

Ziyarat Ashoora - Importance, Rewards and Effects

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You have already read numerous articles written in the previous Muharram al-Haraam special issues of Al Muntazar on the topic of 'Importance of Ziyaarat (visitation) of Imam Husain (a.s.) and its benefits in this world and the hereafter.' The importance of Ziyaarate Aashoora has also been dealt with in some detail in the previous Al Muntazar issues. To know more on this topic, you can refer to the following articles - 'Ziyaarat of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.)' (Muharram al-Haraam special issue - 1411 AH), 'Ziyaarat Arbaeen' (1412 AH), 'The visitors of Imam Husain's (a.s.) grave on the Day of Qiyamat' (1414 AH), 'The conditions for the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.)' (Muharram al-Haraam special issue - 1417 AH), 'The visitors of the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.)' (1422 AH), 'The status in the hereafter and the significance of Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.)' (1424 AH)

However, it is a firmly established fact that just as it is impossible to comprehend and grasp the greatness, excellence, position and status of Ahle Bait (a.s.), it is impossible for us to comprehend the connotations, implications and significance of their words and statements in their entirety. Of course, we can have some basic understanding of their words, which makes us realize their high stature and distinction. Ziyaarate Aashoora too falls in a similar category. Its greatness, benefits and rewards cannot be entirely comprehended or enumerated. Hence whatever is being written in this article concerning Ziyaarate Aashoora is like taking a few drops from a vast ocean. As the old Arabic cliché goes, 'If the entire ocean cannot be encircled and seized, then at least take from it to the extent of your thirst.'

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Hadith-e-Qudsi

What else could be a greater merit for this Ziyaarat than to be the 'Word of Allah' (Hadithe Qudsi)? No other Ziyaarat bears this eminence and superiority. The difference between the Holy Quran and Ziyaarate Aashoora is the same as the difference between the Holy Quran and Hadithe Qudsi. If the words from Allah claim to be a miracle from the aspect of meaning and concept, then they are the verses of the Holy Quran. But if there is no claim of miracle from the aspect of meaning and concept, then these divine words are called as 'Hadithe Qudsi'. And if the concept is from Allah, but the words are those of the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), then it is called as 'Hadith'. However there is no doubt that this Ziyaarat is Hadithe Qudsi.

Safwan (r.a) narrates that Hazrat Jibraeel (a.s.) conveyed this Ziyaarat to Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) on divine command. We will narrate this incident in detail in the end of this article. What is important at this point is to appreciate that this Ziyaarat is Hadithe Qudsi and it has reached Imam Baqir (a.s.) through his noble ancestors who received it from Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.). Imam Baqir (a.s.) made 'public' this Ziyaarat for the first time. This is because like all other divine laws that were delayed, the delay in the communication of Ziyaarate Aashoora in the public domain also had a divine rationale.

(Shifa al-Sudoor, p. 51 by Abul Fazl Tehrani)

We will narrate the importance of Ziyaarate Aashoora in the light of traditions later in this article. Now let us take a look at some incidents that highlight the significance of Ziyaarate Aashoora and its recitation.

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Importance

The great and pious jurist, Marhoom Shaikh Jawad b. Shaikh Mashkoor, was a leading jurist of Najaf who died at the age of 90 years in 1337 A.H. He is buried next to his father in a room in the blessed courtyard of the grave of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). This great scholar dreamt in the night of 26 Safar 1332 A.H in which he saw Hazrat Izraeel - the angel of death (a.s.). He did salaam to the angel of death and asked him from where he was coming. The angel of death replied 'I am coming from Shiraz after having seized the soul (Ruh) of Mirza Ibrahim Mehlaaki.' Shaikh asked him 'In what condition is his soul in Barzakh?' The angel of death replied 'He is residing in the most beautiful garden and is in the best of the conditions. Allah has appointed 1,000 angels at his beck and call.' Shaikh asked him 'For which action has he received such a great reward - for his high level of knowledge? Or for the large number of students he had trained?' The angel of death replied, 'For none of these reasons'. Shaikh asked, 'Then for leading the congregational prayers and explaining the religious laws to the people?' The angel of death replied in the negative. So Shaikh asked, 'Then on what basis did he receive such a great position?' The angel of death said 'For reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora.' Mirza Mehlaaki recited Ziyaarate Aashoora regularly in the last 30 years of his life. And if due to an illness or any other reason, he was unable to recite the Ziyaarat, then he would appoint a representative to recite the Ziyaarat on his behalf.'

