

Chapter 1: Rituals of The Ahl Al-Bayt

The majority of private rituals practiced by the virtuous community directly or indirectly relate to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). However, in this discussion, we aim at dedicating our discussion to the rituals that basically focused on the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in their capacity as persons of a superior standing with Almighty Allah and enjoying the position of Imamate and divinely designated leadership of the Muslim community. Thus, the following topics fall under this title:

1. Commemorating Imam al-Husayn's Martyrdom
2. Commemorating Anniversaries of the Holy Infallibles ('a)
3. Visiting Tombs and Shrines of the Holy Infallibles ('a)

Ceremonies of commemorating Imam al-Husayn's Martyrdom

Besides expressing loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) in general and Imam al-Husayn ('a) in particular, the ceremonies of commemorating Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom, as well as the anniversaries appertaining to the Holy Infallibles ('a), are actually meetings which discuss doctrinal, moral, social, historical affairs, and issues related to the daily and current affairs of Muslims. In one aspect of their content, the social aspect, these ceremonies resemble the Friday Prayers during which Muslims gather to listen to the sermons delivered by the preacher who usually discusses various aspects of their current affairs and reminds them of Almighty Allah.¹ In another aspect, these ceremonies are held to deliberate knowledge and ethics.

We have previously discussed the ceremonies commemorating Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom in the Second Book of this series which discussed the cultural aspect of building a virtuous community. We have also discussed the philosophy of such ceremonies, their spiritual, cultural, and political outcomes, rituals recommended by the Holy Imams ('a) and, other rituals invented by people.

Although the ceremonies commemorating Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom, represent an anniversary of one of the Holy Imams ('a), an independent chapter has been dedicated to discussing this anniversary due to its significance and particularities. The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) gave this anniversary so much importance and consideration that it has turned into a cultural, spiritual, and behavioral school for building a virtuous community.

Hereafter, I will briefly discuss the ceremonies and the times when the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) solemnly commemorate Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom. These ceremonies can be classified into five major classes:

1. The First Ten Days of Muharram

The followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) hold special ceremonies on the first ten days of Muharram (the first month in the Islamic Calendar). Wherever they are, the individuals of the virtuous community gather to condole with and weep for Imam al-Husayn ('a) as well as discuss current cultural and doctrinal issues. For them, the commemoration of this anniversary is almost a doctrinal duty, since some individuals of the virtuous community may not participate in any other doctrinal celebration the whole year, but never miss commemorating this anniversary. During this commemoration, they concern themselves with serving others with food dedicated to this occasion, meeting together, and expressing their grief for Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom by a demonstration of sorrow.

The focus of the individuals of the virtuous community, in commemorating this anniversary, varies according to the variety of their cultural, intellectual, and social levels as well as the surrounding political circumstances. Therefore, some of them hold ceremonies and spend large amounts of money to gather as large a congregation as possible. They select the most skillful orators, speakers, and lecturers. At the same time, the virtuous community attends and participates in such sessions to benefit culturally, spiritually, and emotionally.

At the same time, there is immense desire to become close to Imam al-Husayn ('a) by presenting oneself at his holy shrine or, from afar,² by offering him salutations and greetings, complaining to him about personal problems, pledging allegiance to him, and renouncing his enemies, cursing them, and rejecting their barbarian acts.

On such days, both the ordinary and the elite media of the individuals of the virtuous community weep for Imam al-Husayn ('a) and demonstrate grief and pain on the cruelties perpetrated upon him and his companions in Karbala.

Another practice that manifests itself particularly in this season and on these days is the public serving of food and drink dedicated to Imam Husayn ('a) in remembrance of the three days and nights of his thirst and hunger.

Traditions from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) report these practices in the first ten days of the holy month of

Muharram.

Some other practices through which the Ahl al-Bayt's followers express their grief for Imam al-Husayn's tragic saga bear no supportive evidence from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). They are:

- organizing public processions and marches
- roaming in streets to express loyalty to and grief for Imam al-Husayn ('a)
- holding theatrical performances aimed at representing some aspects of Imam al-Husayn's tragic saga—his journey to Karbala, the burning of the tents of the women and children after massacring his companions, the journey of those who were taken as captives after the battle, or other grievous events to which Imam al-Husayn ('a) was exposed—or all the events that took place in Karbala

All of the above are inventions of ordinary people to express their emotions and feelings.³

On the tenth day of Muharram, these rituals and ceremonies attain their climax when markets are shut down and almost all the individuals of the virtuous community participate in the condolence ceremonies and food is prepared to feed all the participants.

2. The Months of Muharram and Safar

The rest of the days of Muharram and Safar (the second month in the Islamic calendar) have a secondary place of importance for holding sessions for condolence ceremonies of Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom. Public condolence meetings are organized by individuals and communities in private and public places. Each ten days of these two months are taken as a new term similar to the first ten days of Muharram, dedicating each day and night to a certain occasion for which its special ceremonies are held.

These terms end on the twentieth of Safar, the day of Arba'in, which is the fortieth day after Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom. Hence, the last ten days are dedicated to the occasion of the arrival of the captives in Madinah, followed by the demise of the Holy Prophet (S), which falls on the twenty-eighth day of Safar and which we shall mention later.

The general mark of the ceremonies held on the rest of the days of Muharram and Safar is the holding of assemblies (*majalis*; sing. *majlis*). The ceremonies on the day of Arba'in, include processions and marches organized and destined for the two holy shrines in Karbala, Imam al-Ridha's holy shrine in Mashhad, the shrine of Lady Fatimah, the daughter of Imam Musa al-Kazim ('a) in Qum, or for public places of worship, such as mosques, Husayniyyahs, and religious places. These processions and marches are organized for the purpose of commemorating Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom, pledging allegiance to him, and commemorating the anniversary of the captives' return to Karbala, as maintained by some reports.

3. Weekly Sessions

The third category are weekly or monthly assemblies that the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) hold regularly in public places or in their houses, as a response to the Holy Imams ('a) who, according to many traditions, called their followers to hold such sessions and meetings.

The issues of Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom and loyalty to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have become the pivot of these sessions, as instructed by the Holy Imams ('a). However, discourses in such sessions can also be about a variety of doctrinal, ethical, behavioral, historical, erudite topics, etc.

Communities and individuals choose a certain day or night in the week or the month for holding such sessions as much as their conditions allow. These sessions and meetings have thus become a continuously open school throughout the year. The individuals of the virtuous community and the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) arrange days and times among them so that everybody can benefit from these meetings although the majority may choose Thursday nights and Fridays because these nights and days enjoy a special significance among the other days of the week.

By virtue of these meetings, social relations among the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) become well-established and positive and many religious and worldly benefits are gained. For instance, after orators mention the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and discuss religious topics, the sessions for knowledge-seekers turn into scientific researches, for men of letters into literary forums, and for merchants into exchange of commercial viewpoints.

4. Sessions in the Month of Ramadhan

The fourth category of ceremonies commemorating Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom are assemblies during Ramadhan, when nights of this blessed month of devotion turn into educational seasons. During the public sessions, the most distinctive feature is the remembrance of Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom in addition to discussion regarding, most comprehensively, Islamic issues and topics concentrating on ethical, spiritual, and behavioral issues, the laws of Islam and the recitation of the Holy Qur'an. However, intellectual, doctrinal, and historical issues are also discussed in such sessions.

From a cultural aspect, there can be found an equipoise between the sessions of Ramadhan and the sessions of Muharram and Safar. The latter sessions concentrate on political issues and the uprising against oppression, tyranny, and corruption, and their historical goals, factors, and causes, in addition to the sentimental and emotional aspects of Shi'ite beliefs. The former assemblies concentrate on ethical and spiritual issues, laws of Islam appertaining to human behavior, especially the issues of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and the like. In addition to the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, doctrinal aspects regarding the fundamentals of religion, such as monotheism, Prophethood, divine revelations, and eschatology are discussed. The common points between these two types of sessions pertain to the general conditions of the virtuous community and the issue of Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom and

uprising.

5. Private Occasions

The fifth and last grouping include assemblies held on special occasions to commemorate Imam al-Husayn (‘a). The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), in their plan of building a virtuous community, took great interest in the issue of holding meetings to gather their followers on various occasions. In these meetings, discourses revolve around the issue of Imam al-Husayn’s martyrdom and uprising. For instance, in funeral eulogies ceremonies are held for solacing the relatives of the deceased. In these ceremonies, the Holy Qur’an is recited and the tragedy of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) and his companions is mentioned to seek nearness to Almighty Allah and alleviate the grief of the bereaved.

On other occasions, such as returning from the Hajj Pilgrimage or long journeys, moving to a new house, opening a private or public foundation, recovering from a disease, or private issues that socially require the holding of a meeting, assemblies are held to seek nearness to Almighty Allah, to gain blessings by mentioning Imam al-Husayn (‘a) and to commemorate Imam al-Husayn (‘a). Thus, such meetings have become one of the distinctive features of the virtuous community.

Commemorating The Anniversaries Of The Holy Infallibles

Commemoration of the anniversaries of the Holy Infallibles (‘a) is of two kinds:

Commemorating their deaths and martyrdoms

Celebrating their birthdays and their joyful occasions

Commemorating the deaths and martyrdoms of the Holy Infallibles (‘a)

The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) counseled their followers to keep their memories alive and memorialize their anniversaries. The individuals of the virtuous community, therefore, commemorate the deaths and martyrdoms of the thirteen Infallibles; namely, the Holy Prophet (S), Lady Fatimah al-Zahra, and the eleven Imams, before Imam al-Mehdi (‘a), who is still living. The anniversaries of some eminent figures among their followers such as, Lady Khadijah al Kubra, Muslim ibn ‘Aqil, Lady Zaynab bint Ali, Zayd ibn ‘Ali ibn Husayn, Abu-Talib, Umm al-Banin, and others are also commemorated.

According to the belief of the virtuous community, Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi-Talib (‘a) and his son Imam al-Husayn (‘a) were slain by the sword, while the other Holy Imams (‘a), with the exception of the Awaited Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), who is still alive, were poisoned to death. Although this general concept has not been proven through historical events except for Imam Hasan, Imam al-Kazim, and Imam al-Ridha (peace be upon them all), orators and preachers accept it as truth on the basis of a validly reported tradition that quotes Imam al-Ridha (‘a) as saying:

مَا مِنَّا إِلَّا مَقْتُولٌ أَوْ مَسْمُومٌ

Not one of us—the Ahl al-Bayt—died, except that he was slain or poisoned to death.[4](#)

Another fact is that there is not complete consensus upon the dates of their martyrdoms and deaths. Nevertheless, the individuals of the virtuous community have generally committed themselves to certain traditions in this respect, relying upon the inference of their scholars and historians.

More or less, the dates of the Holy Infallibles' deaths and martyrdoms are distributed over the months of the year (on the Islamic calendar) except for the month of Sha'ban[5](#). Thus, associated ceremonies form an annual cycle, soundly entrenched in the social milieu of the virtuous community.

The related assemblies concentrate on the life of the commemorated Imam and the injustice he had to encounter. In addition, an analysis of the historical events that took place during his lifetime is presented. Other Islamic or Shi'ite beliefs and some of the ethical instructions and sermons of the commemorated Imam are also recalled. Usually, such meetings end by recounting the martyrdom of the commemorated Imam or some tragic aspects of Imam al-Husayn's saga.

These meetings are another form of commemorating Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom (*al-Majalis al-Husayniyyah*) with some concentration on the life of the commemorated Imam ('a).

In the general milieu of the virtuous community, there is special interest in commemorating the Holy Prophet, Imam 'Ali, Lady Fatimah al-Zahra', Imam Hasan, in addition to Imam al-Husayn—peace be upon them all. Special commemoration rituals of the other Imams ('a) are often performed in the regions where they are buried. For instance, there is special interest in commemorating the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam al-Kazim ('a) in the city of al-Kazimiyyah, Iraq, whose people, on that day, hold special ceremonies and rituals, shut down the marts, and participate in public processions. The same thing is applicable to the people of Mashhad, Iran, when they celebrate the anniversary of Imam al-Ridha's martyrdom and the people of Samarra' on the anniversary of Imam al-Hadi's martyrdom.[6](#)

Let us now mention a list of the familiar dates on which the deaths and martyrdoms of the Holy Infallibles ('a) have been recorded and are well known by the individuals of the virtuous community:

1. Death of the Holy Prophet (S): 28th of Safar
2. Martyrdom of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib ('a): 19th–21st of Ramadhan because he was injured on the nineteenth of Ramadhan and passed away on the twenty-first
3. Martyrdom of the All-veracious Lady Fatimah al-Zahra' (the Luminous) ('a): 8th of Rabi' II, 15th of Jumada I, and 3rd of Jumada II. There are several traditions mentioning various dates of her martyrdom. Ceremonies of commemorating her martyrdom are usually held on the last two dates although, sometimes, such ceremonies continue for twenty days between these two dates. In Iraq, some

ceremonies are held on the earlier date.

