

## How to Visit Holy Shrines

A pilgrimage to the holy shrines of Ahlul bait<sup>a.s</sup> has, undoubtedly overwhelming rewards, as has been narrated in numerous traditions of masomeen<sup>a.s</sup>. We quote only few of them, specially those which particularly refer to Ziarat-e-Imam Hussain<sup>a.s</sup>, although the same virtues and blessing will apply in visiting all the other holy places, i.e., Bibi Zainab<sup>sa</sup> as being equal contributor to the Divine mission of Imam Hussain<sup>a.s</sup> ‘Sharika-tul Hussain<sup>a.s</sup>’<sup>1</sup>.

Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> said, ‘whoever visits any one of ‘US<sup>as</sup>’ (masomeen), will get the same reward as performing the Ziarat of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>’<sup>2</sup>

When a Shia intends to go to Ziarat<sup>3</sup> of Imam Husain's<sup>a.s.</sup>, Allah<sup>swt</sup> forgives all his sins, upon taking the first stride all his sins are erased, his virtues are multiplied and these would keep on increasing till the time he becomes worthy of Paradise<sup>4</sup>.

A famous companion of Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>a.s.</sup> Moawiya bin Wahab narrates, I visited Imam-e-Sadiq<sup>a.s</sup> and found Mola<sup>a.s</sup> busy in reciting prayers, I sat down quietly, upon completing ‘Salat’ Mola<sup>a.s</sup> started to recite supplications to Allah<sup>swt</sup> in the following words, ‘O Lord<sup>swt</sup> ! Who granted us charismatic virtues, promised us with the intercession (in the hereafter) and made us heirs of Prophets<sup>a.s</sup> by giving us the knowledge of Prophethood. And making us ‘Hujjat’<sup>5</sup> on the last nation for propagating and safeguarding the message of your last Prophet<sup>saww</sup>, and have blessed us with the knowledge of the past as well as the future and have softened people’s hearts for us (to love).

Extend Your<sup>swt</sup> blessings to me, my brothers in-Aman<sup>6</sup> and those who visit the holy shrine of Al Hussain bin Ali<sup>a.s.</sup> Also all those who have bear expenses, have travelled

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<sup>1</sup> Equal part

<sup>2</sup> Sawab-ul-Amal and Aqab-ul-Amal, pp. 109, hadith 3

<sup>3</sup> Pilgrimage

<sup>4</sup> Wasailul Mohibbeen, pp. 280

<sup>5</sup> Master and Guardian

<sup>6</sup> Those who believe in Mola Ali<sup>a.s.</sup> a.s. Wiliat as wajib.

from their hometowns, with the intent of adhering to our ‘Wiliat’ and are expecting a reward for the deeds carried out in our love as well as for the sake of pleasing Your<sup>swt</sup> Prophet<sup>saww</sup>. They have annoyed your enemies while trying to please You<sup>swt</sup>. O Lord<sup>swt</sup>! Reward them, on my behalf, with extending your love for them, safeguard them during the day and the night, as well as those among their dependents who they have left behind, protect all of them and become their companion. Keep away from them all the bad intention of cruel and uncouth people and protect them from the mischief of Satan, be them among the human and/or the jinn. Reward them more than what they are expecting for, as they have suffered ‘home-sickness’ and have preferred ‘Ourselves<sup>as</sup>’ to their own wealth and family. O Lord<sup>swt</sup>! They have come out to visit us even though they are heavily criticised and teased by ‘Our<sup>as</sup>’ enemies, so enlighten their faces with Your<sup>swt</sup> blessings which have got burnt-out under the hot sun and bless their cheeks which are being placed (while on prostration) on (doorstep) Imam Hussain<sup>a.s</sup>’s shrine. Reward those eyes which cry out on our grief, and bless those hearts, which become restless upon remembering those atrocities committed against us. Bless them for their ‘matam’<sup>7</sup> and for the screams which emanate on our<sup>as</sup> behalf. O Allah<sup>swt</sup>! I give all these bodies and souls in Your<sup>swt</sup> care and pray to You<sup>swt</sup> to quench their thirst from the Spring of ‘Kauser’ on the Final Day of Judgement. And, as I watched, Imam<sup>as</sup> continued with these prayers while in prostration. I told Imam<sup>as</sup> afterwards, the prayers I have heard from you, I imagine, would even save non-a believer, if prayed for his forgiveness, from the enraging fires of the hell. I added, By Allah<sup>swt</sup>, my heart started aching now with the desire, I would have gone for the Ziarat of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup> instead of performing many Hajj<sup>8</sup>

