

Visitation: Its Monotheistic and Political Dimensions

The Family of Monotheism in History

According to the Qur'an, the family of monotheism (*tawhid*) is one and a single family, whose links are connected to one another. The leader and the father of this family is Prophet Ibrahim ('a), the friend of the All-merciful.

Allah, the Exalted says:

“He has chosen you and has not placed before you any obstacle in religion, the faith of your father, Ibrahim. He named you ‘muslims’ before, and in this, so that the apostle may be a witness to you, and that you may be witnesses to mankind.”¹

The Prophet of Allah (S) is the last of the prophets of this family. With him the earlier Divine messages have been concluded. This family is {like} a good (*tayyibah*) tree whose roots have spread all over, blessed are its branches and off-shoots, sweet are its fruits, it is extended over the history, and it is a single family in the very words of the Qur'an:

“Indeed this community of yours is one community (ummah), and I am your Lord, so worship Me”²,

and:

“Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord, so be wary of Me.”³

The Qur'an gives utmost significance to exhibit the unity and coherence of this family, and to consolidate the relation between its different parts and elements, and to deepen the relations within it.

The position of this emphasis lies at the core of the Islamic education methodology, with the aim of

displaying the unity of this family, deepening the sense of being related to it, insisting on the inheritance of monotheism and monotheistic values within this family, generation after generation; and strengthening the relationship among the different links of this family.

Moreover, in introducing the symbolic and righteous men (*salihin*) of this family, there is an exemplar and pattern for the people in their lives.

The Inter-connectedness and Reunion between Generations of this Family

The following are examples of the importance given by the Qur'an to this interconnection between the links of this family in history, and the significance given by it in connecting its present to the past, and the subsidiary to the principal:

1. To create a mutual acquaintance within the family, reminding it of its righteous (*salihin*) members, paying tribute to them by their names, and celebrating their remembrance.

This matter has been given great importance in the Qur'an. The following are some examples of it:

- ***“And mention in the Book Mary, when she withdrew from her family to an easterly place.”***⁴
- ***“And mention in the Book Ibrahim. Indeed he was a truthful one, a prophet.”***⁵
- ***“And mention in the Book Musa. Indeed he was exclusively dedicated {to Allah}, and an apostle and a prophet.”***⁶
- ***“And mention in the Book Isma'il. Indeed he was true to his promise, and an apostle and a prophet.”***⁷
- ***“And mention in the Book Idris. Indeed he was a truthful one, a prophet.”***⁸
- ***“And remember Our servant Dawud, the man of strength.”***⁹
- ***“And remember Our servant Ayyub, when he called out to his Lord, ‘The devil has visited on me hardship and torment.’”***¹⁰
- ***“And remember Our servants Ibrahim, Ishaq, and Ya'qub, men of strength and insight. Indeed We purified them with the exclusiveness of the remembrance of the abode {of the Hereafter}.”***¹¹
- ***“And remember Isma'il, Alyasa', and Dhu al-Kifl, each {of whom was} among the elect.”***¹²

2. Establishing a relation between the different links of this family, based on peace (*salam*) and removing rancour, hatred and jealousy from the generations of this family, and connecting their present to the

past, the children to their parents, and the descendants to their ancestors. The relation on the basis of peace is the most distinct and the best of relations within any family. Allah, the Exalted, says:

● ***“And We left for him a good name among posterity. Peace be to Nuh, throughout the nations! Thus indeed do We reward the virtuous. He is indeed one of Our faithful servants.”***¹³

● ***“And We left for him a good name in posterity. Peace be to Ibrahim!”***¹⁴

● ***“And We left for them a good name in posterity. Peace be to Musa and Harun!”***¹⁵

● ***“And We left for him a good name in posterity. Peace be to Ilyas!”***¹⁶

● ***“And peace be to the apostles! All praise belong to Allah, Lord of all the worlds.”***¹⁷

A relation founded on peace requires unity at inception, unity of goal, unity in the course of action, unity in resolution to actualize the goal, unity of method, and unity in attitude and opinion. Without such a comprehensive unity, ‘peace’ would make no sense.

3. The relationship of inheritance between generations of this family, such that the righteous descendants inherit from their ancestors monotheism (*tawhid*), the monotheistic values, and the calling toward monotheism.

With regard to this, Allah, the Exalted, says:

● ***“Then We made heirs to the Book those whom We have chosen from Our servants.”***¹⁸

● ***“Certainly We gave Musa the guidance and We made the Children of Israel heirs to the Book.”***¹⁹

● ***“And those who are watchful of their prayers (salat). It is they who will be the inheritors.”***²⁰

● ***“As for those who hold fast to the Book and maintain the prayer, indeed We do not waste the reward of those who bring about reform.”***²¹

It is based on this relationship that the descendant takes monotheism and its values from the ancestor, so that he in turn could pass on these values to the generations to come.

4. To strengthen the sense of being related to this family. Prophet Ibrahim (‘a) has been considered by Allah, the Exalted, as the leader of this family, the father of all monotheists (*muwahhidin*), as he (‘a) has considered them to be his offspring.

This clear and explicit affiliation to this family connects different generations of this family to one another with the strongest of bonds and relations.

Allah, the Exalted, says:

“He has chosen you and has not placed before you any obstacle (haraj) in the religion, the faith of your father, Ibrahim. He named you ‘muslims’ before, and in this, so that the apostle may be a witness to you, and that you may be witnesses to mankind.”²²

5. The command of Allah to the generations of this family to follow in the footsteps of the prophets, the messengers, the righteous (*salihin*) and the truthful (*siddiqin*) amongst the members of this family, in the past and present.

Allah, the Exalted says:

- ***“In the Apostle of Allah there is certainly a good exemplar for you.”***²³
- ***“There is certainly a good exemplar for you in Ibrahim and those who were with him.”***²⁴
- ***“There is certainly a good exemplar for you in them –for those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day.”***²⁵

After the Qur’an mentions a number of the apostles of Allah and His righteous friends, it orders mankind to follow them, take guidance from them, and glean something from their light.

