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The Ziyara

I. The Legality Of The Ziyara

Al-Shaykh Taqi al-Din Ahmad b. 'Abd al-Halim, better known as Ibn Taymiyya (661-728) held the view that pilgrimage (*ziyara*) to the tomb of the Prophet was forbidden, let alone pilgrimage to other tombs. He considered that travelling to make a pilgrimage to tombs where the performance of prayer was necessary, was forbidden. For this view of his, he relied upon Traditions, which do not substantiate his requirement, arguments based on the application of discretion in Islamic law, which have no value in legal deduction, and dangers which, he claimed, were consequences of pilgrimages to tombs which do not exist.

On the other hand, the jurists and Traditionists from all the Islamic schools of law reject his views and confirm the legality of making a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet and others with much evidence taken from the Qur'an and *Sunna*, the consensus of the Muslims and the evidence of reason.

Al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, in his book, *Kashf al-Irtiyab fi Atba' Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab* has reported from al-Samhudi al-Shafi'i in his book called *Wafa' al-Wafa' bi Akbar Dar al-Mustafa*, the attitude of the leaders of the four schools of law to this problem. He says: [1](#)

“As for what is reported from the leaders of the four schools of law, in *Wafa' al-Wafa'* after mentioning the differences among the early Muslims about whether it was best to begin at Mecca or Medina, he records that Abu Hanifa said that it was best to begin at Mecca, although it was permissible to begin at Medina. Then one would come close to the tomb of the Apostle of God and stand between the tomb and the qibla (or direction of prayer)....

As for the report that Malik disliked men saying, 'We made a pilgrimage,' to the tomb of the Prophet, assuming that this is true, it should be interpreted as a dislike of using this expression for reasons which he mentioned but we should take too long to report, not because of a dislike of the principle of such a pilgrimage (*ziyara*). There are, however, scholars, like al-Subki and Ibn Rushd, who, according to *Wafa' al-Wafa'*, dispute with him over the dislike of this expression.

Al-Samhudi had mentioned in *Wafa' al-Wafa'* statements by Shafi'ites concerning the recommended nature of making a pilgrimage to the Prophet's tomb. Then he added that the Hanafites maintained the pilgrimage to the Prophet's tomb was the best of the recommended practices, even close to being treated at the level of an obligatory practice. He went on to say that, in the same way, the Malikites and Hanbalites stipulated it and al-Subki has explained their report in his book on pilgrimage (*ziyara*)”

The permissibility of making a pilgrimage to the graves of righteous men, and even of those who are merely Muslims, of calling for peace to be with them, of praying for them and of bringing reward to them by recitation of the holy Qur'an and by good actions—this permissibility is confirmed by the *Sunna* which is supported by the definitive practice associated with the time of the Prophet.

It is well known that the Imamite Shi'a hold the view that it is a recommended practice to make pilgrimages to the tomb of the Prophet, of the Imams of the Holy Family and of righteous men, to worship God at them by performing the *salat*, praying, reciting the holy Qur'an, calling for peace to be with them and praying for them. Furthermore, they consider that that is one of the rituals of God and it is an act of piety of the heart. According to them, it was established by the definitive *Sunna* and the definitive consensus. There is no dispute about that among them.

It is certain that the practice of the Muslims from the time of the Apostle of God throws light on the legal aspect of the problem and reveals, at least, the permissibility of making pilgrimages to tombs, even if it does not reveal its legal predominance.

II. The History Of The Ziyara Before Al-Husayn

Al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin has reported:

“It has been established that the Prophet used to visit the cemetery of al-Baqi' and the martyrs of Uhud. Ibn Maja has related with his chain of authorities that the Prophet said: 'Visit graves, for they will remind you of the Hereafter.'² He also reported with his chain of authorities that A'isha said that the Prophet allowed the visit to graves... He also reported with his chain of authorities that the Prophet said: 'I used to forbid you to visit graves but now visit them, for they will make you abstain from the world and remind you of the Hereafter.'³ Muslim has reported the first part of the above tradition up to the words 'but now visit them.'³ Al-Nasa'i has reported it in a slightly variant form: 'I forbade you from visiting graves but now let whoever wants to visit them, do so.'

The Prophet visited the grave of his mother. Muslim has reported in his *Sahih* as has Ibn Maja and al-Nasa'i, with their chain of authorities, that Abu Hurayra said: 'The Prophet visited the grave of his mother. He wept and it made those around him weep.'⁴

Muslim has reported that whenever the Prophet used to spend the night with A'isha he used to go out, last thing at night, to the cemetery of al-Baqi' and say: 'Peace be with you, abode of people who believe.

What you were promised has come to you.'

He taught 'A'isha when she asked him: 'How should I address them, Apostle of God?' He said, 'Say: Peace be with the people of the place who are believers and Muslims.' This tradition is reported by Muslim.

Ibn Abi Shayba has reported from Abu Ja'far (i.e., Imam Muhammad al-Baqir) in *Wafa' al-Wafa'* that Fatima, daughter of the Apostle of God, used to visit the grave of Hamza. She repaired it and improved it, and she marked it with a stone.⁵

It is reported on the authority of the former (i.e. Muhammad al-Baqir) that Fatima used to visit the graves of the martyrs every two or three days until she died.

Al-Hakim has reported on the authority of 'Ali' that Fatima used to visit the grave of her uncle, Hamza, every week. There she would perform the salat, pray and weep.

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When 'Umar made peace with Jerusalem, during the conquest of Syria, and Ka'b al-Ahbar came to him and submitted to Islam, 'Umar was delighted with his acceptance of Islam and said to him: 'Would you come with me to Medina, visit the Prophet's tomb and enjoy seeing it?' 'Yes,' he replied. When he returned to Medina from the conquest of Syria, the first thing he did was to go to the mosque and pray for peace to be with the Apostle of God.

In *Wafa' al-Wafa'* of al-Samhudi 'Abd al-Razzaq reponed with his sound chain of authorities that when Ibn 'Umar came back from a journey, he would go to the Prophet's tomb and say: 'Peace be with you, O Apostle of God, peace be with you, O Abu Bakr, and peace be with you, O my father.'

In the *Muwatta'* in the recension of Yahya ibn Yahya, it is reported that Ibn 'Umar used to stand at the tomb of the Prophet and he would pray for blessings and peace to be with the Prophet and he would pray for peace to be with Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

It is also reported from Ibn 'Awn that a man asked Nafi' whether ibn 'Umar used to pray for peace at the tomb. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I have seen him a hundred times, or more than a hundred times. He would come to the tomb and stand before it. Then he would say: Peace be with the Prophet, peace be with Abu Bakr and peace be with my father.'

In the *Musnad* of Abu Hanifa it is reported that Ibn 'Umar said: 'It is from the Sunna that you should come to the tomb of the Prophet from the direction of the prayer, or qibla. You should put the direction of prayer, or qibla, at your back and you should face the tomb. Then you should say: Peace be with you, O Prophet, and the mercy and blessings of God.'

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There is a detailed report from 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz that whenever he used to send a messenger (to Medina) from Syria, he used to say: 'Pray for peace to be with the Apostle of God on my behalf.' That was in the early period of the generation of the followers of the Companions. Among those who have mentioned that about him is Abu Bakr ibn 'Asim al-Nabil. He said, in his *Manasik*, that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz used to send a messenger straight from Syria to Medina to recite the prayer for peace to be with the Prophet. Then he would return.

As for what is reported of the action of the rest of the Muslims, in *Wafa' al-Wafa'*,⁶ it is reported that historians and Traditionists have mentioned that Ziyad ibn Abihi (i.e. son of his father) wanted to make the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca. His brother Abu Bakra came to him but he would not speak to Ziyad directly.

So Ziyad took his son and sat him in Abu Bakra's lap so that he might speak to the son directly and hear Ziyad. Abu Bakra said: 'Your father has done this and he has done that. Now he wants to go on the pilgrimage (*hajj*) while Umm Habiba, the wife of the Prophet is in Medina. If she permits him to see her, what a great disaster and treachery to the Apostle of God by her it would be! If she remains in seclusion from him what a great proof against him it would be!' 'You will not let your brother have your advice,' said Ziyad.

According to what al-Baladhuri reported, Ziyad then abandoned the idea of going on the pilgrimage. Others reported that he made the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca but he did not make a pilgrimage (*ziyara*) (to the Prophet's tomb at Medina) because of the words of Abu Bakra. Al-Subki has commented: 'Taking in every consideration, the story gives evidence for the fact that the pilgrimage (*ziyara*) (to the Prophet's tomb at Medina) during the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca was well-known at that time.

Otherwise, it would have been possible for him to make the pilgrimage (*hajj*) without going by way of Medina. Indeed it would have been nearer for him because he was in Iraq. Yet going to Medina was in their eyes a matter which could not be abandoned."⁷

The passage which we have quoted clearly reveals the legality of the pilgrimage (*ziyara*). Depending on this legality Muslims, both male and female, in every age, have carried out this practice as being one of the rituals of God. None of their jurists, Traditionists or preachers have denounced them for that. Rather they have urged them to do it.

The denunciation of this practice is only known to have come from Ibn Taymiyya and Shaykh Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahhab in more recent times. The Muslim scholars have met this juristic attitude to the problem with amazement and disapproval the direction the invalidity of the view forbidding it, with evidence from the Qur'an, the *Sunna*, the consensus and the evidence of reason.

Therefore, when the Imams of the Holy Family directed their Shi'a to make pilgrimages to al-Husayn, they were only applying a common legal practice to a particular destination, namely al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.

The Imams of the Holy Family have made public their great concern to direct Muslims, in general, and the Shi'a, in particular, to make pilgrimages to the Prophet, to the Imams of the Holy Family and to the men and women who have stood the test in the history of Islam, by fighting against his enemies, and by sticking fast to his laws, as a means of attaining educational and religious objectives. We will treat these in detail in the ensuing section of our study.

III. The Ziyara To Al-Husayn: Its Objectives And Aims

Perhaps, it may be that one of the things which distinguishes the Imamite Shi'a from many other Muslims is their extraordinary concern to make pilgrimages to saintly men and women in the history of Islam, and their intense eagerness to practise this continually.

The foremost of these saintly men is the Apostle of God and, after him, the Imams of the Holy Family. The foremost of the latter is Imam al-Husayn ibn 'Ali. Added to these are some women who enjoy a special status in the history of Islam, in general, or the history of Shi'ism, in particular. At the head of these women comes the Lady Fatima the Fair. Then there is the Lady Zaynab, daughter of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. After her, there are the women who have participated, in one way or another, in the history of Islam in general, or the history of Shi'ism in particular.

There is a widespread belief in the minds of the people, even in the minds of a great majority of the Shi'a themselves, in recent times, that the motives for making these pilgrimages (*ziyara*) are connected with the veneration of the persons to whom the pilgrimages are made, because they are noble in the eyes of God, and therefore the pilgrimages are connected with seeking intercession by them with God, and with seeking blessing from God through their mediation.

In short, the widespread belief is that these motives bring the persons to whom pilgrimages are made and the person who makes a pilgrimage to them into contact; and that this is everything.

This, however, is a great mistake.

The mistake of non-Shi'ites in the understanding of this Shi'ite practice is a result of judging it from the outside without understanding it from the inside, and without understanding its processes in the political and social ideas of the Imams of the Holy Family. The latter have made the pilgrimage (*ziyara*) an established practice in Islamic legal tradition and something the Muslim practises continually as a political, social and cultural institution which has been established at the heart of the Shi'ite cultural cosmology.

The mistake of the Shi'a, themselves in their practice of such pilgrimages arises out of their failure to understand it as an institution which represents, in the history of Islam, the revolutionary core which has set itself up as a permanent witness and critic of the existing government and its methods of dealing with the *umma*.

When the inner structure of the Shi'ite man begins to crack and abandon its basic virtue, his understanding of the practices, which were formed to nourish his soul and mind, changes. Then he changes them into practices which paralyse him and justify his defeatist position. This is what has happened to the Muslim individual in general, but here we are studying the special position of Shi'ite man.

The Imams of the Holy Family directed their Shi'a to make visitations to the Prophet and the Imams who preceded them in the service of a great aim. This was to keep the relationship between living Islam and the Shi'ite man throbbing with life lest Islam become transformed in his mind into mere ritualistic practices and dead jurisprudence.

Lest the formal practical patterns of Islam, with which the Muslim lives in his daily life at the level of government and society, should become merely repetitive patterns which have been accepted from the past. Whereas they should be kept alive in his mind as the sound, healthy and pure patterns of Islam, and they should be kept alive in his mind as the faithful trusted practices of Islam.

When the Imams of the Holy Family made the *ziyara* into an intellectual, political and social institution, they intended to put Shi'ite man in living and direct contact with the sources of his Islam in thought and ideology, in application and practice.

The texts concerning the *ziyara* to the Apostle of God bring light to bear on the efforts of the Apostle of God in the call to Islam, in its spreading and in its consolidation, in addition to the expressions of praise, honour and respect for the person of the Apostle which they contain.

The texts concerning the *ziyara* to the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, include an exposition of his intellectual and practical efforts in the cause of Islam.