4. Martyrdom⁷ of Imam Hasan ibn ‘Ali (‘a): 7th of Safar (in Iraq) and 28th of Safar in Iran, (which falls on the same date of the anniversary of the Holy Prophet’s demise).
5. Martyrdom of Imam al–Husayn (‘a): 10th of Muharram.
6. Martyrdom of Imam ‘Ali ibn al–Husayn Zayn al–‘Abidin (‘a): 25th of Muharram. This anniversary is also commemorated on the twelfth of Muharram.
7. Martyrdom of Imam Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al–Baqir (‘a): 7th of Dhu’l–Hijjah.
8. Martyrdom of Imam Ja’far ibn Muhammad al–Sadiq (‘a): 25th of Shawwal.
9. Martyrdom of Imam Musa ibn Ja’far al–Kazim (‘a): 25th of Rajab.
10. Martyrdom of Imam ‘Ali ibn Musa al–Ridha (‘a): 17th of Safar (in Iraq), or the last day of Safar (in Iran).
11. Martyrdom of Imam Muhammad ibn ‘Ali al–Jawad (‘a): the last day of Dhu’l–Qa’dah.
12. Martyrdom of Imam ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al–Hadi (‘a): 3rd of Rajab.
13. Martyrdom of Imam Hasan ibn ‘Ali al–‘Askari (‘a): 8th of Rabi’ I.

Celebrating the Birthdays and Glad Occasions of the Holy Infallibles (‘a)

In addition to commemorating the anniversaries of the deaths and martyrdoms of the Holy Infallibles (‘a), the individuals of the virtuous community celebrate their birthdays and glad occasions, creating some equilibrium between the grievous occasions and joyful ones.

Of course, celebrating such joyful occasions differs from celebrating grievous ones; therefore, the individuals of the virtuous community celebrate these joyful occasions in a way different from celebrating the deaths and martyrdoms of the Holy Infallibles (‘a). These celebrations are therefore characterized by the following features:

1. Colorful decorations replace black flags of grief and sorrow.
2. Performances and discourses concentrate on remembering the virtues of the Ahl al–Bayt (‘a) by means of sermons and recitation of laudatory compositions and hymns with the participation of the audience.
3. Literary expressions of happy emotions is the general feature of these celebrations. Festivals and carnivals are held, and numerous poets, men of letters, and orators participate therein. However, on certain occasions, such as the birthday of the Awaited Imam al–Mahdi (‘a), educational and doctrinal

discourses are delivered, because this anniversary is regarded as the best opportunity to put forth the topic of his blessed birth. Hence, these occasions bring together the two most required kinds of discourse.

Unlike commemorating the deaths and martyrdoms, which does not exclude any of the Holy Infallibles ('a) who were martyred, the celebrations of the anniversaries of their birthdays are usually dedicated to some of them, because the individuals of the virtuous community aim at bringing into view the injustice, oppressions, and ordeals to which the Holy Infallibles ('a) were exposed more than their joyful occasions. This is because injustice and oppression were the most eminent phenomena in the history of the Holy Infallibles ('a) as well as the history of their followers.

Besides, the tragedies and sorrows of the Holy Infallibles further equip the individuals of the virtuous community with patience and steadfastness, and make them follow the examples of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) exactly as they are required to do.

Moreover, such interest may have come from instructions of the Holy Imams ('a) such as the following sayings of Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin ('a):

إِنَّمَا أَعْيَادُنَا مَا تَمُنَّا.

Verily, our festivals are commemorations of our deaths.

الْقَتْلُ لَنَا عَادَةٌ وَكَرَامَتُنَا مِنَ اللَّهِ الشَّهَادَةُ.

Being slain is our propensity, and martyrdom is the honor that Almighty Allah confers upon us.

Finally, the most accurate understanding of these festivals and days of joy is to spend them doing acts of worship and true recognition of Almighty Allah, serving people and expecting rewards only from the Almighty.

A view at these joyful occasions demonstrates that they are utterly intermixed with the anniversaries of deaths and martyrdoms, except for the two months of Muharram and Safar, which are totally dedicated to grievous occasions, and the month of Sha'ban, which is dedicated to joyful occasions. However, the dates of the Holy Imams' ('a) birthdays are more expansive. Accordingly, equilibrium between the two kinds of occasions can be found in a better and more expansive way although there is a preponderance of the grievous occasions over the joyful ones.

Let us now mention a list comprising the dates of the Holy Infallibles' ('a) birthdays generally celebrated by the individuals of the virtuous community:

1. Birthday of the Holy Prophet (S): 17th of Rabi' I, which coincides with the birthday of Imam Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq ('a). Although there are many narrations holding that the Holy Prophet (S) was born on the twelfth of Rabi' I, which is celebrated by our non-Shi'ah brothers, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) always celebrated the anniversary of his birthday on the seventeenth of the same month.[8](#)
2. Birthday of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib ('a): 13th of Rajab.
3. Birthday of Lady Fatimah al-Zahra' ('a): 20th of Jumada II.
4. Birthday of Imam Hasan ibn 'Ali al-Mujtaba ('a): 15th of Ramadhan.
5. Birthday of Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ('a), the martyr: 3rd of Sha'ban.
6. Birthday of Imam 'Ali ibn Husayn, Zayn al-'Abidin ('a): 5th of Sha'ban.
7. Birthday of Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha ('a): 11th of Dhu'l-Qa'dah.
8. Birthday of the Awaited Imam al-Mahdi ('a): 15th of Sha'ban.

It would certainly be asked why these holy Infallibles have been given such special interest other than the others—peace be upon them all—as regards celebrating their birthdays.

The answer is that the birthdays of the other holy Imams ('a) are celebrated, yet limitedly. As for the previously mentioned Infallibles ('a), the anniversaries of their births have been given special interest because definite historical events and moral particularities expressly appertain to these Imams ('a), which highly motivate the individuals of the virtuous community.

The Holy Prophet (S), is the last Messenger of Almighty Allah to humanity.

Imam 'Ali ('a), being the first of the Holy Imams ('a) and the successor of the Holy Prophet (S), represents the doctrinal epitome of the virtuous community.

Imam Hasan ('a), the first grandson of the Holy Prophet (S), represents the first point in the extension of the Holy Prophet's progeny.

Imam al-Husayn ('a) is the martyred grandson of the Holy Prophet (S) whose birth was accompanied by grief and sorrow.

Imam Zayn al-'Abidin's birthday falls a day after the birthday of his father, Imam al-Husayn ('a). The followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) celebrate the birthdays of Imam al-Husayn, 'Abbas ibn 'Ali ('a), and Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) on three successive days respectively; the third, fourth, and fifth of Sha'ban. These three persons are gathered under one topic: the tragedy of Karbala'.

Imam al-Sadiq ('a) represents the doctrinal and jurisprudential school to which the virtuous community

belongs.

Imam al-Ridha's birthday is widely celebrated in Iran because of the period of time he spent in the country and the existence of his grave therein. He therefore represents a symbol of the loyalty of the Iranian people to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a).

The awaited Imam al-Mahdi ('a) represents the everlasting symbol of the divinely commissioned leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), who still exists among the Muslim nation.

Visiting The Tombs And Shrines Of The Holy Infallibles

Legitimacy of visiting the graves

Visiting the tombs of the Holy Prophet (S), the Holy Imams ('a), the prophets ('a), the saints, and the descendants of the Holy Imams ('a) is regarded as the most important ritual emphasized by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and dutifully observed by the virtuous community. Such visits (or pilgrimages) are a significant phenomenon in the lives of the virtuous community.

In their capacity as a sort of Hajj (i.e. pilgrimage), these visits, in both content and form, are considered one of the general rituals of Islam, since traditions have described them as a complementary part of the ritual Hajj Pilgrimage.

On the other hand, Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab and his followers known as Wahhabis discommend and even forbid visiting or going on pilgrimage to tombs or building structures and domes on them. Nevertheless, numerous are the traditions that are uninterruptedly reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), not to mention the Holy Prophet (S) and the honorable companions, confirming the recommendation of visiting the tombs.

Hereinafter, I will mention some traditions reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), confirming the act of visiting the tombs as one of the highly advisable acts and the leading mottoes of the virtuous community.

Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, Shaykh al-Saduq, in *'Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha* and *'Ilal al-Ahkam*, and Ibn Qawlawayh, in *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, have reported through a valid chain of authority that Imam al-Ridha ('a) said:

إِنَّ لِكُلِّ إِمَامٍ عَهْدًا فِي عُنُقِ أَوْلِيَاءِهِ وَشِيعَتِهِ، وَإِنَّ مِنْ تَمَامِ الْوَفَاءِ بِالْعَهْدِ وَحُسْنِ الْأَدَاءِ زِيَارَةَ قُبُورِهِمْ. فَمَنْ زَارَهُمْ رَغْبَةً فِي زِيَارَتِهِمْ وَتَصَدِيقًا بِمَا رَغِبُوا فِيهِ كَانَ أُمَّتُهُمْ شُفَعَاءَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

The disciples and followers of every Imam ('a) are connected to him with a binding covenant that they must fulfill. Among the elements of an excellent fulfillment of these covenants is indeed the visiting of the Imams' ('a) tombs. Hence, if one visits their tombs eagerly and with the intention of gaining their (the

Imams') desire, the Imams will intercede for him on the Day of Resurrection. [9](#)

According to another validly reported tradition, Zayd al-Shahham has reported that he asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a), "What is the reward of one who visits (the tomb of) one of you?"

The Imam ('a) answered:

كَمَنْ زَارَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ.

He (who visits one of us) will be rewarded the same reward of one who has visited the Messenger of Allah (S). [10](#)

According to another validly reported tradition, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has said:

مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ خُلُقًا أَكْثَرَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَإِنَّهُ لَيَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ كُلِّ مَسَاءٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ يَطُوفُونَ بِالْبَيْتِ لَيْلَتَهُمْ، حَتَّى إِذَا طَلَعَ الْفَجْرُ أَنْصَرَفُوا إِلَى قَبْرِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَسَلَّمُوا عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَأْتُونَ قَبْرَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَيُسَلِّمُونَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَأْتُونَ قَبْرَ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَيُسَلِّمُونَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَأْتُونَ قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَيُسَلِّمُونَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَعْرَجُونَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ. ثُمَّ تَنْزِلُ مَلَائِكَةُ النَّهَارِ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ فَيَطُوفُونَ بِالْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ نَهَارَهُمْ، حَتَّى إِذَا دَنَتِ الشَّمْسُ لِلْغُرُوبِ أَنْصَرَفُوا إِلَى قَبْرِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَيُسَلِّمُونَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَأْتُونَ قَبْرَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَيُسَلِّمُونَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَأْتُونَ قَبْرَ الْحَسَنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَيُسَلِّمُونَ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ يَأْتُونَ قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَيُسَلِّمُونَ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يَعْرَجُونَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَغِيبَ الشَّمْسُ.

Almighty Allah has not created a category of creatures greater in number than angels. Verily, seventy thousand angels descend every day to circumambulate the Holy House (of God). Then, they circumambulate the Holy Ka'bah. Then, they visit the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S) to offer greetings. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful ('a) to offer greetings. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam Hasan ('a) to offer greetings. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam Husayn ('a) to offer greetings. They then ascend back to the skies before sunrise. Then, the angels of daylight descend to circumambulate the Holy House (of God) all the day. Before sunset, they leave to visit the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S) to offer greetings. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful ('a) to offer greetings. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam Hasan ('a) to offer greetings. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam Husayn ('a) to offer greetings. They then ascend to the skies before sunset. [11](#)

According to another tradition that is reported through numerous chains of authority, Abu-'Amir al-Tabbani, the preacher of Hijaz, has reported that he visited Imam al-Sadiq ('a) and asked, "O son of Allah's Messenger, what is the reward of one who visits the tomb of the Commander of the Faithful (Imam 'Ali) ('a) and those who construct it?"