He, the Exalted, says:

“This was Our argument that We gave to Ibrahim against his people. We raise in rank whomever We wish. Indeed your Lord is All-wise, All-knowing. And We gave him Ishaq and Ya’qub and guided each of them. And Nuh We had guided before, and from his offspring, Dawud and Sulaiman, Ayyub, Yusuf and Harun.

Thus do We reward the virtuous. And Zakariyyah, Yahya, ‘Isa and Ilyas –each of them among the righteous. And Isma’il, Alyasa’, Yunus and Lut –each We graced over all the nations. And from among their fathers, their descendants and brethren –We chose them and guided them to a straight path... They are the ones whom Allah has guided, so follow their guidance.”²⁶

6. The relation of supplication (*du’a*’); the prayer of the following generation for the preceding one. This is the most remarkable and the best of relationships between the descendants and their ancestors, which is manifested in the testimony given by the succeeding generation for the preceding one in their being forerunners in faith, and praying to Allah on their behalf for forgiveness and mercy.

“And those who came in after them, who say, ‘Our Lord, forgive us and our brethren who were our forerunners in the faith, and do not put any rancour in our hearts toward the faithful. Our Lord, You are indeed Most Kind and Merciful.”²⁷

Therefore, celebrating the life of the past generations of the monotheistic family and building a relation with them is among the genuine methods of Islam in education and training (*tarbiyah*).

For building such a relationship and preserving its continuity, there is a distinct culture specific for this

purpose, and the Holy Qur'an urges the believers to maintain this relationship and connection throughout the generations within this Muslim family, which is extended from the time of Prophet Ibrahim ('a), rather from the time of Prophet Nuh ('a), to this day, through such great and resolute prophets as Musa bin 'Imran, 'Isa bin Maryam, and among them being the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad (S) .

This continuity and relation between the generations is among the most significant characteristics of the family of monotheism (*tawhid*).²⁸

The Visitation

After we have known that 'continuity', 'inheritance', 'harmony', 'meeting with each other', and 'mutual love' between the generations of monotheism are among the properties of Islam, this leads us to the fact that the means that crystallize the 'reunion' between these generations, and express the feelings of the descendants toward their ancestors, form the very core of the Islamic education methodology for actualizing this aim.

4Visiting the graves of the prophets and their successors ('a), and those of the friends (*awliya'*) of Allah and the righteous (*salihin*) of His servants, sending salutations (*salam*) on them, praying (*du'a'*) for them, and giving testimony that they maintained prayers (*salat*), gave *zakat*, and bid what is right and forbid what is wrong, are among the most important factors of the crystallization of this 'reunion' between the generations of the believers.

In these visits which the believers pay to the graves of the friends of Allah and the believers, and what it involves of sending salutations, prayers, and giving testimony, the believers express all their feelings toward the community of the believers who preceded them in faith, established prayers, gave alms, enjoined the good and forbade the wrong, took up the mission of inviting toward the Oneness of Allah before this generation, paved the way for it to Allah, made the people worship Allah, and raised –before this generation– the word of *tawhid* amidst the people.

Now, to all this good, there must be a sense of loyalty (*wafa'*). *Ziyarat* is a declaration of this loyalty; the loyalty and allegiance of the children to their forefathers. Likewise, there also must be some kind of testimony to this role of leadership played by the earlier generations in inviting people to the Oneness of Allah, in maintaining prayers and giving *zakat*. Again, *Ziyarat* is an assertion of this testimony of the children for their forefathers, and of the descendants for their ancestors.

Ziyarat is also an expression of peace and love in the relation of the descendants with their ancestors, and an embodiment of what Allah has commanded of the inter-connectedness, love and respect amongst the believers, taking the righteous as an exemplar, remembering them, reminding others of them, and celebrating their lives.

In actual fact, the believers instinctly perceive all this during their visits to the graves of the prophets, the

righteous ones and the believers. It has been proven that the companions of the Holy Prophet (S) used to visit the graves of the martyrs of the battle of Uhud, including that of Hamzah (‘a). As we also have authentic reports that Lady Fatimah (‘a), daughter of the Holy Prophet (S) , would keep up visiting the grave of Hamzah (‘a), and in most of her visits she would offer prayers, make supplication and *dhikr*, and turn toward Allah, while at his grave.

In any case, the texts of the *Ziyarat* that have been transmitted to us are replete with all these concepts.

However, it is surprising to see that some of the Islamic sects rebuke the Muslims for giving importance to visiting the graves of the prophets and the leaders (*a’immah*) of the Muslims and the righteous men, and for giving significance to prayers and supplication at their graves.

This view, which maintains that visiting the graves of the prophets and the righteous men is a wrong act and is equivalent to ascribing partners to Allah (*shirk*), is an exception to the general state which the Muslims are accustomed to in visiting the graves of the righteous, and praying, supplicating, and remembering Allah at their graves.

We do not know the reason behind this opinion except that it seems that such people have not understood correctly this Islamic ritual, and the concepts and values it entails.

I do not understand what kind of wrong act this is that the Muslims have not abstained from it, despite all the opposition and severity in prohibiting them from it in the last fifty years!

In this case, we either suspect the understanding of the Muslims in respect to their religion, or we suspect these people in their understanding of *tawhid* and *shirk*.

May Allah guide us all and direct us to His pleasure on the straight path.

A Study of the Concepts which have Appeared in the Texts of the Ziyarat

In the transmitted texts of the *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) and the A’immah of the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), we come across various kinds of concepts. We will give here two examples of these concepts.

The first example is of concepts regarding the political and dynamic relation between the nation (*ummah*) and its leader (*imam*); whilst the second example is concerning the concepts related to the personal relation that exists between the visitor (*za’ir*) and the *Imam*.

In this section, we shall discuss what has appeared in the texts of the *Ziyarat* with respect to each of the above two areas.

The Political and Dynamic Aspect in the Ziyarat

The ideological (*'aqaidi*) and political matter occupies a larger part of the texts of the *Ziyarat* transmitted from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). By the ideological and political matter, I mean the issue of the divine successorship (*imamah*) and authority (*wilayah*) after the Holy Prophet (S) .

This issue has a strong connection with all that befell the Muslims during the times of the Banu Umayyah, the Banu 'Abbas and after them, of the deviation from the genuine path of Islam, its thought and culture. In other words, during the reign of Islam, people who could not be trusted with Islam, the Muslims and the wealth of the Islamic world, came to power and caused great harm to Islam and the Muslims.