The same is the case with regard to the texts concerning pilgrimages to the other Imams of the Holy Family. Each of the approved pilgrimages includes a commitment before God which the Shi'ite man makes, particularly, with the person to whom the pilgrimage is made and, generally, with the Apostle and the Imams of the Holy Family, that he will remain faithful to their covenant, their faith and their practice. Here, we will give some examples of that:

*O God, make me, in this state that I am in, one of those who will receive Your blessing, mercy and forgiveness. O God, make my life the life of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, and my death the death of Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, may the blessings of God be with him and his family.*⁸

*O God, I testify before You to the authority (wilaya) of those to whom You and Your Apostle have dedicated it. I testify to my renunciation of those whom You and Your Apostle have renounced.*⁹

...I testify before God, the Blessed and Exalted—and He is indeed a sufficient witness. I testify before

You that I believe in You and will follow You in my very nature, in the legal requirements of my religion, in the impressions made by my actions and in my final destiny and resting place. [10](#)

O God, I testify before You and before those of Your angels who are present that I believe in them and reject those who fight against them. O God, make what I say with my tongue be a reality in my heart and a religious precept in my actions. [11](#)

There is much more of this material.

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Among (the prayers of) these pilgrimages which are recited at the shrines or places of pilgrimages of the Holy Family, those of al-Husayn ibn 'Ali are the most numerous and the richest in intellectual and kinetic content.

The concern of the Imams of the Holy Family has been constantly and consistently intent on bringing light to bear on the revolution of al-Husayn. It has made the memory of al-Husayn a firm and fiercely living presence in the public mind. It has put pilgrimages to al-Husayn at the head of religious festivals for the Shi'a in every part of the world.

The reason for that is that the revolution of Imam al-Husayn was the greatest event in tragedy and nobility in the history of the Shi'a. Even though Imam 'Ali waged many wars to correct the course of Islam, he waged them from a position of authority. On the other hand, Imam al-Husayn had embarked on his war of self sacrifice from outside authority, even against authority, and without worldly expectations.

It is because of this that his revolution enjoys a greater power of revival and a greater ability to influence and to outline the sacrificial example for Shi'ite man to face the difficulties of his existence under oppressive governments. From another angle, it is an exemplary, intensely stimulating and practical application of the changing of an intellectual attitude into a course of action and activity in daily life.

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It is, then, an absolute certainty that, in order for the pilgrimage to accomplish its influence, it must arise out of an awareness of the role played in Islam by the person to whom it is made, and of his attitude towards the struggle for the sake of Islam. This state of awareness is the preoccupation of many of the texts which have reported that the character of a pilgrim to al-Husayn is of 'one who knows his right.'[12](#)

The knowledge of the right of the person, to whom the pilgrimage is made, means an awareness of the role which he carried out in his life, of his central position in the leadership of the movement of Islam in the two fields of legislation and application. Whenever a pilgrimage is carried out in the light of this awareness, it will strengthen the contact with dynamic and effective Islam in the heart and mind of the pilgrim because it will bring him into contact with dynamic and effective examples in the history of Islam.

Making a pilgrimage to the Apostle and the Imams of the Holy Family is not an idle pastime, nor is it a worldly activity. It is a spiritual act of worship. It is an action which is aimed at bringing oneself closer to God. Because it is an act of worship, the texts, which call for the practice of it and devotion to it, contain promises of reward from God, of forgiveness of sins and errors and of the granting of blessings.

This is a matter which can be understood when such a pilgrimage is put in the correct framework which we have elucidated, and when it does not become a mere act of celebration and veneration which a living man carries out to honour a dead man. When a Shi'ite carries out a pilgrimage, he is renewing his contact with Islam as a whole and he is promising God that he will hold fast to it, guard it and apply it in his life. It is an action which entitles him to reward and blessings from God in accordance with the principles of Islam.

From what we have mentioned the magnitude and great effect of this institution on the formation of Shi'ite man will be clear as well as the vast potentialities which abound in it and the extent of its ability to transform psychologically Shi'ite man from his position of surrender to a dynamic and active position when he regains the true concept of the pilgrimage and puts it into practice in the essential spirituality from which it sprung forth.

It also makes clear the extent of the burden of error into which Shi'ite man has fallen, as well as some of his spiritual leaders, when he conceives of the pilgrimage as being only a form of honour and veneration of a certain person and neglects the numerous aspects of the educational objectives which it aims at.

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The field of study of the pilgrimage is very broad as must now be clear. It includes the pilgrimages to the Prophet, all the Imams of the Holy Family and other outstanding men and women in the history of Islam, generally, and in the history of Shi'ism, in particular.

We are, however, compelled to limit our present work to the specific field of our study, namely the pilgrimages made to Imam al-Husayn as a manifestation of the revolution of al-Husayn in popular consciousness.

This field, in terms of the material which can be studied, is, as we mentioned above, the fullest of the aspects of pilgrimage and the richest of them in ideas and emotions. This arises out of the special position which al-Husayn and his revolution enjoy in the Shi'ite mind in terms of his important position in the continuous movement of correction which began with 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and has, in no way, finished.

IV. The Ziyara In The Legal Texts

Hundreds of sound Traditions have been reported from the Imams of the Holy Family, in many of which there is the call to make pilgrimages to al-Husayn and that this should be done at all times, as well as on specific days, and from near and from far.

Similarly texts have been reported from them, which give the pattern of the pilgrimages which are made to al-Husayn at specific times and on every other occasion.

In the same way the Imams of the Holy Family had performed pilgrimages to al-Husayn, themselves. By that they were a model for their Shi'a in this matter. The earliest example which we have of that is the action of Imam Zayn al-'Abidin 'Ali ibn al-Husayn. He used to go from Medina to Karbala' to make pilgrimages to the tomb of his father.

One of the Shi'a of the Holy Family saw him at the mosque of Kufa. Since he was surprised at his presence, he asked him: 'What has brought you to a land in which your father was killed?' He answered him: 'I have made a pilgrimage to my father and I have performed the *salat* in his mosque.'¹³ It appears from the question of the questioner that he was surprised at Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn's presence. This suggests that the pilgrimage had not yet become widespread and a familiar matter.

In what follows, we shall mention some selected texts which contain the basis for the legality of the pilgrimage as a principle. They, also, include the urging and wish for it to be done.

1. In a Tradition whose chain of authorities goes back to Imam Muhammad al-Baqir ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn, the latter said: 'Order our Shi'a to make pilgrimages to the tomb of al-Husayn b. 'Ali. Doing this is a duty for every Muslim who acknowledges the Imamate of al-Husayn.'¹⁴

2. In a Tradition whose chain of authorities goes back to Zurara, who reported: I said to Abu Jafar (i.e. Imam Muhammad al-Baqir), 'What do you say about anyone who makes pilgrimages to your father when he is afraid?' He answered, 'God will keep him safe on the day of the greatest fear. The angels will meet him with good news and he will be told: Do not fear and do not be sad. This is the day of your success.'¹⁵

3. It is reported on the authority of Musa ibn Umar, on the authority of Hassan al-Basri, on the authority of Mu'awiya ibn Wahb, who recounted: I asked permission to visit Abu 'Abd Allah (i.e. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq). I was told to enter. So I went in and found him in his place of prayer in his house. I sat until he had finished his *salat*. Then I heard him address his Lord in private prayer saying:

"O God, forgive me and my brothers, and those who make pilgrimages to the tomb of al-Husayn, who have spent their wealth and made their bodies go there out of a desire for reverence towards us, out of hope for what there will be with You for them through contact with us, out of a joy which they have entered into through Your Prophet, in answer to our command and because of anger which they have entered into against our enemies.

By that, they wish for Your approval. Reward them on our behalf with happiness. Watch over them night and day and remain, in the best way possible, with their families whom they have left behind Accompany them and protect them from the evil of every tyrant, from every weak and violent one of Your creatures and from the evil of devils, both jinn and human. Give them the most excellent reward which they hope

for from You through their absence from their homes and through their preference of us to their sons, their families and their relations.

O God, our enemies denounce them for their journey. Yet that does not stop them from journeying to us, out of opposition by them to those who oppose us. Have mercy on those faces which have been burnt by the sun. Have mercy on those cheeks which have twisted in grief at the hollow grave of Abu 'Abd Allah (i.e. Imam al-Husayn).

Have mercy on those eyes which have shed tears, out of mercy for us. Have mercy on those hearts which have mourned and been enflamed for us. Have mercy on that cry which was for us. O God, I entrust to you those bodies and those souls until you receive them at the watering-places of Heaven on the day of the greatest thirst.”

Mu'awiya ibn Wahb continued: He continued to pray while prostrating as he made this prayer. When he finished I said, 'May I be your ransom, if what I heard you saying was said to someone who did not know God, I would think that Hell-fire would never feed on anything of him. By God, I wish that I had made a pilgrimage (*ziyara*) to him and not performed the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*).'¹ He replied, 'I do not rejoice with you for that. What prevents you from making a pilgrimage to him?' Then he went on, 'Mu'awiya, why did you not do that?' 'May I be your ransom,' I replied, 'I did not see that the matter had reached all this extent.'¹ He said, 'Mu'awiya, those in Heaven who pray for those who make pilgrimages to him are more than those who pray for them on earth.'¹⁶

4. In the Tradition from Ibn Bukayr, that latter said: I said to Abu 'Abd Allah (i.e. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq), 'I stopped at al-Arjan. My heart struggled with me about staying at the grave of your father. When I left, my heart was apprehensive and worried so that I went back out of fear of the authorities, informers and soldiers from the garrisons.'¹

He said: 'Ibn Bukayr, don't you want God to see you fearful concerning us? Don't you know that God shades anyone who is afraid, out of fear for us, under the protection of His throne. His reporter under the throne is al-Husayn and God keeps him safe from the terrors of the Day of Resurrection. The people will be terrified but he will not be terrified. The angels will bring succour to his power and they will quieten his heart with good news.'¹⁷

5. In a Tradition of Abu'Abd Allah (Imam Jafar al-Sadiq), he said: "Ali (ibn Maymun al-Sayigh), make a pilgrimage to al-Husayn and do not abandon him.'¹ 'Ali ibn Maymun asked: 'What reward will there be for anyone who goes to him?' He replied: 'For him who goes to him on foot, God has ordained a good reward for each step and the removal of an evil for each step, and He has raised his rank.'¹⁸

6. In a Tradition which is reported from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, he said: 'Whoever would rejoice to be at the tables of light on the Day of Resurrection, let him be among those who make pilgrimages to al-Husayn ibn'Ali.'¹⁹

7. In a Tradition from Imam Musa al-Kazim ibn Jafar, who said: 'The least reward for one who makes a visitation to al-Husayn on the banks of the Euphrates, if he recognises his right, his sanctity and his authority as Imam, will be that his past and later sins will be forgiven.'²⁰

8. In a Tradition whose chain of authorities goes back to Imam 'Ali al-Rida ibn Musa, he said: 'Every Imam has a mutual compact with his close associates and his Shi'a. This compact can be properly fulfilled and carried out by making visitations to their tombs. Whoever of them makes a visitation to them out of the desire to make such a visitation and in confirmation of their desire, for them their Imams will be intercessors on the Day of Resurrection.'²¹

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There are examples of the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of texts which have come from the Imams of the Holy Family urging pilgrimages to al-Husayn in different ways.

Some of these texts came in answer to questions from different men; others were made from the beginning without any question in order to direct the thought of the Shi'a towards pilgrimages.

Because of these texts which are specific to the pilgrimage to al-Husayn or those in which the Imams urge pilgrimages to the Prophet and other Imams or other righteous men and woman a Shi'ite social and cultural climate has developed in respect to the pilgrimage, in a general way, and in respect to the pilgrimage to al-Husayn, in particular.

This has formed an emotional human tendency which constantly grows in importance in all lives and places which it travels through at all times and in all circumstances.

Among the evidence for the growing importance of the pilgrimage among the Shi'a is the story that one of the adherents of the Shi'a complained to the seventh Imam, Musa al-Kazim ibn Ja'far, that the pilgrimage to al-Husayn had become so well-known that the pious pilgrim was no longer able to practise it without drawing attention to himself.

This was something which was a negation of the piety which made a Muslim prefer to do good works secretly. He reported: I went to the Imam and said: 'May I be your ransom, people who know of this matter²² and others who do not, are making pilgrimages to al-Husayn. Even women are making the journey to him. It has become very famous so that I have held myself back going because of the fame which I have seen it to have.' The Imam stopped without answering for some time. Then he came towards me and said: 'O Iraqi, since they make themselves known, you will not make yourself known! By God, anyone who goes to al-Husayn recognising his rights, cannot but have his past and later sins forgiven by God.'²³

Fear of the official authorities did not succeed in limiting the development and spread of this tendency. There are texts which indicate that the measure of the authorities only had a slight effect. It appears that

this tendency—as the nature of things requires—began little by little. Then it constantly grew in importance and its scope widened.

It came to have fixed seasons which were formed at a very early period, at least in the time of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. In a Tradition recorded by 'Abd Allah ibn Hammad al-Basri, the Imam said to him: 'I have learnt that people are going to the tomb of al-Husayn from regions around Kufa as well as other people and women who mourn for him. That is in the middle of the month of Sha'ban. Among them are reciters who recite, story-tellers who tell his story, mourners who mourn and poets who recite laments.' 'Yes,' I answered. 'May I be your ransom, I have seen some of what you describe.' He said: 'Praise be to God Who has caused there to be among people, those who come to us, praise us and lament for us. God has made our enemies those who criticise them for being close to us, and others who threaten them and revile what they do.'²⁴

It appears that the Imam meant the 'Abbasids and their followers by his last words.

