A reflection on Ziyarah of holy Shrines as a logical religious manner

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Abstract: *The reason of Ziyarah of holy shrines is a new question which is raised due to the Salafi's strong influence on the world of Islam. This power comes more from the company and coalition of major powers of the world with the Salafi's governments. Prior to the Salafi's movement in Egypt and its hostile approach, who are the supports of Muhammad ibn Abdulwahab, there are a few cases regarding questioning about Ziyarah.*

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What we have seen over the history was not attacking *Ziyarah* but there were conflicts between groups in Islamic society or rulers of Muslims and the

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other groups belonged to the same nation in order to damage that group. For example, if at the beginning of the ٤th century A.H., Hanabilah tended to attack the pilgrimage Caravan of Imam Husayn by the sedition of Hasan Ibn ‘Ali Barbahari, it was a reaction against the increasing number of Shia in Baqdad not an objection to the pilgrimage per se. or when Mutiwakkil ‘Abbasi, at the beginning of ٣rd century, flooded the grave of Imam Husayn, he wanted to silence the remembrance of the Ahlul Bayt. Even the disrespectful behavior of Umawi-Marwani ,overcoming Medina in the second half of the first century, with the holy Prophet’s shrine, religious prohibition of *Ziyarah* of holy shrine was not mentioned as a reason but this behavior generally was interpreted as power-seeking behavior of Umawi’s rulership which had to eradicate Islam and the name of Prophet since the time of reign of Mu‘awiyah and Mu‘awiyah directly declared his policy in his expression “ dafnan dafna”.

Silfi Najdi

Joining the desert-dwellers of Najd who spend their days by killing and looting to Muhamamd ibn ‘Abdulwahab – the claimer of a Religious reform in Silfi Najdi’s style- followed by gathering huge wealth from oil caused this unfortunate destiny for islam world when in the modern days , even the most unprivileged societies who left behind from the new caravan of civilization ,set saving their cultural heritance among their priorities, in the other side of this globe a group under the name of Islam are destroying their historical signs of themselves which are signs of their civilization, this proves their failure in getting along with new humanistic approaches; they use the huge God given wealth derived from oil-exporting outcome and fool a group of people who need this money or they suffer from religious knowledge. Therefore these ignorant people will beat on the drum of fighting with culture; now we witness at the time of respecting spiritual cultures, every moment the news of destroying a religious or cultural masterpiece by the hands of supporters of reviving caliphs sunnah fully covered by medias reached to people’s ears; this results in showing a fake disgusting figure for Islam.

Fundamental hint

In explaining the philosophy of *Ziyarah* we started from two fundamental points:

١. The word *Ziyarah*
٢. The value of *Ziyarah*

The word *Ziyarah* is from the root “Z-w-r” means tending to something or somewhere and taking distance from something or somewhere; by going to somewhere “Mazar” or being present

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besides someone " mazur" *Ziy̲a̲rah* has happened. In fact the result of this action of being present is to honor that place or person relating it or him/her to something holy.

Sunnah of visiting shrines of holy imams and other great people has been based on this belief. It is more out of logical behavior of human beings rather a religious advice. The religious teaching in this regard is more consisting of correcting the methods and prohibiting misunderstandings in this logical action. Meanwhile some verses of holy Quran confirms the correctness of these kinds of human behavior like one direct example in surah Nisa verse ٦٤;

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا

"We did not send a Messenger except that he should be obeyed, by the permission of Allah. If, when they wronged themselves, they had come to you and asked Allah for forgiveness, and the Messenger had asked for forgiveness for them, they would have found Allah the Turner, the Most Merciful."

It is about those who did wrong to themselves and disobeyed God, they are advised to go to Prophet and repent God in his presence and Prophet asked for their forgiveness as God gives good news of being forgiving. According to this verse, God is the One Who forgives sins and accept repents and as He is Kind and Prophet just because those people came to him ask God for their forgiveness; but their presence besides Prophet has a role in their forgiveness.

Now, if approaching Prophet is an opportunity for sinful people and a way to get closer to God, this action would be suitable for others and can cause their closeness to God; it means we can not say approaching Prophet is suitable only you commit a sin. This opinion is kind of illogical thoughts which is not acceptable.

One the other hand, according to various traditions, death of Prophet is only his physical absence in this world and his majesty in Barzakh has a continuous connection with this world and is an observer to faithfuls. The common understanding of people is this and some reports not a few have been recorded in source books concerning presence of his companions and usual people besides his shrine to spiritually benefit from him or talk to him.

Besides that, in tradition sources of Ahl Hadiht, in an attention-worthy frequency in Shia tradition sources, there are advices to muslims to visit the shrine of holy Prophet, these traditions are from Prophet and infallible imams.

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The content of traditions by Prophet narrated by Sunnit are like these:

Anyone after my death visit my shrine, would be among those who migrated towards me (and joined muslims). Even if a person can not come to visit my shrine (to do pilgrimage) send ... to me as it reached me.

In Shia traditions the importance of this pilgrimage has been explained from another aspect.

It is narrated from Imam ‘Ali who said,

The pilgrims of Mecca (who go to perform Haj) in order to complete their Haj should go to visit the shrine of holy Prophet. Faithfuls are commanded to do this and if they do not, they do not respect Prophet of kindness.

This saying obviously shows that visiting the holy shrine of Prophet not only does bring spiritual benefits but also is the sign of respecting him. No one can claim to be a muslim who owes Prophet but avoids visiting his shrine or denies blessings of *Ziyarah*. Most of Fighhi schools of thought of Sunnah confirmed goodness of *Ziyarah* of the holy shrine of Prophet and some schools like Malikiyan knows it obligatory.

Vain excuses

The wonder is those who insist on denying this pilgrimage that gave credits to blasphemy, disrespecting Prophet and Islam …

This group forget that this place was so honored that people were proud of being buried there.

***Ziyarah* and Polytheism**

According to this, claiming *Ziyarah* as an act of polytheism is not logical. Polytheism has no exception and it can not be said *Ziyarah* of holy Prophet is not a reason for *Ziyarah* of other infallibles. To prove this claim we can refer to the manner of the daughter of Prophet who according to histories each Friday visited the grave of Hamzah sayyid al-Shuhada, and repaired it when necessary.

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