The practice of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) was resistance and opposition to the two political powers which were contemporaneous with them. This political resistance and opposition to the two powerful and prosperous systems, such as the Umayyad and the Abbasid rule, left such a lucid effect on the Shiite thought, culture and literature that they came to be known since then as *ar-rafidah*, since they rejected (*rafd*) the authority of the Umayyad and the Abbasid caliphs.

The Shiite political thought and literature took on the shade of 'rejection' after Mu'awiyah assumed the caliphate –through means and ways known to everyone– during the time of Imam al-Hasan ('a) up until the fall of the Abbasid rule.

This political contention and opposition is explicitly reflected in the supplications reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), particularly in the *Ziyarat* of Imam Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali bin Abi Talib ('a) and Imam al-Husayn ('a); as the period of these two Imam was the severest of the periods in the history of Islam as far as this contention and encounter is concerned.

Perhaps this is the reason behind the huge number of *Ziyarat* reported in the case of Imam Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) and his son al-Husayn ('a), and their difference in quantity and quality from the *Ziyarat* of the rest of the A'imma ('a).

The political matter in these *Ziyarat* can be summarized, as mentioned earlier, in the testimony (*shahadah*) and the stance (*mawqif*). The first has to do with judgement (*qada'*), whilst the second with politics (*siyasah*).

Taking a stand comes after giving testimony; for a political stand in any given dispute and difference is resolved within the sphere of the judgement reached. The just and sound judgment is decisive between the two opposing sides. Thereafter, and in the light of the decision reached by the judicial authority, the political stand takes shape. And the best of the judicial authorities is the human conscience (*damir*) and the justice that Allah has deposited in his innate nature (*fitrah*).

Now, in this Divine court, the visitor (*za'ir*) gives testimony for the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) that the right (*haqq*) is theirs' (*lahum*) and it is with them (*ma'ahum*), and he testifies against their opponents and adversaries that they deviated from the truth and were inclined toward the falsehood (*batil*) and took the wrong way

in the field of confrontation and dispute.

Thereafter, based on this testimony, he takes up a political stand in relation to both sides of the dispute together, loyalty and devotion (*wala'*) to one side and dissociation (*bara'ah*) from the other; inclination toward one side and the rejection of the other; prayers and salutations (*salam*) to one side and curse (*la'nah*) on the other.

We will now cite the actual texts of the *Ziyarat* reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) regarding each of the elements of 'testimony' and 'stand'.

1. Testimony

a. Testimony to the Messengership of the Prophet (S) in the First Stage of the Conflict

The conflict –as asserted by 'Ammar al-Yasir, may Allah have mercy on him– is twofold, and not a single conflict; a conflict over the revelation (*tanzil*) as was the case in the battles of Badr and Uhud, and a conflict over the interpretation (*ta'wil*) as in the battles of Jamal, Siffin, and at-Taff²⁹. Both these conflicts are still on up to this day and continue to exist in our contemporary life.

With regard to the conflict over the revelation, we read in the *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) , “I bear witness, O Messenger of Allah, together with every witness, and I stand witness irrespective of any denier {that} you conveyed the message of your Lord, were sincere to your nation, struggled in the way of your Lord, endured hardships for His sake, called on to His path with wisdom and with good and proper advice.

And that you delivered the truth that was entrusted to you; and that you were kind to the believers and severe with the infidels, and you worshipped Allah until the inevitable came to you. So may Allah elevate you to the most honourable place of the noble ones, and to the highest station of the near ones, and to the loftiest station of the messengers, such that none could join you, nor excel you, nor precede you, nor desire to reach you.”

We also read in the *Ziyarat* of the martyrs of Uhud, “I give witness that you struggled in the way of Allah with a struggle due to Him, and defended the religion of Allah and His Prophet, and sacrificed your lives for his sake. And I bear witness that you were killed on the path of the Prophet of Allah. May Allah reward you on behalf of His Prophet and Islam and its followers, with the best reward; and may we recognize your faces in {the heaven of} His pleasure with the messengers, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous; and excellent companions are they.”

b. Testimony for the Imam ('a) in the Second Stage of the Conflict

This is a testimony given by the visitor (*za'ir*) within the sphere of the dispute over the interpretation (*ta'wil*). The following are the phrases from the *Ziyarat* of Amir al-Mu'minin ('a):

“O Allah, I bear witness that he conveyed on behalf of Your Prophet what was trusted to him, and took care of what was consigned to him, and preserved what he was entrusted with; he regarded as lawful (*halal*) the lawful of Allah, and considered the unlawful (*haram*) of Allah as unlawful.

He established Your laws, and struggled (*jahada*) in Your way against those who broke their allegiance (*nakithin*), and those who transgressed (*qasitin*) the limits of Your laws, and those who deviated (*mariqin*) from Your command, with patience, anticipating the reward from You, {and} without paying heed in Your affair to the blame of any blamer.”

In the *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) specific for the day he was declared as the prophet (*mab'ath*), we come across the following description of Imam 'Ali ('a):

“You were a kind father to the believers, and to the infidels you were crude, harsh and furious. You were {like} rain, a fertile land, and a banner {of guidance} for the believers. Your argument never failed, your heart never strayed, your insight never faltered, and you were never cowardly. You were like a mountain that the violent winds could not shake, nor the thunders destroy it.

You were as the Holy Prophet (S) had said: strong in your body, humble in your heart, magnanimous near Allah, great on the earth, and revered in the heavens. No one could find a fault with you, nor could any speaker speak ill of you, nor did anyone have an eye for what you had, nor did anyone find respite from you {regarding the law of Allah}. The weak and the humiliated is strong and mighty with you until you take back for him his right, whilst the strong and mighty is weak with you until you take the right {of the weak} from him.”

c. Testimony on the Second Part of the Dispute on the Interpretation

The first part of the dispute on the interpretation is represented by the battle of Siffin, while the second part of this dispute is the battle of at-Taff. In Karbala', this clash comes to the fore in an explicit manner, such that it does not contain any ambiguity for one who has a heart, or gives ear, being attentive.