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All the means of transportation known at that time were used in travelling to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of al-Husayn in addition to walking.²⁵ The same is the case right up to the present time—the majority of the text lays stress on the importance of walking to make a pilgrimage to al-Husayn. In some texts, however, there is mention of boats.

The texts in *Kamil al-Ziyara* come from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, with the exception of one text which comes from Imam al-Baqir. It is certain that this tendency had begun to grow and spread its scope during the Umayyad period.

Similarly groups of pilgrims used to come in crowds from the majority of the regions of the Islamic world at that time, perhaps even all of them. Instructions are mentioned in the texts to pilgrims who came from Khurasan, Arjan and Yemen.

As for those who were unable to get to the tomb of al-Husayn, they were able to perform the ritual of *ziyara* at a distance. The Imams have given texts for the *ziyara* to al-Husayn from a distance. The report of Malik al-Juhm contains an explanation of the appropriate actions for a believer to do when he is far from Karbala' and cannot travel there to perform the pilgrimage to al-Husayn. Malik said: I asked the Imam: 'May I be your ransom, what should someone do who lives far away from the place and cannot get to it on the Day of 'Ashura '?'

Imam al-Baqir replied: 'On that day he should go out into the desert or up on a high roof of his house. There he should give an indication of his wishing peace to be with al-Husayn and he should strive in prayer against his killer. After that he should perform two *rak'as*, doing that on the middle of the day before the sun begins to decline. Then he should mourn for al-Husayn and weep for him. He should, also, tell those in his house to weep for him.'²⁶

In this way the opportunity was provided, for everyone and in all circumstances, to participate in and be influenced by the *ziyara* and through that to renew contact with al-Husayn and what he represents. This facet of the legality of performing the *ziyara*, even while at a distance from the tomb, which has mentioned, reveals the intense anxiety of the Imams of the Holy Family to fix firmly the roots of the institution of *ziyara* in every heart in order to provide the widest scope of its educational and guiding task.

While the performance of the pilgrimage is something which is recommended on every day of the year, there are special days and nights in which the merit for performing it is greater. They are: the Day of 'Arafat (*Yawm 'Arafat*), that is 9th Dhu al-Hijja; the Day of Sacrifice (*Yawm al-Adha*), that is the 10th Dhu al-Hijja; the Day of the End of the Fast (*Yawm al-Fitr*), that is 1st Shawwal; the Day of 'Ashura', that is 10th Muharram; 1st of Rajab; 15th of Rajab; 15th of Shatban; and the Nights of Destiny (*layali al-qadr*), that is 19th, 21st and 23rd of the month of Ramadan.

Sometimes added to these times is the pilgrimage made to him on 20th of Safar, which is the *ziyara* of the forty days (on the occasion of the passing of forty days after the martyrdom of al-Husayn; that is from 10th Muharram to 20th Safar). On that day a great number of pilgrims gather at the tomb of al-Husayn at Karbala', even though it does not enjoy, with the religious scholars, the status which is accorded to the rest of the times for pilgrimage which we have mentioned earlier, because the narration for the pilgrimage after forty days has a weak chain of authorities and is supported by weak evidence.

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By this direction of theirs –in addition to the personal factor of al-Husayn and his revolution with every Muslim– the Imams of the Holy Family have been able to make the personality, revolution and tragedy of al-Husayn and what happened to him, his family and his followers at Karbala', into a living vibrant thing which is continually recalled.

By means of the performance of the pilgrimage, they have made it something which preserves contact with his reasons and objectives, something which brings praise and veneration to al-Husayn and his family, something which contains the pledges which the pilgrim makes before God that he will keep to this path and follow this way, also something which includes the denunciation of the oppressive deviating forces which committed their hideous crime at Karbala', and the denunciation of all other forces, later on, which followed those criminal forces in their example, their slogans and their attitude.

...May God curse a people who killed you. May God curse those who gave them the possibility of fighting against you. May I be innocent before God and you of them, their party and their followers.[27](#)

May God curse those who fight against you. May God curse those who ordered it. May God curse those who got that order and accepted it.[28](#)

The ruling powers, in the time of the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids and those who followed, became

aware of the danger of this current and of its ability to produce a state of consciousness of the situation among the people and a repudiation of the dominant political forces. Therefore throughout Islamic history, various attempts were made by the authorities and their supporters, aimed at stopping the increasing number of pilgrims to Karbala¹.

The attempts appeared in two different manifestations.

The First Manifestation was to put garrisons and guards on the roads leading to Karbala¹ to stop the pilgrims from reaching the grave of al-Husayn and to carry out various punishments on those who were apprehended. The punishment, on some occasions, was death.

It appears that this repressive manifestation was so cruel that its effects were reflected in the demeanour of the Shi'a in performing the pilgrimage. It was also the reason for the great number of questions about the rules for the pilgrimage in circumstances of fear.

It reached such a degree that Ibn Qawlawayh al-Qummi devoted a special chapter in his book with the title: *Chapter Forty-five: The Reward for the Pilgrimage to al-Husayn made in Fear*. In it he has recorded some of the things which have been set out by the Imams of the Holy Family in this matter.

Some of what he presents is reported from Imam Abu Jafar al-Baqir and the other part of it is from Imam Abu 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq. This means that the repression of this Shi'ite practice existed in the Umayyad period and continued into the 'Abbasid period. In what follows, there will be some of the texts which Ibn Qawlawayh has presented.

It is reported from Muslim ibn Muhammad: Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali (i.e., Imam al-Baqir) asked me: 'Are you going to the tomb of al-Husayn?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'but in fear and dread.' He said: 'The more intense this is, then the reward for it will be in accordance with the fear.'²⁹

It is reported from al-Asamm that Ibn Bukayr said: I said to Abu 'Abd Allah (i.e. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq), 'I stopped at Arjan. My heart struggled with me about staying at the grave of your father. When I left, my heart was apprehensive and worried so that I went back out of fear of the authorities, informers and soldiers of the garrisons'³⁰

Another example is reported by al-Husayn ibn Abi Hamza al-Thumali. He recounted: 'Towards the end of the period of the Marwanids, I went to perform a pilgrimage to the grave of al-Husayn, keeping myself out of view of the Syrians until I reached Karbala¹. Then I hid myself in the area of the tomb until the middle of the night'³¹

Another example are the words of 'Abd Allah ibn Hammad al-Basri to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq: 'May I be your ransom, I used to go to the grave of al-Husayn until I became beset by the authorities who were determined to guard their wealth. I was well-known to them. So out of precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*), I gave up going to it.'³²

Another example is the answer Misma¹ Kardin gave to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq when he asked him whether he was going to the tomb of al-Husayn. He said: 'No, I am a man well-known to the people of Basra, among whom are people who follow the wishes of the Caliph.

We have many enemies among the tribesmen including those who hate the Shi'a and others. I could not be sure that they are not watching my situation on behalf of the sons of Sulayman.¹ (The Sulayman who is mentioned here is Sulayman ibn 'Abd Allah b. 'Abbas, the governor of Basra.)

This method of combatting the pilgrimages to al-Husayn did not succeed in checking the overriding tendency which continued to grow in size and importance. The texts, which Ibn Qawlawayh and others have reported, and the fact of history confirm that this tendency remained firm and constantly increasing without the repression having any effect on it.

The Second Manifestation was the attempt to remove the object of pilgrimage. This was done by the destruction of the tomb of al-Husayn and the wiping out of any trace of it so that its place would become lost and would not be found. This manifestation occurred in the reign of the 'Abbasid, al-Mutawakkil, through the decision he made to destroy the tomb of al-Husayn. We will let Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani tell us his methods in what he has reported of that time:

"Al-Mutawakkil was very hostile towards the descendants of Abu Talib, cruel towards their group and suspicious of their activities. He had great anger and animosity towards them and was very doubtful and suspicious of them. It occurred to him that Ubayd Allah ibn Yahya ibn Khaqan, his vizir, also used to think badly of them and the denunciation of their activity seemed good to him.

He carried out actions against them that none of the 'Abbasids before him had carried out. Among these, he ploughed up the grave of al-Husayn and removed all trace of it. He put armed garrisons on the rest of the roads. Anyone they found making a pilgrimage to it, they brought to him. He killed or punished them severely.

Ahmad ibn al-Ja'd al-Washa reported to me—and he was a witness of it: The reason for ploughing up the grave of al-Husayn was that one of the songstresses used to send their young girls to him, before he was Caliph, to sing to him when he was drinking. When he assumed authority, he sent for that songstress.

He learnt that she was absent and had gone to perform a pilgrimage to the tomb of al-Husayn. News of this reached her and she hurried back. She sent one of her young girls to him whom he was familiar with. He asked her, 'Where were you?' She answered, 'My mistress went to make the pilgrimage and she took us with her.'¹ It was in the month of Sha'ban. So he asked, 'Where were you making a pilgrimage to in the month of Sha'ban?' 'To the tomb of al-Husayn,' she answered.

He flew into a rage and ordered her mistress to be imprisoned, and he confiscated her property. He sent one of his men, called al-Dizaraj—who was a Jew—to the tomb of al-Husayn. He ordered him to plough it

up, obliterate it and destroy everything around it. He carried that out. He destroyed everything around it, demolished the building and ploughed up about two hundred fields around it. When he reached his grave, no one would approach it.

So he brought some Jews and they ploughed it up. Then he made water flow all around it. He put armed garrisons in control of it. There was a mile between each armed garrison. No one could perform the pilgrimage without being apprehended by them and sent to him.

Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Ashnani reported to me: My promise to perform the pilgrimage seemed impossible in those days because of the terror. Then I decided to risk my life to do it. A perfume merchant helped me to do that. We set out to perform the pilgrimage, hiding by day and travelling by night until we came to the area of al-Fakhiriyya.

From there we departed in the middle of the night and went into between two garrisons so that we came to the grave of al-Husayn. It was hidden from us. We began to sniff for signs of it and search for some aspect of it until we came upon it. The structure, which had been around it, had been torn down and burnt. Water had been made to flow over it and the place where bricks had been sunk down so that it had become like a ditch.

We performed the rituals of the pilgrimage to him. We threw ourselves down on the ground and smelled a fragrance from it which I have never smelled anything like. It was like some kind of perfume. I asked the perfume merchant, who was with me, 'What fragrance is this?' 'By God, I have never smelled any kind of perfume like it,' he replied.

We made our farewells and put marks around the grave in a number of places. When al-Mutawakkil was killed, we gathered with a group of the descendants of Abu Talib and the Shi'a to go to the grave. We removed the marks and restored it to the state which it had been before."[33](#)

Al-Tabari has reported in his history concerning the events of the year 236[34](#) : It has been mentioned that an official of the head of the *shurta* proclaimed in the area: 'After three hours, any man whom we find at his tomb, we will send to the dungeons.' The people fled. They were prevented from going there. The place was ploughed up and the area around put under cultivation.

We must presume that his terrorisation had some effect for sometime on the activity of the movement towards performing the pilgrimage and that it caused it to become moribund. Indeed the persecution seems to have increased in some periods to such an extent that the 12th Imam (al-Mahdi Muhammad ibn al-Hasan) was obliged to issue a general directive to the Shi'a in which he forbade them from performing pilgrimages to the cemetery of Quraysh in Baghdad (the sacred site of the graves of the two Imams, Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim and Muhammad al-Jawad) and the sacred site of the grave of al-Husayn at Karbala'.[35](#)

Even though the method of repression and the method of destroying the grave, in addition to the former,

had made the development of the movement to perform these pilgrimages moribund for some time, or had prevented them, they had not succeeded in bringing them to an end in any final way.

The Shi'a seized every opportunity available to activate the movement to perform the pilgrimage, especially after periods of repression and persecution. Moreover, after such periods, the movement to perform the pilgrimage used to return in a more intense and varied form that had been the case before its prevention and the suppression and punishment of the pilgrims.

The only explanation for that is the fact that al-Husayn's revolution and personality continued to grow without any interruption in popular consciousness in a way which could not be stopped at any point, such was its size and nature. It is still growing and spreading its extent even to the present day.

After having got to know about the pilgrimage from the external aspect –its motives, history, preventions, circumstances, time and continuous growth– it is necessary for us to become acquainted with it from within –if that is the correct expression. We shall examine examples from the texts which have been reported from the Imams of the Holy Family of how the pilgrimage to al-Husayn was to be performed, together with a brief analysis of each of the texts.

We shall put forward here two examples of prayers of the *ziyara* of al-Husayn. One of these is long and detailed and the other is brief and general. The two examples should be considered as representative of dozens of texts which have been reported from the Imams of the Holy Family about how the pilgrimage to al-Husayn should be performed. Of a similar nature are those texts which have been laid down about how the pilgrimage to the other Imams of the Holy Family, apart from al-Husayn, should be performed.

These two examples are reported from Imam Abu 'Abd Allah (Jafar al-Sadiq).