The Imam ('a) answered:

يَا أَبَا عَامِرٍ، حَدَّثَنِي أَبِي عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ عَنْ عَلِيٍّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ قَالَ لَهُ: وَاللَّهِ لَتُقْتَلَنَّ بِأَرْضِ الْعِرَاقِ وَتُدْفَنُ بِهَا. قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، مَا لِمَنْ زَارَ قُبُورَنَا وَعَمَرَهَا وَتَعَاهَدَهَا؟ فَقَالَ لِي: يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى جَعَلَ قَبْرَكَ وَقَبْرَ وَلَدِكَ بِقَاعِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَرَصَةً مِنْ عَرَصَاتِهَا، وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَ قُلُوبَ نَجَبَاءَ مِنْ خَلْقِهِ وَصَفْوَةَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ تَحِنُّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَتَحْتَمِلُ الْمَذَلَّةَ وَالْأَذَى، فَيُعْمِرُونَ قُبُورَكُمْ وَيُكثِرُونَ زِيَارَتَهَا تَقَرُّبًا مِنْهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَوَدَّةً مِنْهُمْ لِرَسُولِهِ. أَوْلَيْتُكَ، يَا عَلِيُّ، الْمَخْصُوصُونَ بِشَفَاعَتِي الْوَارِدُونَ حَوْضِي، وَهُمْ زُؤَارِي غَدًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ. يَا عَلِيُّ، مَنْ عَمَرَ قُبُورَكُمْ وَتَعَاهَدَهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَعَانَ سُلَيْمَانَ بْنِ دَاوُدَ عَلَى بِنَاءِ بَيْتِ الْمَقْدِسِ، وَمَنْ زَارَ قُبُورَكُمْ عَدَلَ ذَلِكَ تَوَابٍ سَبْعِينَ حِجَّةً بَعْدَ حِجَّةِ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَخَرَجَ مِنْ ذُنُوبِهِ حَتَّى يَرْجِعَ مِنْ زِيَارَتِكُمْ كَيَوْمِ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ، فَأُبَشِّرُ وَأُبَشِّرُ أَوْلِيَاءَكَ وَمُحِبِّكَ مِنَ النَّعِيمِ وَقُرَّةِ الْعَيْنِ بِمَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبٍ بَشَرٍ. وَلَكِنَّ حَتَالَءَ مِنَ النَّاسِ يُعِيرُونَ زُؤَارَ قُبُورِكُمْ كَمَا تُعِيرُ الزَّانِيَةُ بَزَاءَهَا! أَوْلَيْتُكَ شِرَارُ أُمَّتِي، لَا أَنَالَهُمُ اللَّهُ شَفَاعَتِي وَلَا يَرُدُّونَ حَوْضِي.

O Abu-'Amir, my father narrated to me on the authority of his father, on the authority of his grandfather, Husayn ibn 'Ali, on the authority of (Imam) 'Ali, that the Messenger of Allah (S) said to him (i.e. Imam 'Ali), "By Allah I swear this: you shall be slain in the land of Iraq and you will be buried therein." Imam 'Ali ('a) asked, "O Allah's Messenger, what will be the reward of one who visits our tombs, constructs them, and protects them?" The Holy Prophet (S) answered, "O Abu'l-Hasan, Almighty Allah has verily chosen your tomb and the tomb of your son to be sites and courtyards of Paradise. He has also made the hearts of excellent persons from amongst His creatures and choice persons from amongst His servants long for you and endure humiliation and harm for your sake.

They will thus build your tombs and frequently visit them, to seek nearness to Allah and show love for His Messenger. O 'Ali, it is these who shall deserve my intercession exclusively and who shall join me at the Divine Pond. In Paradise, they shall be my visitors. O 'Ali, whoever constructs and protects your graves, is regarded as if he has helped (Prophet) Solomon the son of (Prophet) David build the Sacred Mosque of Jerusalem. Whoever visits your tombs will be given the reward of going on Hajj Pilgrimage seventy times after the obligatory Hajj, and he will be free of sins like the day on which his mother gave birth to him until he returns home after visiting your tombs.

So, receive these glad tidings and convey to your loyalists and devotees the glad tidings of bliss and delight of the eye in such a way that no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no heart has ever imagined. However, dregs of the society will impute dishonor to the visitors of your tombs in the same way as dishonor is imputed to an adulteress for her sin. These are the vilest of my nation. May Allah never allow them to enjoy my intercession and may they never approach my Pond. [12](#)

Traditions especially emphasize visiting the tombs of the Holy Prophet (S), Imam al-Husayn ('a), and Imam 'Ali ('a) because the Holy Prophet (S) and these two holy Imams ('a) represent the epitome of the beliefs of the virtuous community, in addition to the special outcome in the field of cultural, spiritual, and political education gained from visiting them.

In the coming chapter of *Ziyarah*, we will notice that all emphasis has been generally laid on visiting the

Holy Prophet's tomb, while visiting the tombs of the Holy Imams ('a) has only been attached to this visit. Special visits have been emphatically mentioned for Imam 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib and Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon them.

The Cultural Content of Visiting the Tombs

In the previous discussion of the cultural foundations under the title of visiting Imam al-Husayn's tomb, we have looked into the spiritual, political, and social outcomes of such visits. They also stand for a practical and spiritual embodiment of the interrelation between the individuals of the virtuous community and the Holy Infallibles ('a). A visitor of their tombs believes that he is visiting that Imam ('a) in his house. Almighty Allah "has permitted them to be exalted so that His name may be remembered in them". The visitor, by reciting the paragraphs of the *Ziyarah* formula, believes he is talking to the Imam who, beyond doubt, can hear his words, understand what he says, and answer him.

The best presentation of this fact is the following formula of seeking permission (*isti'dhan*) by a visitor before entering any of the holy shrines of the Holy Infallibles ('a). This form reads as follows:

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي وَقَفْتُ عَلَى بَابٍ مِنْ أَبْوَابِ بُيُوتِ نَبِيِّكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَقَدْ مَنَعْتَ النَّاسَ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوا إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ فَقُلْتُ

{ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ }

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْتَقِدُ حُرْمَةَ صَاحِبِ هَذَا الْمَشْهَدِ الشَّرِيفِ فِي غَيْبَتِهِ كَمَا أَعْتَقِدُهَا فِي حَضْرَتِهِ وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ رَسُولَكَ وَخُلَفَاءَكَ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَكَ يُرْزَقُونَ بِرَوْحِ مَقَامِي وَيَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامِي وَيَرُدُّونَ سَلَامِي وَأَنَّكَ حَجَبْتَ عَنِّي سَمْعِي كَلَامَهُمْ وَفَتَحْتَ بَابَ فَهْمِي بِلَذِيذِ مُنَاجَاتِهِمْ وَإِنِّي أَسْتَأْذِنُكَ يَا رَبِّ أَوَّلًا وَأَسْتَأْذِنُ رَسُولَكَ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ ثَانِيًا وَأَسْتَأْذِنُ خَلِيفَتَكَ الْإِمَامَ الْمَفْرُوضَ عَلَيَّ طَاعَتُهُ...

O Allah, I am standing at one of the doors of Your Prophet's Houses—may Your blessings be upon him and his Household—and You have prevented people to enter there before they obtain his permission. You have thus said, "O ye who believe! Enter not the Prophet's houses until leave is given you."

O Allah, I believe in the sanctity of the owner of this holy shrine in his absence just as I believe in it in his presence. I also know with certainty that Your Messenger and Your Representatives—peace be upon them—are alive, finding their sustenance in Your presence. They can see my place, hear my words, and respond to my greetings. You have prevented my hearing from receiving their words, but You have opened the door of my understanding to taste the sweetness of my confidential speech with them. I thus ask Your permission—O my Lord—first of all, and secondly the permission of Your Prophet—peace be upon him and his Household—and the permission of Your Representative, the Imam, obedience to whom is incumbent upon me...

You may here mention the name of the visited person, and then continue:

وَالْمَلَائِكَةَ الْمُؤَكَّلِينَ بِهَذِهِ الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ تَالِثًا أَدْخُلُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَدْخُلُ يَا حُجَّةَ اللَّهِ أَدْخُلُ يَا مَلَائِكَةَ اللَّهِ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ
الْمُقِيمِينَ فِي هَذَا الْمَشْهَدِ فَأَذِّنْ لِي يَا مَوْلَايَ فِي الدُّخُولِ أَفْضَلَ مَا أَدْنَتْ لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَوْلِيَائِكَ فَإِنْ لَمْ أَكُنْ أَهْلًا لِذَلِكَ
فَأَنْتَ أَهْلٌ لِذَلِكَ.

...and thirdly (permission of) the angels commissioned to supervise this blessed area. May I enter, O Messenger of Allah? May I enter, O Proof of Allah? May I enter, O angels of Allah—the intimate, the residing in this shrine? So, (please) permit me to enter, O my Master, with the best of permission that you have ever conferred upon any of your intimate adherents. If I do not deserve such permission, then you are worthy of not conferring it upon me. [13](#)

All formulas of *ziyarah* uttered at the tombs of the Holy Infallibles ('a) carry doctrinal, monotheistic, Islamic, and spiritual aspects. They are: repeating the *takbir* statement (*allahu-akbar*: Allah is the Most Great) one hundred times, and uttering the two statements (*shahadatayn*) of Islam—I bear witness that there is no god save Allah and that Muhammad is His messenger. They all offer salutation to the Holy Imams ('a), mention them by names, and utter words of praise, glorification and gratitude to Almighty Allah for granting the bliss of visiting the shrine—all these are direct doctrinal, moral, and spiritual lessons given to the visitors of these tombs.

Encyclopedias of traditions (i.e. *Hadith*) have dealt with this subject matter so expansively that the encyclopedias of the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and the virtuous community have been characterized by expatiating upon this topic. Since the first century of Shi'ite writings, many books dealing exclusively with the formulas of *ziyarah* and supplicatory prayers have been written. Some are: *Kamil al-Ziyarat* by Ibn Qawlawayh, *Misbah al-Mutahajjid* by Shaykh al-Tusi, *Al-Mazar al-Kabir* by Shaykh Muhammad al-Mashhadi, *Al-Mazar* by al-Shahid al-Awwal, *Al-Misbah* by Shaykh al-Kaf'ami, and many others. All these books substantiate the special interest in the ritual and devotional *ziyarah* and supplicatory prayers. [14](#)

In this discussion, we will refer, yet generally, to the major sections of *ziyarah* and to some of the most important times and occasions observed by the individuals of the virtuous community, leaving the details to the extensive books on this topic. Basically, we will depend upon the well-known book of *Mafatih al-Jinan*.

There are general etiquettes and manners for *ziyarah*, which a true faithful believer must observe because they correspond to an aspect of the blessed rite of *ziyarah*. The most important in this connection is spiritual purity, attained by ritual bathing and ablution, and the material cleanliness of body and clothes, attained by removing impurities and dirt. Another is the frequent remembrance of Almighty Allah, by repeating words of glorification, praise, and thanks to Him for granting this blissful boon.

It is worth mentioning that there are certain manners and etiquettes in this regard, including saying certain supplications, offering certain prayers, and choosing certain times for traveling (i.e. going on pilgrimage for visiting a holy shrine). Because traveling is the first step towards *ziyarah*, these manners and etiquettes have been mentioned as a prelude to the etiquettes of pilgrimage and *ziyarah*.¹⁵

Pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams (‘a) Buried in al-Baqi’ Cemetery

Many corroborated traditions have confirmed great reward for visiting the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S) while others have deemed it obligatory upon those who can do it after accomplishment of the obligatory rites of the Hajj Pilgrimage. Other traditions sternly forbid shunning a visit to the Holy Prophet’s tomb as a sort of alienation from him. Many other traditions assert that visiting his tomb results in entrance into Paradise.

Among these traditions, Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

إِذَا حَجَّ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَخْتِمْ حَجَّهُ بِزِيَارَتِنَا؛ لِأَنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ تَمَامِ الْحَجِّ.

*Any one of you who goes on the Hajj Pilgrimage must conclude his Hajj by visiting us, because it is the completion of the Hajj.*¹⁶

Imam ‘Ali, the Commander of the Faithful (‘a), is reported to have said:

أَتَمُّوا بِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ حَجَّكُمْ إِذَا خَرَجْتُمْ إِلَى بَيْتِ اللَّهِ؛ فَإِنَّ تَرْكَهُ جَفَاءٌ وَبِذَلِكَ أَمَرْتُمْ، وَأَتَمُّوا بِالْقُبُورِ الَّتِي أَلَزَمَكُمُ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ زِيَارَتَهَا وَحَقَّهَا، وَاطْلُبُوا الرِّزْقَ عِنْدَهَا.