The next morning, Shaikh Jawad went to Ayatullah Mirza Mohammed Taqi Shirazi and narrated his dream. On hearing this, Ayatullah Mirza Mohammed Taqi began weeping. When people asked him the reason of his grief, he replied 'Mirza Ibrahim Mehlaaki was a pillar of jurisprudence and he has departed from the world.' People said 'But this news was only a dream, while we don't know the fact as yet.' Ayatullah Mirza Taqi replied, 'This was not the dream of an ordinary individual, it was the dream of Shaikh Jawad.' The very next day there was letter informing the residents of Najaf about Mirza Ibrahim Mehlaaki's demise. In this way, the veracity of Shaikh Jawad's dream proved to be true. Subsequently many scholars learnt of this incident from the late Ayatullah Syed Abdul Hadi Shirazi who in turn had personally heard about it from Shaikh Jawad.

(Ziyaarate Aashoora by Nasir Rasti Lahejaani, p. 27)

This incident highlights the significance of reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora regularly.

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Consequences and benefits

Shaheed-e-Mehraab, Ayatullah Dastghaib Shirazi (r.a.) narrates an incident from Ayatullah Uzma Shaikh Abdul Kareem Haayeree (r.a.), the founder of the Hauz-e-Ilmiyyah in Qum. Janab Haayeree (r.a.) narrates, 'I was residing in Samarrah to pursue religious studies. Once, the city was struck by a deadly plague. Scores of people were dying every day. During those days, a group of religious scholars had gathered at the house of our teacher late Syed Mohammed Fesharki (r.a.). At that time, Janab Mirza Mohammed Taqi (r.a.) too came in that meeting. The talk turned towards the topic of plague and the devastation it was causing in terms of loss of lives. Marhoom Mirza Taqi (r.a.) said, "If I command you to perform an action will all of you obey me?" Everyone replied "Yes, of course, we will obey whatever you

say." Marhoom Mirza (r.a.) then ordered "Tell every Shia of Samarra to recite Ziyaarate Aashoora for the next ten days and to gift the reward of the Ziyaarat to the soul of the mother of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), Janabe Nargis Khatoon (s.a) so that the people remain safe from this disease." All those who were present in that gathering passed this information to the Shias of Samarra, who all began reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora. From the very next day, there was no news of any Shia death. Only the news of the death of the Ahle Sunnat was being reported. Gradually the Sunnis realized this and asked some of their Shia friends as to the reason that why none from the Shias were dying of plague. The Shias said that they were reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora. On hearing this, the Sunnis too began reciting the Ziyaarat. Consequently, they too were secured from the perilous effects of the plague.'

(Ziyaarate Aashoora - Effects & Miracles, p. 24)

Conclusion

1. This incident not only highlights the effects and consequences of reading Ziyaarate Aashoora, but also the importance of the Ziyaarat itself.
2. People usually recite Ziyaarate Aashoora on behalf of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s). This incident further highlights the great position of Imam's (a.t.f.s.) mother, Janabe Nargis Khatoon (s.a)
3. The Sunnis vehemently oppose reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora. Yet by reciting the Ziyaarat, even they acknowledged that the Ahle Bait (a.s.) are the 'Dispellers of calamities'.

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Emphasis of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.)

The emperor of the era, the friend of Allah, the chief of the universe, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has forcefully stressed the importance of reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora in his letters and sayings.

In his masterpiece, Mafaateeh al-Jenan, the pillar of traditionalists, Shaikh Abbas Qummi (r.a) has mentioned an incident from his teacher, Janab Mirza Husain Tabarsi (r.a) - famous as Mohaddis Noori (r.a). We will not narrate the entire incident but mention only that portion where Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) has emphasized the regular recitation of Ziyaarate Aashoora .

