



Islamic Research &
Information Center



A Glance at

ARBA'EEN WALK AND PILGRIMAGE

Dr. Ehsan Eshtehardian

Translated by
Mojganeh Saffarnia

*In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate,
the Merciful*

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For Arba'een

Arba'een is a manifestation of an astounding magnificence unto which, in recent years, has been added. It can uninhibitedly be said that many beautiful incidents, love and endearments, unheard and untold emotions have been intertwined together and created this marvelous event.

In regard to Arba'een much has been said. From on-site observational descriptions, to stigmas and denunciations by some. From the numbers, to the narration of the culture of welcoming and accommodating pilgrims and guests going to the homes of poor Iraqis and a host sincerely giving all he has.

The Arba'een convocation- due to the geographical extent that it covers, and due to its unique and wonderful happenings- is a great opportunity for recording events, writings and analyses. Analyzing pleasant occurrences and searching for their root causes can assist in their preservation and commemoration.

This event cannot be overlooked inconsiderately; it must be told, heard, analyzed and conveyed to the next generations. God has not promised at all that He would easily preserve such glories without our endeavors and without any hardships.

This writing- addressing the eager Arba'een pilgrims- while trying to inform pilgrims

regarding the status and value of the Arba'een Walk, also tries to acquaint them with their mission and that is to revere the name of the Hujjat (Chosen Proof) of Allah, in addition tries to increase their ability to answer certain issues about Arba'een.

From the Origination to the Consequences Throughout the Times

The founding of the Arba'een Ziyāra has been attributed to Jabir ibn Abdullah Ansari, who was of the Ashab of the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him & His Progeny, PBUH & HP) and of companions of the Amir al-Mo'menin (PBUH). But in regard to the Arba'een Walk, no precise report is at hand. Some of the elite, such as Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali Qazi Tabatabayi in the book *Research Regarding the First Arba'een of Sayyid al-Shuhada (PBUH)*, have believed that the first Arba'een Walks were at time of the Bani-Umayya and Bani-'Abbas when the Shi'ah used to observe the Arba'een Walk during the presence of the Imams (Peace Be Upon Them, PBUT).

But definitely the founder or better said the reviver of this great movement during Occultation was the late Shaikh Ansari; however, it did not last long or at least it was not deservedly restored.

That which we are witnessing today was

started by the late Muhaddith Noori (1838-1902 CE) and after him, with the Grace of Allah, still in this century this movement has almost uninterruptedly been persisting.

Jawad Shubbar- a contemporary Arab writer in the book *Adab al-Taff'aw Shu'arā' al-Husayn min al-Qarn al-Awwal al-Hijri hatta al-Qarn al-Rābi' Ashar* (a 10 volume collection about Imam Hussain (PBUH) poetry and poets throughout 14 centuries)- in a report from the Arba'een convocation in Karbala, has compared the assembly in this observance with the assembly of Muslims in Mecca; he has mentioned the presence of mourning groups in the convocation reciting lamentations and elegies in Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Urdu. *Adab al-Taff'* was published in 1968 CE and the author estimated that the number of mourners present in the Walk amounted to over one million. Actually the million presence in the Arba'een Walk goes back to over half a century ago.

Of course, after the arrival of the first types of motor vehicles in the area the trips as old fashioned caravans were discontinued and travels were shaped in new styles. Then after a while- when Ayatullah Sayyid Mahmoud Hussaini Shahroudi (1883-1974 CE) was considered as one of the influential and significant spiritual teachers and experts of the Najaf Hawza- due to his requiring and insisting on going on foot to Karbala, again the issue of walking to Karbala as a holy trip became

prevalent among Hawza students; meanwhile others with different nationalities such as some Iranians too occasionally accompanied them in the journey to the Atabat.

Indeed, with the coming to power of the Ba'ath Party in Iraq, pressure on the Shi'ah was, slowly but surely, going to increase. Since the Arba'een Walk was one of the largest Shi'ah gatherings, this Walk was banned by the Ba'ath regime. The regime's tough stance in forbidding the Arba'een Walk and even the ziyāra of Imam Hussain (PBUH), temporarily obstructed this great movement for a few years. Nevertheless in those very same years some of the locals, through palm forests and away from the main roads, used to, far from the eyes of regime guards, go on foot to Karbala.

With the fall of the Ba'ath Party (2003) the Arba'een Walk in Iraq was once again revived. Thenceforth every year, compare to the year before, more and more people have been participating in the Walk. At first, the Walk witnessed presence of 2 to 3 million pilgrims but in the following years, number of participating pilgrims in this Walk reached over ten million. With security established in Iraq and safety provided for most of the roads and with media coverage, the number of these pilgrims increased even more, so much so that according to Iraq's Ministry of Construction and Housing the number of pilgrims has been reported 26 million in 2017.

According to on-site observations, a very significant point is that not only the Shi'ah but also some of the Sunni and even Christians and followers of other religions too, participate in this great event.