Imam<sup>as</sup> responded, you are very close (to Haram of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>) then what has prevented you in performing Ziarat? **Be aware Mouviya! Never ever give up Ziarat-e-Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>!** I replied, I was unaware of very high virtues of the Ziarat. Imam<sup>as</sup> replied, O Mouviya! There are so many more in the skies, as compared to inhabitants of the earth, who pray on behalf of all those who visit the shire of Imam (Hussain<sup>as</sup>). **I warn you! Never ever abandon our Ziarat for any kind of fear/threat. Whoever would shy away from performing our Ziarat will regret on the final day of judgement and proclaim, alas! I would have stayed**

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<sup>7</sup> Self flagellation

<sup>8</sup> Pilgrimage to Qabah

**near the grave of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup> until my very last breath.** Don't you wish to be among those who are in the prayers of Rasool Allah<sup>saww</sup>, Mola Ali<sup>as</sup>, Fatimah<sup>sa</sup> and masoom Imams<sup>as</sup>? Don't you like to be among those who would be welcome and greeted by the angles on the doomsday? Don't you want to be among those who would have no sins to their accounts on the final day of judgement? Don't you wish to be among those who will be welcome by Rasool Allah<sup>saww</sup> in the hereafter.

### **Before Proceeding for Ziarat:**

- 1 It is recommended<sup>9</sup> by Imam-e-Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> to fast for three days before leaving your house for Ziarat-e-Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup> and perform 'Ghusal'<sup>10</sup> on the third day. Then gather your family and pray to Allah<sup>swt</sup>, 'O Lord! I have given in Your<sup>swt</sup> protection, my soul, my belongings, my family and whoever that is related to me including those who are present, as well as, those who are elsewhere. Allah<sup>swt</sup> take care of ourselves, safeguard our 'Aman' and protect ourselves and declare ourselves in Your<sup>swt</sup> guardianship, and we are thankful for the 'Naimat'<sup>11</sup> you have granted us, and we beg to You, do not replace it with anything else! Please enhance our recognition of Your 'Naimat', as we endeavour on your path. Subsequent to praising Allah<sup>swt</sup> one should send 'Salawat' (blessings) on Mohammed<sup>saww</sup> and his pure progeny<sup>as</sup> and commence his/her journey with peace of mind and elegance. It is also narrated in other traditions of masomeen<sup>as</sup> that for every drop of pilgrim's perspiration, Allah<sup>swt</sup> creates 70,000 angels who recite 'Tasbih' and ask for Lord<sup>swt</sup>'s forgiveness, on behalf of the pilgrim, from that very moment until the final day of judgement.
  
- 2 It is narrated from Imam-e-Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> that when you go out and visit holy shrine of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup> then you should be in immense state of grief, with tearful eyes, appearance of being battered with calamities, in the state of thirst and starvation. Make your prayers and leave immediately afterward and do not try to reside there permanently.

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<sup>9</sup> Mafati-ul-Jinan, pp. 751

<sup>10</sup> ceremonial bath

<sup>11</sup> Wiliat of Mola Ali a.s.

- 3 **Do not take with you ‘delicious foods’** (roasted meat, halva and similar stuff) **and eat very basic diet upon arriving there. In another tradition, quoted by Sheikh Sadduq<sup>12</sup>, someone asked what should we eat there? Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> replied, ‘Eat bread with Milk’.**
- 4 It is also narrated from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> that I have heard that a group of pilgrims went for Ziarat-e-Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup> and took with them a stock of eatables including roasted meat, baked sweets, then Imam<sup>as</sup> asked: do they take the same sort of food-stock when they visit graves of their own fathers and mothers? In another tradition from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup>, it is narrated that Imam<sup>as</sup> said, ‘Some times it is better to perform Ziarat Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup> rather than not endeavouring for it but for some it is far better not to go there at all instead of visiting the holy shrine of Imam<sup>as</sup>. The companion asked, I am shocked with the news, Mola<sup>as</sup>, when would the later be applicable? By Allah<sup>swt</sup>, replied Imam<sup>as</sup> when you visit the graves of your own parents then you are always in grief and sad but when you travel for the Ziarat of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>, you take large supplies of food and travel accessories, this is very painful and inappropriate! You should go for Ziarat with intense grief and travel in worn-out outfits.
- 5 Sheikh Kulani<sup>ra</sup> has quoted from a very reliable source that after the Shahadat of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>, Imam<sup>as</sup>’s wife Kalbia<sup>sa</sup> organised a majlis-e-Aza<sup>13</sup> and every one cried so much, including the women and servants, that they were totally exhausted; their eyes dried out of tears and upon hearing this someone sent a roasted bird ‘Muragh Qtah’ for the respected lady Kalbia<sup>sa</sup> to regain her strength owing to excessive grief but she promptly asked what is this? People replied it’s a gift sent by a person so that you regain your strength for matam-e-Hussain<sup>as</sup>. Bibi<sup>sa</sup> replied we are not celebrating a wedding occasion here so this kind of food (delicious food) is not appropriate for us. That food was then sent outside.