In this encounter, al-Husayn ('a) together with seventy two of his family members, companions and a group of believers who did not participate in the battle for one reason or the other, are on one side; whilst Yazid and the family of Umayyah and their army from Sham and Iraq are on the other side.

In this battle each of the two conflicting sides comes to the fore with its reality, without any ambiguity. Al-Husayn ('a) emerges with the guidance of the prophethood, whilst Yazid appears with the arrogance of the transgressors, tyrants, and oppressors.

The Battle of at-Taff was indeed a separating line between the two sides, such that after it no one up to

this day has remained in obscurity with regard to this dispute, or has not been able to distinguish the truth from the falsehood, except for those whose light Allah has taken away, and has sealed their hearts and hearing, and has blind-folded them.

It is within the framework of this conflict that the visitor (*za'ir*) of al-Husayn ('a), son of the Holy Prophet (S), gives testimony for him that he established prayers, gave *zakat* and struggled (*jahada*) in the way of Allah. The visitor also confesses for the offspring of al-Husayn ('a) after him –in extension to this clash whose links are connected with one another after the event of Karbala'– with the Divine successorship (*imamah*), authority (*wilayah*) and leadership (*qiyadah*) of the nation from Allah, the Exalted.

Now, let us go through some of the phrases of this *Ziyarat* which contains this *shahadah*:

“I bear witness that you conveyed from Allah what He had ordered you with and did not fear anyone other than Him. You strived in His way and worshipped Him sincerely until the inevitable visited you. I give testimony that you are the word of piety (*taqwa*), firm grip (*'urwat al-wuthqa*), and the argument {of Allah} over the remaining ones {of the people}. I bear witness that you are the servant of Allah and His trustee.

You conveyed {the message} sincerely and delivered {it} faithfully. You were killed as truthful (*siddiq*) and consigned your soul with certainty. You did not prefer blindness to guidance, and did not deviate from the truth to the falsehood. I bear witness that you established prayers, gave *zakat*, bid the good and forbade the wrong, followed the Prophet, recited the Book with the recitation due to it, and invited {people} to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good advice.

I stand witness that you stood on a manifest proof from your Lord, conveyed what you were commanded with, stood up for His truth, and believed in those who were before you without displaying weakness or causing others to do so. I give testimony that *jihad* is for you, and that the truth is with you and toward you, you are the man of truth and the origin (*ma'din*) of truth, and the heritage of prophethood is with you.”

d. Testimony for the Inheritance

This Divine successorship (*imamah*) that we bear witness to in this *Ziyarat*, and that which we bore witness to for al-Husayn ('a) and his offspring after him, is not a kind of successorship which is discontinuous or perishable. Rather this *imamah* has its connection with the *imamah* of the leaders of monotheism in history before al-Husayn ('a); from the time of Prophet Adam ('a), Nuh and Ibrahim, until the time of the Holy Prophet (S), 'Ali and al-Hasan ('a).

Al-Husayn inherits this *imamah* with all its values, heritage, duties, responsibilities, and the call toward it, right from Prophet Ibrahim ('a) and his children.

“Indeed Allah chose Adam and Nuh, and the progeny of Ibrahim and the progeny of 'Imran above

all nations; some of them are the descendants of the others, and Allah is All-hearing, All-knowing.”³⁰

Now, al-Husayn (‘a) was bearing this great heritage and its responsibilities, and he carried it with him to Karbala’, so that he may argue with it against the people, defend it and fight for its sake. And this is communication in clear terms (*al-balagh al-mubin*) of this message which al-Husayn (‘a) had inherited from the progeny of Ibrahim and ‘Imran.

Therefore, the visitor (*za’ir*) of al-Husayn (‘a) attests to this inheritance in the midst of this ferocious battle, and clearly asserts that the encounter of al-Husayn (‘a) against Yazid is not disjointed from the encounter of Ibrahim (‘a) against Namrud, nor from the encounter of Musa (‘a) against Fir’awn, nor from the encounter of the Holy Prophet (S) against Abu Sufyan, nor from the encounter of Imam ‘Ali (‘a) against Mu’awiyah.

Secondly, he attests to the fact that the spirit of this encounter, in all its stages and links, is *tawhid*.

Thirdly, he stands witness that the heritage which al-Husayn (‘a) inherited from the progeny of Ibrahim and ‘Imran, and with which he stood up in Karbala’, is passed after him to the offspring of al-Husayn (‘a) who are his inheritors, and to his followers and helpers –from amongst the Muslims– who took up the path of guidance of the progeny of Ibrahim and ‘Imran.

Lets us go through the following phrases in the *Ziyarat* of *warith* (inheritor) regarding the testimony for al-Husayn (‘a) as the inheritor of the righteous ones:

“Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Adam, the chosen one (*safwah*) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Nuh, the prophet (*nabiyy*) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Ibrahim, the intimate friend (*khalil*) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Musa, one who talked (*kalim*) with Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of ‘Isa, the spirit (*ruh*) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Muhammad, the beloved (*habib*) of Allah. Peace be upon you, O the inheritor of Amir al-Mu’minin, the friend (*waliyy*) of Allah.”

Although this inheritance of al-Husayn (‘a) from the progeny of Ibrahim and ‘Imran is confined to the descendants of one particular family, as is attested by the Qur’an, “Some of them are the descendants of the other”, his inheritance from them is on a basis other than his relationship with the Holy Prophet and Amir al-Mu’minin (‘a) through prophethood; because the following basis appears immediately after the above testimony, “Peace be upon you, O son of Muhammad, the chosen one (*al-mustafa*). Peace be upon you, O son of ‘Ali, the one Allah is pleased with (*al-murtada*). Peace be upon you, O son of Fatimah, the glowing one (*al-zahra*’). Peace be upon you, O son of Khadijah, the great (*kubra*).”

The Witness and the Witnessed for

The relation between the witness (*shahid*) and the witnessed for (*mashhud*) in the texts of the *Ziyarat* is

very strange in its kind. In these testimonies, the visitor (*za'ir*) attests for the visited one (*mazur*) that: "You established prayers, gave *zakat*, bid the right and forbade the wrong, and strived (*jihad*) in the way of Allah with a striving due to Him."