V. Two Examples Of The Ziyara To Al-Husayn

1. The First Example

It is reported from Imam Abu 'Abd Allah Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq that he said: 'When you enter the *Ha'ir*,³⁶ say:

1. O God, this is a position by which you have honoured me and distinguished me. O God, through it give me my desire for the reality of my faith in You and Your apostles.

The visitation begins with thanking God for honouring and distinguishing the pilgrim by giving him the opportunity to perform the pilgrimage. Then he prays to God that He will answer him and grant him his request for the reality of his faith in God and His prophets.

2. The peace of God be with you, son of the Apostle of God and the peace of His angels be with you in the pure fragrances which come to you and on you in the evening and the morning. Peace be with the

angels of God, who bring men close to God. Peace be with the Muslims who have you in their heart and who speak to you of your great virtue with their tongues.

After discharging his duty of remembering God and thanking Him, the pilgrim begins by calling for peace to be with al-Husayn. Then he calls for peace to be with the angels of God. He goes on to call for peace to be with all those who believe in al-Husayn's attitude and who declare their faith in him.

This suggests that al-Husayn is not alone, nor is the pilgrim, who believes in al-Husayn's cause, alone; they are both part of a great movement which God blesses and sends His peace to its men and women through the angels. Part of this movement are the angels who bring men close to God; part of it are those people who believe and trust in al-Husayn with their hearts and who declare their faith in him.

3. I testify that you are truthful and trustworthy. I trust in what you called for, I trust in what you came for. You are the vengeance of God on earth for the blood whose vengeance will only be attained on earth by your friends.

O God, make me love their martyrdoms and their witness, so that You bring me close to them and make me with the first of them and a follower of them in this world and the Hereafter.

At this stage of the pilgrimage, the pilgrim declares his close bond with al-Husayn in terms of faith and principles.

First, he testifies to the truth of what al-Husayn came for and called for.

Secondly, he testifies to the fact that al-Husayn, when he made the sacrifice in his true and sincere mission, did not belong to any man, nor one group of people He belonged to the whole of humanity. Therefore he is 'the vengeance of God'. His vengeance, then, is a common cause which profiteers and deviators cannot deal with. Only the friends of God can deal with it'. . . for the blood whose vengeance will only be attained on earth by your friends.'

After this testimony, which signifies the bond of reason and principle with God, the pilgrim then turns to ask that God bind him emotionally to al-Husayn . . . 'make me love their martyrdom and witness.' This is for the sake of joining them in their struggle so that he may be in their vanguard in witness and a follower of them in principle in this world and the Hereafter.

4. Glory be to God, to Whom the angels and the Kingdom of Heaven give praise, and through Whose names all His creation is sanctified. Glory be to God, the Most Holy Sovereign, the Lord of the angels and the Spirit. O God, inscribe me within the group, which has come to the best of Your places, and within the best of Your creatures.

O God, curse idolatry and tyranny and curse their parties and followers. O God, make me bear witness to all the testimonies of God with the Holy Family of Your Prophet. O God, receive me as a Muslim and give me a sure place with those surviving inheritors who inherit Paradise, where they will dwell eternally

among Your righteous worshippers.

Here there is a return to remembering and glorifying God. Then there is the prayer to God that He may accept his coming and his pilgrimage to al-Husayn, so that He will inscribe him among those who have come to him. This is a result of the pilgrim having already declared the bond of principle and emotion with al-Husayn and his revolution.

The pilgrim, then, announces his negative attitude which rejects the enemies of al-Husayn and of his call, including the Umayyads and the representatives of their policy in history, who were their followers.

He returns, after this, to the prayer with a supplication which comes from the depths of a soul thirsting to meet God in purity. Thus he prays to God that He make him among the group of His righteous worshippers whose lives form a continuous chain of striving for the sake of God, the end of which comes through the faith and Islam.

5. O God, ordain faith for me and confirm it in my heart. O God, make what I say with my tongue a reality in my heart and a religious precept in my actions. O God, make me one of those who have a firm footing with al-Husayn and establish me among those who were martyred with him.

At this stage of the pilgrimage, the pilgrim returns to asking God to establish him in the true faith. Here, the prayer of the *ziyara* includes assurance about an important problem of the true faith, in fact the most important problem concerning this faith. It is that this faith is not a belief alone; it is belief and works, ideology and conduct. What the pilgrim aspires to, is not a theoretical faith but a living active faith. In this way it becomes clear that the pilgrimage is employed in the service of a pure and practical Islamic policy.

The pilgrim, then, returns to al-Husayn and prays to God that He will decree that he be among those who were martyred with al-Husayn in terms of those martyrs representing the apex of the vocation in which faith is transformed into works and conduct.

6. I testify that you are the purity of the pure and pure of purity. Through you, the land is pure. The earth where you are is pure and your sanctuary is pure. I testify that you ordered and called for justice, and that you are the vengeance of God on His earth so that He may arouse the feelings of all His creation because of you. The blessings of God be with your spirit and your body. You are the sincere one, the truthful one and confirmer of truth. May God destroy those who destroy you with their hands and tongues.

Here, purity means innocence from religious and moral sins. The holiness which al-Husayn enjoys arises out of his purity, not from any other source. This purity spreads wherever the pure man settles. The places, themselves, do not enjoy any holiness; their holiness only derives from them being a centre of action and activity by the pure man.

After that the pilgrim to al-Husayn testifies that his revolution was for the sake of justice; justice was its slogan and its objective. Thus, al-Husayn is the vengeance of God, not of any particular person or group, because the justice, which he strove to establish, was the justice of God.

Then, he testifies to his practical truth: a vocation which gives corroboration through action, effort, slogans and theoretical belief. This is what made him an opponent of those in power nominally in the name of Islam, who were men with slogans; the reality of their conduct gave testimony to their insincerity.

The pilgrim goes on to reiterate his renunciation of the enemies of al-Husayn, who are, at the time, the enemies of justice and truth.

7. Peace be with you, O martyrs. You precede us and we follow you. Receive the good news of a meeting with God which has no discrepancy. God will attain your vengeance for you and He will overcome His enemies on earth through you. You are the lords of the martyrs in this world and the Hereafter.

This salutation is to the men who bore witness with al-Husayn at Karbala'. On the occasion of every pilgrimage to al-Husayn there is a salutation and a prayer for peace for the martyrs.

In this salutation, the pilgrim declares that the martyrs precede him and he follows them, that they are all—both the pilgrim and the martyrs—companions in one journey of struggle. In this way the pilgrim binds his life to the path which the martyrs traveled and for the sake of which they died.

8. Praise be to God, Who remains One in all matters. He created the creatures and none of their affairs is absent from His knowledge. The earth and those who are on it are sureties for your blood and your vengeance, O son of the Apostle of God, may God bless you.

I testify that you will have from God the support and victory which He promised you, that you will have from God the truthful promise of the destruction of your enemies and the fulfilment of God's promise to you.

I testify that those who follow you are the true ones of whom God said: Those are the truthful ones and the witnesses before their Lord, they will have their reward and their light. [37](#)

In this section, after praising God and His unity, the pilgrim makes a declaration of the cosmic nature of al-Husayn's revolution, for the earth and those on it will be the guarantors for his blood and are not transitory, for the confirmation of realities which are eternal and which extend into the future of time and of man. Similarly it has deep roots in the past and present of man and time.

Then, the pilgrim speaks of hope, for the martyrdom of al-Husayn and the end of his revolution do not bring an end to hope, nor do they throw one into the abyss of despair devoid of action. Al-Husayn's cause is the climax of war in a long uninterrupted history of the struggle for the sake of the Muslim, and

for man, in general.

Therefore, the divine promise will be attained, must be attained. For this reason, the Shi'ite works for al-Husayn's policy through the inspiration of the attainment of God's promise from this hope.

This section calls to mind the words which al-Husayn wrote from Mecca when he decided to leave his brother, Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya and the Hashimites: ' . . . Whoever joins me will be martyred and whoever does not join me will not attain victory.'³⁸

At the end of this section of the prayer of the *ziyara* the pilgrim performing it renews his testimony of the faithfulness of the supporters of al-Husayn.

9. Praise be to God, Who has not taken a son and has no partner in His sovereignty. He created and determined everything. I testify that you called upon God and His Apostle, that you fulfilled his covenant with God and you carried out his words to God, that you strove for the sake of God until certainty came.

May God curse a people which killed you. May God curse a people which treated you unjustly. May God curse a people which forsook you. May God curse a people which abandoned you. O God, I testify in the authority (wilaya) of those whom You and Your Apostles appointed. I testify to my renunciation of those whom You and Your Apostles renounced.

*O God, curse those who lied against Your Apostle, destroyed Your Ka'ba, distorted Your Book, shed the blood of Your Holy Family, spread corruption in Your land and disparaged Your worshippers. O God, redouble the torment on them for what has taken place on Your roads, Your land and Your sea. O God, curse them in secret and in public in Your earth and Your Heaven.'*³⁹

In this section, the prayer of the *ziyara* reaches its climax. The pilgrim returns to praising and exalting God. We notice, here, that the remembrance, praise and exaltation of God permeates every section of the prayer of the *ziyara*. The pilgrim remembers God in a variety of ways throughout the prayer of the *ziyara* to al-Husayn, and his pilgrimage to al-Husayn is, itself, a kind of remembrance of God through remembering one of His righteous servants who struggled for His sake.

The pilgrim reiterates his declaration testifying that al-Husayn's revolution was for the sake of God. After this he curses all the forces opposed to al-Husayn's call and revolution: those who forsook him; those who abandoned giving him support; and those who killed him.

He, then, declares his firm life-long bond with the policy of struggle of al-Husayn, and his absolute renunciation of the enemies of that policy.

In an intense emotional manner appropriate to the psychological state which he should have reached when he comes to this stage of the pilgrimage, the pilgrim reiterates his complete and absolute renunciation of the enemies by cursing them through mentioning the features and acts which require such a curse: they lied against the Apostle; they destroyed the Ka'ba; they distorted the Book; they shed

the blood of the Holy Family; they disparaged Your worshippers.

Here are clear indications of specific historical events. These include the revolt of Ibn al-Zubayr, al-Hajjaj's bringing it to an end and the destruction of the Holy Ka'ba.

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This example of the prayer of the *ziyara* is representative of the largest part of the texts associated with the pilgrimage to al-Husayn.

It contains the following elements:

1. It remembers God and glorifies and praises Him. It declares the extent of His authority, omnipotence and magnitude;
2. It honours al-Husayn and the Holy Family as being representatives of the Islamic way of life, of the righteous conduct required by the Islamic way of life and of the true causes of a Muslim and of mankind, in general.
3. It mentions al-Husayn's revolution, his witness, and the martyrs and witnesses with him as the climax of the struggle to realise truth and achieve justice. It gives these a universal and cosmic quality in terms of those who are witnesses of it being 'the vengeance of God.'
4. It concentrates on the hope for the coming victory and it rejects despair.
5. It declares the life-long bond between the Shi'ite and al-Husayn and his policy. It also declares the absolute renunciation of all forces whose policy opposes the policy of al-Husayn.

All these elements are repeated in the prayer of visitation in several ways, in a variety of expressions and from different angles in order to attain one aim: to make al-Husayn's revolution, insofar as it is an application of Islam and its principles, something vibrant with life in man's consciousness, something which inspires him in his daily life through the ideas which are appropriate to it.

2. The Second Example

It is reported from Imam Abu 'Abd Allah Ja'far al-Sadiq that he said: 'When you come to the tomb of al-Husayn stand at the door and say:

1. Peace be with you, O heir of Adam, the chosen of God.

Peace be with you, O heir of Noah, the prophet of God.

Peace be with you, O heir of Abraham, the dear friend of God.

Peace be with you, O heir of Moses, the one addressed by God.

Peace be with you, O heir of Jesus, the spirit of God.

Peace be with you, O heir of Muhammad, the beloved of God.

Peace be with you, O heir of 'Ali, the entrusted delegate of the Apostle of God.

Peace be with you, O heir of al-Hasan, who gave satisfaction.

Peace be with you, O heir of Fatima, daughter of the Apostle of God.

In this example, the revolution of al-Husayn is presented from an angle which differs from the angle in which this revolution has been presented in the previous example.

Al-Husayn's revolution had been accused by the regime of having departed from the general policy. It was a rebellion against the legal authority and it caused dissension in the community. Therefore it was an aberration in the course of Islam and because of that it was without legality.

The Umayyads attempted to give this quality to the revolution of al-Husayn. It is indisputable that the apparatus of information at that time –the hired Traditionists and the story– tellers– attempted to give this picture of al-Husayn's revolution to the masses.

This attempt was not ordained to have its hoped for success, even though it did succeed in forming some of the insignificant views of some jurists and Sufis, fragments of which we find in some of their books, represented by unfriendly expressions towards the revolution of al-Husayn.

The Imams of the Holy Family and their followers among the scholars undertook to refute this falsification. Instead of the revolution of al-Husayn being made unlawful, the whole Umayyad regime was made unlawful. In the same way its extensions in time as represented by any regime, which bore the slogans of the Umayyads, were made unlawful. In a general way, the pilgrimage was one of the means of refuting and exposing this. This example of the prayer of the *ziyara* is more concerned with these points than other prayers of the *ziyara*.