Reason Behind the Arba'een Movement

The Arba'een Walk has 3 dimensions: ziyāra, mourning and the walking; thus the main reason behind this great movement is in regard to the ziyāra and the revival of mourning of Imam Hussain (PBUH), and secondly it is about going to ziyāra on foot.

Ziyāra, giving heed to the Infallible Imam, mourning and its upholding are all of a valid cultural concept and the Arba'een Walk is another aspect of this concept.

• *Ziyāra*

In Arabic lexica ziyāra literally means, to intend and to incline, and as an expression it implies the presence of the pilgrim next to that which is to be visited in order to revere and honor the visited. Since human spirit lives on and is transferred from a smaller world to a greater world after the death of human body, when the pilgrim visits the Turbah and the burial place of a person and a spiritual interrelation is established, this relationship is between a living

being and another living being. Shaikh al-Ra'is ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980-1037) has said that The pilgrim- who with his material and spiritual beings goes on pilgrimage to visit a grave- seeks assistance from the soul of the visited in order to gain a benefit or to avert a loss; and Since the soul of the visited has been separated from the body, it will be effective, more completely and amply; and since the pilgrim has gone on pilgrimage both with his body and his spirit, he will gain both material and spiritual benefits.

When ziyāra is considered in this sense, whether the visited is alive or deceased, makes no difference to the pilgrim, and he will regard the visited as present and seeing.

Many Hadiths, implicitly or explicitly, assert that for the Infallible Ones (PBUT) life and death are the same. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH & HP) has said that anyone going to his ziyāra after his demising would be like he who has met him during his lifetime, and that he (PBUH & HP) would, in both cases, be a witness over him and would intercede for him on the Day of Resurrection. (*Kāmil al-Ziyāra*, p. 45)

The fact that in some ziyāra supplications profession is made that the visited is alive, is to remind the pilgrim that he is visiting and talking to a living person. As we read in the ziyāra supplication of Imam Hussain (PBUH):

"I bear witness that you hear my voice and answer me."

(*Mafatih al-Jinan*, The Ziyāra of Imam Hussain (PBUH) on 15th of Rajab)

• ***Ziyāra on foot***

While going to ziyāra itself holds a lofty status, yet in Shi'i beliefs special attention has also been paid for going on foot. Perhaps it can be said that when human leaves material interests behind and travels on foot, his spirit will flow in a more sublime milieu. Walking slowly and disregarding the fast pace of modern life itself will add to human concentration. The pilgrim on his way patiently and far from all excitement and anxiety, whispers supplications. Perhaps he pays more attention to whom he is going to visit, i.e. Imam Hussain (PBUH), and perhaps he finds more opportunity to concentrate on and spiritually confide in his living Imam, the Baqiyatullah Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his reappearance). Multitude of pilgrims glorifying Allah and here and there reciting the Faraj (Relief) Supplication for Imam Mahdi (PBUH) together, proves this claim. When and where so many people can take their time together to give heed to God and God's Hujjats (Proofs) (PBUT)?!

Perhaps these are some of the reasons why Imam Sadiq (PBUH) in regard to going to

ziyāra on foot has said:

“Allah SWT for every single footstep of a person who leaves his house intending ziyāra of Imam Hussain (PBUH), writes a good deed and obliterates a bad deed, until when the person reaches the Haram (Shrine), then Allah writes him among al-Muslihin al-Muntajabin (the Chosen Righteous), when he finishes the rituals Allah writes his name among al-Fa’izin (the Victorious Delivered), and when the person wants to return an angel faces him and tells him that the Prophet of Allah (PBUH & HP) has said Salaam to him and has asserted that he is to restart his deeds, for, all that was passed has been forgiven.”

(Kāmil al-Ziyāra, pp. 132-135)

It is truly this way; this forgiveness of past deeds and purification of one’s Book of Deeds after the Arba’een Walk is something that the Believer feels with all his heart and soul. This great reward is indeed for the heed given to the most significant creation of the world of existence and the essence of the Religion and that is the heed given to the Proof of Allah; which shall soon be explained more.

• **Mourning**

The Moharram Mourning is a number of Shi’ah, and sometimes the non-Shi’ah, rituals

performed to mourn for the martyrs of Karbala. Imam Sajjad, Lady Zaynab, Umm al-Banin and Lady Rubab (PBUT) were of the first mourners of Imam Hussain (PBUH) after his martyrdom who called others to mourn too. Kumayt al-Asadi and De'bel Khoza'i- of the poets at the times of Imams-Baqir, Sadiq and Reza (PBUT)-composed many poems praising Imam Hussain (PBUH).

At first, mourning was of the form of crying and reciting poetry, but gradually other forms such as reciting rhythmical eulogy, lamentation, presenting graphic accounts of events of Karbala, chest-beating, etc. were added. These forms of mourning mainly started from the 4th century AH (10th century CE) during the Buyid dynasty (a Shi'i dynasty ruling over today's Iran, Iraq, etc.) when pressure on the Shi'ah was somewhat reduced; and these forms of mourning were even more established during Safavid dynasty (a twelver Shi'ah dynasty ruling over today's Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Syria, etc.), and later during Qajar dynasty. Therefore, the expansion of mourning for Imam Hussain (PBUH) started at time of the Infallible Imams (PBUT) and in course of time with social changes it has increased and decreased.