Consequently, the visitor (*za'ir*) is the witness (*shahid*), and the 'witnessed for' (*mashhud lahu*) is the visited one (*mazur*); as the opposite is also correct. This is because the apostles of Allah, His messengers and their successors (*awsiya'*) are witnesses over the nations, and the Holy Prophet (S) and his successors are witnesses over this nation. Regarding this, He, the Exalted, says:

- ***"The day We raise in every nation a witness against them from among themselves, We shall bring you as a witness against these."***³¹
- ***"O Prophet! Indeed We have sent you as a witness, as a bearer of good news and as a warner."***³²
- ***"Thus We have made you a middle nation that you may be witnesses to the people, and that the apostle may be a witness to you."***³³
- ***"...so that Allah may ascertain those who have faith, and that He may take witnesses from among you."***³⁴
- ***"...They are with those whom Allah has blessed, including the prophets and the truthful, the martyrs and the righteous, and excellent companions are they."***³⁵

Thus, the position of the visitors change from being witnesses (*shahid*) to that of being 'witnessed for' (*mashhud lahu*), and the position of those whom we address in the *Ziyarat* and testify for them that they maintained prayers, gave *zakat*, enjoined the good, and performed *jihad*, change from that of being 'witnessed for' to that of being witnesses.

The following has also appeared in some texts of the *Ziyarat*, "You are the straight path, and the witnesses in the transient world, and the intercessors in the eternal world."

A phrase in the eighth *Ziyarat* of Amir al-Mu'minin ('a) reads, "You advanced toward that over which you were witness, present, and witnessed for."

2. The Stand

In the judicial proceedings, 'testimony' is followed by 'judgement' (*hukm*); whilst in politics 'judgement' is followed by 'stand' (*mawqif*).

Taking a political stand requires clarity and unambiguity, firmness, offering, and preparing oneself for sacrifice.

Taking a stand in relation to events like those of Siffin and Karbala' in the history of the Muslims is not only confined to those who were contemporaries with these events, rather it also includes those who ally themselves with the contemporaries of those events in showing their pleasure (*rida*) and anger (*sakhat*), and love (*hubb*) and hatred (*bughd*), for what transpired.

This is one of the features of the days of separation (*ayyam al-furqan*)³⁶ in history; days in which people split into two distinct fronts and there remains no obscurity for anyone and the truth and the falsehood are not concealed from anyone, except if he is among those whose hearts have been sealed by Allah, and whose hearing and sight have been taken away by Him.

The days of separation continue to split and divide the people into two groups throughout history based on their agreement or disagreement, and love or hatred, toward what took place in the past; as they also reject the third front which is just an onlooker of the occurring events. The days of Siffin and Karbala' are among the days of separation.

Consequently, whoever investigates into the events of the battles of Badr, Siffin and Karbala', with a thorough understanding of both sides of the conflict, he would either stand beside this front and join it, or he would stand beside the other front and ally with it, as he cannot avoid both of them. This perfectly implies the 'stand' (*al-mawqif*).

May Allah have mercy upon Sayyid al-Himyari who reflects this advanced awareness about history and the clash between the truth and the falsehood in history, in some verses of his poem which are filled with awareness and a sense of responsibility for taking a stand. He says:

*I indeed adhere to what the successor adhered to, On the day of Jamal.
And I adhere to what he adhered to on the day of Nahrawan, And his palm touched mine at Siffin.
O Lord! I take responsibility of all that blood, And the like of it with it amin amin.*

The battle which took place in Siffin and Karbala' was a real battle of values. It did not end in Siffin by the lifting of the Qur'an and the appointment of the arbitrators, nor with the martyrdom of al-Husayn ('a) and his companions in Karbala'.

The reason there is special reference to the events of Siffin and Karbala' is that the decisive battles in the history of Islam, in my opinion, are three: the battle of Badr, Siffin, and Karbala'; as they are also the days of separation (*furqan*) in Islamic history.

This encounter and battle between the two sides extends up to this day. And this is what history is; it forms the basis of the political and cultural make up of the present of this nation (*ummah*), and it is not possible, nor is it correct, to detach the present from the past.

The children inherit the 'positions' (*mawaqif*) and the 'stands' (*mawaqif*) from their fathers. By 'positions', I mean the historical events, and, by 'stands', what man is obliged to say and to do with respect to the

events. Hence, if the 'position' is a clash of values, and not a dispute over an island in the sea or on a piece of land, then it will pass from one generation to another, cross the past and get connected to the present, and it will be inherited by the descendants from their ancestors.

In this case, it is not possible to detach the 'stand' from the 'position'. Consequently, the 'positions' are passed on to the present generation together with the 'stands' they require in relation to each of the two sides of dispute.

Moreover, this inheritance is not restricted to one group or the other. Rather as the righteous (*salihin*) inherit the heritage of their righteous ancestors, of their positions and stands, similarly the arrogant ones and their followers inherit the positions and stands of their arrogant ancestors.

In the texts of the *Ziyarat* reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), we clearly see the notion of the 'inheritance of the stands' put in different ways. The following are examples of different forms of 'the stand'.

Friendship and Dissociation

Among the most obvious of these forms is friendship (*wala'*) with the friends of Allah and dissociation (*bara'ah*) from the enemies of Allah. However, this friendship and dissociation are not mere concepts independent of the situation of the dispute and encounter, rather they are inseparable parts of the political stand vis-à-vis this clash which has divided the Islamic arena into two groups.

Let us now go through some phrases of the famous *Ziyarat* of *al-jami'at al-kabirah* which refer to the concept of friendship:

"I take Allah as a witness and I take you as witnesses that I indeed believe in you and in what you have believed in. I reject your enemies and that which you have rejected. I have thorough knowledge of you and of the misguidance of those who opposed you. I am your friend and the friend of those who are your friends; I hate your enemies and I am hostile toward them. I am at peace with him who is at peace with you, and I am at war with him who is at war with you. I will affirm what you have affirmed as truth, and reject what you have rejected as falsehood."

We read in the popular *Ziyarat* of the day of '*ashura*':

"May Allah curse the people who set the foundation of oppression and injustice against you, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). And may Allah curse the people who ousted you from your position (*maqam*) and removed you from the stations (*maratib*) that Allah had placed you in."

