

***Ziyarat* Ashura and Imam Mahdi: Are Karbala and the Advent of the Imam on One Path?**

The Link Between *Ziyarat* Ashura and Imam Mahdi: The Secret to Changing from Mourner to Awaiter

Ziyarat Ashura and Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) are two sacred names and realities in the mind and heart of Shias, sometimes perceived as separate, yet intrinsically linked. Many consider *Ziyarat* Ashura merely a text to commemorate the event of Karbala and mourn the sufferings of Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him); however, the truth of this *Ziyarat* extends far beyond that. *Ziyarat* Ashura is more than a historical narrative; it is a covenant for humanity's present and future—a covenant that connects individuals to the living Imam and their responsibilities during the era of occultation.

If we examine the content of *Ziyarat* Ashura, we find that alongside the curses and salutations, there are passages that directly invite individuals to a commitment for the future. In this *Ziyarat*, weeping for the past is intertwined with a covenant for the future. Tears shed for Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) only gain true meaning when they lead to awareness and responsibility toward Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). It is this very link that elevates *Ziyarat* Ashura beyond an emotional text, transforming it into an educational school for shaping the individual waiting for the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him).

Ziyarat Ashura teaches us that the main tragedy of Karbala was not merely the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him), but rather the sidelining of the

infallible Imam from his position of guidance—a wound that persists to this day and throughout the era of occultation. When this truth becomes clear, one realizes that they too are complicit in this tragedy because a society where the Imam is absent is an orphaned society, deprived of true life. Thus, each recitation of *Ziyarat Ashura* is an opportunity to know one's true identity and to remember that we still bear a great responsibility toward Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him).

The link between *Ziyarat Ashura* and Imam Mahdi is not merely a doctrinal or emotional bond; rather, it is a roadmap for Shia life. *Ziyarat Ashura* teaches us that true mourning is not confined to weeping and lamenting; instead, it must result in a covenant to support Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) and prepare society for his advent. This is where tears for the past transform into action for the future, and individuals elevate from the status of a mourner to that of an aware awaiter.

Why Is *Ziyarat Ashura* Incomplete Without Understanding Its Connection to Imam Mahdi (Peace Be Upon Him)?

At first glance, *Ziyarat Ashura* is a ritualistic text, a collection of salutations and curses that transports the reader to the atmosphere of Karbala. However, if we interpret this *Ziyarat* solely within the framework of the events of the year 61 AH, half of its truth remains hidden. *Ziyarat Ashura* and Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) are two inseparable realities.

The event of Karbala was not only the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) and his companions; the greatest tragedy was that the infallible Imam was sidelined from his position of societal leadership

¹. In fact, Karbala is not just a bloody tragedy, but another point of decline in human history after Ghadir Khumm. This calamity continues today because in the era of occultation, society is also deprived of the manifest guidance of the living Imam. Therefore, when we shed tears during *Ziyarat Ashura*, these tears are not just for the past; rather, they are for the current state of humanity, for a society that, without the infallible Imam, lives in oppression and confusion.

If *Ziyarat Ashura* is limited solely to mourning, it loses its primary function. Weeping and lamenting without a connection to awaiting [the Imam] remain merely an emotional release. However, when we understand that the avenging of Imam Hussain's blood is only realized by the victorious Imam, namely Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him), our perspective changes. Tears for the past must transform into a covenant for the future. *Ziyarat Ashura* teaches us that true mourning is none other than responsibility toward the living Imam, and this responsibility manifests itself in individual life through purposeful worship and in social life through standing against oppression and corruption.

If the connection between *Ziyarat Ashura* and Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) is disregarded, the *Ziyarat* will be incomplete. Ashura without Mahdawiyyah is fruitless, and Mahdawiyyah without Ashura is rootless! This is the main message of this *Ziyarat*; it elevates the awaiting individual from the level of a mourner to that of a responsible person.