This mourning is a sign of the love existing between the Shi'ah and the Infallible Imams Especially Imam Hussain (PBUT). The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH & HP) has asserted that:

“For the Martyrdom of Hussain (PBUH) there exists a heat in the hearts of the Believers which will never cool down.” when he finishes the rituals Allah writes his name among al-Fa’izin (the Victorious Delivered), and when the person wants to return an angel faces him and tells him that the Prophet of Allah (PBUH & HP) has said Salaam to him and has asserted that he is to restart his deeds, for, all that was passed has been forgiven.”

(Jāmi‘ ahādith al-Shi’a, Vol. 12, p. 556)

Indeed, mourning has turned into a culture with its effects and consequences. These impressions and consequences have been able to appear as a form of a subculture in accordance to cultural characteristics of every geographical region. Some of these subcultures- such as a special type of chest-beating among the people of south western Iran or people of Pakistan- have turned into particularities among the people of those regions.

But the Arba‘een Walk and Ziyāra is an encompassing and comprehensive form beyond all geographical regions, gathering every mourning subculture together in one place and one body, and shaping a unique voice for the mourning of Imam Hussain (PBUH). But the story does not end here. Passage of history and assembly of different peoples from various cultures in this path has not caused this event to become noticeable only by those interested and

believing in Imam Hussain beliefs’.

The characteristics of this event and the manner it is being observed, also its meta-religious attractions, have caused people with other beliefs too to take notice. This very matter may cause certain jealousies and enmities, and even the spread of hatred against the Arba‘een Walk.

Parameters of Arba‘een

Parameters of the Arba‘een event- which separates it from other cultural world events- must be identified and expressed so that they may be used in other events with the same globalization aspiration.

These parameters and characteristics are beyond material matters and views of the philosophy of Humanism which rests on the centrality of human desire and satisfaction and often rejects the importance of belief in God; thus these parameters are not necessarily in accordance with all desires of today’s human and we are not to have such expectations from these parameters. But since we believe that the Shi’ah beliefs are based on inwardly found needs, many of these parameters can serve as an example and source for any event resting on inward findings, humanity and spirituality.

Some important Arba‘een parameters include:

Manifestation of the concept of Salam, loving others for God's sake, patience during hardships, giving heed to the Proof of Allah, unanimity of hearts, financial giving, providing sustenance, self-sacrifice, etc. which we are going to briefly touch:

• *Manifestation of the concept of Salam*

The word Salam in Arabic has different meanings but one of these meanings which actually comprises all other meanings is declaration of peace. When we say Salam to a person, we are really declaring peace and security to him and we are telling him that we are in peace with him and he is safe and secure with us.

As an expression, the word Salam has been understood as a form of greeting, thus sometimes other words are used in its place such as hello in English and Dorood in Persian. But this is only an expression, and for non-Arabs the application of Salam does not include the full concept of the word Salam.

A non-Arab using the word Salam is different from an Arab using it. The extent of the word Salam used by an Arab is much greater than a non-Arab.

The Iraqis hosting the Arba'een pilgrims manifest the concept of Salam in the best possible way, and in spite of certain cultural

gaps they host the non-Arab Muslims, even followers of other religions, under their light of peace, security and safety.

Although there are some immoderate people in all nations who may sadly manifest biased opinions in regard to race, nationality, social class, language, etc., yet it is observed that during the Walk the Iraqi Shi'ah patiently welcome and receive such people too.

- *Loving others for God's sake*

Based on the Holy Qur'an, it is incumbent upon All Muslims to love the AhlulBayt of the Prophet (PBUH & HP); thus anyone who loves God surely loves the Prophet's AhlulBayt (PBUT) too. He who loves others for the AhlulBayt's sake has actually done so for God's sake.

For the Iraqi hosts or even for the pilgrims it makes no difference who is present at the Walk and where he has come from, no one withholds his love from others, and with attention paid to Islamic ground rules, love and friendships are established. It must be confessed that this manifestation of love is much more from the Iraqi side.

Loving and expressing love for God's sake, in the manner God Himself has expressed through His Book and His Hujjats (PBUT), is a requisite for being a Muslim, and ultimately will

lead to blissfulness. Actually, this particularity, as explained by the Prophet of Allah, can be considered as a sign of belief as the Prophet (PBUH & HP) has asserted:

“Friendship of believer with believer for God’s sake is of the greatest branches of faith. Behold! He whose loving is for God’s sake, his enmity is for God, his giving for Him, and his withholding is for God’s sake, he is of those selected by God.”

(Al-Kāfi, Vol. 2, p. 125)

- ***Patience during hardships***

This journey is a hard journey. Although the Iraqis welcome and host their guests with all they have, but Iraq is a war-torn country thus reduced to poverty and has lost many of its infrastructures. On the other hand, traveling on foot for such long distances in the heat and cold is not easy at all and is quite difficult. In addition, necessary personal stuff and back packs must be carried by each individual which makes the travel even more difficult. Furthermore, a sickness or an injury may also happen to the pilgrim, in a place where medical care is quite limited.