*When you go on pilgrimage to the House of Allah, complete your Hajj by visiting the Messenger of Allah(S) because to avoid doing so is a sort of alienation from him which you have been ordered to avoid. Also, complete your Hajj with visitation of the tombs that Almighty Allah has ordered you to visit and carry out your duties towards them. Seek sustenance therein.*¹⁷

Imam al-Baqir (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مَنْ زَارَنِي حَيًّا أَوْ مَيِّتًا كُنْتُ لَهُ شَفِيعًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

Whoever visits me in my lifetime or after my death, will receive my intercession on the Day of Resurrection.¹⁸

Imam Hasan ibn ‘Ali (‘a) is reported to have asked the Holy Prophet (S), “O father, what is the reward of

one who visits you?” The Holy Prophet (S) answered:

يَا بُنَيَّ، مَنْ زَارَنِي حَيًّا أَوْ مَيِّتًا أَوْ زَارَ أَبَاكَ أَوْ أَخَاكَ أَوْ زَارَكَ، كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَزُورَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَأُخَلِّصَهُ مِنْ دُنُوبِهِ.

O son, he who visits me in my lifetime or after my death, or visits your father, your brother, and you, will put me under the duty of visiting him on the Day of Resurrection to deliver him from (the consequences of) his sins. [19](#)

According to another tradition that is reported through a valid chain of authority, the Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam al-Husayn ibn ‘Ali (‘a):

يَا بُنَيَّ، مَنْ أَتَانِي زَائِرًا بَعْدَ مَوْتِي فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ، وَمَنْ أَتَى أَبَاكَ زَائِرًا بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِ فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ، وَمَنْ أَتَى أَخَاكَ زَائِرًا بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِ فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ، وَمَنْ أَتَاكَ زَائِرًا بَعْدَ مَوْتِكَ فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ.

O son, whoever comes to me to visit me after my death will be awarded Paradise. Whoever comes to your father to visit him after his death will be awarded Paradise. Whoever comes to your brother to visit him after his death will be awarded Paradise. Whoever comes to you to visit you after your death will be awarded Paradise. [20](#)

According to another tradition, Imam al-Ridha (‘a) is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

مَنْ زَارَنِي فِي حَيَاتِي أَوْ بَعْدَ مَوْتِي فَقَدْ زَارَ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى.

He who visits me in my lifetime or after my death has in fact visited Almighty Allah. [21](#)

Zayd has reported that he asked Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) as to what the reward of one who visits the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S) would be.

The Imam (‘a) answered:

كَمَنْ زَارَ اللَّهَ فِي عَرْشِهِ.

It shall be as if he has visited Almighty Allah on His Throne. [22](#)

It is also reported that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) was once asked, “Is it lawful to visit (the tomb of) your father?” “Yes, it is,” answered the Imam (‘a). “What is then the reward of one who visits him?” he was asked. He

answered:

الْجَنَّةُ إِنْ كَانَ يَأْتُمُّ بِهِ.

The reward will be Paradise for those who believe in (and follow) his Imamate.

“What is the punishment of one who shuns visiting him out of purposeful alienation from him?” he was asked. The Imam (‘a) answered:

الْحَسْرَةُ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ.

The punishment will be intense regret on the Day of Regret. [23](#)

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

مَنْ زَارَنِي غُفِرَتْ لَهُ ذُنُوبُهُ وَلَمْ يَمُتْ فَقِيْرًا.

Whoever visits me will have his sins forgiven and will be saved from dying in poverty. [24](#)

Because of its priority over all other visits and because it is the criterion and example of visiting the tombs of the other Holy Infallibles (‘a), confirmations have been made regarding visiting the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S).

It goes without saying that visiting the tombs of the Holy Prophet and the Holy Imams—peace be upon them—is one of the best activities and rites that is practiced by the individuals of the virtuous community who pay more interest to such visits in the seasons of Hajj Pilgrimage and ‘Umrah (minor Hajj). They therefore endure various sorts of suffering and harm, especially in the days when the custodians and keepers of these shrines exert pressure on the visitors and accuse them of baseless charges.

Visiting Imam al-Husayn’s tomb

Visiting the holy shrine of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) at all times is very highly recommended, whether directly by presenting oneself at his holy shrine,[25](#) or indirectly, by saluting him from afar. However, to visit Imam al-Husayn (‘a) in his holy shrine, or from the holy shrines of Imam ‘Ali (‘a) or the other Holy Imams (‘a), or any other shrine would bring about a bigger reward, as has been held by some traditions that identify certain places from which one may visit Imam al-Husayn (‘a).

Other traditions assert that the reward of visiting any of the Holy Imams (‘a) is the same as visiting the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S).

Other traditions read:

مَنْ زَارَ وَاحِدًا مِنَّا كَانَ كَمَنْ زَارَ الْحُسَيْنَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ.

Whoever visits any one of us will be as if he has visited Husayn (‘a). [26](#)

Accordingly, the same merits and rewards are gained when any of the tombs of the Holy Infallibles (‘a) is visited.

The most famous formula of *ziyarah* that can be recited upon visiting the eleven martyred Holy Imams (‘a) is the formula known as *aminullah*, which begins with this statement:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ يَا أَمِينَ اللَّهِ فِي أَرْضِهِ وَحُجَّتَهُ عَلَى عِبَادِهِ

Peace be upon you; O trustee of Allah on His lands, and proof of Allah for His servants.

This formula has been described by ‘Allamah al–Majlisi as the best formula in both text and chain of authority. It is highly advisable to repeat this formula of *ziyarah* perseveringly at all the holy shrines.

Through a valid chain of authority, Jabir ibn ‘Abdullah has reported that Imam Zayn al–‘Abidin (‘a) made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Imam ‘Ali (‘a) and uttered this very formula of *ziyarah* therein. [27](#)

It is also noteworthy that visiting the tomb of Imam al–Husayn (‘a) has been given the greatest emphasis in the uninterruptedly reported traditions that have also mentioned a great reward ensuing from visiting his tomb. According to other traditions, visiting the tomb of Imam al–Husayn (‘a) may be more favorable than visiting the tombs of the succeeding Imams (‘a). Through numerous chains of authority, some traditions have identified certain times of visiting Imam al–Husayn’s tomb with certain formulas of *ziyarah*, while others have mentioned other general formulas that can be uttered when his tomb is visited at any time. Great rewards have been reported for visiting his tomb at these identified times or at all times.

The compilations of formulas of *ziyarah* have identified certain times for visiting his tomb. Hereinafter, a list of the best times at which Imam al–Husayn’s tomb can be visited is provided according to chronological sequence based on the Islamic calendar:

1. *Ziyarah* of ‘Ashura’ on the tenth of Muharram with a special formula [28](#)
2. *Ziyarah* of Arba’in on the twentieth of Safar with a special formula
3. *Ziyarah* on the first of Rajab with a special formula that is identical to the formula dedicated to the fifteenth of Sha’ban

4. *Ziyarah* on the fifteenth of Rajab night and day with a special formula that is identical with the formula to be said on the first of Rajab
5. *Ziyarah* and invocation of blessings upon Imam al-Husayn ('a) on his birthday, the third of Sha'ban with a special formula
6. *Ziyarah* on the fifteenth of Sha'ban night and day, which is the same formula as that of the first of Rajab
7. *Ziyarah* on the Qadr Nights (19th, 21st, and 23rd of Ramadhan) with a special formula
8. *Ziyarah* on the nights of 'Id al-Fitr (the first of Shawwal) and 'Id al-Adhha (the tenth of Dhu'l-Hijjah) with a special formula
9. *Ziyarah* on the days of 'Id al-Fitr and 'Id al-Adhha with a special formula
10. *Ziyarah* on the Day of 'Arafat, the ninth of Dhu'l-Hijjah, with a special formula

Among all these times, the *ziyarah* for the night of the fifteenth of Sha'ban and the Day of 'Arafat enjoy a special significance concerning the great reward that is gained by those who go on *ziyarah* pilgrimage to the tomb of Imam al-Husayn ('a) at these two times. The individuals of the virtuous community specially wish to go for *ziyarah* at these two times. Some traditions hold that visiting Imam al-Husayn's tomb at these two times may have more rewards than a recommended Hajj or 'Umrah and that Almighty Allah looks with the eye of mercy and forgiveness at the visitors of Imam al-Husayn's tomb before he takes a similar look at those halting on Mount 'Arafat.

The two *ziyarah* of 'Ashura' and Arba'in also acquire a special interest for the individuals of the virtuous community because they are connected with commemorating the anniversary of Imam al-Husayn's martyrdom when large ceremonies and large well-organized processions are held. In addition to these timed *ziyarah*, there are other formulas addressed to Imam al-Husayn ('a) at different times from near or afar. In *Mafatih al-Jinan*, Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi has mentioned seven such general formulas of *ziyarah* the most famous of which is the one known as *ziyarah al Warith*.²⁹

Besides these formulas, there are general etiquettes and manners observed by one who visits the holy shrine of Imam al-Husayn ('a), the most important of which is that a visitor must be ritually pure, by performing the ritual ablution before entering the holy shrine, and physically clean, by putting on clean clothes and ridding oneself of all impure items. Within these etiquettes are praying to Almighty Allah, making every effort to become closer to Him, and repeating phrases glorifying, praising, and thanking Him. It is also required to observe all the etiquettes that need to be done in the presence of the Imam. Of course, these etiquettes must also be observed when visiting the Holy Prophet and the other Holy Imams, peace be upon them all.³⁰

Visiting the Tomb of Imam ‘Ali (‘a)

In the previously cited traditions about visiting the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S), we have come to know the great reward and the fabulous outcomes resulting from visiting the tomb of Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi–Talib (‘a).³¹ Herein, we will present other traditions in this regard.

Shaykh al–Kulayni has reported that Abu–Wahab al–Qasri visited Imam al–Sadiq (‘a) in Madinah and said, “May Allah accept me as ransom for you! I have come to visit you, but I have not visited the tomb of the Commander of the Faithful (Imam ‘Ali).”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

بِئْسَ مَا صَنَعْتَ! لَوْلَا أَنَّكَ مِنْ شِيعَتِنَا مَا نَظَرْتُ إِلَيْكَ! أَلَا تَزُورُ مَنْ يَزُورُهُ اللَّهُ مَعَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَيَزُورُهُ الْأَنْبِيَاءُ وَيَزُورُهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ؟

So evil is what you have done. Were it not that you are one of our partisans, I would never look at your face. You should have visited him who is visited by Almighty Allah along with His angels, the Prophets, and the faithful believers.

“I did not have any idea about that,” Wahab apologized.

The Imam (‘a) added:

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ أَفْضَلُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْأَئِمَّةِ كُلِّهِمْ، وَلَهُ ثَوَابُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ، وَعَلَى قَدْرِ أَعْمَالِهِمْ فَضِّلُوا.

*So now, be it known to you that the Commander of the Faithful is more favorable in the view of Almighty Allah than all the other Imams, and he has the reward of their good deeds. They have preference to one another according to each one’s deeds.*³²

According to another validly reported tradition, Imam al–Sadiq (‘a) has said:

مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ خَلْقًا أَكْثَرَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَإِنَّهُ لَيَنْزِلُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ سَبْعُونَ أَلْفَ مَلَكٍ فَيَأْتُونَ الْبَيْتَ الْمَعْمُورَ فَيَطُوفُونَ بِهِ، فَإِذَا هُمْ طَافُوا بِهِ نَزَلُوا فَطَافُوا بِالْكَعْبَةِ، فَإِذَا طَافُوا بِهَا أَتَوْا قَبْرَ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَسَلَّمُوا عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ أَتَوْا قَبْرَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَسَلَّمُوا عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ أَتَوْا قَبْرَ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَسَلَّمُوا عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ عَرَجُوا. وَيَنْزِلُ مِنْهُمْ أَبَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.

Almighty Allah has not created a category of creatures bigger in number than angels. Verily, seventy thousand angels descend every day to circumambulate the Much–Frequented House. Then, they circumambulate the Holy Ka’bah. Then, they visit the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S) to offer greetings.