This incident pertains to Janab Syed Ahmed bin Syed Hashim bin Syed Hasan Musawi Rashty. He was a trader from the city of Rasht. He says 'I left the city of Rasht with the intention of going for Haj and came to the house of Haji Safarali Tabrezi. I was a little worried as there was no caravan scheduled for Haj at that time. When I saw that another friend Haji Jihad Jaludar Isfehani has packed his luggage and is all set to leave for Haj, I too decided to leave with him and hired a mount for the journey' (For more details of this incident, the separation of Janab Rashty from his group and being left alone - losing the way in a snowstorm and the darkness of the night - meeting Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) in this state of distress who led him to his destination etc please refer to Mafaateeh al-Jenan, Incident of Syed Rashty & Najm al-Thaaqib, chapter 7).

In this incident, Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), in the beginning mentions, 'Recite Naafelah Shab' Then he says 'Recite Ziyaarat Jaameah' and then he says 'Recite Ziyaarate Aashoora '. Syed Rashty did not know either Ziyaarat-e-Jaameah or Ziyaarate Aashoora by heart. But the moment Imam (a.s.) asked him to recite them regularly, he knew both these Ziyaarats by heart.

Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) helped Syed Rashty to reach his destination. On the way, Imam (a.s.) once asked him rhetorically, 'Why don't you recite the Naafelah prayers?' Then he (a.s.) repeated thrice 'Naafelah, Naafelah, Naafelah!' Again, Imam (a.s.) asked him, 'Why don't you recite Ziyaarate Aashoora?' Then Imam (a.s.) reiterated, 'Aashoora, Aashoora, Aashoora!' Once again, Imam (a.s.) asked Janab Rashty, 'Why don't you recite Ziyaarat-e-Jaameah?' And then Imam (a.s.) emphasized thrice, 'Jaameah, Jaameah, Jaameah!'

Conclusion:

This incident underlines the extraordinary importance of Ziyaarate Aashoora. The fact that Janab Syed Rashty, who had lost his way met Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.), shows his distinction. But the emphasis of Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) on the regular recitation of Ziyaarate Aashoora and Ziyaarat-e-Jaameah points to the fact that Imam-e-Zamana (a.t.f.s.) desires that his (a.s.) followers should always remember the tribulations of his grandfather Imam Husain (a.s.) and they should always be aggrieved and anguished by the events of Karbala.

'How fortunate are those who have the taufeeq of reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora regularly.'

Ziyaarate Aashoora: Repealing of chastisement

The significance of Ziyaarate Aashoora can be gauged from yet another incident. The previous incident reveals the benefit of Ziyaarate Aashoora for the one who recites it regularly. But the following incident depicts a really strange benefit of Ziyaarate Aashoora. It shows that the one who recites Ziyaarate Aashoora becomes a cause of the forgiveness of sins committed by others!!!

Marhoom Mohaddis Noori (r.a.) narrates an incident from Al-Haaj Mulla Hasan Yazdi, who was a pious and virtuous individual and was the caretaker of the shrine of Ameerul Momineen (a.s.). He was very religious and was always preoccupied in worship and Ziyaarat. Mulla Hasan, in turn narrates about Mohammed Ali Yazdi who too was a very respectable, devout and virtuous person. He too would always spend his time in acts of worship and in matters related to the Hereafter. Janab Mohammed Ali used to spend his nights in worship in a particular place in Yazd known as "Mazaar" where many prominent and pious scholars are buried. He had a neighbor who was his good friend. Both of them had grown up and studied together. His friend started doing the work of "Ghassari" (tax collection). Few years later this friend died and was buried in this very 'Mazaar' where Janab Mohammed Ali used to spend his nights in worship. One month after his friend's demise, Janab Mohammed Ali saw him in a dream. His friend was looking very handsome and smart. Janab Mohammed Ali asked him 'I very well know the kind business in which you were involved. There was nothing in that business that you did hiddenly or openly that would merit this great reward that you have received. In fact nothing except punishment could be expected from the kind of work you used to do. Then how did you receive this great position and reward?' The friend replied 'You are absolutely right. In fact, from the time I died, till yesterday I was involved in a painful

chastisement. But yesterday, the wife of Ustad Ashraf Haddad (blacksmith) died and was buried a few meters away from here. Last night Imam Husain (a.s.) came to visit her thrice. On the third visit, he (a.s.) ordered that the punishment from the entire graveyard be removed. Hence, now you see me living a life of easy and comfort.'