In this example, the revolution of al-Husayn is closely connected to the movement of Islam which is deep-rooted in history of the life of humanity. It goes back in time to the first human existence which brought Islam in its first form on the earth as represented by Adam, the father of mankind. It goes on to Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad and then comes to 'Ali.

From this viewpoint, the revolution is not an event without any precedent. It is part of the movement of Islam in history. It is an extension of the movement of the prophets of God and their entrusted delegates in time, place and man.

Therefore, it enjoys legality and thus it is its right that it should receive the support of all the Muslims. Its legal and political opponent, i.e. the regime, is what does not enjoy legality. Therefore it is men's duty to

destroy the latter in order to bring victory to the revolution.

This is one of the aims of this example of the prayers of the *ziyara*. Perhaps it has the greatest importance in the view of the Imams of the Holy Family.

Another aim is that the Shi'ite Muslim should be aware that, through the revolution of al-Husayn, he is linked to Islam in its furthest extension. Since Islam has acted in steering time in this manner, it does not stop at the revolution of al-Husayn.

Rather, it takes a new impetus and a new strength from this revolution and continues to accumulate the power of an active transforming movement through the conscious act of heroism motivated by a faith, which believes in it and works for the good of mankind through it and by its guidance.

2. Peace be with you, O truthful witness.

Peace be with you, O pious reverend entrusted delegate (wasi).

Peace be with you, O proof of God and son of His proof.

Peace be with the souls who dismounted at your open field of battle and remained where you stopped.

Peace be with the angels of God, who surround you.

In the previous section the pilgrim declared his awareness of the position of the revolution of al-Husayn in the historical movement of Islam, and his awareness of its legality and the lack of legality of the regime which it rose against. After that, the pilgrim declares, in this section of the prayer of *ziyara*, his awareness of the qualities which gave al-Husayn and his revolution this position in the history of Islam and its historical movement.

First, he is truthful and a witness. A truthful person transforms his faith into a living actual application. He does not leave it confined to the realm of ideology, nor does he seek comfortable justifications for himself. This truthfulness leads him on to become a witness so that he seals his life with the most glorious act of truth. He seals it by witnessing with it through, and for the sake of, his faith.

This reality is the reality of truthfulness and witnessing. It is what makes it suitable that he and his revolution should be among the outstanding features of the movement of Islam in history.

Secondly, he is the entrusted delegate (*wasi*). He is the entrusted delegate of his brother, Imam al-Hasan, who was the entrusted delegate of his father, Imam 'Ali, who was the entrusted delegate of the Apostle of God.

He is a pious reverend entrusted delegate. Through the reality of his being an entrusted delegate, he works for the religion of God and for the *umma*. Thus he bears a heavy responsibility and sacrifices his life to carry it out.

Thirdly, he is the proof of God and the son of His proof. This quality comes from his being a pious reverend entrusted delegate (*wasi*) of God. Through this quality, he was the heir of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad.

After Muhammad, he was the heir of 'Ali and al-Hasan. They are proofs of God to His creatures. He is like them in being a proof of God to His creatures. He is a continuation of them, and his revolution is an extension of their revolutions and calls.

He explained to men and summoned them to God so that the authorities of his time no longer had any argument or excuse for shunning the guidance of God and the faithful application of the Islamic way of life demanded by God.

Finally the pilgrim takes note of the fact that al-Husayn was not alone in his truthfulness and his witness. His supporters participated with him in a degree of truthfulness and witness. They, then, are also a model which should be imitated, beacons through which one will receive light on the long journey to truth and justice. The pilgrim calls for peace to be with them to show his awareness of their rank and their great role.

The pilgrim brings this section to a close by calling for peace to be with the blessed angels who surround the grave of al-Husayn and the grave of the martyrs.

3. I testify that you have performed the salat and you have paid the alms-tax (zakat), you have enjoined the good and forbidden evil; you have worshipped God sincerely so that certainty came to you. Peace be with you and the mercy and blessings of God. [40](#)

At the end, the pilgrim declares his awareness of the essence and core of al-Husayn's life. It is living Islam. The relationship with God is represented by *salat*, a real relationship which always exists in daily activity. The *salat* is not merely the formal prayer which ends at the call for peace in it. The *salat* with the believer is something which encompasses within its nature the life and actions of the person praying.

The relationship with men is represented by the alms-tax (*zakat*) a form of giving. Thus his position with regard to men is the position of the giver, someone who sacrifices and pays no attention to himself and his own interests for the sake of others.

Movement in society is represented by enjoining good and forbidding evil. It is the movement of building society, building righteous man and a clean life.

The first feature of all these manifestations of the life of al-Husayn –in relation to God, in relation to men and as a movement in society– is absolute sincerity towards God, total absorption in God and shunning everything else except God.

* * *

These are two examples of the dozens of texts which deal with the visitation to al-Husayn and his fellow martyrs at Karbala' at all times and at specific times previously indicated.

The scope of the ritual of visitation has been broadened to include all the Imams of the Holy Family and the supporters who were martyred alongside them, or who accomplished an important area of work for Islam during the time of the Imams and at their direction.

The overwhelming majority of the texts concerned with the pilgrimages to the other Imams and their followers repeat the honour given to al-Husayn and his followers, the horror at what befell them and the renunciation of their enemies.

The pilgrimage fulfils the role which it is intended to fulfil in the formation and historical existence of the Shi'ite Muslim. It keeps him in living vibrant contact with the Imams of the Holy Family, with their vision and with their movement which provides opposition and yet is constructive.

It keeps him in contact with the Islam which confronts in order to remove injustice and establish justice among all the people –not with Islam through its official governing institutions. In the eras of the rule of Islam, neither the Holy Family nor their Shi'a have had any share worth mentioning in the official institutions of the government of Islam.

VI. The Ziyara in the Poetry of Lament for Al-Husayn

In the odes of the poets of lament for al-Husayn which they composed in praise of and in lament for the Holy Family, and in lament for al-Husayn, they have given expression to the ritual of the *ziyara* since the first half of the fourth century. It is a date for which we possess poetic evidence. Even though we can estimate that the poetry of lament included this purpose before this date, there is not much before it.

That is because the reflection of any concern of the people in poetry implies two things: (i) This concern which the poetry reflects, is a common subject which excites the interest of many groups of people of diverse schools of thought and views.

This common subject excites in the people emotions and feelings of love, or awe, or hostility towards it. (ii) There is no danger, or at least no great danger, in the expression and practice of this common subject. Otherwise the poets would not express it in poetry which came readily to men's tongues and which was recited at their gatherings.

In the light of this analysis we can judge that poetry gave expression to the pilgrimage from several aspects out of the total of its purposes when the pilgrimage became a common concern for the Shi'a, and was no longer limited to a selected few among them, when it became an established part of their religious activity which had a socio-political quality.

This is from one aspect. From another, poetry probably gave expression to the pilgrimage when it

became possible to carry it out with security and the safety of the pilgrim was not exposed to danger.

We can deduce that these two matters –the widespread nature of the pilgrimage and freedom to carry it out with security– were achieved in the second stage of the 'Abbasids, after the Buwayhids had gained real control over Iraq and Iran and the Hamdanids had gained control in Syria.

In this period, popular consciousness attained an understanding of the pilgrimage in a comprehensive form. This consciousness came to express its understanding of it on numerous occasions when thousands of people gathered. Karbala' began to witness a constant movement of pilgrims coming to the tomb of al-Husayn.

Then the pilgrimage became one of the topics of the poetry about al-Husayn, which the poets expressed in a variety of ways and at which they looked from different aspects.

* * *

Perhaps Abu Bakr Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn al-Hasan ibn Murad al-Dabbi al-Halabi al-Antaki, known as al-Sunawbari (d. 334) was among the first poets of lamentation who reflected the subject of– the pilgrimage to al-Husayn in their poetry. Al-Sunawbari spent his life between Aleppo and Damascus.

For this reason, his poetry's inclusion of references to the pilgrimage in a number of his odes discloses, without any doubt, an important historical fact about this subject, namely that groups of pilgrims at this historical period were flowing into Karbala' from the Syrian area. This is a phenomenon which, first of all, proves that the ritual of *ziyara* had become a common popular Shi'ite practice which went beyond the geographical region of Karbala', that is Iraq, to other geographical regions.

Secondly it proves that the element of security had increased to such an extent that it allowed great numbers of people to cross this long distance between Syria and Iraq without very great fear.

In one ode in lamentation for al-Husayn, al-Sunawbari called on the pilgrims to stop at the place on the bank of the Euphrates and described their weeping at the graves.

In another ode, he tells of their camels halting at the place of grief and the people smelling the musk and kissing the camphor of the ground. They perform the pilgrimage there, which is recommended, and they grieve for him with tears flowing down.

In a third ode, he urges the people to travel straight. The pilgrimage to the Imam of guidance is the best pilgrimage which can be made.

It appears that the third ode may be addressed in farewell to a group who are heading for Karbala' to perform the pilgrimage.

* * *

Abu 'Abd Allah al-Husayn ibn Ahmad ibn al-Hajjaj al-Nili al-Baghdadi (d. 391) comes almost half a century later than al-Sunawburi so that he reflects for us, in one of the beautiful passages of his poetry, a picture of the pilgrimage, which indicates the depth of the penetration of the ritual into popular consciousness so that it has become an institution with traditional practices.

In his ode, al-Husayn ibn al-Hajjaj has spoken about the pilgrimage to the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. It gives a picture of the circumstances which were prevailing then at the sanctuary of Imam al-Husayn.

Al-Husayn b. al-Hajjaj calls on 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. He says that the pilgrims may gain a cure or reward which they seek. It instructs the pilgrims to be in a state of ritual purity before entering the tomb.

They should prepare themselves to answer his call and go round his tomb seven times. At the door to the tomb, they should stand and call for peace to be with the people of knowledge and nobility. Then they should acknowledge that they are holding fast to the faith, because the Imam is the firm bond which binds them to the faith. They hope that he will intercede for them, that no harm will come to them and they will have no fear.

These verses depict some of the popular customs at the pilgrimage, as well as expressing some of the ideas which were circulating in some of the texts.

* * *

Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Hammad ibn 'Ubayd Allah ibn Hammad al-'Adawi al-'Abdi al-Basri (d. end of 4th century), was a poet who was a contemporary of al-Husayn ibn al-Hajjaj. In one of his odes of lament, he speaks of the ritual of the pilgrimage and the Divine blessing which are promised to those who perform it.

He tells the pilgrims to al-Husayn that they may receive forgiveness for their sins and safety from Hell. When they call upon al-Husayn, he will answer their prayers whether they are said aloud or in secret. For al-Husayn is alive with God. They should go round his tomb and kiss the soil of his grave, for al-Husayn possesses very great purity.

In another ode, the poet speaks of the great effect the deaths of the sons of the Prophet at Karbala' had. He mentions that whoever sees their graves begins to weep. He describes the light which shines on these graves and the angels which go back and forth from them. These are graves with the power to ward off harm and evil and pilgrims seek cures for their evil thoughts. Whenever one sees them, one is reminded of the day on which al-Husayn died and the words he spoke in admonition to his enemies.

* * *

Al-Sharif al-Radi Abu al-Hasan Muhammad ibn Abi, Ahmad al-Husayn al-Musawi (359-406) spoke of the ritual of pilgrimage in one of his beautiful poems. In it he revealed his desire to perform the

pilgrimage to the Commander of the faithful and Imam al-Husayn and he said that he quenched this thirst in his heart by performing the pilgrimage to the two tombs of the two Imams (al-Kazimayn) Imam Musa b. Ja'far and Imam Muhammad al-Jawad in Baghdad.

This demonstrates that in this period performing the pilgrimage to the tombs of the Imams of the Holy Family in Iraq had become a popular general practice.

* * *

Abu al-Hasan Mihyar ibn Marzawayh al-Daylami, the famous poet, (d. 428) was one of those in this period who spoke of the ritual of pilgrimage in an ode of lament for Imam 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, and Imam al-Husayn. That was in the month of Muharram in 392.

In his discussion he shows that the pilgrimage involves the practice of blessing the soil of the tomb of al-Husayn. It appears from this text that those who performed the pilgrimage used to go back with some of the soil of Karbala¹ which they used to sprinkle on those of their family and friends who used to ask for it as a means of seeking blessings and seeking cures. This practice does not exist in the present time, and it is a point which ought to be studied from the historical angle.

* * *

Al-Sharif al-Murtada al-Qasim 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Musa al-Musawi, known as 'Alam al-Huda (the sign of guidance) (355-436) is one of the distinguished men whose poetry reflects the ritual of the pilgrimage. In it he mentions the healing effect on the soul of performing the pilgrimage.

* * *

In this way poets of lament for al-Husayn have continued to reflect in their poetry the ritual of the pilgrimage to the tomb of al-Husayn and the rest of the tombs of the Holy Family. They are expressing the doctrinal and emotional relationship of the Shi'ite with al-Husayn, the martyr. This relationship considers the pilgrimage as one of the most outstanding means of expressing it.

There has been much poetry dealing with the subject of the pilgrimage in recent times, even to the extent of some poets making it the sole purpose of some odes. This reflects the growth of this ritual in popular consciousness as one of the manifestations of the revolution of al-Husayn in popular consciousness.