Part of the same *Ziyarat* says:

"O Allah, curse the first oppressor who committed injustice to the right of Muhammad and his Progeny, and {curse} the last of those who followed him in this. O Allah, curse the group that fought against al-Husayn and that which sided with it, paid allegiance to it, and followed it in killing him. O Allah, curse them all."

In the lesser known³⁷ *Ziyarat* of 'ashura', we come across the following phrases:

“O Allah, this is the day in which the adversity (*niqmah*) is revived, and the curse is sent down on Yazid and the family of Yazid and the families of Ziyad and 'Umar bin Sa'd and Shimr.

O Allah, curse all of them and curse him who is pleased with their speech and practice, with a great curse; and make them enter the heat of Your fire and make them dwell in the hell fire, as it is an evil destination; and make definite upon them, and upon anyone who sided with them, paid allegiance to them, followed them, helped them and gave consent to their deeds, that of Your curses with which You cursed every oppressor, every usurper, and every denier.

O Allah, curse Yazid, the family of Yazid and the progeny of Marwan, all of them. O Allah, multiply Your wrath, anger, punishment, and rancour on the first oppressor who committed injustice toward the progeny of Your Prophet. O Allah, and curse all those who have oppressed them; and avenge them, for indeed You are the one who takes revenge from the evil-doers.”

Pleasure and Anger

Pleasure (*rida*) and anger (*sakhat*) are part of *wala'* and *bara'ah*; being pleased with what the friends of Allah are pleased with, and being angry at that which they are angry at.

Pleasure, anger, love and hatred are among the most obvious signs of faith (*Iman*), and among the constituents of *wala'* and *bara'ah*. Besides, they imply the real profundity of a political stand, for without them a political stance would be superficial and non-resistant.

It is such a relation and faith which stem from within a person that provide a political stand with resistance, firmness and profundity.

The following phrases in the *Ziyarat* of Lady Fatimah ('a) refer to the elements of pleasure and anger:

“I take Allah and His angels as witnesses that I am pleased with whom you are pleased with, and angry with whom you are angry with. I dissociate myself from whom you dissociated yourself. I am a friend of whom you befriended and I am hostile toward whom you were hostile. I hate whom you hated and love whom you loved.”

Another phrase in the same *Ziyarat* says: “I bear witness that I am indeed the friend of he who befriended you, and an enemy of him who was your enemy. I am at war with him who was at war with you.”

Peace and Submission

Among the properties of a political stand are peace (*silm*) and submission (*taslim*). Submission is a stage above that of peace.

Hence, the stand must be, at the foremost, peaceful and bearing the mark of peace (*silm*) toward Allah, His Prophet, friends, and righteous servants:

“O you who have faith! Enter into peace, all together”³⁸;

not having contaminated it by the stains of opposition to them:

“...Do they not know that whoever opposes Allah and His Apostle, there awaits him the fire of hell, to remain in it {forever}?”³⁹;

nor with the stains of transgression and arrogance toward Allah:

“...but do not overstep the bounds therein, lest My wrath should descend upon you.”⁴⁰, or with defiance, “Indeed the wrongdoers are steeped in extreme defiance.”⁴¹

Secondly, the stand must be founded on submission (*taslim*) and obedience (*ta’ah*) to Allah, His Prophet, and the Custodians of the affairs of the Muslims. The elements of peace and submission must leave their impression, at one time, in the heart, intention (*niyyah*), actions and the practice of a person. The spirit of peace, submission and following (*taba’iyyah*) must occupy the heart.

If this is the case and if a political stand is characterized with peace and submission in intention and practice, in exterior and interior, then even if the people were to come together they would not be able to challenge such a stand with an opposite stand.

It is in this case that a believer (*mu’min*) becomes a ‘nation’ (*ummah*) in himself, rising with the mission of the nation, possessing the firmness and resistance of a nation, as was our father Ibrahim (‘a) a nation in himself as asserted by the Qur’an:

“Indeed Ibrahim was a nation, obedient to Allah, upright, and he was not one of the polytheists.”⁴²

No stand can take shape in history without the elements of peace and submission, and nothing would remain of it if we were to separate these two elements from it, as they constitute the spirit (*ruh*) of every allegiance (*bay’ah*) to Allah, His Prophet and the Leaders of the Muslims.

This is because allegiance means that one should sell (*yabi’*) to Allah at once everything that He, the Exalted, has granted him of opinion, love, hatred, endeavour, his self, property and children, and leave everything for the sake of Allah. Thereafter, he should not turn back and regret on what he sold to Allah, entertaining doubt in what he has done; because now he has sold everything to Allah and has already received its amount, thus there is no room for abrogation (*iqalah*) or withdrawal (*istiqalah*), as he has embarked on a profitable bargain.

This, in fact, constitutes the essence of a stand vis-à-vis the Guardians of the affairs of the Muslims and

the Leaders of the believers. Ponder on the following phrases from the *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny, the leaders of the Muslims:

1. In the *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) , "...Thus, my heart is in submission to you, and my support ready for you, until Allah decides for His religion {at the time of the re-appearance of the Twelfth Imam ('aj)}. I am with you, {only} with you, not with your enemy."
2. In the *Ziyarat* of Imam al-Hasan ('a), "Here I am, O caller to Allah. If my body could not answer you when you called for help, and my tongue when you asked for assistance, {then} my heart, hearing and sight have answered you."
3. In the *Ziyarat* of Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas ('a), "My heart is submitted to you; I am your follower and my support is ready for you, until Allah decides, and He is the Best of judges."
4. In the *Ziyarat* of Imam al-Husayn ('a) on the day of *arba'in*, "My heart is submitted to your heart; and my affair follows your affair, and my support is ready for you until Allah grants you permission. I am with you, {only} with you, not with your enemy."

This concept of 'being with you' which the visitor often repeats while expressing his stand and devotion to the leaders of the Muslims is the essence of 'the stand' and friendship (*wala'*); being with them both in ease and adversity, at times of peace and war, in comfort and happiness as well as in difficulty and hardship; and in this world and the Hereafter, by the will of Allah.

