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Legislating the Ziyarat

During certain times, hordes of pilgrims regard the *ziyarat* [visiting the Imams' shrines], a highly commendable deed. They visit one of the foundations of the creed and the lighthouse of its guidance, and from it are the injunctions derived and where the branches of knowledge are researched. Visitors go to his grave from various parts of the world. People get to know each other; they witness such an amazing crowd.

There is an incessant stampede. Everyone desires to get to the holy shrine, for the one being visited is the same who promoted a divine call and is a caller to the path of his Lord with wisdom and good exhortation...

The pilgrim realizes, even more so, the greatness of the person he is visiting. He will better appreciate him and his cause, and he will be very impressed by such an elating sight. His heart will be more kind, and his conviction grows stronger. It is only natural that he would then be attracted to following his teachings, studying his biography, researching his legacy, and getting to know the injustice inflicted upon him. And the least of such innumerable benefits does not end here.

There is another advantage: such *ziyarat* cements the bonds of fraternity among brethren, the fraternity called for by the Book of Allah in the verse saying,

"Believers are brethren of one another" (***Qur'an, Sura al-Hujurat, 49:10***).

When the visitors meet at the gravesite or on their way to it, they discuss deeds of righteousness and the rewards related thereto; they admonish one another with regard to the right faith, so the error in the beliefs of other sects becomes unveiled. So is the latter's straying from the right course, and the bond between the faithful becomes based on wisdom.

This is the truth with regard to visiting the shrines of all the Imams of guidance. They are the awesome path, the avenue that leads to every guidance, the conscience of reform, the cultivated rite, the true guidance, the complete knowledge.

Also, belief in them must be established after realizing their apparent distinction, tremendous knowledge, legendary piety, and innumerable miracles. There is no doubt that to visit their holy shrines with the intention to seek nearness to the Master, Praise to Him, strengthens such a creed and firmly establishes it.

This is the only reason for legislating the *ziyarat*. As regarding specifying a particular *ziyarat* for the Master of Martyrs, in addition to urging others to visit his shrine at any time, rather than that of any other Imam, or even that of the Master of Messengers (S), there are many reasons behind that.

The most important reason is that the Umayyad mentality is still alive, and it increases or decreases in intensity from time to time.

Those who have certain vested interests periodically howl about it. Although the Umayyads have turned into dust rags and nothing is attached to their name except shame and they are cursed whenever they are mentioned, yet since such a propensity is atheistic in nature and is promoted by their gang and by those who join them from the generations.

Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) paid a special attention to putting its fire out and to attracting the attention to its deviation from the right path, the path brought by the Greatest Saviour who suffered so much in order to disseminate his call and keep it alive.

One of the means that lead the souls to such a path, acquainting them with the injustice meted to Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and directing them towards the divine right clarified for them by the great legislator (S), is the cause of the Master of Martyrs: It is full of tragedies to which the heart of the most bitter enemy softens, let alone that of his follower who recognizes the Imam's usurped authority.

The Imams (‘a) desired that their Shi’as should remain all year round, as days come and go, fully alert with regard to those who usurped such an authority, the ones that are so distant from the right path. They, therefore, required them to be present around the shrine of the masters of the youths of Paradise on specific occasions, and during other times as well.

It is only natural that such assemblies bring to memory the cruelty employed by the Umayyads who slaughtered the children and banished the daughters of the Prophet (S) from one country to another.

They were forced to ride
Hands to the necks tied
On bare hump she-camels they did ride.
No veil did their faces find:
Behind forearms and hands did they hide.[1]

Fervour and manliness insist that nobody should surrender and accept to be ruled by anyone who inflicts such horrible deeds on anyone else at all, let alone on the family of the most holy Prophet (S). It is then that the souls become filled with emotion, feelings reach their ebb, and judgment is issued against those filthy folks who reneged from the Islamic faith.

Of course, such a cause with regard to the Master of Martyrs is more binding than any other Imam because his cause contains that which softens the hearts. It is from this juncture that the Infallible Ones ('a) used him as their argument whereby they assault their foes.