Then, they visit the tomb of Imam ‘Ali, the Commander of the Faithful (‘a), to offer greetings. Then, they visit the tomb of Imam al-Husayn (‘a) to offer greetings. They then ascend back to the skies. Every day and up to the Day of Resurrection, a similar number of angels descend and do the same thing.

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) has also said:

مَنْ زَارَ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَارِفًا بِحَقِّهِ غَيْرَ مُتَجَبِّرٍ وَلَا مُتَكَبِّرٍ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ أَجْرَ مِائَةِ أَلْفِ شَهِيدٍ، وَغَفَرَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ، وَبُعِثَ مِنَ الْأَمِينِينَ، وَهُوَ عَلَى الْحِسَابِ، وَأَسْتَقْبَلَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ، فَإِذَا انْصَرَفَ شِيعَتُهُ إِلَى مَنْزِلِهِ، فَإِنْ مَرِضَ عَادُوهُ، وَإِنْ مَاتَ تَبِعُوهُ بِالْإِسْتِغْفَارِ إِلَى قَبْرِهِ.

Verily, if one visits the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) with full recognition of his right³³ without being arrogant or conceited, Almighty Allah shall determine for him the reward of one hundred thousand martyrs, forgive his past and coming sins, include him with the secured group (on the Day of Resurrection), and make easy for him the calling to account. He will be also received by the angels. As he returns home (after the ziyarah), these angels will visit him when he is ill. When he dies, these angels will follow him to his grave, imploring Almighty Allah to forgive him.

The Imam (‘a) also said:

وَمَنْ زَارَ الْحُسَيْنَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ عَارِفًا بِحَقِّهِ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ ثَوَابَ أَلْفِ حِجَّةٍ مَقْبُولَةٍ، وَأَلْفِ عُمْرَةٍ مَقْبُولَةٍ، وَغَفَرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ.

Whoever visits Husayn (‘a) with full recognition of his right, Almighty Allah will establish for him the reward of one thousand times an accepted Hajj Pilgrimage and one thousand times an approved ‘Umrah Pilgrimage, and will forgive all his sins, the past and the coming.³⁴

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is also reported to have said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَرَضَ وَلِابْتِنَا عَلَى أَهْلِ الْأَمْصَارِ، فَلَمْ يَقْبَلْهَا إِلَّا أَهْلُ الْكُوفَةِ، وَإِنَّ إِلَى جَانِبِهَا قَبْرًا لَا يَأْتِيهِ مَكْرُوهٌ فَيُصَلِّي عِنْدَهُ أَرْبَعَ رَكَعَاتٍ إِلَّا رَجَعَهُ اللَّهُ مَسْرُورًا بِقَضَاءِ حَاجَتِهِ.

Almighty Allah had offered the loyalty of our leadership to the people of the countries, but none accepted it except the people of Kufah. To the side of this city, there is a tomb which no aggrieved one comes to visit and offers a four-unit prayer therein except that Almighty Allah makes him return with the pleasure of having his request granted.³⁵

Referring to Imam ‘Ali (‘a), Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is also reported to have said:

يَا بَنَ مَارِدٍ، مَنْ زَارَ جَدِّي عَارِفًا بِحَقِّهِ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِكُلِّ خُطْوَةٍ حَجَّةً مَقْبُولَةً وَعُمْرَةً مَبْرُورَةً. يَا بَنَ مَارِدٍ، وَاللَّهِ مَا يُطْعِمُ اللَّهُ النَّارَ قَدَمًا تَغَبَّرَتْ فِي زِيَارَةِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ مَا شِئًا كَانَ أَوْ رَاكِبًا. يَا بَنَ مَارِدٍ، أُكْتُبُ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ بِمَاءِ الذَّهَبِ.

O son of Marid, as for any one who visits the tomb of my grandfather with recognition of his right, Almighty Allah shall decide for him the reward of an acceptable Hajj and admissible 'Umrah for each step he takes. O son of Marid, I swear by Allah that He shall never give to Hellfire a foot that was dusted in the course of visiting the Commander of the Faithful ('a), be he walking or riding. O son of Marid, write down this saying with golden ink. [36](#)

General And Timed Visitations Of Imam 'Ali's Tomb

Visits to Imam 'Ali's tomb are classified into general (that are made at any time) and timed (that are made at certain times).

General Visits

Shaykh al-Qummi, in *Mafatih al-Jinan*, has mentioned seven formulas of *ziyarah* of Imam 'Ali ('a) that may be said when his tomb is visited at any time. The first formula is reported from Shaykh al-Mufid, Shaykh al-Shahid, Sayyid Ibn Tawus, and other scholars. The second and most important is the one known as *ziyarah of aminullah* to which a previous reference has been made.

The earlier formula comprises some etiquettes to be carried out by the visitor from the moment he leaves his house up to arriving in Kufah. Afterwards, the visitor is advised to walk to the holy shrine of Imam 'Ali ('a) in the holy city of Najaf up to uttering the formula of bidding the Imam farewell (known as *wada'*). This formula also includes a form of *ziyarah* of Prophets Adam and Noah, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and Imam al-Husayn, peace be upon them all. [37](#)

A greater number of general formulas of *ziyarah* has been mentioned by 'Allamah al-Majlisi in *Bihar al-Anwar*. [38](#)

Timed Visitations

There are four formulas of *ziyarah* to be said while visiting the tomb of Imam 'Ali ('a) at special times.

First, the formula of *ziyarah* to be said while visiting Imam 'Ali's tomb on the Day of Ghadir is regarded as the most comprehensive, since it comprises the totality of concepts and merits related to Imam 'Ali ('a). On the Day of Ghadir, Imam 'Ali ('a), by divine command, was appointed the next leader, Imam, and vicegerent of the Holy Prophet (S). On this day, which falls on the eighteenth of Dhu'l-Hijjah, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered all pilgrims to gather in a crossroad near a spring called Khumm and declared the famous sermon that is known as Hadith al-Ghadir. [39](#)

In the words of Shaykh al-Qummi, this formula of *ziyarah* has been reported through many valid chains of authority from Imam ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi al-Naqi (‘a) when he visited his grandfather, Imam ‘Ali (‘a), and said this formula on the Day of Ghadir when Mu’tasim, the ‘Abbasid ruler, summoned him to Baghdad. Shaykh al-Mufid has also reported this formula, yet without mentioning its transmitters, from Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (‘a) on the authority of his fathers, peace be upon them.[40](#)

About the merits of visiting Imam ‘Ali (‘a) on the Day of Ghadir, Imam al-Ridha (‘a) is reported to have said to Ahmad ibn Abi-Nasr:

يَا بْنَ أَبِي نَصْرٍ، أَيُّنَمَا كُنْتَ فَأَحْضِرْ يَوْمَ الْغَدِيرِ عِنْدَ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ؛ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يَغْفِرُ لِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ
وَمُؤْمِنَةٍ وَمُسْلِمٍ وَمُسْلِمَةٍ ذُنُوبَ سِتِّينَ سَنَةً، وَيَعْتِقُ مِنَ النَّارِ ضِعْفَ مَا أَعْتَقَ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ وَفِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ وَلَيْلَةِ
الْفِطْرِ.

Listen, son of Abu-Nasr! Wherever you are, try your best to present yourself at the tomb of the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) on the Day of Ghadir. Verily, Almighty Allah, on this day, forgives the sins of sixty years of each faithful believer and Muslim individual, male and female. On this day too, Almighty Allah releases from Hellfire two times as many people as He releases during the month of Ramadhan, the Night of Qadr Night, and the Night of ‘‘d al-Fitr.[41](#)

‘Allamah al-Majlisi and Shaykh al-Qummi, in *Bihar al-Anwar* and *Mafatih al-Jinan* respectively, have mentioned other formulas of *ziyarah* to be addressed to Imam ‘Ali (‘a) on the Day of Ghadir. One of these formulas is the famous *ziyarah* of *aminullah*.

Second, there is a special formula to be said on visiting the tomb of Imam ‘Ali (‘a) on the anniversary of the Holy Prophet’s birthday. Shaykh al-Mufid, Shaykh al-Shahid in *Al-Mazar* and Sayyid Ibn Tawus in *Iqbal al-A’mal* have reported that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) addressed a certain formula of *ziyarah* to Imam ‘Ali (‘a) on the anniversary of the Holy Prophet’s birthday and then dictated it to Muhammad ibn Muslim al-Thaqafi, his trustworthy companion.

This formula, which contains words ascribing virtue, knowledgeability, and struggle for the sake of Almighty Allah to Imam ‘Ali (‘a), as well as statements declaring loyalty to him, renunciation of his enemies, and recognition of his divinely commissioned leadership, has been recorded by ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, in *Bihar al-Anwar*, and Shaykh al-Qummi, in *Mafatih al-Jinan*.[42](#)

Third, there is a special formula that is reported to be addressed to Imam ‘Ali (‘a) when he is visited on the night and the day of the appointment of the Prophet to the Divine Mission (*al-mab’ath*), which is widely and unanimously celebrated on the twenty-seventh of Rajab by the individuals of the virtuous community.[43](#)

This formula has been reported by Shaykh al-Mufid, al-Shahid, and Sayyid Ibn Tawus from whom ‘Allamah al-Majlisi reported it. However, he then commented that he had not been acquainted with its

chain of authority nor had he been informed about the dedication of a special formula to this anniversary, although, he added, the matter is one of the facts unanimously believed by the Shi'ah.⁴⁴ Shaykh al-Qummi has mentioned three different forms of this formula.

Fourth, a special formula has been reported to be addressed to Imam 'Ali ('a) on the day of his martyrdom, the twenty-first of Ramadhan.

Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, and Shaykh al-Saduq, in *al-Amali*, have reported that on the day when Imam 'Ali ('a) departed life as a martyr, the place was convulsed with weeping and people were stunned just like the day of the departure of the Holy Prophet (S). Weeping and hurrying, a man came repeating the ritual statements of misfortune (i.e. We are Allah's and to Him shall we return) and saying, "This day has the vicegerency of the Holy Prophet (S) been interrupted." When he arrived at the door of Imam 'Ali's house, he said:

رَحِمَكَ اللَّهُ يَا أَبَا الْحَسَنِ كُنْتَ أَوَّلَ الْقَوْمِ إِسْلَامًا وَأَخْلَصَهُمْ إِيمَانًا...

May Allah have mercy upon you, O Abu'l-Hasan ('a). You were the first of all in accepting Islam and the most sincere of all in faith...

All the attendants kept silent until this man finished his words. He then wept, causing all the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) to weep. They then searched for the man, but in vain. It is believed that this man was al-Khidhr ('a).⁴⁵

Visiting the Holy Imams ('a)

In addition to their emphasis on visiting the Holy Prophet, Imam 'Ali, and Imam al-Husayn (peace be upon them all), the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) have laid similar emphasis on visiting the tombs of the Holy Imams ('a) in general. This emphasis has been reported by many traditions (some of which have been previously cited under the topic of "Visiting the Holy Imams' ('a) Tombs") which validate each other, some of which a reference will be made hereinafter.

Zayd has reported that he asked Imam al-Sadiq ('a) about the reward of one who visits the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S). The Imam ('a) answered:

كَمَنْ زَارَ اللَّهَ فِي عَرْشِهِ.

*It shall be as if he has visited Almighty Allah at His Throne.*⁴⁶

Zayd further asked, "What is the reward of one who visits any one of you?"

The Imam ('a) answered:

كَمَنْ زَارَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ.

He (who visits one of us) will be rewarded the same reward of one who has visited the Messenger of Allah. [47](#)

‘Isa ibn Rashid has reported that he asked Imam al-Sadiq (‘a), “May Allah accept me as ransom for you! What is the reward of one who visits the tomb of Husayn (‘a) and offers a two-unit prayer therein?”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

كُتِبَتْ لَهُ حِجَّةٌ وَعُمْرَةٌ.

He will be given the reward of one Hajj Pilgrimage and one ‘Umrah Pilgrimage.

“Is the same reward given to one who visits the tomb of any of the Imams, to whom obedience is obligatory?” asked the reporter. The Imam answered:

وَكَذَلِكَ كُلُّ مَنْ أَتَى قَبْرَ إِمَامٍ مُفْتَرَضَةٍ طَاعَتُهُ.