Also many incidents may happen in this trip. Indeed, AhlulBayt’s adversaries have not been and are not pleased with this event. Especially the extensive media coverage in recent years has

resulted in certain jealousies.

Such particularity is not comprehensible for today's human- who under the influence of Humanism and with a materialistic view- only seeks comfort, welfare, pleasure and security in the world. This lack of understanding sometimes may even become a cause for mocking at the pilgrim and attributing unpleasant remarks to him. But the pilgrim while being aware of all these, with reliance upon God steps in a path which he knows Allah's Pleasedness is in it. He, with hope and fear, relies upon Allah and continues on his way.

- ***Giving heed to the Proof of Allah***

Prior to religious precepts and jurisprudence, prior to ethics and rituals, the concept of the Proof of Allah is the most fundamental pillar in Shi'i beliefs. Without believing in the Proof of Allah, no deed is accepted even if the person has not committed any jurisprudential sin.

With believing in the Proof of Allah, there is hope for forgiveness of sins- of course with special conditions and with the consent of anyone whose right has been abused-, and hope for going to Heaven, of course after enduring hardships in the world, the Barzakh (limbo) and the Qiyama (resurrection).

In Shi'i teachings, Proof of Allah, giving heed to him, acceptance of his Wilayat and his

superiority, are the most fundamental beliefs which animate all deeds, behavior and even beliefs. Believing in the Proof of Allah is not merely verbal loving, rather submission to his commands, even if his commands may not be compatible with our feelings, is the sign of belief. In the great Arba'een Walk the Shi'ah direct their attentions to the Proof of Allah, he whose cognition is necessary and his obedience obligatory. All the concentration, heed, need, eagerness, etc. are directed toward he whom Allah has introduced.

This is the clear meaning of Imam Baqir (PBUH)'s statement who has said:

“Certainly people have three obligations: Cognition of Infallible Imams (PBUT), submission to them and referring to them in their disagreements.”

(Al-Kāfi, Vol. 1, p. 390)

Indeed in the Arba'een Walk people are performing their Divine duties, for, performing Divine perceptions and law becomes meaningful only after the cognition of His Hujjats (PBUT).

It was the disregarding of the Proof of Allah throughout the ages which caused the world of Islam to be in the stage that it is now. One day they burned the house of the Proof of Allah, one day they killed him (Imam 'Ali (PBUH)) in the Altar, one day they poisoned him (Imam Hassan (PBUH)) and threw arrows at his coffin,

one day they slaughtered him (Imam Hussain (PBUH)) while he was extremely thirsty!!!

- ***Generosity***

Giving to others from one's wealth, food or anything that can solve their problems is a common matter, but when in an event Generosity becomes a particularity of that event and is repeated endlessly and is expanded, then it becomes a matter beyond common giving.

Giving can be caused by different motives. Some give for God's sake and His obedience, others do it for spirituality and attaining good feelings, and some do it to gain a benefit, or for fame, or even affectation. That's right! Whatever the motive, giving has decreased.

Arba'een is the arena for manifestation of universal giving. There may be no place else in the world where you can find different individuals from all walks of life, from various financial and social levels, who give from their wealth in this manner. From a businessman who gives many meals every day, to a little girl who gives you a napkin and a bowl of water.

- ***Enfaaq (spending in Allah's way)***

The concept of Enfaaq is somewhat more than just financial giving. I.e. contrary to financial

giving which is about giving wealth, providing sustenance is not only about wealth and is not just limited to wealthy people. As the Majestic Qur'an states, those who do Enfaaq from what God has given them. Thus, this giving can be not only from financial assets rather it can be from human's spiritual capitals such as time, knowledge, reputation, specialty and much more.

But the higher level of Enfaaq is giving from that which you love. As the Holy Qur'an states, one does not reach goodness unless he does Enfaaq from that which he loves. With regard to this Verse Enfaaq is much loftier than regular giving.

Truly if this concept was to spread all over the world today among all ways of thinking, societies would have been much better places. If there was Enfaaq there would be no poverty. If there was Enfaaq no war fire would be kindled. If there was Enfaaq no one would have died from famine in one geographical region. And if Enfaaq was to spread enmities would have diminished. For, most people do not like poverty, war and wickedness.

The Arba'een Walk has been able to reveal this concept for its participants. These people during the Walk do not reserve many rights for themselves and waive their privileges for the sake of others; they freely give their money, time, energy, etc.

It is only just to say that the Iraqi hosts are the front-runners in this manifestation of the concept of Enfaaq too. They dedicate their time, money and even their homes to the pilgrims. They devote their slightest amenities with their greatest abilities to the pilgrims.

- *Self-sacrifice*

It is noteworthy to mention that in today's world much work has been done for the concept of giving, and we see many people with the help of different private organizations who are trying to encourage people to give and even Enfaaq and to help others. But the giving and Enfaaq of Arba'een does not stop here, another concept takes its place which has a more sublime value. A concept which changes the standards for giving and Enfaaq, and annihilates all that within itself, and that is self-sacrifice.