VII. Three Other Ziyaras Concerned With the Revolution of Al-Husayn

1. The ziyara to al-'Abbas ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib

i

Al-'Abbas was born in 26. His mother was Fatima, daughter of Hizam ibn Khalid ibn Rabi' (he was the brother of the poet Labid) ibn 'Amir ibn Kilab ibn Rabi'a ibn 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'a, of the tribe of Kilab. She was famous for her *kunya* 'Umm al-Banin'.

The Commander of the faithful, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib married her at the suggestion of his brother, 'Aqil ibn Abi Talib, who was an expert in the genealogy of the Arabs. He had asked 'Aqil to look for a woman for him who would give birth to Arab warriors so that he could marry her and she could bear him a noble son. 'Aqil indicated her to him.

After the death of Lady Fatima, the radiant, he had married her, or perhaps after his marriage to Umama, daughter of Zaynab, daughter of the Apostle of God.

She bore the Commander of the faithful four sons. They were al-'Abbas (he was the eldest of them), 'Abd Allah, Ja'far and 'Uthman. These were her sons (*banin*) and she was given her *kunya* after them so that she was called 'Umm al-Banin'.

They were all martyred in front of their brother, Imam al-Husayn, at Karbala'.

Al-'Abbas had lived with his father, Imam 'Ali, for fourteen years. On the day he was martyred, he was about thirty-four years of age.

He married Lubaba, daughter of 'Ubayd Allah ibn al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, and she bore him two sons. They were 'Ubayd Allah ibn al-'Abbas ibn 'Ali and al-Fadl ibn al-'Abbas ibn 'Ali. Through the latter he received his *kunya* so that he is called Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas.

He was a mighty horseman with tall stature. 'He used to ride a sturdy horse and his feet could trail along the ground.' He was brave and was given the nickname, 'the moon of the Hashimites', because of his beauty. At Karbala' after his martyrdom he was given the nickname 'the bringer of water', and 'the father of the water-skin', because he risked his life to provide water for al-Husayn's camp after the Umayyad army blockaded it from water.

Then he had made more than one raid to the Euphrates to bring water. He was martyred in one of these attempts on 10th Muharram after his hands had been cut off during the battle while he was holding a water-skin which he had filled with water in order to give a drink to the children who were parched with thirst.

He was the standard-bearer of al-Husayn at Karbala'. When al-Husayn put his followers into their positions early in the morning of 10th Muharram, his place was in the centre. He was martyred after his brothers whom he asked to go before him into the battle.

ii

Al-'Abbas was a man of knowledge. In this connection, it is reported that the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali, said: 'My son, al-'Abbas, has fed well on knowledge.'

Concerning him, it is reported that Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq said: 'Our uncle, al-'Abbas, was penetrating in his insight and firm in faith. He had a position with God, for which all the other martyrs envied him.'

It seems from the *rajaz* poetry, which is attributed to him and which he used to recite at the battle in which he was martyred – it seems from this *rajaz* poetry that he was at a very high level of awareness of his faith. Despite the fact that he took part in a battle which his brother led against a family which was hostile to his family, not the slightest hint of his personal feeling appears in his *rajaz* verse. In it, he only speaks of the religion which his brother, al-Husayn, embodied by being Imam. He recited:

By God, if you cut off my right hand, I will still defend my religion. And an Imam who speaks truly and with certainty, the pure and faithful offspring of the Prophet.

Al-'Abbas is singled out from all the other martyrs, whether Hashimite or not, with an independent grave on which a great shrine has been built.

iii

In all the poetry of lament which has been composed about Karbala', al-'Abbas is mentioned as one of the martyrs, most outstanding in rank, or the most outstanding of them in rank, after al-Husayn. Later poets of the Shi'a have composed special poems of lament for him.

In the rites of remembrance for the death of al-Husayn, he has a special position. Thus he is remembered with special honour and is favoured by the full description of his life and martyrdom. In the rites of 'Ashura' special rites of remembrance for his death are held. The preachers on the pulpit during the rites of remembrance for al-Husayn in Iraq, usually speak of him on the night of 7th Muharram.

Al-'Abbas enjoys a very strong presence in the popular consciousness of Iraqi and Iranian Shi'ites, which is clearly reflected in the intense and crowded thronging to perform a visitation to his tomb.

Al-'Abbas occupies a special place in the pilgrimage. Whenever his name is mentioned, it is associated with the call for peace to be with him and his position is praised in nearly every one of the prayers of pilgrimage for Imam al-Husayn.

Similarly pilgrimages specially concerned with him, have been reported from the Imams of the Holy Family. In what follows we will mention an example of one of them which Abu Hamza al-Thumali has reported from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. Ja'far al-Sadiq said: 'When you want to perform a pilgrimage to the tomb of al-'Abbas ibn 'Ali, it is on the bank of the Euphrates opposite the Ha'ir, stand at the door of the enclosure and say:

1. The peace of God, the peace of His angels who bring men close to God, of His Prophets who He has sent, of His righteous worshippers, of all the martyrs and men of truth, and the pure blessings, which come constantly, be with you, O son of the Commander of the faithful.

I testify to your submission to Islam, truthfulness, loyalty and devotion to the successor of the Prophet sent by God, the chosen grandson, the knowing guide, the one entrusted with authority who conveyed his mission, the man who was wronged and killed.

May God reward you with the best reward on behalf of His Apostle, on behalf of the Commander of the faithful and on behalf of al-Hasan and al-Husayn, the blessings of God be with them, for what you endured, sacrificed and suffered. May the result be blessings in Paradise.

May God curse those who killed you. May God curse those who were ignorant of your rights and who scorned your sacredness. May God curse those who prevented you from getting the water of the Euphrates.

Throughout the prayer for peace in this form, the prayer of the *ziyara* reveals the group to which al-'Abbas belongs. He belongs to the angels, the prophets, the martyrs and the men of truth. The passage which follows the section praying for peace explains the reasons for al-'Abbas belonging to these groups of righteous worshippers of God.

He is a Muslim, truthful, loyal and devoted to Imam al-Husayn. That is to say, he is loyal to his religious commitment which arises out of him being a sincere Muslim because, at this point, al-Husayn is not a brother, he is the leader of Islam.

This section of the prayer of *ziyara* ends with the prayer that God will reward al-'Abbas for his noble stance. Then it renounces, with a curse, his enemies as the enemies of religious law. In this section also the distinguished role of al-'Abbas is given prominence in a way which preserves his memory in popular consciousness as the most outstanding of those concerned to provide the thirsty camp with water.

2. I testify that you were killed unjustly and that God will fulfil his promise to you. O son of the Commander of the faithful, I have come as a pilgrim to you. My heart submits to you; and I will follow you. My support will always be ready for you until God gives His judgement, and He is the best of judges.

I will be with you, with you, not with your enemies. I am one of the believers with you and will suffer with you. I am not one of the unbelievers with those who oppose you and killed you. May God kill a people who killed you with their hands and tongues.

In this section, the pilgrim bears witness to the justice of the cause, for which al-'Abbas was martyred by saying that he was killed unjustly. Therefore his killers must be unjust. Yet the pilgrim is not in despair because the ultimate result of al-'Abbas' struggle is that he is certain of God's victory and the

establishment of a state of truth and justice.

The pilgrim proclaims his commitment to the same policy of struggle, which al-'Abbas had followed and for which he had died. In the same way he proclaims his renunciation of the opposite policy, the policy of injustice which the Umayyads followed.

3. Peace be with you, O righteous worshipper, dedicated to God, to His Apostle, to the Commander of the faithful and to al-Hasan and al-Husayn, may peace be with them. Peace be with you and the mercy, blessings and favour of God be with you, your soul and your body.

I testify, and God is my witness, that you died like those who fought at Badr for the sake of God, who acted in good faith toward Him in fighting against His enemies who did their utmost in support of His chosen ones and who defended His loved ones. May God reward you with the best and most abundant reward of any one of those who fulfilled their pledge to Him, answered His call and obeyed those whom He had entrusted with authority.

I testify that you exceeded the utmost in good faith and that you gave the ultimate in striving. Then God raised you among the martyrs and put your soul alongside the souls of the martyrs. He has given you one of the largest and best places in His Paradise and has gathered you with the prophets, the truthful ones, the martyrs and the righteous men as a good companion for them.

I testify that you have never demeaned yourself nor recoiled. You died in full awareness of your situation, emulating the righteous and following the example of the Prophets. God will unite us with you, with His Apostle and with His saints in the mansions of those who are Humble before God. Indeed He is the most merciful of those who are merciful.

In this passage the pilgrim begins his address by asking for peace to be with him and by a prayer in which he demonstrates the element of the faithful obedience shown by al-'Abbas which arises out of an awareness of duty and a commitment to it.

After the call for peace and the prayer, the pilgrim gives testimony that this obedience was not formal; it expressed itself through practical commitment. Here a group is shown to which al-'Abbas belongs in a more defined way, namely those who fought at Badr. These men occupy the highest rank in the processions of noble martyrs who bore witness to the truth with their lives in front of the Apostle of God.

Then follows the testimony that in his striving al-'Abbas went beyond the standard required by virtue of being an obedient Muslim to a much higher standard. He 'exceeded the utmost in good faith and gave the ultimate in striving.'

Next there is the testimony that he carried out his magnificent role at Karbala¹, resolutely facing death in the end through a conscience governed by principle. His was not an unconscious faith, nor a blind faith because there is no blind faith in Islam. ' . . . You died in full awareness of your situation' Therefore

there was, in his high moral attitude, that with which he achieved the highest Islamic moral standards in transcending one's personal nature.⁴¹ In this attitude, ' . . . he never demeaned himself nor recoiled.' This is confirmation that his attitude was the result of consciousness, 'full awareness'.⁴²

Abu Hamza al-Thumali has reported from Imam Ja'far al Sadiq that he said that when he parted from al-'Abbas, he should say:

4. I bid farewell to you, commending you to God and asking for your concern and attention. I recite my call for peace to be with you. We believe in God, His Apostle, His Book and what he brought from God. O God, decree that we should be with the martyrs. O God, do not make this the last pilgrimage to the grave of the cousin of Your Prophet. For as long as You preserve me, let me make pilgrimages to him. Then Bather me with him and his fathers in Paradise. O God, bring recognition between him, Your Apostle and Your saints and myself.

*O God, grant blessings to Muhammad and the family of Muhammad and receive me as someone who believes in you, who acknowledges the truth of your Apostle and the authority (wilaya) of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Imams among his offspring and who renounces their enemies. O Lord, I have been pleased to do that.*⁴³

This form of farewell reveals the depth of the emotional association of principle between the pilgrim and al-'Abbas. It links them with bonds of love which arise out of both of them being committed to one principle in which the one to whom the pilgrimage is being made represents the role of the exemplary model.

Then the pilgrim declares his faith and directs his prayer towards God, asking Him to create a permanent association with al-'Abbas both in this world and the Hereafter. He asks God to strengthen him in faith and keep him loyal to Islam and to the authority of the Imams of the Holy Family.

2. The ziyara of 'Ali (al-Akbar) ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib

i

'Ali ibn al-Husayn was born on 11th Shaban in the year 33. When he was martyred on 10th Muharram in the year 61, he was twenty-seven years and five months old. His mother was Layla bint Abi Murra ibn 'Urwa ibn Mas'ud al-Thaqafi. Urwa ibn Mas'ud had been an important intermediary between Mecca and al-Ta'if. The grandmother of 'Ali's mother was Maymuna bint Abi Sufyan, the sister of Mu'awiya and the aunt of Yazid.

Ali ibn al-Husayn had the *kunya* of Abu al-Hasan. There is a report from Imam al-Rida that he married a slave-mother of his child (*umm walad*) but we doubt the authenticity of this report. However, in the prayer for his *ziyara* there is some evidence that he had children. It says, 'May God bless you, your offspring, your family, your fathers and your sons.' It is, nonetheless, possible that the words 'your sons'

(*abna' ika*) may be an addition of a copyist or a misrepresentation of 'your fathers' (*aba' ika*).

The *kunya* (naming a man as father of so and so, in this case Abu al-Hasan) is not evidence that he was married and had children. It may have been given out of the appropriateness of the name, 'Ali to go with the *kunya*, Abu al-Hasan –this was the name and *kunya* of his grandfather, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.

The custom was carried out of giving a child a *kunya* when he was born as being among some of the practices mentioned by legal scholars, in accordance with reports that have been handed down from the Imams of the Holy Family concerning this matter. In any case whether 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (al-Akbar) was in fact married is doubtful in our view.

Ali was given the nickname al-Akbar (the elder) to distinguish him from his brother 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin.

He was like the Apostle of God in form, temperament and speech and had a handsome face.

Ali al-Akbar was the first of the Hashimite martyrs after all the supporters of al-Husayn, from outside the Hashimite family, had been martyred. When only his family were left with al-Husayn, one after the other came to say farewell to him. 'Ali al-Akbar was the first to ask his father's permission to go into battle. Al-Husayn bowed his head and wept. Then he raised in supplication to God as he said:

O God, I testify against these people, against whom has advanced a young man who most resembles your Apostle in form, temperament and speech. When we used to long for Your Prophet, we used to look at him.