Aqa Mohammed Ali got up with a start from his sleep. He did not know who Ashraf Haddad was nor did he know where he lived. He went to the iron market, inquired about him and reached his house. Janab Mohammed Ali asked him 'Did you have a wife?' He replied 'Yes. She died last night and I buried her at so and so place' Janab Mohammed Ali asked him 'Had she gone for the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.)?' The man replied 'No. But why are you asking me all this?' Janab Mohammed Ali narrated to him the dream that he had seen. After hearing the entire incident, the blacksmith said 'My wife was very particular and regular in reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora'

(Daarus Salaam, Mohaddis Noori (r.a.), vol. 2, p.268; Shifa al-Sudur, p. 52 - Persian Translation; Mafaateeh al-Jenan)

'O Allah! You bestow such an honor to my grave that it too a place of Imam Husain's (a.s.) visits! O Allah! Grant me the taufeeq to recite Ziyaarate Aashoora regularly!'

Ziyaarate Aashoora: In the light of traditions

The above incidences clearly convey the virtues and significance of Ziyaarate Aashoora - both in this world and the Hereafter. Now let us have a look at those traditions that indicate and highlight the merits of reciting Ziyaarate Aashoora and also substantiate the above incidents.

Tradition 1

Alqamah bin Mohammed ibn Hazrami (r.a.) narrates 'I requested Imam Baqir (a.s.) to teach me a dua that I should recite on the day of Aashoora after the reciting the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.) - from near his (a.s.) grave or from a distance.' Imam (a.s.) replied

'O Alqamah, whenever you wish to recite the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.), you first perform two units of prayers. Then turn towards the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) and while pointing towards it, you first say 'Salam' and then 'Takbir'. Thereafter, you recite this Ziyaarat (Ziyaarate Aashoora). If you do so, then as if you have recited the supplication read by the angels while visiting the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.). Moreover, when you recite this Ziyaarat, then

- (a) Allah will increase your grade ten lakh times*
- (b) You will be included among those people who were martyred along with Imam Husain (a.s.)*
- (c) On the day of Judgment, you will be included among the martyrs*

(d) *You will get the reward of all the Prophets (a.s.) who have visited the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) from the day that he (a.s.) was martyred till date.*

And the way of reciting the Ziyaarat is like this...'

(Then Imam (a.s.) recited the entire Ziyaarate Aashoora for Alqamah (r.a.))

(Kaamil al-Ziyaarat, Ibn Qoolwayh, Ch. 71, p.194)

At the end of this tradition, Imam Baqir (a.s.) says

'O Alqamah, if you can, then recite this Ziyaarat every day send salutations to Imam Husain (a.s.). You will get all the rewards (of the one who recites it on the day of Aashoora).'

Tradition 2

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) says:

'The one who visits the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) on the day of Aashoora or spends the night near his (a.s.) grave, then it is as if he attained martyrdom along with him (a.s).'

(Kaamil al-Ziyaarat, Chapter 71, p. 191)

(Many Ziyaaraat have been mentioned that can be recited on the day of Aashoora. But the Ziyaarat mentioned by Janab Safwan (r.a.) is more common and it is Hadith-e-Qudsi).

Tradition 3

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) informs,

'The one who does the Ziyaarat of Imam Husain (a.s.) on the day of Aashoora, then paradise is obligatory upon him.'

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 101, p.104)

Tradition 4

Imam Sadiq (a.s.) mentions,

'The one who visits the grave of Imam Husain (a.s.) knowing his right (of Imamate) then it is as if he has done the Ziyaarat of Allah on the Arsh.'

Tradition 5

Abdullah bin Fazl narrates, 'Once I was in the presence of Imam Sadiq (a.s.) when a person from the city of 'Toos' came to visit him (a.s.). He asked. 'O son of the Messenger of Allah (s.a.w.a.)! What do you have to say for the one who visits the grave of Aba Abdillah (a.s.) on the day of Aashoora?' Imam (a.s.) replied

'O Toosi! The one who visits the grave of Aba Abdillah (a.s.) while he acknowledges that his (a.s.) obedience is obligatory from the side of Allah, then all his past and future sins shall be forgiven. He will be granted the right of intercession for seventy sinners. There will be no supplication that he shall ask from Allah near the grave of Aba Abdillah (a.s.) except that it shall be accepted.'