Praying for the Triumph of the Revenge

Among the other requirements of 'the stand' is praying for the triumph of revenge. When the stand is true, stemming from deep inside the heart, then one would beseech Allah, through all means, for the victory of the leader of the Muslims and the Muslims as well. Among these means is the prayer (*du'a'*) to Allah for victory. Prayer is among the best and the finest of all these means, except that it does not dispense one with putting effort, offering and sacrifice.

The content of the prayer in support of the political stand has appeared in numerous texts of the *Ziyarat* reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a). The following are some examples:

1. In the *Ziyarat* of Imam al-Mahdi ('aj), "O Allah, help him, and help Your religion through him, and help Your friends with him. O Allah, manifest justice through him, and back him with victory, and help those who help him, and abandon those who abandon him. Shatter through him the tyrants among the infidels, and destroy the infidels and the hypocrites, and fill the earth with justice through him, and manifest through him the religion of Your Prophet."
2. Part of the prayer for the Twelfth Imam ('aj) says: "O Allah, You have supported Your religion in all times with an *Imam* whom You had appointed for Your servants, and as a lighthouse in Your lands, after

his cord has been joined to Your cord, and made him the means to Your good pleasure...

O Allah, inspire Your guardian (*waliyy*) to give thanks for that which You have blessed him with, and inspire us with the like concerning him. Render him a favourable authority from Yourself and inaugurate for him with an easy inauguration. Help him with Your mightiest pillar, brace up his back, strengthen his arm, and guard him with Your eye. Defend him with Your safeguarding, help him with Your angels, and assist him with Your victorious army.

Through him establish Your Book, Your bounds, Your laws, and the norms (*sunan*) of Your Prophet (S), revive the guideposts of Your religion deadened by the wrongdoers, burnish the rust of injustice from Your way, sift the adversity from Your road, eliminate those who deviate from Your path, and eradicate those who seek crookedness in Your straightness.

Make his side mild toward Your friends, stretch forth his hand over Your enemies, give us his clemency, his mercy, his tenderness and his sympathy, and make us his hearers and obeyers, strivers toward his good pleasure, assistants in helping him and defending him.”

3. Another *Ziyarat* of the Twelfth Imam (‘aj) reads, “O Allah, fulfill that which You have promised to Your *waliyy* (friend). O Allah, manifest his word, promote his call, and grant him victory over his enemy and Your enemy.

O Allah, grant him a mighty victory, and inaugurate for him with an easy inauguration. O Allah, make {Your} religion strong through him after it has become weak, give rise to the truth through him after its decline, unveil through him the darkness, remove through him the sorrow, make the land peaceful through him, and guide mankind through him. O Allah, fill the earth through him with justice and equity as it has been filled with oppression and injustice.”

Prayer for the Revenge (tha’r)

Taking revenge and praying for it is part of the political stand. The stand of the family of monotheism (*tawhid*), right from the time of Ibrahim (‘a) –rather from the time of Nuh (‘a)– up to this day, has been one and the same stand, a single course of action, a single point of set-off and a single goal.

This stand (*mawqif*) extends from Prophet Ibrahim (‘a) to the time of the re-appearance of al-Mahdi (‘aj), from the Propgeny of Muhammad (S) , when Allah will bring to an end at his hand, with victory and triumph, this long journey which has been full of blood and tears, victory and relapse, and ease and adversity. This is in order that Allah, the Exalted, may avenge on those who bar others from His way, and those who have killed, oppressed and suppressed the leaders of this path and its followers.

The greatest of all that which has befallen this family, of the misfortune, destruction and oppression, is the martyrdom of al-Husayn (‘a) in Karbala’ together with his family members and companions.

Hence, we ask Allah to make us among those who will take revenge, alongside al-Mahdi ('aj), from these oppressors and those who came after them and their followers, and from those who were pleased with their wicked acts.

To take revenge on those who move on their line and follow their way and are pleased with their deeds, is something by which Allah would cool the hearts of the community of believers, and infuriate the hypocrites and the polytheists.

The concept of praying for the revenge has frequently appeared in the Ziyarat of al-Husayn ('a) and that of his son Imam al-Mahdi ('aj). An example of this is what has appeared in the lesser known *Ziyarat* of 'ashura', "O Allah, make us among those who seek his revenge along with the just *Imam*, through whom You will make Islam and its followers mighty; O Lord of the worlds."

Ziyarat within the Framework of Personal Relationship

It is within this framework that the state of mutual exchange in this relationship becomes more distinct and stronger, and the phenomenon of give-and-take between the *za'ir* (visitor) and the *mazur* (the one visited) becomes even more active.

Among the most important features which become manifest as a result of this relation between the *za'ir* and the *mazur* are:

1. Prayer for the Holy Prophet and his Progeny, sending blessings on them, and seeking Allah's mercy for them: "O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household with a blessing by which You will make for them plentiful Your gifts and generosity, and perfect for them Your bestowals and awards, and fill out their share of Your kindly acts and benefits."⁴³

We read in the *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) , "O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Progeny, and send Your benedictions on Muhammad and his Household, the best You have blessed, sent benedictions, showered mercy, showed affection and sent salutations on Ibrahim and the Progeny of Ibrahim."

2. Praying for the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny that may Allah make them mediators (*wasail*) to His mercy for His servants, and intercessors (*shufa'a'*) with Him on their behalf.

A phrase in the *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) reads, "O Allah, give Muhammad the mediation (*wasilah*), honour, excellence, and a noble position. O Allah, confer on Muhammad the most honourable station, the gift of peace, and intercession {for the followers of} Islam. Join us with him, such that we are not ashamed, nor among those who have broken their promise {with him}, nor regretful."

In another *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet, we read, "O Allah, grant him a {lofty} position, mediation to the Heaven, and raise him to such a praiseworthy station that the first and the last ones would covet it."

3. Seeking recourse (*tawassul*) with the Holy Prophet (S) and his Progeny ('a), and implore for their

intercession (*shafa'ah*) with the permission of Allah, "O Allah, make me distinguished in Your eyes in this world and the Hereafter, for the sake of Muhammad and his Household. O Prophet of Allah, I turn with your help toward Allah, your Lord and my Lord, that He may forgive me my sins, and accept from me my deeds, and fulfill for me my needs. So intercede on my behalf with your Lord and my Lord, for the best of those who have been asked and the best of the masters is my Lord, and you are the best intercessor, O Muhammad, upon you and your Progeny be peace."