When he went forward to fight, he was offered security in view of his kinship with Yazid ibn Mu'awiya through the grandmother of his mother, Maymuna bint Abi Sufyan. He refused the offer of security which had been given to him, saying, 'Kinship with the Apostle of God has a greater right to be observed.'

He had directed himself into battle while suffering from severe thirst. He returned to the camp of his father, Imam al-Husayn, after having fought fiercely and having killed a great number. His thirst became unendurable. When he told his father about his thirst, the latter wept and said, 'Help will come for it. Soon you will meet your grandfather; he will give you a drink from his cup after which you will never be thirsty.' He took his tongue and licked it, and he gave him his ring to put in his mouth.

Ali al-Akbar returned to the battle and died a martyr.

ii

Ali al-Akbar enjoyed the highest level of consciousness in faith. There is a text which gives clear evidence of this fact. A conversation took place between Imam al-Husayn and his son, 'Ali al-Akbar after al-Husayn and his followers had learnt of what had happened to Muslim ibn 'Aqil in Kufa.

The end to which the revolution was coming was clear to everyone. While al-Husayn was continuing the journey with his followers, he was heard to say: 'We belong to God and to Him we shall return. Praise be to God, Lord of the universe.'

'Ali al-Akbar asked him why he had recited the verse of return used for those who die.

The Imam replied, 'I became drowsy and my head nodded off. A horseman appeared before me, saying: "The people are advancing and death is coming towards you." Then I knew that our lives were bringing the news of our deaths to us.'

'God will not show evil towards us,' replied 'Ali al-Akbar. 'Aren't we in the right?'

'Yes,' he answered, 'it is to Him that all men must return.' 'Father,' declared 'Ali al-Akbar, 'as long as we are in the right, we should have no cares.'

'May God reward you with the best reward a son can receive from his father,' exclaimed al-Husayn.[44](#)

Mention is made of 'Ali al-Akbar in all the lamentation poetry which has been composed about al-Husayn. Later poets of the Shi'a have also composed special poems of lament about him. In their odes they recall his qualities, the way he asked his father's permission to fight, his thirst and the sorrow, grief and distress of his mother, Layla, when he was martyred.

'Ali al-Akbar enjoys an outstanding place in the rites of remembrance for al-Husayn. One of the nights of the ten days to 'Ashura ' is devoted to him, when preachers on the pulpit tell the story of his martyrdom.

He has also been given a distinguished place in the rituals of *ziyara*; in all the rituals of *ziyara* to al-Husayn, his son, 'Ali-Akbar, is especially mentioned. In the prayers of his *ziyara* there are expressions calling for peace to be with him, expressions of honour and praise for his struggle and expressions of distress for what happened to him.

Everything which comes in the ritual of *ziyara* to him comes within the ritual of *ziyara* to Imam al-Husayn. As far as we know, there is no repetition of it in an independent *ziyara* as there is in the case of his uncle, al-'Abbas. Perhaps this results from the fact that his grave is nearby the grave of his father, Imam al-Husayn, in contrast to al-'Abbas whose grave is far from the grave of his brother.

Among the prayers of *ziyara* for 'Ali al-Akbar which come within the prayers of *ziyara* for his father, Imam al-Husayn, is one which Abu Hamza al-Thumali has reported from Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, who said after he had taught him how to perform the *ziyara* to Imam al-Husayn that then he should pass on to the grave of 'Ali ibn al-Husayn which is at the foot of al-Husayn's and say:

Peace be with you, O son of the Apostle, and the mercy and blessings of God, son of the successor (khalifa) of the Apostle of God, son of the daughter of the Apostle of God. May the peace, the mercy and the blessings of God be multiplied with you whenever the sun rises and sets. Peace be with you and the

mercy and blessings of God.

I would sacrifice my mother and my father for you, that you were unjustly slaughtered and killed. I would sacrifice my mother and father for you, that when you came before your father, he reckoned Heaven would be yours and he wept for you, with his hearts burning with pain for you. He raised your blood in his hand towards the clouds in the sky.

No drop of it came back to him. No moaning comforted your father for your loss. He said farewell to you at your departure. Your place with God is with your fathers who have died and with your mothers in Heaven. Before God, I renounce those who killed and slaughtered you.

This section of the *ziyara* begins with a prayer for peace to be with him, in which the kinship of 'Ali al-Akbar is shown. This kinship involves the Apostle of God. 'Ali al-Akbar is the son (that is a direct great-grandson), of the Apostle of God and he is the son of the successor (*khalifa*) of the Apostle of God (that is, he is a grandson of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib).

The same description is frequently used about al-Husayn without mentioning him by name. This goes to show the position of sanctity which 'Ali al-Akbar enjoys in terms of the fact that all the descriptions of his kinship come together with the 'Apostle of God'.

The prayer of the *ziyara* conveys scenes from Karbala' in the emotional cry from the heart, 'I would sacrifice my mother and father for you'; the scene of 'Ali al-Akbar coming forward to his father to ask for permission to go into battle; the scene of al-Husayn bending over the prostrate body of his son, taking his blood into his hand and raising it to the sky. Then the pilgrim renounces those who have committed the crime of killing him.

The peace of God, the peace of His angels who bring men close to God, the peace of His prophets whom he has sent, the peace of his righteous worshippers be with you, my master, son of my master, and the mercy and blessings of God be with you. May God bless you, your offspring, your family, your fathers, your sons and your mother, the best of people, the pious ones from whom God has removed all evil and whom He has made pure.

Peace be with you, son of the Apostle of God, son of the Commander of the faithful, son of al-Husayn ibn 'Ali and the mercy and blessings of God. May God curse your killers. May God curse those of them who survived and those of them who died. May God curse those who scorned your rights and those who killed you. May God curse those of them who survived and those of them who died. May God and His angels bless you and grant you much peace.

In this passage, the pilgrim repeats his call for peace to be with 'Ali al-Akbar in another form. This peace is from God and a select group of humans: prophets and their sincere sons. During this call for peace, he shows that this elect group is one to which 'Ali al-Akbar belongs. In the same way the other form of this call for peace shows the relationships of kinship of 'Ali al-Akbar from another angle which differs

from the previous passage.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq went on to tell Abu Hamza that he should put his cheek against the tomb and say:

May God bless you, O Abu al-Hasan (three times). I would sacrifice my father and my mother, I have come to you as a pilgrim, journeying to you and seeking refuge with you from the evil which I have inflicted upon myself and which I gathered up on my back. I ask God Who is Your authority (wali) and mine that He make my destiny be through my ziyara to you, freedom from the burden of Hell-fire.[45](#)

Perhaps Imam Jafar al-Sadiq's direction to put one's cheek on the grave is an allusion to what Imam al-Husayn did when he stood over the dead body of his son and put his cheek against his, saying, 'After you there is nothing left in the world What has made them so bold against God to commit sacrilege against the Apostle?'

The action of putting one's cheek against the grave is an expression of the emotions of love, sadness and devotion. The pilgrim finishes the prayer of his *ziyara* by praying to God that He forgives him his sins and frees him from the punishment of Hell-fire.

3. The ziyara of the Martyrs of Karbala'

i

The martyrs of the revolution of al-Husayn at Karbala' have a very strong presence in popular consciousness. Their hearts encompass the emotions of love, wonder and sanctity which arise out of their attitude and devotion at Karbala.[46](#)

The scope for any discussion of these pious men, may God be pleased with them, is broad and extensive. Their lives, which they directed towards their struggle is full of lessons and morals for every generation which aspires to take any part in the noble search for peaceful social change.

It is not one of the purposes of this brief section to include studies of their numbers, accounts of all their lives and details of the participation of each of them at Karbala'. We have devoted a book to these studies, as already indicated.[47](#) We only intend here to show their existence and presence in popular consciousness as reflected in the prayers of *ziyara* in which they are addressed by the pilgrim as has been reported from the Imams of the Holy Family, together with an indication of their existence in popular consciousness as reflected in poetry and the rites of remembrance.

* * *

The martyrs of the revolution of al-Husayn expressed their high degree of awareness in the revolution until the end which they knew would be martyrdom. They refused to take advantage of al-Husayn's offer to them that they should leave him and that each one should try to save his own life. This was when he gathered them together on the evening of 10th Muharram and spoke to them.

Among the things he said to them was: ' . . . Indeed I think that tomorrow will be the day when we meet these enemies. I have already given you permission to go. Therefore you are all released s you in darkness. Take advantage of it to ride away. Let each of you take the hand of a member of my Holy Family. Then God give you all a good reward. Scatter to your lands and towns. These people are not pursuing you. If they could strike me down, they would not bother to pursue anyone else.'

Muslim ibn 'Awsaja spoke: 'Are we to leave you? How would we excuse ourselves to God for not carrying out our duty towards you? By God, I will not leave you until I lunge my spear into their breast, until I strike them with my sword for as long as its hilt remains in my hand. If I no longer have any weapon to fight with, I will hurl stones against them until I die with you.'

Then Sa'id ibn 'Abd Allah al-Hanafi spoke: 'We will not leave you so that God may know that we have remained loyal to the absent Apostle of God through you. By God, if I knew that I would be killed, then brought back to life, then burnt alive, then scattered in the wind, and that was done to me seventy times, I would not leave you until I meet my death in defence of you. How, then, could I not do so when death only comes once? It will be an honour which will have no end.'

Zuhayr ibn al-Qayn, next, spoke: 'By God, I want to be killed, then brought back again so that I may be killed in that way a thousand times. Indeed God, the Mighty and High, will guard my soul and the soul of these young men from the Holy Family through that death.'[48](#)

The rest of his followers spoke similar sentiments.

* * *

In the same way they refused to let any of the Holy Family go into battle before them. They went forward towards the Umayyad army until they were all killed.

Al-Husayn spoke words of praise when they were killed, some of which have been preserved by the narrators. These words express his esteem and love for them. An example is the words he spoke over the dead body of Muslim ibn 'Awsaja: 'May God have mercy on you, O Ibn 'Awsaja. *Of them are some who have fulfilled their pledge (met their death) and of them are some who still wait but have not changed their mind.*'[49](#)

He addressed al-Hurr when he had been killed: 'You are a free man (*hurr*), al-Hurr just like your mother named you. You are free in this world and in the Hereafter.' To the corpse of Zuhayr ibn al-Qayn, he said: 'God will not destroy you, Zuhayr. May He curse your killers and may He curse those who turned themselves into baboons and pigs.'

Al-Husayn had said of them: ' . . . I do not know of followers more faithful than my followers, nor a family more pious and generous than my family.'[50](#)

Lamentation poetry also alludes to the followers of al-Husayn, commending them and praising their attitude and devotion. Only a few of the names of the martyrs are mentioned in lamentation poetry, and then it is some of the famous among them who are mentioned, men like al-Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi, Muslim ibn 'Awsaja and Zuhayr ibn al-Qayn. However, we have not come across any poetry which has been specially composed about them.

The same is the case with regard to the rites of remembrance. The rites of remembrance for al-Husayn do mention them when the appropriate subject requires it. Sometimes some of the famous ones among them are mentioned by name when the subject requires the reporting of an incident in which one of them was involved.

Lamentation poetry and the rites of remembrances are only incidentally concerned with them, and it does not happen that they are made an independent topic, by itself, in lamentation poetry and the rites of remembrance. As we have observed in our book, *Ansar al-Husayn* (the Supporters of al-Husayn),⁵¹ they have not been given the attention which they deserve by narrators, researchers and authors.

There we commented: 'Perhaps the glorious radiance which emanates from the personality of Imam al-Husayn, and the great shadow which this great personality leaves on the spirit of the researcher, has been responsible to some extent for the neglect of historians and Traditionists in providing us with the basic material for a better study.'⁵²

Here we might add that perhaps it may be the glorious radiance, which emanates from the personality of Imam al-Husayn, and the great shadow, which this great personality leaves on the spirit of the poet and the preacher at rites of remembrance, has been responsible for the deficiency which has occurred with regard to these martyrs in the poetry of lamentation for al-Husayn and the rites of remembrance for al-Husayn.

We consider that the poets of lament would find a rich spring of images, emotions and feelings as well as struggles full of human ideals in the lives of these martyrs. In the same way the preachers at the rites of remembrance would find, in their lives, material of great value for education and direction which would make the rites of remembrance richer and more engrossing.

It would seem that there would be the possibility, at the end of the second stage of the rites of remembrance for al-Husayn, of making the followers of al-Husayn an independent topic in the rites of remembrance for al-Husayn. We already find the first beginnings of this tendency from al-Shaykh Fakhr al-Din in his book, *al-Muntakhab*, in a number of the accounts of gatherings (*majalis*) in that book.⁵³ Yet it still seems to be a tendency which has not established any permanence.

We have drawn attention to this problem so that it may be given the regard which it deserves from all those who are concerned in reciting poetry for al-Husayn and in the rites of remembrance so that they should develop in the best and most beneficial way, both in form and content. We will return to dealing with this problem in the chapter about the rites of remembrance for al-Husayn.