The same reward will be given to anyone who visits the tomb of any of the Imams, obedience to whom is obligatory. [48](#)

‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Muslim has reported that he visited Imam al-Kazim (‘a) and asked, “Which is better: to visit the tomb of Imam ‘Ali (‘a), Imam al-Husayn (‘a), or one of the other Holy Imams (‘a)?”

The Imam (‘a) answered:

يَا عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ، مَنْ زَارَ أَوْلَانَا فَقَدْ زَارَ آخِرِنَا، وَمَنْ زَارَ آخِرِنَا فَقَدْ زَارَ أَوْلَانَا، وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى أَوْلَانَا فَقَدْ تَوَلَّى آخِرِنَا، وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى آخِرِنَا فَقَدْ تَوَلَّى أَوْلَانَا، وَمَنْ قَضَى حَاجَةً لِأَحَدٍ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءِنَا فَكَأَنَّمَا قَضَاهَا لِجَمِيعِنَا. يَا عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ، أَحِبُّنَا وَأَحِبُّبْنَا فِيْنَا وَأَحِبُّبْنَا لَنَا وَتَوَلَّنَا وَتَوَلَّ مَنْ يَتَوَلَّنَا وَأَبْغَضْ مَنْ يُبْغِضُنَا. أَلَا وَإِنَّ الرَّادَّ عَلَيْنَا كَالرَّادِّ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ جَدِّنَا، وَمَنْ رَدَّ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ فَقَدْ رَدَّ عَلَى اللَّهِ. أَلَا يَا عَبْدَ الرَّحْمَنِ، مَنْ أَبْغَضَنَا فَقَدْ أَبْغَضَ مُحَمَّدًا، وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَ مُحَمَّدًا فَقَدْ أَبْغَضَ اللَّهَ جَلَّ وَعَلَا، وَمَنْ أَبْغَضَ اللَّهَ جَلَّ وَعَلَا كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَهُ النَّارَ وَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ.

O ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn Muslim, he who visits the first of us has in fact visited the last of us and he who visits the last of us has in fact visited the first of us. He who shows loyalty to the first of us has in fact shown loyalty to the last of us and he who shows loyalty to the last of us has in fact shown loyalty to the first of us. He who grants the needs of one of our loyalists, it is as if he has granted it for all of us. O ‘Abd al-Rahman, bear love for us, bear love for others on the basis of your love for us, and bear love for

others for the sake of your love for us. Show loyalty to us, show loyalty to those who are loyalists to us, and detest those who detest us. Most surely, he who objects to us is the same as those who object to our grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, and he who objects to the Messenger of Allah (S) has in fact objected to Almighty Allah. O 'Abd al-Rahman, most surely, he who detests us has in fact detested Muhammad (S), and he who detests Muhammad (S) has in fact detested the All-exalted and All-majestic Lord, and whoever detests the All-exalted and All-majestic Lord, it will be then binding on Allah to expose him to Hellfire and for him there shall be no helper. [49](#)

Moreover, many traditions have conveyed the merits of visiting the tombs of each one of the Holy Imams ('a). In the previous discussion of visiting the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S), we cited some traditions appertaining to the merits of visiting the tombs of the Holy Imams ('a) who are buried at al-Baqi' Cemetery. Let us now refer to more traditions in this respect.

Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Dawud reported Ibn Sinan to have asked Imam al-Ridha ('a) about the reward of one who visits the tomb of his father (Imam al-Kazim ('a)).

The Imam ('a) answered:

الْجَنَّةُ، فَزْرَهُ

Paradise is the reward. Therefore, you should visit him. [50](#)

According to another tradition, Zakariyya ibn Adam al-Qummi is reported to have quoted Imam al-Ridha ('a) as saying:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ نَجَّى بَغْدَادَ لِمَكَانِ قُبُورِ الْحُسَيْنِيِّينَ فِيهَا

Almighty Allah has delivered Baghdad from destruction because it contains the tombs of the descendants of Husayn ('a). [51](#)

According to a number of traditions, the visitation to Imam al-Kazim's tomb is similar in reward to visiting Imam al-Husayn's.

According to another tradition, visiting the tomb of Imam al-Kazim ('a) is similar to visiting the tombs of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imam 'Ali ('a), although the latter enjoy special merits. [52](#)

Confirming the validity of each other, many other traditions, some of which have been validly transmitted, hold great merits for visiting the tomb of Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha ('a).

For instance, Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn 'Imarah has reported on the authority of his father that Imam al-Sadiq ('a), on the authority of his fathers, quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

سُتَدْفَنُ بِضَعَّةٍ مِنِّي بِأَرْضِ خُرَاسَانَ، لَا يَزُورُهَا مُؤْمِنٌ إِلَّا أُوجِبَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَهُ الْجَنَّةَ وَحَرَّمَ جَسَدَهُ عَلَى النَّارِ

A piece of my flesh will be buried in Khurasan. No faithful believer visits him but that Almighty Allah shall be bound to award him Paradise and prohibit Hellfire from consuming his body. [53](#)

According to another tradition, Imam al-Ridha ('a) has said:

وَاللَّهِ مَا مِنَّا إِلَّا مَقْتُولٌ شَهِيدٌ

By Allah I swear, all of us will be killed as martyrs.

“Who will kill you, O son of Allah’s Messenger?” the Imam ('a) was asked.

He answered:

شَرُّ خَلْقِ اللَّهِ فِي زَمَانِي يَقْتُلُنِي بِالسَّمِّ ثُمَّ يَدْفِنُنِي فِي دَارِ مَضِيعَةٍ وَبِلَادِ غُرْبَةٍ أَلَا فَمَنْ زَارَنِي فِي غُرْبَتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَهُ أَجْرَ مِائَةِ أَلْفِ شَهِيدٍ وَمِائَةِ أَلْفِ صِدِّيقٍ وَمِائَةِ أَلْفِ حَاجٍّ وَمِعْتَمِرٍ وَمِائَةِ أَلْفِ مُجَاهِدٍ وَحَشْرٍ فِي زُمْرَتِنَا وَجُعَلَ فِي الدَّرَجَاتِ الْعُلَى مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ رَفِيقَنَا

The wickedest of all the creatures of Allah in my time will kill me with poison and will bury me in a lost place and a strange land. Verily, whoever visits me in that far away land, Allah, the Almighty and Majestic, will record for him the reward of one hundred thousand martyrs, one hundred thousand veracious ones, one hundred thousand performers of Hajj and 'Umrah, and one hundred thousand strivers (i.e. warriors for Allah's sake), and he will be resurrected with us and made our companion in the highest ranks of Paradise. [54](#)

Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful ('a), is reported to have quoted the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

سُتَدْفَنُ بِضَعَّةٍ مِنِّي بِأَرْضِ خُرَاسَانَ مَا زَارَهَا مَكْرُوبٌ إِلَّا نَفَسَ اللَّهُ كُرْبَتَهُ وَلَا مُذْنِبٌ إِلَّا غَفَرَ اللَّهُ ذُنُوبَهُ

A piece of my flesh will be buried in Khurasan. No agonized person visits him but that Allah shall certainly relieve him, and no sinful but that Allah shall certainly forgive him. [55](#)

As for the merits of visiting the tombs of the other Holy Imams ('a), Imam Hasan ibn 'Ali al-'Askari ('a) is reported, within the formula of *ziyarah* reported from to him, to have said:

قَبْرِي بِسُرٍّ مَنْ رَأَى أَمَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْجَانِبَيْنِ

My tomb shall be in Samarra'. It is safety for the people of the two banks (of the river). [56](#)

Imam 'Ali al-Hadi ('a) is reported to have taught one of his companions a supplicatory prayer, one of whose introductory paragraphs reads as follows:

وَقَدْ سَأَلْنَا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَلَّا يُخَيِّبَ مَنْ دَعَا بِهِ فِي مَشْهَدِي.

I have besought Allah, the Glorious and Majestic, not to disappoint anyone who repeats this supplication at my shrine. [57](#)

Muhammad al-Himyari is reported to have received a document from Imam al-Mahdi ('a) comprising the method of visiting him and offering salutation to him.

Apart from these unfamiliar reports, there have not been reported any other traditions holding the merits of visiting the tombs of the other Holy Imams ('a) except the general traditions to which we have referred in the previous discussions.

At any rate, the quotations of special formulas of *ziyarah* that are dedicated to these Holy Imams ('a) have been founded on the fact that visits to their tombs are too clear to require special texts, since they can be maintained by the large number of traditions that confirm, generally or specifically, recommendation of such visits. This may be the reason for the existence of special formulas of these Imams ('a) in reference books of *ziyarah*—such as Ibn Qawlawayh's *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, Shaykh al-Saduq's *al-Mazar*, and Shaykh al-Mufid's *al-Mazar*—whose compilers lived close to the ages of the Holy Imams ('a).

In plain words, the existence of numerous and detailed formulas as well as other brief formulas that are reported from the Holy Imams ('a) themselves clearly prove that this trend was established by the Holy Imams ('a) in their plans of building a virtuous community. They then taught their followers this trend and their followers, in turn, have taken it up since then. [58](#)

Epilogue

Before closing this discussion, it seems suitable to mention, yet briefly, two significant points, the details of which will be mentioned in another volume about the doctrinal aspect in the Ahl al-Bayt's role in building a virtuous community.

A) When visiting the tombs of the Holy Infallibles ('a), a visitor is bindingly required to avoid doing any act that may be understood as ascribing partners to Almighty Allah or worshipping the one buried in the visited tomb.

Owing to the seriousness of this issue, the Holy Imams ('a) have emphatically warned against such

practices. In this respect, Zurarah has reported that he asked Imam al-Baqir ('a) whether it was or was not permissible to offer a prayer among tombs.

The Imam ('a) therefore instructed:

صَلِّ بَيْنَ خِلَالِهَا وَلَا تَتَّخِذْ مِنْهَا شَيْئًا قِبْلَةً، فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ نَهَى عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَقَالَ: لَا تَتَّخِذُوا قُبُورِي قِبْلَةً وَلَا مَسْجِدًا؛ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ لَعَنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا قُبُورَ أَنْبِيَائِهِمْ مَسَاجِدَ.

*You may offer a prayer in the empty areas between tombs but, you must never take any tomb as kiblah, since the Messenger of Allah (S), warned against doing thus, “Do not take my tomb as kiblah or as place of prostration, because Almighty Allah has cursed those who had taken the tombs of their prophets as places of prostration.”*⁵⁹

According to another validly reported tradition, it has been instructively warned against circumambulating tombs. Al-Halabi has reported Imam al-Sadiq ('a) as saying:

لَا تَشْرَبُ وَأَنْتَ قَائِمٌ، وَلَا تَطْفُؤُ بِقَبْرِ، وَلَا تَبْلُ فِي مَاءٍ نَقِيعٍ، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ فَعَلَ ذَلِكَ فَأَصَابَهُ شَيْءٌ فَلَا يُلُومَنَّ إِلَّا نَفْسَهُ.

Do not drink (water) while you are standing up, do not circumambulate a tomb, and do not urinate in stagnant water. If one violates these instructions and, as a result, something bad happens to him, he should then blame none but himself. ⁶⁰

Beyond doubt, this warning against taking the tombs as kiblah or prayer-places and against circumambulating them, means that it is forbidden to make these tombs in themselves kiblah by turning ones face towards them in prayer or prostrating before them, but there is no objection when such tombs lie in the direction of the kiblah. There is also no objection in establishing a mosque or a building around tombs. As understood from the topic of the tradition and the ruling mentioned therein, this warning is intended to avoid worshipping those buried in the tombs and deem worship of Almighty Allah far above all considerations.

Confirming this fact, all formulas of *ziyarah* are focused on believing in Almighty Allah as the One and Only God. They begin with statements of deeming Him greater than all things, praising Him, and thanking Him for granting the opportunity to visit the tomb of such holy persons, which is in fact a divine bliss. They strengthen the relationship between people and their religious leaders, the Holy Prophet and Imams (peace be upon them all) because they were the best individuals to establish the prayers, give alms, enjoin the right, forbid the wrong, strive for the sake of Almighty Allah just as striving should be, and convey the messages of their Lord. In addition, these formulas include many other concepts of true monotheism.

B) The tombs of the Holy Prophet and the Imams, peace be upon them all, are visited because they

carry the bodies of these great figures who “are alive and provided sustenance from their Lord,” in the words of the Holy Qur'an. As a result, they hear the words of their visitors and respond to their greetings and salutations. A visitor is therefore required to derive from them all that he can attain when he visits them in their lifetimes, to express loyalty to them, love for them, and feelings of contact with them, to show them respect, to obey them, and to try his best to pattern his life after their examples.