Self-sacrifice means giving something to others which is not in excess over one's need rather the thing is dear to the giving person and he even needs it, and in spite of this he gives it to others. The Iraqi Shi'ah, even though in need and deprived, save their limited income through the year, and while they need that savings for their minimum welfare, they spend it for Arba'een pilgrims. They give what they need for their lives, not the excess.

Self-sacrifice is in contrast with today's human

standards, from Humanism to Liberalism, etc. Thus, one of the issues that makes Arba'een incomprehensible and indefinable for today's human is this very issue of self-sacrifice. Today's human- who with his livelihood-earning intellect is constantly worried for his and his family's future and to him concepts such as savings and insurance are of the smartest things to have- cannot comprehend how can a person for self-sacrifice make his and his family's life hard, a hardship which may cast its shadow on their life throughout the year. Is it rational to spend the whole year's savings for Arba'een?! This is not understandable for today's human-centered attitudes.

Therefore, Arba'een is the arena for manifestation of self-sacrifice which is of the most important concepts in Islamic teachings. A concept which Muslims have forgotten, and indeed Imam Hussain (PBUH) was the clearest and most sublime example of self-sacrifice who sacrificed himself, his belongings and his family in the cause of God. And the hope of his pilgrims- while realizing that Imam Hussain (PBUH)'s sacrifice is incomparable to any other sacrifice- is to try to learn from this sublime quality on Arba'een.

- ***Humbleness***

Humility is one of the lost rings from the chain of interrelation in societies which are

economically lesser developed. Humbleness fits under the category of respecting the rights of others and accepting their values. This important matter is scarcely observed in everyday interactions in such societies even for example by large manufacturers whose life depend on the consumers' satisfaction. Psychological and sociological analyses are needed to search for the reasons for this absence; of course centuries of living under the yoke of usurpers, and dictators supported by exploiters, colonizers and neocolonizers has had its destructive consequences. But this lost ring and link appears miraculously and unbelievably, in a war-torn land, between the hosts and the guests of Arba'een.

The host is humble before the guest while he does not know him and he is not going to return the visit of the guest in the future, and while he is not going to financially benefit from the guest. This humility also appears between the pilgrims and for a few days during the Walk the people who are mostly from lesser economically developed countries turn into extremely humble people. These are all of the miracles of Imam Hussain and his last living reminder, Imam Mahdi (PBUT).

- *Unanimity of hearts*

Unanimity of hearts has also been one of human's rare qualities in all his life. Unanimity

of hearts and togetherness of humans are of the very good occurrences which their individual and social effects and consequences are not hidden from anyone.

Unanimity of hearts during the journey, during hardships, during possible illnesses, while getting lost in the crowds, etc. are of the precious memories of any pilgrim who has stepped or is stepping into this Walk.

The result of this unanimity of hearts and mutual kindness is the formation of a unique Ummah of Believers; as Imam Sadiq (PBUH) has said:

“You see believers in benevolence kindness and friendship with one another as one body that when one member is in pain and complains the other members call each other and accompany him with fever and sleeplessness.”

(Al-Kāfi, Vol. 2, p. 166)

The most sublime form of unanimity of hearts in this Walk is a unity in loving and mourning for Imam Hussain (PBUH)’s hardships, for his thirst, his patience, etc. and imploring Allah to hasten the glorious Appearance of Imam Mahdi (PBUH) who shall set everything right.

Comparison to World Events

Cultural events all over the world have backgrounds, attractions, motives, history and cultural roots. These events- according to the extent of the area they cover, their content and historicity, also based on their compliance with people's culture- have their own characteristics.

Many of these characteristics are unique so much so that they are understood as differentiating factors of one nation and its beliefs from its neighbors and other nations. Much heed is given to public Events, totally incomparable with the subject at hand, such as the Bullfighting event in Spain or even the Olympics.

One of the features which makes the Arba'een Walk different from all world events is its outwardly observed unique dimensions; and indeed sadly that which is never observed is its main differentiating characteristic and that is the essence and truth of its Shi'i beliefs.

Differentiating factors of the Arba'een Walk compared to other events are:

- Number of participants (estimates of between 12 to 26 million).
- Hundreds of millions of free meals distributed among participants.
- Making of the roads unsafe by opposers, yet insistence of the participants to continue even on unsafe roads.

- Free, humble, obliging and enthusiastic hosting by the Iraqis in their best manner while being war-torn and poor.
- Presence of people with different opinions yet becoming united in the Walk.
- Unity of slogan among all pilgrims from different nations and with different languages, expressing readiness to respond to Imam Hussain (PBUH): Labbayk Ya Hussain!

None of these aforementioned factors in this manner and extent, and collectively has ever been observed in other events, neither today nor throughout history. The Arba'een Walk due to its content, manner of execution, side issues, effects and consequences has special and unique advantages which all have surpassed every qualitative and quantitative border. Therefore, comparing the Arba'een Walk with other events is neither practical nor logical nor possible.