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<sup>12</sup> Sawab-ul-Amal and Aqab-ul-Amal, pp. 98.,hadith 22

<sup>13</sup> a gathering to commemorate the brutal killing of Imam Hussain a.s.

- 6 It is quoted from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> that whoever would travel barefoot with the intention of Ziarat-e-Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>, Allah<sup>swt</sup> would reward him for the every stride he takes with 1000 good deeds ‘Nakiyan’, would forgive 1000 sins and would upgrade 1000 time his residence in the gardens of paradise.
- 7 One should look after all those who strive to visit Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>’s shrine. Sheikh Kulani<sup>ra</sup> has referred to Abu Haroon who says, he was present in a gathering in which Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> asked his companions what has happened to you as you consider us worthless? Upon listening to this, a person from ‘Khurasan<sup>14</sup>’ stood up and replied, God forbid us; this is beyond belief that we should consider you weak and ordinary! Imam<sup>as</sup> replied! You are among one of those who consider us worthless. He said, May God save me, how can I do that? Imam<sup>as</sup> replied you should be ashamed of your affairs, did you not hear a cry for help from a person who was requesting you to give him a ride for a mile at the place called ‘Hajaf’? while saying, ‘I am so tired and exhausted’. But you did not even look over your shoulder to reply him, thereby rejecting him as a worthless person. Be warned! Whoever humiliates a ‘momin’ in fact humiliates us<sup>as</sup> and slams our<sup>as</sup> (Divine) status.
- 8 It is narrated by Mohammed bin Muslim that I asked from Imam Mohammed Baqir<sup>as</sup>, ‘Is it as we are performing Hajj when we go for Zirat-e-Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>?’ Indeed, it is so, replied Imam<sup>as</sup>, he then asked: ‘Are we obliged to observe all obligatory precautions of the hajj during Ziarat as well? Certainly, replied Imam<sup>as</sup> your conduct with your companions should be very gentle, talk little and on very best topics and excessively remember Allah<sup>swt</sup>. Wear ‘pak’<sup>15</sup> outfits, take ‘ghusal’ before entering ‘Harram<sup>16</sup>’ and remain spiritually focused and crawl forward with tearful eyes, upon reaching there offer your prayers, keep on sending ‘Salawat’ on

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<sup>14</sup> A province in Iran

<sup>15</sup> Without any trace of impure substances.

<sup>16</sup> Holy Shrine

Mohammed<sup>saww</sup> his pure progeny<sup>as</sup>. Refrain indulging into inappropriate affairs, keep your eyes protected from forbidden objects as well as suspicious matters, and extend favours to your brothers-in-Aman. Also if you realise someone is short of resources/monies then come forward and offer your help by sharing your resources with them. It is also important to keep in view the ‘Taqiya’ (dissimulation) as religion is established around ‘Taqiya’ and keep away from all that which has been forbidden by Allah<sup>swt</sup>. Do not fight with others, do not take excessive oaths/vows, do not engage into arguments. If you observed all these then you have earned the reward of ‘Hajj and Ummera’, not only but you will also be eligible for a special reward from Allah<sup>swt</sup> which is given to a person who would go away from his palace for the sake of Allah<sup>swt</sup>. All your sins will be forgiven upon returning back from ziarat and you will deserve Allah<sup>swt</sup>’s un-countable bounties.

- 9 Abu Hamza<sup>ra</sup> has narrated from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> in the Chapter of Ziarat<sup>17</sup>, **when you arrive in ‘Naniwa’ (another name of Karbala) then unpack your luggage, do not massage your body with oil, don’t wear ‘Surma’ (make-up for eyes) and until the time you stay there do not eat meat.**
- 10 It is narrated from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> that whoever would perform Ziarat Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup> after taking ‘Ghusal’ from the river of Furat, all his sins, including the ‘severe ones’ (Gunah-e-Kabira), would be erased such as he has just born again. It is also narrated that someone said to Imam<sup>as</sup> that some times the water of ‘Furat’ is so cold that it is very difficult to perform ‘Ghusal’, Imam<sup>as</sup> replied, so what, whoever does ‘Ghusal’ in the river of Furat and performs Ziarat of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>, he gets such enormous reward from Allah<sup>swt</sup> which cannot be counted/imagined.