A visit to their tombs must never be only a soulless, physical exercise that expresses nothing but sanctification of dead, yet great, individuals and must never be blind imitation of pagan practices that are far removed from belief in Almighty Allah and the true eternal life of these holy persons. Such visits express belief in the eternal existence of these holy persons who embody a divine content and a special relationship with Almighty Allah. Once again, visits must be in response to the divine command of showing loyalty to them, following their examples, supporting them, and showing them reverence.

According to a validly reported tradition, Imam al-Sadiq ('a) has said:

مَا مِنْ نَبِيٍّ وَلَا وَصِيِّ نَبِيٍّ يَبْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ حَتَّى يُرْفَعَ رُوحُهُ وَعَظْمُهُ وَلَحْمُهُ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ، فَإِنَّمَا تُؤْتَى مَوَاضِعُ آثَارِهِمْ لِأَنَّهُمْ يُبَلِّغُونَ مَنْ بَعِيدِ السَّلَامِ وَيَسْمَعُونَهُمْ فِي مَوَاضِعِ آثَارِهِمْ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ.

*When a prophet or a successor of a prophet dies, his soul, bones, and flesh are raised to the heavens in less than three days. However, their graves are visited because they are conveyed the greetings of those who greet them from a distance and they can hear those who visit them at the place of their graves.*⁶¹

Visiting Saints and the Imams' ('a) Descendants

Derived from the traditions that call attention to visiting the tombs of the Holy Prophet (S) and Imams ('a) and deal with the logic for and the outcomes of such visits, a general trend of visiting, building, and frequenting these tombs has been created among the milieus of the virtuous community. Moreover, the founding of many cities has been the result of a shrine or a tomb of an Imam or a descendant of an Imam therein, such as the cities of Najaf, Karbala, Qasim, Hamzah, 'Ali al-Sharqi, 'Ali al-Gharbi, and many other cities in both Iraq and Iran. Thousands of well-constructed shrines of the Holy Imams' ('a) descendants or those related to them, as well as many scholars and saints, can be seen in Iraq. In Iran, as well as other Muslim countries, thousands of shrines are established.

The most famous shrines after the shrines of the Holy Imams ('a) are the following:

- Al-'Abbas ibn 'Ali ('a) at Karbala
- Muslim ibn 'Aqil at Kufa
- Al-Qasim the son of Imam Musa al-Kazim ('a) in Iraq

- Lady Fatimah al-Ma'sumah the daughter of Imam Musa al-Kazim ('a) in the holy city of Qum⁶²
- Sayyid Ahmad the son of Imam al-Kazim ('a) at Shiraz
- Sayyid 'Abd al-'Azim al-Hasani at Ray, southern Tehran⁶³
- Lady Zaynab bint 'Ali ('a) in Syria

According to one tradition her shrine is in Damascus, but according to another tradition her tomb is in Cairo, along with a shrine of Imam al-Husayn's head.⁶⁴

These tombs are frequently visited by the individuals of the virtuous community who live in their vicinities. Usually and on certain nights and days, they gather at these tombs, which are visited by people coming from a distance and from other countries.

The practice of visiting the tombs and reciting the formulas of *ziyarah* therein, by the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), is a weekly—if not a daily exercise for those who live nearby.

Common Times of Ziyarah

Although there are no certain times for visiting the holy shrines of the Holy Prophet (S), the Holy Infallibles ('a) and their descendants, there are particular religious occasions on which these shrines are visited with special interest and in large numbers because they provide the best opportunities for people to make a visit.

For instance, the anniversaries related to the Holy Imams ('a) or their descendants—such as their birthdays, deaths, and martyrdoms—acquire a special reason for visiting the celebrated Imam ('a) or holy person.

Thursday nights and Fridays also hold a special significance because they are ritually preferred to the other nights and days and because they represent the weekend of Muslims. Traditions have mentioned great reward and merit for those who visit Imam al-Husayn's tomb on Thursday nights.

Other important days are the feast days because they are blessed holidays.

In addition, the summer holiday is also a factor of encouragement since families find a good opportunity to travel and practice the religious ritual of visiting, especially for those who live in remote regions. Accordingly, on such occasions, some holy shrines, such as those of Imam Ridha, Imam al-Husayn, Imam 'Ali,⁶⁵ and Lady Zaynab in Damascus, peace be upon them all, witness a great presence of visitors that sometimes amount to more than one million.

Comprehensive Formulas of Ziyarah

In addition to the special formulas that are exclusively addressed to a certain holy person while visiting

his tomb, there are other comprehensive formulas that can be addressed to all the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) at their holy shrines and the shrines of their descendants without exception.

These comprehensive formulas comprise excellent texts, with respect to their linguistic structure, and include lofty all-inclusive contents with respect to denotation.

The most famous of these comprehensive formulas are the following:

1. The briefest among all the other comprehensive formulas of *ziyarah*, the *ziyarah* of *aminullah*, to which a previous reference has been made, is the most highly considered and most precise in content, in the words of Shaykh al-Qummi. Although brief, this formula covers statements of greetings addressed to the visited holy person, statements of praying to Almighty Allah for oneself, and statements of confidential talk with Him.
2. Most comprehensive and most famous, the Major Comprehensive Formula of *Ziyarah (al-Ziyarah al-Jami’ah al-Kabirah)* is reported from Imam ‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi (‘a). Describing this formula, ‘Allamah al-Majlisi states that it is the most accurate with respect to its chain of authority, the most inclusive, the most eloquent with respect to its expression, the most persuasive with respect to its meaning, and the highest in standing.[66](#)

A number of scholars have undertaken the mission of explaining, elucidating, and construing the paragraphs of this formula in general and the sections that give a somewhat false impression in particular, trying their best to decode such mysterious meanings in order to close the door in the face of any possible objection or criticism. Amongst such scholars are ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, the father of the compiler of *Bihar al-Anwar*, Sayyid Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Karim al-Tabataba’i, known as Sayyid al-Borojerdi, Sayyid ‘Abdullah Shabbar, and many others.

3. The comprehensive formula of *ziyarah* known as *al-Ziyarah al-Jami’ah li-A’immat al-Mu’minin* (the Comprehensive Formula of *Ziyarah* of the Imams of the Faithful) has been reported by Sayyid Ibn Tawus from the Holy Imams (‘a), in *Misbah al-Za’ir*. He mentions certain etiquettes in this formula, practiced during the journey of visit. Coming in the second place after the abovementioned Major Comprehensive Formula, this formula includes highly considered doctrinal, social, and political imports. It has been also reported by ‘Allamah al-Majlisi as the fifth formula.[67](#)

4. Ibn Qawlawayh, in *Kamil al-Ziyarat*, Shaykh al-Kulayni, in *al-Kafi*, and Shaykh al-Saduq, in *‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha* and *man-la-yahdhuruhu’l-faqih*, have reported that Imam al-Ridha (‘a), when asked about presenting oneself at the shrine of Imam Musa al-Kazim (‘a), said:

“You may pray in the mosques surrounding his tomb. It is however acceptable to say the following (form of *Ziyarah*) at all the shrines of the Imams (‘a):

...السَّلَامُ عَلَى أَوْلِيَاءِ اللَّهِ وَأَصْفِيَاءِهِ السَّلَامُ عَلَى أُمَّتِ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّائِهِ

Peace be upon Allah's friends and well-chosen ones! Peace be upon Allah's trustees and beloved ones...

This formula of ziyarah is acceptable at all visits. You may then invoke Almighty Allah's blessings upon the Holy Prophet and his Household, peace be upon them all, by mentioning their names respectively. You may also imprecate His curse on their enemies and then pray to Him for any thing you wish for yourself as well as for the believing men and women." This formula of ziyarah is brief and all-inclusive. [68](#)

Amounting to fourteen, 'Allamah al-Majlisi has referred to another set of comprehensive formulas most of which have not been ascribed to any of the Holy Imams ('a); therefore, there is the probability that these formulas have been composed by ordinary people.

Within the supplications on the Day of 'Arafat, Shaykh al-Qummi has mentioned another comprehensive formula of ziyarah ascribed by Sayyid Ibn Tawus to Imam al-Sadiq ('a). However, this formula is lengthy and lacks confirmation. [69](#)

In addition to these comprehensive formulas, the compilers of books regarding ziyarah have mentioned other formulas dedicated to the days of the week. They have therefore dedicated each day to one or more of the Holy Infallibles. Saturday is dedicated to the Holy Prophet, Sunday to Imam 'Ali ibn Abi-Talib, Monday to Imams Hasan and Husayn, Tuesday to Imams Zayn al-'Abidin, al-Baqir, and al-Sadiq, Wednesday to Imams al-Kazim, al-Ridha, al-Jawad, and al-Hadi, Thursday to Imam al-'Askari, and Friday to Imam al-Mahdi, **peace be upon them all**. The compiler of *Misbah al-Za'ir* has added Lady Fatimah al-Zahra¹ to the Holy Prophet, peace be upon them both, by dedicating an invocation of blessings upon her.

The author of *Bihar al-Anwar* has also mentioned a tradition corroborating this division of days along with formulas of ziyarah that are dedicated to each Imam ('a) on his day and formulas of invocations of blessings upon each one of them. [70](#)

- [1.](#) – Of course, meetings that are held for commemorating Imam Husayn ('a) can never be substitutes for the Friday Prayers that include discourses and performance of prayer. Yet, they can represent an extension of the ritual content of the Friday Prayer in which we can find the root and the Islamic line of these rituals.
- [2.](#) – In the coming chapter about the ritual of ziyarah, we will refer independently to the formulas of ziyarah of Imam Husayn ('a) as well as the other Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that are recommended at certain times from both near and afar.
- [3.](#) – Unfortunately, such activities, sometimes performed by individuals of the vulgar or non-religious class of the community in violation of good public sense, are basically disallowed and are in whole or in part too far from the goals intended by the Holy Imams ('a). They believe that such activities inappropriately express sentiments and emotions (such as the practice known as tatbir which entails striking the head with sharp instruments so as to make blood flow as an expression of mourning for Imam al-Husayn ('a) whose blood was shed on such days).

The scholars, the jurisprudentially mindful people, and the well-aware segment of the virtuous community do not participate in such incompatible activities; rather, they deny them through their statements, words, and lastly in their hearts when they cannot find anybody to hear when they anticipate sedition, discrepancy, or dispute which make the harm greater than the

benefit.

Because of certain political circumstances through which these rituals passed when the tyrannical and unjust rulers worked towards annihilating them to uproot them from their origin, some ordinary people acted fanatically regarding these rituals in the same way they did towards Imam Husayn ('a). At the same time, some scholars kept silent or even permitted the practice of these rituals for the endurance of the commemoration. This was because the public represented the popular power that stood against the tyrannical rulers.

In addition, scholars could not find any point of evidence proving the forbiddance or the illegality of practicing such rituals, so they deemed them legal according to the general jurisprudential rule of the legality of all things unless there is an evident proof demonstrating the opposite. Furthermore, under such circumstances, the practice of these rituals achieved an advantage or repelled a disadvantage not to mention the fact that they were the best way to gather and attract the attention of the masses towards commemorating Imam Husayn's martyrdom.

However, the correct stand, towards the practice of such rituals, taken by Ayatollah Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim, Imam Khumayni, and his successor, Ayatollah Sayyid 'Ali al-Khamana'i, in addition to many Shi'ite master scholars, was that the disadvantage caused by such rituals to the virtuous community has become greater than their advantage nowadays. They deform the portrait of the virtuous community and act as an obstacle between the guidance of the Holy Imams ('a) and the genuine understanding of Islam on the one hand, and the general Muslim masses on the other.

Besides, the practice of these rituals arouses a spurious issue that is forbidden by Islam, because some people consider the practice of these rituals to be a devotional act intended to seek nearness to Almighty Allah, while there is no authoritative evidence (i.e. mentioned in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah) proving this either particularly or generally. Such practices fall under a general topic, and all its parts are considered acts of worship. However, Almighty Allah best knows the truth.

[4.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:32, H. 2.

[5.](#) – The month of Sha'ban is considered to be the month of birthdays and glad occasions.

[6.](#) – In the past, processions were held in the city of Samarra' on the occasion of Imam al-Hadi's martyrdom and people from various regions of Iraq would participate. However, the ruling authorities of the tyrannical regime of the Baathists, out of their antagonistic attitude towards the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and their followers, suppressed and then banned the activities of that day.

