa taqnatu min Rahmatillaah, inalAllah yaghfiruz-zamba jamia'a, Innahu huwal ghafur-rurRaheem"* *"O my servants, those who have committed injustices on to your own souls do not despair and loose hope from the Mercy of God, indeed God will forgive all sins, because surely He is the most forgiving. And He is the most merciful."*

- However there are certain conditions necessary for this forgiveness and the next 3 ayas explain what those conditions are:

- Firstly, INABAH – to feel really penitent and sorry from ones heart.

Second is ISLAM – to except from ones bottom of heart the message of Allah and the power of Allah

Thirdly and finally, I'TTIBA'A – i.e. to practice and follow in one's life all the teachings of Islam i.e. to always keep in mind what Allah has asked us to do, and to always keep in mind as to what Allah has forbidden us from doing, and therefore to refrain from it.

- Therefore in short TAWBA involves THREE things: Feeling repentant/sorry for one's mistakes, having a determination to change and asking for forgiveness for one's sins.

Hazrat Abbas (a.s.)

- According to the Islamic perspective, of all the people serving a society, the highest position is occupied by the Shuhadaa, amongst the Shuhadaa, the highest position is occupied by the Shuhadaa of Karbala, and amongst the Shuhadaa of Karbala, the *Afdhalul Shuhadaa*, the most excellent shaheed is that Hazrat Abbas a.s.
- It is reported by Imam Sajjad (as) that Hazrat Abbas (as) had sacrificed everything he had to help his brother to the extent that both his hands were cut off and in reward Allah will grant him wings in Jannah with which he will be flying along with the angels in Jannah just like Ja'far at-Tayyar. On the Day of Judgment the position occupied by Hazrat Abbas will be so high that all the other shuhadaa and martyrs will envy his high status.
- Indeed even in the dunya the position of Hazrat Abbas is so elevated that if any sincere and true follower will asks for haajah with the intercession of Hazrat Abbas (as), his supplication is surely answered.
- The Zaeer as he approaches the Shrine of Hazrat Abbas is recommended to recite a ziyara which can be considered to cover four major themes: Firstly, It describes the high status of Hazrat Abbas, the fact that he was loyal, and devoted his whole life for his brother and for the sake of Islam. Secondly, the numerous services that he rendered on the plains of Karbala are mentioned. Following which the Zaeer then curses and sends La'ana on the killers and those oppressed Hazrat Abbas. And finally the Zaeer declares his love and allegiance to Hazrat Abbas and his willingness to fight for the same cause for which Hazrat Abbas was martyred.

Ziyarat of Ashura

- In this context should be noted that generally the same FOUR themes are covered in the famous ziyarat of Ashura which is recommended to be recited every day. Indeed the crux of Ziyarat Ashura revolves around two major issues:
- First is the the sending of La'ana and curse on the killers and the dhalimeen, oppressors. Second is the expression of love and allegiance to Imam Husayn and his Ashaab (companions).

It should be noted that La'ana is not using abusive language; rather it is the prayer to Allah (swt) that He should cut off His special Mercy to those people who are transgressors & unjust ones. As the Zaeer sends this La'ana, he should realize that he is expressing hatred and dislike towards the actions of such people and therefore he is also trying to remove traces of similar actions from his own life.

- Having recited this La'ana for 100 times and thereby having cleansed his soul from the evil characters the Zaeer then sends his salaams a 100 times upon Imam Husayn & on his Ashaab, thereby expressing ones conformity, obedience, allegiance and love to Imam Husayn, the cause for which he fought and the supreme values embodied in the teachings of Islam.
- In conclusion the Zaeer by reciting La'ana 100 times has effectively cleaned his soul from all evil characteristics and by reciting salaam a 100 times he has solidified the love for the Ahlul Bayt and Imam Husayn and the Ashaab in his heart.