A Platform for Nurturing the Awaiting Individual in the Era of Occultation

Ziyarat Ashura is not merely a religious text for attaining individual reward; rather, it is an educational charter that places individuals on an active path of awaiting

Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him). In this *Ziyarat*, tears and emotion are intertwined with covenant and responsibility. It is this very combination that elevates it beyond a prayer and lament, transforming it into a school for nurturing the awaiting individual in the era of occultation. This school familiarizes individuals with their truth, reminds them of their historical responsibility, and prepares them to aid Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him).

At the beginning of *Ziyarat Ashura*, Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) is introduced with the title "*Thar Allah*" (Blood of God) ². The meaning of the 'Blood of God' is not physical blood; rather, it is a reality that is the source of human life. The presence of the infallible Imam enables true human life to manifest, and with his absence, society suffers spiritual death. This understanding is the starting point of education in *Ziyarat Ashura*.

In this *Ziyarat*, two key expressions concerning the avenging of Imam Hussain's (Peace be upon him) blood ³ and the avenging of one's own blood ⁴ are also mentioned. Perhaps this question arises: "Since I was not in Karbala, why should I seek to avenge my own blood?" The answer to this question lies in self-knowledge. The truth of our soul is from the light of the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them), and when the Imam is absent as a guide, we too are separated from our heavenly father, and our potentials for attaining the status of God's deputy are destroyed; therefore, our blood has also been shed. Thus, the phrase "*talab thari*" (taking my own vengeance) in *Ziyarat Ashura* means "I seek the return of my heavenly guide and father."

Just as humans seek material sustenance, they must also consider avenging (the blood) as their sustenance. By uttering the phrase "*an yarzuqani talaba thari*" (to

bestow upon me with the chance to take my own vengeance), we are, in fact, confessing that without Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him), our human life is incomplete, and our true sustenance is his presence and sovereignty.

It is here that the connection between *Ziyarat Ashura* and Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) becomes clear. The true avenging of Imam Hussain's (Peace be upon him) blood occurs when Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) comes and the rule of the infallible Imam is established in society. At that time, both Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) will return to Earth, and human life will flow anew. Thus, *Ziyarat Ashura* takes our hand from the year 61 AH and leads us to the future, which is the era of the advent of Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him).

If weeping for Ashura is limited solely to expressing emotions, our mourning remains incomplete. However, when tears transform into seeking retribution and preparation for the advent, a person ascends from the status of "mourner" to that of "awaiter"—a status accompanied by covenant, responsibility, and readiness. This is where *Ziyarat Ashura* leads individuals from mere mourning to a future-making movement to aid Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him).

Ziyarat Ashura and Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) are not two separate paths; rather, they are a singular reality that completes each other. *Ziyarat Ashura* makes us aware of the root of the tragedy: that the greatest catastrophe in history was the removal of the infallible Imam from the position of guidance. Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him) is the answer and the path to salvation from this calamity; his advent signifies the return of the Imam to the center of human life. If this connection is not understood, *Ziyarat Ashura* will be reduced to mere emotional mourning, and awaiting will transform into a vague wish.

A person who truly understands *Ziyarat Ashura* knows that weeping for Imam Hussain (Peace be upon him) is only the beginning of the journey. This weeping must evolve into a covenant for the future, a responsibility to aid Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him), and a movement to prepare society.

What connection do you see between *Ziyarat Ashura* and Imam Mahdi (Peace be upon him)? Has uncovering this connection brought about a change in your perspective and lifestyle? Please share your experiences and opinions with us.

References

¹. *wa la`ana allahu ummatan dafa`atukum `an maqamikum, wa azalatukum `an maratibikum allati rattabakum allahu fiha* (May Allah curse the people who drove you away from your position and removed you away from your ranks that Allah has put you in).

². *alssalamu `alayka ya thara allahi wabna tharihi* (Peace be upon you, O Blood of God and whose blood has not yet been avenged).

³. *an yarzuqani talaba tha'rika ma`a imamin mansurin min ahli bayti muhammadin* (to endue me with the chance to avenge you with a (Divinely) supported leader from the Household of Muhammad).

⁴. *wa an yarzuqani talaba tha'ri ma`a imami hudan zahirin* (and to bestow upon me with the chance to take my own vengeance with a leader of true guidance).