Possible Side Issues of the Arba'een Walk

Every good event surely has its opposers. Especially if that event has arisen from a specific ideology and worldview. Tashayo' (Shiism) has always in all eras faced tough and harsh encounters. Daughter of the Prophet (PBUH & HP) and all the Infallible Imams (PBUT) as the main pillars of Tashayo', except the twelfth Imam (PBUH), have all been killed, and the Shi'ah, being the last center of the Truth of God,

have always been under pressure, suffocation, threat and limitation.

Propaganda of certain hard-line opposers -who belong in the same category as Bani-Umayya and Bani-'Abbas- has made anti-Shi'ism thoughts. But most of the anti-Shi'a are uninformed about the facts and under the influence of propaganda and media; many of these people, who come upon the Shi'ah rituals and sacraments, in their hearts are inclined to the Shi'ah Imams and are adherents to the Islamic law.

In any case, the principle lines of their attacks and the answers must be identified; and it is upon the Arba'een pilgrims and the participants in the Walk to answer the ambiguities in the best possible manner. On the one hand knowing the answers, and on the other hand politely expressing them in a friendly atmosphere, with eloquence and in appropriate circumstances, are very important.

- *The ever-question of expenses*

The expense objection- which stems from the objection of spending money for mourning and for religious duties such as Hajj- in regard to Arba'een has unique dimensions and characteristics, which we shall only concentrate on Arba'een and leave answering the other matters to their own circumstances.

Those who object to Arba'een expenses argue against foreign traveling and against appropriating traveling funds for the poor, as their major lines of objection.

It must be known that Arba'een travelers in Iraq do not have much expenses; in the days leading to Arba'een, food, rest places, bathing, etc. are all free in Iraq. Pilgrims eat free meals while the hosts humbly invite them to sit at their tables. It is the same way in regard to inviting guests to stay in their homes, the Iraqis do not ask for any money from the pilgrims of Imam Hussain (PBUH).

This year there is no visa fee and that is free too. Thus they only pay for getting to Iraq. Moreover, Iraq does not have notable shopping centers or tourist attractions, for pilgrims to spend any extra money.

On the other hand, while God has recommended people in their personal lives to spend money for the poor, He has also recommended people to spend for other causes too. Causes such as helping to raise the cultural level of society, the environment, caring for animals, and alike (all with God's specifications) have been observed in the Sunnah and Tradition of the Infallible Imams (PBUT). As an example, half of the Khums is the Imam's portion which must be spent in the cause of cognition of the Imam (PBUH) and it is not easily allowed to be spent for the poor.

Spending money for ziyāra of the Infallible Imams (PBUT) is one of the recommendations of the Religion. As an example, there is a Hadith stating that once Jabra'il (Gabriel) descended from God to the Prophet (PBUH & HP) and delivered God's saying in regard to some of the rewards of spending money for the mourning of Imam Hussain (PBUH):

The Amin (trustworthy) Jabra'il came down from the Glorious Allah and said:

“O Muhammad! Allah the Supreme sends His al-Salam to you and honors you by benediction and distinction, and says: Swear by My Undefeatableness and Glory, I create for Fatimah (PBUH) pure and purified Shi'ah; these Shi'ah shall Enfaaq their wealth in the way of mourning for Hussain (PBUH) and give their soul in the way of his ziyāra. They erect his mourning in their gatherings and sincerely cry for him. They lessen their sleep and will not turn back from this manner. Behold! Anyone spending as much as one Derham (coin) for Hussain son of 'Ali (PBUT)'s ziyāra and mourning, angels will trade with him until Qiyama and for each Derham they shall give him 70 good deeds, and Allah will build a palace for him in Heaven.”

(Mawsū'at al-Imām al-Husayn, Vol. 20, p. 385)

Yes, while one must spend part of his money to help the poor, Allah has other recommendations

too, such as spending money for ziyāra, which is actually giving heed to the Proof of Allah who is the foundation of the Religion. This action, in addition to having many rewards, also leaves important impressions in the person's life, which its discussion is outside the boundaries of this writing.

Trying to Cause Coherence Among the Shi'ah

For enemies of the Shi'ah, especially the Wahhabis- coherence of all schools of the Shi'ah even the non-twelvers- is not desirable. In recent decades some of the Shi'ah have been the frontrunners for coherence with the Sunni in spite of doctrinal differences. While standing firm on our doctrinal positions, the good parts of this experience can be focused within to cause all schools of the Shi'ah to cohere in front of the enemies; meanwhile some of the more knowledgeable twelver Shi'ah must benevolently remove misunderstandings and prove the rightfulness of the twelve Infallible Imams (PBUT) to all sincere Truth seekers in order to achieve the true unity, now with anticipation of the Faraj of the Imam Mahdi (PBUH), and very soon, Insha'Allah, with his Ever-Anticipated Appearance.

Indeed, during the Walk our enemies try to break this coherence and cause many incitements. Therefore, it is upon us to be wise

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and patient and not let any sparks of differences-which mainly stem from misunderstandings-turn into fire.