Imam al-Kadhim – Kadhamain

- In Kadhamain, the Shrines of Imam Musa Ibn Ja'far al-Kadhim (as) and Imam Muhammad Taqi al-Jawad (as) are present.
- As the Zaeer performs the ziyara of Imam Kadhim a.s. he should try to recall the highlights from this great Imam, whose Imamate extended from 149AH to 183AH. The major achievements of this Imam are as follows:
 - Firstly he continued the ideological training just like his grandfather and father Imam Baqir (as) & Imam Sadiq (as) and therefore he continued the training of experts like, Hisham bin Hakam, Hisham bin Salim, Mumin at-Taaq & the numerous followers of Imam Sadiq (as) gradually started flocking to his presence, to such an extent that the popularity of Imam increased enough to make the unjust rulers envious and even frightened of him.
 - Secondly the Imam continued in guarding the interest of his followers especially encouraging them to engage in silent protest against the tyrannical regime, thereby leading to their political defeat. Infact the Imam actively advised his followers not to cooperate with the tyrants in any way with an exception being Ali Bin Yaqteen, who was already working within the system and the Imam laid down the conditions that if you treat the Shias with kindness and help the down trodden ones solve their needs and help to reduce the evil done on them then you should continue working within the unjust system.
 - **Thirdly the Imam engaged in an open confrontational dialogue with Harun of his right to the political power. So for e.g. when Harun came to Madina and greeted the Prophet As-Salaamu alayka ya Rasulallah YOU ARE MY NEPHEW, Imam Kadhim came and said As-Salaamu alayka ya Rasulallah O MY FATHER.**
 - **Harun was claiming the Khilafat of the Muslimeen because he was the relative of the Prophet, he was very much angered by this approach of Imam al-Kadhim**

Fourthly, the Imam engaged in the reawakening of the revolutionary conscious of the Ummah by encouraging uprisings of the Sadaat, especially when Shaheed of Fakh was martyred, Imam declared him to be a good person and thus it was under of the 7th holy Imam that the Shiite message spread to far of corners of Islamic empire to the extent that the ruling power came to be scared of this popularity such that Harun was forced to imprison Imam for long periods (20 years) and finally poisoned him.

Imam al-Jawad (as)

- Next the Zaeer turns his attention towards Imam Muhammad al-Jawad at-Taqi (as).
- During his Ziyara, he should recall the highlights of the Imam's life as follows:
 - Imams period of Imamate extends from the year 203AH up till the year 220AH.
 - Because the Imam assumed the responsibility of the leadership at a very young age, the Shias were skeptical about his Imamate. However on direct questioning and during one gathering, several thousand questions were posed to the Imam, Shias received convincing replies from the Imam and were satisfied.
 - Mamun-ar-Rashid continued the tradition of keeping a close eye and control over the Imam (as with Imam Ridha (as)), and tried to control the Imam's activities by forcing him to marry his daughter Um Fadhl.

- However Imam Taqi refused to stay in the royal palace and chose to stay independently. Later on Mamun released him and Imam returned to Madina whereby he continued the function of teaching and preaching in the Masjid of the Prophet (saws)
- Numerous traditions have been narrated from the Imam reaching up to 220 through 120 narrators pertaining to subjects of Fiqh, Tafsir, Theology and Akhlaq.
- Numerous traditions have been narrated from the Imam reaching up to 220 through 120 narrators pertaining to subjects of Fiqh, Tafsir, Theology and Akhlaq.
- The Imam also continued to maintain the contact with the Shias who were widespread throughout the Islamic empire including in Baghdad, Madaeen, Iran and North Africa.
- However the increasing popularity of the Imam and the noble virtues of the Imam were enough to make the ruler by the name of al-Mu'tasim envious and frightened of the Imam's power and he forced the Imam to return to Baghdad and in the year 220 AH on the 29th of Zilqaada he managed to successfully poison the Imam who is now buried in Kadhmain near his grandfather Imam Musa Kadhim (as).