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<sup>17</sup> See Mafati-ul-Jinan, pp. 781.

- 11 It is narrated from Abul Hassan Imam Raza<sup>as</sup> that, 'performing Ziarat of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup> near the banks of Euphrates, is as performing Ziarat of Allah<sup>swt</sup> in the 'Arsh' (heavens)<sup>18</sup>.
- 12 Safwan Jammaal narrates on the authority of Imam Sadiq<sup>as</sup> When a Shia leaves his house with the intention of performing Imam Husain's<sup>as</sup> ziarat, he is accompanied by 700 angels. They safeguard him from above and below, from the right and the left, from the front and the back (all six directions), till such a time that he reaches his destination<sup>19</sup>.
- 13 According to another version of the tradition narrated by Raff'ah from Imam Sadiq<sup>as</sup>: 'When a Shia knows Imam Husain's<sup>as</sup> right over the people and leaves his house for Imam's<sup>as</sup> ziarat with this understanding, without any pride and conceit, then a 1,000 angels accompany him from the right, with another 1,000 angels on the left. And he will be rewarded as if he has performed 1,000 Hajj and 1,000 Umrah with a prophet or with the successor (wasi)of a prophet.<sup>20</sup>
- 14 Safwan Jammaal relates from Imam Sadiq<sup>as</sup> 'When the rays of the sun fall on the visitor of Imam<sup>as</sup>'s shrines, it consumes his sins like the fire consumes wooden sticks. The sun does not leave any sin on his body and he returns home sinless. In fact on his return he is granted a status that is not even given to those who shed their blood in Allah's path.<sup>21</sup>
- 15 From every drop of perspiration on the body of Imam<sup>as</sup>'s visitor (in the course of Ziarat). Allah<sup>swt</sup> creates 70,000 angels who glorify and seek forgiveness for Imam's ( a.s.) visitors till the Day of Judgement.<sup>22</sup>
- 16 When the visitor leaves the house, each and every spot that he steps on, prays for him.<sup>23</sup>. If he goes for Ziarat on a mount, for each and every spot

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<sup>18</sup> Sawab-ul-Amal and Aqab-ul-Amal, pp. 95.,hadith 1

<sup>19</sup> Behaarul Anwar, vol. 101, pg. 58, trad. 62;Kamiluz Ziaraat, pg 190

<sup>20</sup> Behaarul Anwar, vol 101, pg 91, tradition 33

<sup>21</sup> Behaarul Anwar, vol 101, pg 15, trad. 14; Kamiluz Ziaraat, pg 298

<sup>22</sup> Mustadrak vol 2, pg 204

that his mount steps on, he will get one virtue and one sin will be forgiven.<sup>24</sup>

- 17 'If someone goes for ziarat on foot, for every step he takes, one virtue will be recorded in his name, one sin will be forgiven and his level will be raised one degree. Once he reaches the shrine, Allah will appoint two angels for him who will record only his good deeds and will omit his evil deeds. When he is about to depart from the shrine, the angels will bid farewell thus - O Allah's slave your sins have been forgiven, and you are now in Allah<sup>swt</sup>'s party, His Prophet<sup>saww</sup>'s party and the Prophet<sup>saww</sup>'s Ahle Bait<sup>as</sup> party. By Allah<sup>swt</sup>, you shall never have to face the Fire and you shall never be made to taste it!<sup>25</sup>
- 18 Imam Muhammad Baqir<sup>as</sup> informed, 'If Imam Husain<sup>as</sup>'s visitor expires in the same year of the ziarat, then the angels of mercy participate in his ceremonial bath (ghusl) and shrouding. They seek forgiveness for him. They are with his funeral till the grave. Then his grave becomes vast and spacious.'<sup>26</sup>
- 19 It is narrated from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> that Imam<sup>as</sup> said, Indeed, Allah<sup>swt</sup>, on the eve of 'Arafat, starts blessing people from the holy Shrine of Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>, a companion asked, Before considering all those who are staying at the place of 'Arfat' (for Hajj)? Imam<sup>as</sup> replied, yes, he asked why is this so? Imam<sup>as</sup> replied there are always some illegitimate people (enemies of Mola Ali<sup>as</sup>) at Arfat but none of these are in Imam Hussain<sup>as</sup>'s shrine<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Behaarul Anwar, vol 101, pg 15, tradition 14