(Behaar al-Anwaar, vol. 101, p. 23)

As we are discussing about the fifth personality of the five holy personas (a.s.), we will suffice with the narration of five traditions. Those who would like to go deeper in this topic can refer to 'Kamil al-Ziyaarat, Behaar al-Anwaar vol. 101, Thawaab al-A'maal and 'Shifa al-Sudur'.

When we ponder over the above traditions, we realize the miraculous nature and effects of Ziyaarate Aashoora. These traditions also bear testimony to the veracity of the earlier incidents.

'Door of Imam Husain (a.s.)' - Universal Door of Mercy

In the sermon of 'Shabaniyyah', Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) while explaining the greatness of the month of Ramdhaan says '... In it the doors of paradise are open...' Elucidating this statement of Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.), Shaikh Jafar Shushtry (r.a) brings forth a very subtle point. About the 'doors of paradise' he says 'If you are unable to reach the 'doors of paradise' (i.e. you are unable to enter paradise due to your bad actions) then there is yet another door that leads to paradise. No one is deprived of it and it is very easy to reach that gate. Anyone, wherever he is or in whatever condition he is in, can reach to the infinite mercy of Allah through this door. Do you want to know the name of this door so that you can enter paradise? It is door of Imam Husain (a.s.). And the way to reach it is through humility and mourning for Aba Abdillah (a.s.)' Shaikh continues, 'If you cannot find the path to paradise through repentance (as there are conditions for repentance and our bad actions act as hurdles) then the love of Imam Husain (a.s.) is an enormous grace. Regardless of the extent of a person's sins and his non-repentance (in the true sense), yet no one is turned away from paradise because of this bounty (of the love of Imam Husain (a.s.)) he will not be deprived of Allah's compassion.'

(Ziyaarate Aashoora by Nasir Rashty, p. 35)

O Allah! For the sake of Imam Husain (a.s.), you grant me honor and nobility near You in this world and the Hereafter!

The late Ayatullah Al Hajj Sheikh ~ Abdul Karim Haeri (r.a.) Repelling Calamities
the founder of the hawzah ~ Ilmiyyah of Qum recounts: "During the time when I was engaged in religious studies in the city of Samarra, an epidemic, in the form of plague, spread amongst the inhabitants of the city and everyday several people would die of the disease.

One day, some of the inhabitants of Samarra had gathered in the house of my teacher, the **late Sayyid Muammad Fisharki (r.a.)**, when **Ayatullah Mirza Muhammad Taqi Shirazi (r.a.) (d. 1338 AH)**, who, in terms of knowledge, was at par with the **late Sayyid Fisharki**, suddenly arrived. In the course of the conversation, the talk drifted towards the issue of the plague that had threatened the lives of all the people.

The late Mirza said: "If I were to issue a hukm (ruling), would it not be mandatory for it to be executed?" All those present said: "Yes."

He said: "I rule that from today onwards, for a period of ten days, the entire Shi'ite community of Samarra should recite "Ziyarat-e- Ashura" and gift the rewards of this recitation to Hadhrat Narjis Khatoon (s.a.) - the mother of Imam Mahdi (a.t.f.s.) - in order that this calamity is repelled from them."

Those present in the gathering informed the other Shi'ites of this ruling and all of them engaged themselves in reciting the "Ziyarat-e- Ashura." **The following days onward, it was observed that none of the Shi'ites would die due to the disease whereas the non-Shi'ites continued to suffer deaths** - and this became plainly manifest for all the inhabitants of the city, such that some of the non-Shi'ites used to question their Shi'ite friends: "How is it that our people die due to the disease, whereas there are no deaths on your side?"

The Shi'ites would answer: **"All of us recite "Ziyarat-e- Ashura" of Imam Husain (a.s.) in order to remain protected from the epidemic and Allah wards away the calamity from us!"**

Reference: Anecdotes for Reflection, Vol 3, Pg 24 (Under Supplication)