Let us not forget that in some pure corner in the Walk the twelfth Infallible Imam, Hazrat Mahdi (PBUH) may be present. He (PBUH) has been forsaken by so many for so long. The heritage of his Anticipation has been entrusted to us by those who loved and anticipated him all their lives, let us not let the Wahhabis or anyone else take this heritage away from us, let us patiently, politely, wisely, kindly and scholarly safeguard this heritage until the glorious moment of Appearance.

Trying to Expand Beautiful Occurrences in Our Societies After the Walk

It is not wrong to claim that the Arba'een Walk is an ethical factory. While the goal of this Walk is beyond these matters, but of the consequences of this event is ethical reminders which is upon the pilgrim to make himself in harmony with such beautiful behavior.

Practicing and repeating a good behavior ultimately results into a good habit. Many good behaviors are continuously practiced during the journey. But this is not enough. The pilgrim must again repeat such behavior with the people of his city and town, with his family and loved ones, with his neighbors and friends,

after returning from this spiritual journey. So much so that such behavior may turn into an everlasting habit.

The Infallible Imams (PBUT) have always recommended the Shi'ah to have good behavior to a point that according to them (PBUT) the lack of attention to good behavior will expose the reputation of Imamate- the main Pillar of the Religion- to damage. Imam Sadiq (PBUH) has requested the Shi'ah to be as adornment to them (PBUT) and not the cause of blame for them, and to speak to people nicely, to withhold their tongues, and to avoid excessive and unpleasant talking.

Let us keep in mind that the AhlulBayt's adversaries have always threatened the exalted status of the AhlulBayt (PBUT) and exposed it to destruction; behold! Let us not, unknowingly, with our unpleasant behavior practically do the same! Therefore, it is upon the Arba'een pilgrim to expand his good manners.

Arba'een and Globalization

Globalization is an issue that has been of interest to thinkers and scholars for years, especially western theorists. Everyone knows that globalization is a multi-dimensional goal. While many consider it related to the subject of economy and access to all markets, but this issue is above just economy, and it holds special

positions in cultural, social and political areas.

Of the important particularities of globalization which can be considered as the pillars of this theory are: Production and expansion of social networks, development of social relations, strengthening and acceleration of social communications, and knowledgeable progress of such process for all walks of life and not just certain groups of people.

These characteristics can be expressed in an integrative statement as: Expansion of human relations in an increasing and knowledgeable manner, free from traditional and geographical borders and in a global level, trans-local and transnational. This expansion will exist in all areas such as cultural, social and political; and obstacles and difficult phenomena which usually cause delay and difficulty in cooperations shall be removed.

Penetrability of territories and borders, when it comes to acceptance of cultural views and ways of thinking, is of special characteristics of globalization. Therefore, absolute rulership over one territory based on one geographical way of thinking shall slowly but surely diminish, and the phenomenon of transferring and integrating of thoughts and cultures shall define a new form of sovereignty.

Intensity of cultural based globalization is right now showing itself in social networks; it has been able to somewhat present a manifestation

of a confused globalization in the relationship between nations. Yet, this fact has caused the importance of globalization based on culture to take the place of economy-based globalization.

The spirit of globalization rests upon peace and observation of human rights, without any conflict, for, if the boundary of humanity is breached and his rights and peace violated, the very phenomenon of globalization and the desire to attain it, even with economical goals, will not be achieved. Thus, that which is necessary as a preliminary for globalization is peace and tranquility which will expand in the future too.

In spite all this, globalization is still considered as an aspiration, and in the real world, beyond the boundaries of the online world, it has not found its place. For now, globalization is resting in social networks, and a real sample which can be introduced as a characteristic or criterion or miniature role model cannot be found.

In the middle of all this, the Arba'een Walk has been able to present a manifestation of globalization- of course with its own personal definitions- and with minor similarities to the aspired model anticipated by humankind. Knowledgeable and expandable social relations between humans, free from limitations of borders, tastes and nationalities- yet with a common goal of loving and obeying God and His beloved past and oppressively martyred

Hujjats and the Anticipation of the lonely living twelfth Imam- is quite evident in the Arba'een Walk.

Arba'een Walk has been able to display for the world, a globalization role model in a rough course. Iraq is an impoverished, war-torn country, lacking facilities and necessary infrastructures. Inadequacy of facilities in Iraq makes life difficult in this country let alone one of its cities, at one limited time, hosting over twenty million people who are not supposed to pay anything for room and food, rather the Iraqis are going to host their guests in the route leading to Karbala and in the city of Karbala, and going to pay the enormous expenses willingly based on kindness and eagerness, without demanding or expecting anything in return.

The great Arba'een Walk has appeared beyond defined globalization models. Arba'een Walk has surpassed all borders of globalization prior to its birth, or in the heart of globalization, it has defined another globalization and substituted its criteria.

In the so called modern globalization model no one is to receive free services rather he can only enter into other borders; in the globalization model all are not to love each other and take care of one another rather as long as one does not breach others' tranquility, it is sufficient; in the globalization model economic expansion is a main pillar, and business and profit are great

motives for seeking globalization.