<sup>24</sup> Thawaabul A'maal, pg 116

<sup>25</sup> Kamiluz Ziaraat, pg 134

<sup>26</sup> Kamiluz Ziaraat, pg. 143, Behaarul Anwar vol 101, pg 18

<sup>27</sup> Sawab-ul-Amal and Aqab-ul-Amal, pp. 100.,hadith 27



### **Regarding who is Capable of and who is Incapable of Performing Ziarat:**

1 In a detailed tradition reported in Behar-ul-Anwar<sup>28</sup>, someone asked from Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>a.s</sup>, may I be your ransom, what would you say about a person who is capable of performing ‘Ziarat-e-Imam Hussain<sup>a.s</sup>’ but would not go? **Imam<sup>a.s</sup> replied he has grieved Rasool Allah<sup>saww</sup> as well as us (masomeen<sup>a.s</sup>), through considering us<sup>a.s</sup> worthless and powerless;** but whoever would perform Ziarat, Allah<sup>swt</sup> will take care of all his affairs, including his entire worldly needs, protect him from calamities, provide him with sustenance, and reimburse his Ziarat expenses, and would forgive his fifty years’ sins, on reaching his death bed, he will not have any sins left, and if he dies while travelling to/from Ziarat, angels would descend from the heavens, open doors of paradise in his grave, and he is looked after until the final day of judgement. If he returns back alive then his sustenance is increased, and for every penny he has spent, he will get 1000 time more, and will get special blessings from Allah<sup>swt</sup>, which will keep on accumulating, by the grace of Allah<sup>swt</sup>.

Sheik Sudduq has quoted in his book<sup>29</sup>, I have been told by Mohammed bin Hassan<sup>ra</sup> who heard from Mohammed bin Hassan Saffah, who from Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Isa, who from a chain of narrators refer to Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>as</sup> that Imam<sup>as</sup> said, ‘who is unable to do any favour (Nakey) to us then he should extend his favours to those who are staunch believers of our ‘Wilait’ and refrain from sins. By doing so, he will get the same reward as if he has strived for our<sup>a.s</sup> cause. **And who is unable to perform our<sup>a.s</sup> ‘Ziarat’, he should visit those who firmly believe in our ‘Wiliat’ and observe precautions from sins, by doing so he will get the reward equivalent to performing our<sup>a.s</sup> ‘Ziarat’.**

2 Hanan bin Sadeer narrates from his father who said that Imam Jafar-e-Sadiq<sup>sws</sup> once asked him, O Sadeer! Do you visit the sacred grave of Imam Hussain<sup>sws</sup> every day? I replied, may I be your ransom, I don’t. Imam<sup>sws</sup> responded, you are so cruel to Imam Hussain<sup>sws</sup>! But do you go for Ziarat every month? I replied, no, Mola<sup>sws</sup>. Imam<sup>sws</sup> then asked, Do you visit Imam Hussain<sup>sws</sup>’s shrine every year. I replied, sometime I managed to visit Imam<sup>sws</sup>’s harram on yearly basis. Imam<sup>sws</sup> said, you are

<sup>28</sup> Pp. 56, Volume II

<sup>29</sup> Sawab-ul-Amal and Aqab-ul-Amal, pp. 110.,hadith 1

so unkind to the cause of Imam Hussain<sup>sws</sup>. Do you know Allah<sup>swt</sup> has created 100,000 angels who grieve and circumambulate Imam Hussain<sup>sws</sup>'s Tomb so much that their hair and body get covered in dirt and they never show any signs of laziness and never fail to turn-up. Then what stops you from going to Ziarat at least five times a week or even better on daily basis? I replied, O my lord, may I sacrifice my life for your cause, I live far away from Imam<sup>sws</sup>'s Haram. Imam<sup>sws</sup> replied, in that case, you should go on top of your roof (higher point in your house), ***look at right-hand side then left-hand side and after that turn toward the direction of Imam Hussain sws' shrine and say the following while looking into sky 'Assalam-o-Allaika ya Aba Abdullah-hay Assalam-o-Allaika Wa Rahmatullah-hay-wa-Barakatow'***, it is equivalent to visiting grave of Imam Hussain<sup>sws</sup> and sending 'Salam' from where you are.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Manla Yahzar-al-Faqih, Vol.2, Traditions 3203.