Although the martyrs of Karbala¹ have been deprived of their right to be honoured and extolled in the poetry of lament for al-Husayn and in the rites of remembrance for al-Husayn, although the Shi'ite individual has been deprived of deriving full benefit from their lives in those two fields, the matter is different in the *ziyara*, insofar as none of the pilgrimages to al-Husayn, whether of a general or particular nature, is likely to be without a prayer of *ziyara* to them, which will be full of expressions of honour and love, drawing attention to their role in the service of Islam by their struggle and self-sacrifice.

The following is one of the prayers of a *ziyara* which has been reported about them.

*Peace be with you, O men associated with God. You are our predecessors and fore-runners, and we are your followers and supporters. I testify that you are the supporters of God, as God has said in His Book: How many a prophet has fought, with whom were men worshippers of the Lord and they were not weak because of what they had been struck by for the sake of God and they were not humiliated.*⁵⁴

You have not been feeble, you have not been weak and you did not surrender until you met God on the path of truth and in support of the complete words of God. May God bless your souls and your bodies and grant them peace.

In the form of the call for peace, the prayer of the *ziyara*, attention is drawn to the quality of *rabbaniyya*. This word means 'a relationship with the God at a high level' which makes the life of a man who worships the Lord (*rabbani*) an act which is dedicated to God insofar as personal desires are united with responsibilities imposed by the Divinely inspired way of life and morality. There can be nothing opposed to these responsibilities.

Thus the quality in man of being associated with God entails 'loving through God and hating through God'.

Then the pilgrim expresses the idea that is associated with them, has embraced underlying principle and is following their path. He considers himself to be their follower and supporter, and he regards them as predecessors and fore-runners. There is one continuous path, a single path joined by links. They are an earlier link in it and the pilgrim is a link following them along this path. In this way the pilgrim expresses his commitment in principle to the revolution of al-Husayn.

The pilgrim goes on to testify that they are defiant, strong and noble supporters of God. They are like the devoted supporters of prophets, who fight with their supporters in the cause of God.

*Rejoice at the promise of God, which will not be altered, for God does not alter His promises. God will attain the vengeance for you which He promised you. You are masters of the martyrs in this world and the Hereafter. You are the one who went first, the emigrants (*muhajirin*) and the supporters (*ansar*).*

I testify that you fought for the sake of God. You were killed fighting for the policies of the Apostle of God

and the son of the Apostle of God. Praise be to God, Who has kept Faithful to His promise to you and shown you what you love. [55](#)

In this passage of the pilgrim's prayer of the *ziyara*, he expresses this deep-rooted hope that the lofty aims, for the sake of which the supporters of al-Husayn fought, will be achieved because that is God's promise and He does not alter His promise. For this reason, the pilgrim does not despair because the followers of al-Husayn were martyred without achieving their aims during their lives.

After this, the pilgrim describes them with Qur'anic expressions which were revealed concerning a select band of believers. They are those who went first to the faith, they were emigrants to God and they were supporters of the religion of God.

They were those who went first in terms of all the bravery involved in the quality of being first. It is a bravery which enables the one who has such a quality to go beyond the stagnant imitative attitudes of the people of his time and to realise his dreams of the future in a movement of defiance which has taken over his life.

It does, however, provide an ideal model and example for future generations. Thereby great honour is achieved. In this respect, the followers of al-Husayn are those who went first, who went beyond the attitudes of their generation and the cowardly norms of their society in a movement of defiance in which they have cut a path for future generations.

They were the emigrants (*muhajirin*) in terms of all that the emigration (*hijra*) implies of leaving the usual, the familiar, the comfortable and the guaranteed for the unusual, hardship and danger for the sake of others, not for the sake of themselves. Emigration (*hijra*) goes beyond the self to others for the sake of God.

They were supporters (*ansar*) in terms of all that support implies of altruism, cooperation and enduring dangers for the sake of God.

The pilgrim brings this part of the prayer of *ziyara* to an end and giving testimony which springs from these qualities: they fought for the sake of God and they were killed defending the policies of the Apostle of God and Imam al-Husayn.

* * *

Texts have been reported from the Imams of the Holy Family about the words of farewell to the martyrs when the pilgrim finishes his pilgrimage to al-Husayn. Among them is the following.

O God, do not make this my last pilgrimage to them. Rather make me close to them and bring me into the righteousness which you gave to them through their support for the son of Your Prophet and Your proof (hujja) to Your creatures and through their struggle alongside him for Your sake.

O God, unite us and them in Your Paradise with the righteous men, and may they be good companions.

I commend you to God's protection and I recite my prayer for peace to be with you. O God, grant me the chance of coming to them again. Gather me with them on the Last day, O Most Merciful of those who are merciful. [56](#)

These words of farewell throb with hope of what may come from God, with love for the martyrs and with the wish for God to allow the pilgrim to express his close ties of love by coming again to these martyrs, may God be pleased with them all.

[1.](#) The following passage is taken from al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin's *Kashf al-Irtiyab fi Atba' Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Wahab* (p. 471) citing al-Samhudi, *Wafa' al-Wafa' bi Akhbar Dar al-Mustafa*, II 411-415.

[2.](#) Ibn Maja. *Sunan*. vol. L, 235.

[3.](#) Muslim, *Sahih* on the margin of *Irshad al-Sari*, IV, 225.

[4.](#) *Ibid.*; Ibn Maja, *op. cit.*, 245; al-Nasa'i, vol. L, 286.

[5.](#) Al-Samhudi, *op. cit.*, II, 112.

[6.](#) *Ibid.*, II, 410.

[7.](#) Al-Sayyid Muhsin al-Amin, *Kashf al-Irtiyab ...*; *op. cit.* devotes chapter XVII, pp. 459-483 to the ziyara to tombs. In this chapter there is a comprehensive study of the problem of ziyara in all its aspects. We have relied upon it for all that we have presented above. The significance of the statement by Abu Bakr is that Ziyad claimed to be the son of Abu Sufyan but this had no basis for legitimacy because he was born as the result of an unlawful relationship between Abu Sufyan and Sumayya, his mother, whereas Umm Habiba, a mother of the faithful, was a legitimate daughter of Abu Sufyan. If Ziyad made the ziyara to the tomb of the Apostle in Medina, he ought to visit Umm Habiba as he claimed that she was his sister. She was not, however, his sister because, as we have just mentioned, he was not a legitimate son of Abu Sufyan. If she had met him because of his claim that she was his sister, that would have been a betrayal of the Apostle of God. If she had refused to meet him, that would have been a humiliation for him and a denial of his claim to be the son of Abu Sufyan.

[8.](#) Ibn Qawlawayh al-Qummi, *Kamil al-ziyara* (Najaf, 1356 A.H.) 177-178.

[9.](#) *Ibid.*, 197.

[10.](#) *Ibid.*, 233.

[11.](#) *Ibid.*, 240.

[12.](#) *Ibid.*, 138-141, 146.

[13.](#) Al-Kulayni, *Rawdat al-Kafi*, (Tehran, 1389 A.H.), 255.

[14.](#) Ibn Qawlawayh, *op. cit.*, 121.

[15.](#) *Ibid.*, 125.

[16.](#) *Ibid.*, 115-118.

[17.](#) *Ibid.*, 12s-6.

[18.](#) *Ibid.*, 1334.

[19.](#) *Ibid.*, 135.

[20.](#) *Ibid.*, 138.

[21.](#) *Ibid.*, 122.

[22.](#) 'This matter' (*amr*) is a term which occurs frequently in reports and Traditions from the Imams of the Holy Family; it also occurs in the questions of their followers. It means 'Shi'ism'. A person who knows 'this matter' is a Shi'ite, and someone who does not know 'this matter' is a non-Shi'ite. Perhaps this expression to indicate Shi'ism was used in conversations because of the atmosphere of caution which prevailed among the Shi'a as a result of the state's hostile attitude to them.

[23.](#) Ibn Qawlawayh, *op. cit.*, 140.

[24.](#) *Ibid.*, 325-6.

[25.](#) *Ibid.*, 133-5.

[26.](#) Ibid, 154,163.

[27.](#) Ibid., 176.

[28.](#) Ibid, 202.

[29.](#) Ibid, 127.

[30.](#) Ibid, 126.

[31.](#) Ibid, 111–2.

[32.](#) Ibid, 125.

[33.](#) Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin*, 579–9. Ibn Khallikan has also reported: When al-Mutawakkil destroyed the tomb of al-Husayn in the year 226, al-Bisami recited: 'By God, if it was the Umayyads who wrongfully killed the son of the daughter of their Prophet, his cousins have come against him in the same way. By my life, here is his tomb destroyed. They regretted that they had not participated in killing him. So they pursued him as a corpse.' Al-Tusi has reported in *al-Amali* (p. 209) from Abd Allah ibn Daniyya al-Turi, who said: I made the pilgrimage (hajj) in the year 247 A.H. When I came from pilgrimage (hajj) and went to Iraq, I made a ziyara to the tomb of Ali b. Abi Talib in a state of fear because of the authorities. Then I went to make a ziyara to the tomb of al-Husayn. Its ground had been ploughed up, water had been poured over it, and oxen and men sent to work on it. With my own eyes, I saw oxen being driven over the ground. They were driven over it until they came to the tomb where they turned to the right and left of it. Even though they were beaten fiercely with sticks, it did not make them tread directly on the grave. It was impossible for me to make a ziyara. Therefore I headed for Damascus while reciting: By God, the Umayyads came against Cf. *Adab al-Taff*, (Beirut, 1969) 327.

[34.](#) Al-Tabari, *op cit.*, IX, 185.

[35.](#) *I'lam al-Wara*, 421; al-Tusi, *al-Ghayba*, 172. It appears that in this period of the Abbasid dynasty the terrorisation had become so much greater than what it had been in the beginning of the Abbasid government and in the Umayyad period that the Imam was impelled to order a temporary halt to be made in the movement of the Shi'a to make the ziyara. This situation had not occurred in the time of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq from which the majority of the reports about making the ziyara in a state of fear come. In some of these he directs the Shi'a not to give any consideration to fear as an excuse for not making the ziyara. For example, his words to Mu'awiya ibn Wahb: 'Do not abandon the ziyara of the tomb of al-Husayn because of fear Ibn Qawlawayh, *op. cit.*, 126.

[36.](#) Originally al-Ha'ir meant 'flat ground in which water flowed around', in the sense that there was no way for it to flow out. In the Traditions of the Holy Family, it is a name for the area surrounding the tomb of al-Husayn. It is a subject of dispute with regard to the definition among the Jurists because of it being a place for the application of the religious law which give a traveller the choice of shortening the salat and completing it in the Ha'ir. Ibn Idris al-Hilli holds the view that it is the area which runs around the wall of the shrine and the mosque there. According to some, it is the whole of the courtyard surrounding the shrine and the mosque. Others maintain that it is the area which the dome erected over the grave shelters. Yet others state that it is the enclosure of the sacred garden and the sacred building which surround it including the portico, site of the martyrdom, the enclosure and other buildings. According to al-Majlisi, the author of *Bihar al-Anwar*, the obvious definition is the whole of the ancient courtyard, not the area defined in the Safavid dynasty. Al-Sayyid al-Hakim regards that the restriction to the most certain extent of the meaning of Ha'ir and sacred enclave (haram) is the area which is close to the sacred mausoleum. (Cf. *Mustamsak*, VIII, 718.) It appears that naming the tomb together with the area around it as al-Ha'ir developed after al-Mutawakkil's destruction of the tomb.

[37.](#) Qur'an LVII, 61; Ibn Qawlawayh, *op. cit.*, 75.

[38.](#) Ibid

[39.](#) Ibid., 194–7.

[40.](#) Ibid., 206–7.

[41.](#) Cf. my book *Bayn al-Jahiliyya wa-al-Islam* (Beirut. 1975), the chapter on morals (*al-akhlaq*).

[42.](#) Cf. my book *Ansar al Husayn*, *op. cit.*, 165–70, where there is a study of 'the people of awareness'.

[43.](#) Ibn Qawlawayh, *op. cit.*, 256–7

[44.](#) There is some confusion over this 'Ali al-Akbar. According to Shaykh al-Mufid, he is 'Ali Zayn al-'Abidin, while, according to Shaykh Shams al-Din, he is the 'Ali who was murdered at Karbala'. Nonetheless, it still seems incorrect to attribute this conversation with Imam al-Husayn to him, for it actually took place between Imam al-Husayn and 'Ali Zayn al-

'Abidin. (tr.)

[45.](#) Ibid., 139–140.

[46.](#) We have published a book about them which we mentioned earlier in this book. Ansar al-Husayn Dirasa 'an Shuhada' Thawrat al Husayn: al-Rijal wa al-Dalala, (Beirut, 1975).

[47.](#) Cf. note 68 above.

[48.](#) Al-Tabari, op. cit., V, 419ff; al-Ya'qubi, op. cit., II, 231; al-Khawarizmi op. cit., I, 247.

[49.](#) Al-Tabari, op. cit., V, 435. The allusion is to Qur 'an, 33:23.

[50.](#) Al-Shaykh al-Mufid, al Irshad, op. cit., 231.

[51.](#) Cf. Ansar al-Husayn, op. cit.

[52.](#) Ibid, 11

[53.](#) Al-Turayhi, al-Muntakhab, 36, 76, 100, 415.

[54.](#) Qur 'an, 3:146.

[55.](#) Ibn Qawlawayh, op. cit., 204.

[56.](#) Ibid, 209

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