But in the Arba'een model humans associate with humans based on love, kindness, mercy, compassion and mutual caring, and their relationship is beyond merely respecting each others' rights. In Arba'een Walk there is no desire to trade and profit, on the contrary, great expenses are paid by the hosts of this Walk.

Still sadly, a few- out of ignorance and not based on knowledge- manifest biased and unkind behavior ... but in the Arba'een event the humble Iraqis host and treat Arabs and nonArabs alike, with those very same aforementioned particularities.

In the Arba'een Walk attachments to border, geography, culture, color, etc. seems less obvious; as soon as people step in this Walk they are treated by others, especially by Iraqis, with kindness and hospitality, and this spirit exists among pilgrims toward each other.

In Iraq food security is a big challenge casting its shadow upon bases of life and staying alive. But in this Event the first thing which becomes the base of mutual social relations is establishment of food security, and this is from the people who themselves are exposed to this threat and challenge all through the year.

Food is only a preliminary for a mutual human relationship based on kindness, and it is not a goal or motive for the relationship, rather

in this event mutual relations among groups of people are to happen around the axis of the name of Imam Hussain (PBUH). Just like a family gathering to strengthen family ties in which food is not the goal but it is a basis for having the gathering.

Similar to the Era of Reappearance

Indeed the Era of the Reappearance of the twelfth Imam (PBUH) is neither comparable to the time before it, nor precisely perceivable. Things which will happen shall be beyond current social relations and human knowledge. Manifestation of justice to a point that there will be no more poor, people's disinclination to wealth, comprehensive peace, sufficient rainfall and manifestation of blessings all over the earth, behavior change of wild animals, etc. are cases which are even hard to imagine, and no event even Arba'een can be considered an example of that Era.

But the dimensions of social behavior and manifestation of human particularities in the Arba'een event can, to a limited extent, familiarize our minds to the miracle of the Reappearance Era. Things that happen in Arba'een are scarce even perhaps unfound outside the event; unique, unbelievable and unusual occurrences. These all remind us that miracles do happen.

In Arba'een a human miracle happens. In an impoverished land a huge social gathering occurs, and in a defective framework a great event is formed. Different cultures and nationalities gather together peacefully, and are affectionate to one another while outside this event they may have serious cultural gaps, gaps which can cause conflicts. In the Era of Reappearance too miracle will happen.

This miracle will happen on the foundation of an event which has been growing next to the concepts of Anticipation, Appearance and all Shi'i key words, and it is of the same type, and it has come to being from a common belief. To put it simply, Appearance and the miracle of Appearance is the fruit of the same tree which has created Arba'een.

Remembering the Living Imam (PBUH)

The most important reason which leads pilgrims all through the year to visit the graves of the Infallible Imams (PBUT) is to honor the Imams and to present their beliefs to them (PBUT). We believe that those killed in the cause of God are alive and receive sustenance in the Presence of God.

In the midst of these beliefs, believing in the concept of Divine Leadership and the Imam of Time - the twelfth Imam (PBUH)- are the greatest and the most fundamental key words.

Therefore, giving heed and remembering Imam Mahdi (PBUH) all through the journey is a necessary matter. On the other hand, it must be known that the Infallible Imam of each era is kind, compassionate and merciful to the Shi'ah and those who love him, and indeed this is even more for those who have taken steps to exalt the names of the AhlulBayt (PBUT).

Can it be possible that a person- in the way of loving Imam Hussain and ultimately winning the Pleasedness of Allah SWT and honoring the Sha'aa'er (Sacraments) of Allah- does something hard and goes through a difficult course, is then not included in the graciousness of the living Infallible and Allah-Appointed Imam of his time?! Now that this is so, nothing is then better for the pilgrim than seeing himself, more than ever, in the center of attention of the Infallible Imam of his time.

It would be wonderful if our intentions become Imam-oriented. Let us go on pilgrimage on Imam Mahdi (PBUH)'s behalf. Let us dedicate the rewards of all our good deeds in this journey- our self-sacrifice, unanimity of hearts, etc. - to the Imam of our time (May Allah hasten his emergence).

Let us bring this writing to an end with a recommendation from Imam Sadiq (PBUH):

“When the hardships of Bani-Israel became too long, for forty consecutive mornings, they cried and implored Allah.

Allah then Revealed to the Prophet Moses and his successor Aaron (PBUT) to free the Bani-Israel from Pharaoh. Thus, Allah reduced one hundred and seventy years (from the previously ordained four hundred years of torment). Then Imam Sadiq (PBUH) continued: If you (the Shi'ah) do the same, Allah shall draw near our (AhlulBayt's) Faraj (Relief, Appearance of Imam Mahdi (PBUH)). But if you do not do so, the Amr (of Appearance) will be delayed to its very end."

(Biḥār al-anwār, Vol. 52, p. 132)

And Arba'een is one of the best opportunities for imploring Allah together to hasten the Appearance of Imam Mahdi, the God's remainder (PBUH).



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