They, therefore, required their followers to weep, to commemorate in any way, to visit his shrine..., and so on and so forth, causing the *umma* to become full of the memory of Husayn: Husayni in principle, and to the last breath Husayni...

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq ('a) recites a special supplication during his prostration that has been transmitted to us by Mu'awiyah Ibn Wahab. It casts a divine light in the depths of the hearts; it reaffirms the creed; it brings ease to the soul, and it acquaints us with obscure mysteries. The Imam ('a) used to say the following whenever he prostrated:

"Lord! You are the One Who chose us to receive Your bliss, promised us to intercede, granted us the knowledge of what passed and of what remains, made the hearts of some people lean towards us:

I invoke You to forgive me and my brethren and those who visit the gravesite of my grandfather al-Husayn, those who spend their wealth and exhaust themselves out of their desire to express their devotion to us, hoping to earn the rewards which You have for all those who maintain their link with us, and because of the pleasure they bring to Your Prophet, and out of their response to our own order to do so. Reward them for having vexed our enemy as they sought Your Pleasure.

Do reward them, O Lord, on our behalf, and grant them sustenance during the night and the day, and be generous to their families and offspring, those who succeed them in doing such good deeds. Be their Friend; ward off from them the evil of all stubborn tyrants, all those from among Your creatures.

Protect their weak from the evil of the mighty ones, be they demons, humans, or jinns. And grant them the best of what they aspire as they estrange themselves from their home-lands, and for preferring us over their sons, families, and kinsfolk. Lord! Our enemies find fault with their going out to visit our shrines, yet it does not stop them from doing so, unlike those who oppose us. Lord! Have mercy on the faces transformed by the heat of the sun.

Have mercy on the cheeks that touch the grave of Abu 'Abdullah, al-Husayn. Have mercy on the eyes that weep out of kindness to us. Have mercy on the hearts that are grieved on our account and are fired with passion for us. And have mercy on those who mourn us. Lord! I implore You to be the Custodian of these souls and bodies till You bring them to the Pool [*of Kawthar*] *on the Day of the great thirst."*

When Mu'awiyah Ibn Wahab regarded this supplication as giving "too much" for those who visit the gravesite of Imam al-Husayn ('a), Imam as-Sadiq ('a) said to him, "*Those in the heavens who supplicate for those who visit al-Husayn's gravesite are more numerous than those who do so on earth*".2

This supplication by the Imam of the nation contains great injunctions and attributes which only those who seek their light and uphold the rope of their guidance appreciate. The mourning to which the Imam ('a) refers near the end of his supplication is the result of one who is terrified and afflicted with a calamity.3

Since there is no specifying whether such mourning takes place at home or simply everywhere, it is commendable no matter where it may be, be it in the streets, or upon seeing a re-enactment, or at any other situation encountered by men or women.

Among the other means which Ahl al-Bayt ('a) enjoined their Shi'as to do is rubbing their cheeks on the most pure grave. There is no need to specify the grave of al-Husayn ('a) because there is one narration relevant to saluting the graves recorded by Shaikh al-Tusi on p. 200, Vol. 1, of his book *Al-Tahthib* has transmitted by Muhammad Ibn 'Abdullah al-Himyari who says,

"I wrote the *faqih* asking him about one who visits gravesites. He wrote me back stating near his signature that prostrating on graves is not permissible in any obligatory or optional prayer, but one may place his right cheek on the grave, and this is general due to the recommendation that one places his cheek on any of the graves of the Infallible ones, peace be upon them."

1. From a poem by Shaikh Hadi Kashif al-Ghi□a', may Allah sanctify him.
2. Narrated by al-Kulayni in his book Al-Kafi, by Ibn Qawlawayh on p. 116 of Kamil al-Ziyarat by Ibn Qawlawayh al-Qummi, and by as-Saduq on p. 54 of his book titled Thawab al-A'mal.
3. Taj al-'Arus, Vol. 3, p. 66, in a chapter dealing with screaming.

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