[7.](#) – It is well-known that Imam Hasan ('a) was poisoned to death; he is therefore considered martyred. [Translator]

[8.](#) – The Islamic Republic of Iran has been interested in both of these dates and gathered them in one week, giving it the name of the Muslim Unity Week, because the Holy Prophet (S) is the best representation of unity among Muslims. More details about this topic will be cited in the coming chapter about the distinctive days.

[9.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:116, H. 1.

[10.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:117, H. 5.

[11.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:117, H. 8.

[12.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:120, H. 22.

The same chain of authority of this tradition is mentioned for traditions No. 23, 24, and 25 of the same reference book.

[13.](#) – Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 311–312 as quoted from Shaykh al-Kaf'ami's al-Balad al-Amin.

[14.](#) – All-inclusive and relatively concise, the book of Mafatih al-Jinan can be considered the best and most famous book ever written in the field of rituals and etiquettes of ziyarah and supplicatory prayers. It was compiled by the late master researcher and traditionist, Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, recently in Farsi, based upon a variety of the most reliable reference books. Up to now, millions of copies of this book have been published, being read by all milieus in all countries. Moreover, the book has been translated into Arabic and Urdu, as well as many other languages. For thorough acquaintance with the details of all issues, etiquettes, and best times of ziyarah and supplications, it is highly advised to refer to this book.

[15.](#) – About the etiquettes of traveling and the etiquettes of ziyarah, refer to Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 302–306 and 306–311 respectively, where these etiquettes are mentioned briefly.

- [16.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 14:324, H. 1.
- [17.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:139, H. 2.
- [18.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:139, H. 3.
- [19.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:140, H. 7.
- [20.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:144, H. 16.
- [21.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:139, H. 4.
- [22.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:145, H. 31.
- [23.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:145, H. 36.
- [24.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:145, H. 34.
- [25.](#) – According to some traditions, presenting oneself in the holy shrine of Imam Husayn ('a) is obligatory upon those who have the ability to do so. Although we cannot name the scholars who have issued this verdict, it is probable that such obligation has been decided according to the political circumstances of a certain age which required the issuance of such a verdict, or it has been determined in order to confirm the obligation of love for, loyalty to, and connection with the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). At any rate, such a verdict can, in the least, act as an indication of the extremely high recommendation and desirableness of this act, just like the high recommendation of participating in congregational prayers, although not obligatory, by the Holy Prophet (S) who threatened setting on fire the house of those who would abstain from participating in them.
- [26.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:118, H. 10.
- [27.](#) – Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 350.
- Citing it with the general forms of ziyarah to the tomb of Imam 'Ali ('a), the author of the aforesaid book added the following words of Imam al-Baqir ('a):
- مَا قَالَ هَذَا الْكَلَامَ وَلَا دَعَا بِهِ أَحَدٌ مِنْ شِيعَتِنَا عِنْدَ قَبْرِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَوْ عِنْدَ قَبْرِ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْأَئِمَّةِ إِلَّا رَفَعَ اللَّهُ دُعَاءَهُ فِي دُرُجٍ مِنْ نُورٍ وَطُبِعَ عَلَيْهِ بِخَاتَمِ مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَكَانَ مَحْفُوظًا حَتَّى يُسَلَّمَ إِلَى قَائِمِ آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ، فَيَلْقَى صَاحِبَهُ بِالْبُشْرَى وَالتَّحِيَّةِ وَالتَّكْرَامَةِ. Indeed, any one of our adherents (Shi'ah) who pronounces these words at the tomb of Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) or the tomb of one of the Holy Imams ('a) shall certainly have his prayer lifted up on a ladder of light, carrying the seal of the Holy Prophet's ring. It shall be kept so until it will be delivered to the Rising Imam of Muhammad's Household, Imam al-Mahdi ('a), who will receive the one who offered the prayer with good tidings, greetings, and honor.
- [28.](#) – The formulas of ziyarah dedicated to certain times can be viewed in the book of Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 438–469. The compiler of this book has arranged them in chronological order beginning with the ziyarah on the first of Rajab. As for 'Allamah al-Majlisi, in Bihar al-Anwar Vol. 98, he has dedicated an extensive chapter to these formulas mentioning all narrations pertaining to visiting the tomb of Imam Husayn ('a).
- [29.](#) – Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 422–430.
- [30.](#) – Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 411–422; 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:134–138.
- [31.](#) – Visiting Imam Husayn's tomb has preceded visiting Imam 'Ali's, although visiting the tombs of all the Holy Imams ('a) is in itself equal in merit with the virtue of the visited Imam ('a). However, more emphasis has been laid in traditions on visiting Imam Husayn's tomb than any other. This may be because of the nature of Imam Husayn's tragedy as well as the political and spiritual circumstances that have encompassed visiting his tomb. On account of such highly emphasized instruction, the individuals of the virtuous community have paid more interest to visiting Imam Husayn's tomb. Another reason may be the relatively many formulas of ziyarah that have been reported by the Holy Imams ('a) to be addressed to Imam Husayn ('a).
- [32.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:257, H. 3.
- [33.](#) – To recognize the right of Imam 'Ali ('a) is to acknowledge his divinely commissioned leadership, to carry out the obligation of obedience to him and to accept him as the true successor of the Holy Prophet (S). [Translator]
- [34.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:257, H. 1.
- [35.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:259, H. 7.
- [36.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:260, H. 10.
- [37.](#) – Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 339–361.
- [38.](#) – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:263–354.

39. – Hadith al-Ghadir reads,

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

أَلَا مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَعَلَيْ مَوْلَاهُ، اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ وَعَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ، وَأَنْصُرْ مَنْ نَصَرَهُ وَأَخْذُلْ مَنْ خَذَلَهُ وَأَدِرِ الْحَقَّ مَعَهُ حَيْثُمَا دَارَ. Behold! 'Ali is (now) the master of every one who regards me as his master. O Allah, (please) support whoever supports 'Ali; and be the enemy of whoever incurs the hostility of 'Ali; and aid whoever aids 'Ali; and forsake whoever forsakes 'Ali; and make truth and rightness follow 'Ali wherever he goes.

40. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:359, H. 6.

41. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:358, H. 2.

42. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:358; Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, p. 374.

43. – It is historically known that the beginning of the Holy Prophet's Divine Mission is inseparably attached to the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, which undoubtedly was in the month of Ramadhan and, more specifically, on the Night of Qadr, as is maintained by the following two verses of the Holy Qur'an:

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ (185: 2) The month of Ramadhan is that in which the Qur'an was revealed. (شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ 185) Surely, We revealed it on the grand night. (97: 1) Therefore, a question is always asked: On which date did the Holy Prophet's Divine Mission start? However, to answer we say that the public revelation of the first part of the Holy Qur'an was on the twenty-seventh of Rajab, while its revelation as a whole to the Holy Prophet was in the month of Ramadhan and on the Night of Qadr. It is well-known that there were two kinds of revelations of the Holy Qur'an:

The first kind was the gradual, progressive (i.e. partial) revelation, which lasted for a period of twenty-three years beginning with the Holy Prophet's Divine Appointment up to His departure from the material world.

The other kind was the entire revelation that took place in the month of Ramadhan and on the Night of Qadr, which is called the stage of perfection. Referring to this division in the revelation of the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah has said:

(كِتَابٌ أُحْكِمَتْ آيَاتُهُ ثُمَّ فُصِّلَتْ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ خَبِيرٍ 1) This is a Scripture the revelations whereof are perfected and then expounded. It comes from One Wise, Informed. (11: 1) However, Almighty Allah knows best.

44. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:383.

Shaykh al-Qummi has put forth a question as to why these two formulas of ziyarah that are dedicated to the anniversaries of the Holy Prophet's birthday and his Divine Mission are exclusively addressed to Imam 'Ali ('a) rather than the Holy Prophet (S) himself. He then answers that because Imam 'Ali ('a) is of the same self as the Holy Prophet (S), to visit him should be the same as visiting the Holy Prophet (S). Furthermore, this dedication to Imam 'Ali ('a) has been made to stress the precedence of Imam 'Ali ('a) over all the other companions of the Holy Prophet (S). Nevertheless, he has been exposed to impartiality in this regard. Shaykh al-Qummi then cites two traditions confirming this fact. See Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 378–379.

45. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:355–379.

Shaykh al-Qummi has noted that the words of this formula of ziyarah are greatly similar to the words of the one dedicated to the anniversary of the Divine Mission.

46. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:145, H. 31.

47. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 97:117, H. 5.

48. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 100:119, H. 18.

49. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 100:121, H. 26.

50. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:2, H. 5.

51. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:2, H. 6.

52. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:4, H. 19.

53. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:31, H. 1.

54. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:32, H. 2.

55. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:33, H. 10.

56. – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 10:448, H. 2.

57. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 50:127, H. 5.

58. – Such formulas of ziyarah can be found in Mafatih al-Jinan and volumes 100–102 of Bihar al-Anwar.

59. – 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 100:128, H. 7, as quoted from Shaykh al-Saduq's 'Ilal al-Shara'i'.

[60.](#) – ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 100:126, H. 3.

Having cited this tradition, the author of the book assumed that circumambulating a tomb might have meant excreting on a tomb, because the Arabic word ‘taf’ may be interpreted as circumambulation or excretion. He then cites points of evidence inferred from the Arabic language and from other traditions to prove his claim. Actually, this assumption is closer to reality than the earlier because it suits the other parts of the tradition all of which concentrate on anticipation of a physical contaminant. However, Almighty Allah knows best.

[61.](#) – ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 100:130, H. 13, as quoted from Ibn Qawlawayh’s Kamil al-Ziyarat.

Apart from the meaning of raising to the heavens mentioned in this tradition and elaborately discussed by ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, the most important point in this tradition is the last paragraph on which the Holy Imams (‘a) wanted to shed light.

[62.](#) – About this great lady, some traditions hold that Imam al-Ridha (‘a) has recommended visiting her tomb in Qum, saying:

مَنْ زَارَهَا فَلَهُ الْجَنَّةُ. Paradise is the reward of one who visits her. This tradition has been reported in the books of Kamil al-Ziyarat by Ibn Qawlawayh and Thawab al-A‘mal and ‘Uyun Akhbar al-Ridha by Shaykh al-Saduq. See ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:265, H. 1.

[63.](#) – Some traditions, yet incompletely transmitted, hold that Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (‘a) has likened a visit to the tomb of ‘Abd al-‘Azim al-Hasani to a visit of Imam Husayn’s tomb. See ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:268.

[64.](#) – Historians disagree about the place of Lady Zaynab’s tomb. Some say that she was buried in the outskirts of Damascus, others in Cairo, Egypt, and others in other places. However, the first two burial places are familiarly known by the followers and devotees of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) as well as by Muslims in general. About the burial place of Imam Husayn’s head there is also disagreement. Some believe that the head was buried in Damascus while others believe it to have been carried to Cairo and buried there. However, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) generally believe that the head was buried in Karbala with the Imam’s body by the captives when they returned from Kufah.

[65.](#) – Under certain circumstances, the number of visitors to some holy shrines decreases relatively because of the political conditions of the country in which these shrines exist. For instance, there was a remarkable decrease in the number of the visitors to the holy shrines in Iraq because the criminal regime of the Baathists were hostile towards the visitors, banned such visits, and exerted pressure on them and on all people generally. In Iran during the days of the eight-year Iraq-Iran war imposed on Iran and due to the blockade exercised on the Islamic Republic of Iran by the governments of the countries where followers of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) live, the number of visitors to the holy shrines decreased. However, it can be obviously observed that the number has began to incredibly increase these days, as reports have it that five million persons presented themselves in the holy shrine of Imam Ridha (‘a) to participate in the pilgrimage of Arba’in last year, and three million for the pilgrimage on al-Ghadir. On other occasions, several million present themselves at this holy shrine to celebrate other anniversaries.

[66.](#) – ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:144. Some details about this formula of ziyarah have been mentioned in the pages 127–144 of this reference book. It has been also mentioned in Shaykh ‘Abbas al-Qummi’s Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 544.

[67.](#) – ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:162; Shaykh ‘Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, Appendix, pp. 577.

[68.](#) – ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:126; Shaykh ‘Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 543.

[69.](#) – ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:126–209; Shaykh ‘Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 552.

[70.](#) – ‘Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 102:210–230.

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