In the *Ziyarat* of the A'imma (‘a) buried at al-Baqi’, we say, "This is the position of one who has exceeded the limits, sinned and has been humiliated, who confesses what he has committed of the offences, and {now} anticipates salvation from the state he is in... so you be my intercessors, as I have come to you when the people of this world have turned away from you, and have taken the signs of Allah in derision, and are disdainful of them."

In the *Ziyarat* of Hamzah (‘a), the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S) , "I have come to you from a distant place, asking {you} to set my soul free from the Fire, as my back has been burdened with my sins and I have committed what enrages my Lord. I find no one to flee to better for me than you, the Household of mercy; so be my intercessor."

4. Turning to Allah and asking Him to grant us their neighbourhood and companionship in the Hereafter, and firmness of stand on their guidance and path in this world, and that we may live and die in this world the way they lived and died, and that we may be resurrected in their company in the Hereafter, in the same manner that He, the Exalted, endowed us with their guidance and love in this world.

In the *Ziyarat* of the Holy Prophet (S) we come across the following phrases, "O Allah, I seek refuge in the generosity of Your face from placing me in the position of humiliation and disgrace, on the day the veils shall rip apart and the secrets shall be disclosed and violent fear shall seize {the people};

and the Day of Sorrow and Penitence; the Day of Drought, the Approaching Hour, the Day of Dispossession, the Day of Judgement, the Day of Requital, a day whose span is fifty thousand years, the Day of {the blow of} the Trumpet, the day when the Quaker quakes and is followed by the Successor, the Day of Resurrection, the Day of Exposition, a day when mankind will stand before the Lord of all the worlds, the day when a man will evade his brother, his mother and his father, his spouse and his sons, the day the earth is split open and the flanks of the skies, the day when every soul will come pleading for itself, the day they will be returned to Allah and He will inform them about what they have done, the day when a friend will not avail a friend in any way."

After this round of asking the companionship of the Holy Prophet (S) and the friends of Allah on that dreadful day, the visitor (*za'ir*) says: "O Allah, have mercy on my stand on that day, and do not disgrace me in that site because of what I have committed against my self. O my Lord, make my coming out on that day with them, and my resurrection in the company of Muhammad and his Progeny (‘a). Make his spring {of *kawthar*} to be the place of my arrival, and give me my book in my right hand."

We read in the *Ziyarat* of Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas ('a), "May Allah gather us with you, and with His Prophet and friends."

The following has also appeared in some texts of the *Ziyarat*, "Strengthen for me a truthful stand (*qadama sidqin*) with al-Husayn and the companions of al-Husayn, who sacrificed their souls for al-Husayn ('a)."

In the supplication of '*Alqamah* recited after the *Ziyarat* of '*Ashura*', we read, "O Allah, make me live the life of Muhammad and his Progeny, and make me die the like of their death. Take my soul while I am on their religion, and resurrect me in their company. Do not separate me from them even for a blink of an eye, forever, in this world and the Hereafter."

A phrase in the lesser known *Ziyarat* of '*Ashura*' reads, "O Allah, bless Muhammad and his Household, and make me live their life and make me die their death, and do not separate me from them in this world nor in the Hereafter, indeed You hear all supplications."

Part of the *Ziyarat* of *al-Jami'at al-Kabirah* reads, "May Allah make me steady, throughout my life, on Your friendship and love, and facilitate for me to obey you, and grant me your intercession, and make me among the best of your adherents, who follows that toward which you had called, and make me among those who follow in your footsteps, move on your road, who are guided through your guidance, resurrected in your company, brought back to life at your return (*raj'ah*), given an office during your rule, honoured under your protection, granted power in your days, and who will be delighted to see you tomorrow {in the Hereafter}."

A phrase in the *Ziyarat* of Abu al-Fadl al-'Abbas ('a) says: "May Allah gather us with you, and with His Prophet and friends, in the stations of the humble ones."

In this way the bond between the visitor (*za'ir*) and the one visited (*mazur*) is accomplished. It is a mutual relationship which involves, on the one hand, prayers, greetings and salutations on the 'one visited' from the visitor, while on the other, it entails prayer to Allah by the visitor, asking from Him the intercession of the 'one visited' and his companionship in the Hereafter. This is taking into consideration that the mediator in this relationship, from both sides, is Allah; as He, the Glorious, the Exalted, is the one asked from (*al-mas'ul*), first and last.

1. Qur'an, 22:78.

2. Qur'an, 21:92.

3. Qur'an, 23:52.

4. Qur'an, 19:16.

5. Qur'an, 19:41.

6. Qur'an, 19:51.

7. Qur'an, 19:54.

8. Qur'an, 19:56.

9. Qur'an, 38:17.
10. Qur'an, 38:41.
11. Qur'an, 38:45 46.
12. Qur'an, 38:48.
13. Qur'an, 37:78 81.
14. Qur'an, 37:108 109.
15. Qur'an, 37:119 120.
16. Qur'an, 37:129 130.
17. Qur'an, 37:181 182.
18. Qur'an, 35:32.
19. Qur'an, 40:53.
20. Qur'an, 23:9 10.
21. Qur'an, 7:170.
22. Qur'an, 22:78.
23. Qur'an, 33:21.
24. Qur'an, 60:4.
25. Qur'an, 60:6.
26. Qur'an, 6:88 91.
27. Qur'an, 59:10.
28. By the family of tawhid we mean those who have not deviated from the path of monotheism.
29. The battle of Karbala' {trns.}
30. Qur'an, 3:33 34.
31. Qur'an, 16:89.
32. Qur'an, 33:45.
33. Qur'an, 2:143.
34. Qur'an, 3:140.
35. Qur'an, 4:69.
36. This is a Qur'anic concept taken from verse 41 of chapter 8. {trans.}
37. Ghayr al-Ma'rufah.
38. Qur'an, 2:208.
39. Qur'an, 9:63.
40. Qur'an, 20:81.
41. Qur'an, 22:53.
42. Qur'an, 16:120.
43. Sahifat As-Sajjadiyyah, supplication no.47.

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