

The Fallacy of Doubt:

**Embracing the
True Essence of
Ziyarat**

By: Masooma Ali



Introduction

Each year, millions of people go for Ziyarat across Iran and Iraq to complete the visitation of the Holy Imams. A common phrase during these pilgrimages is "Ziyarat Qubool," meaning "May the pilgrimage be accepted." While this phrase may seem benign at first glance, a deeper examination reveals a flaw in its underlying sentiment. The practice of seeking assurance in the acceptance of one's Ziyarat undermines the essence of devotion and trust embedded within this sacred act.

Imagine a situation in which a gracious host extends an invitation to a guest. Once the invitation is extended, it is implied that the guest is welcomed and desired. The guest's primary responsibility becomes showing gratitude and appreciation for the invitation, not seeking validation that they were indeed invited. Using this framework we can connect it to Ziyarat, where the Imams, as spiritual hosts, extend an open invitation to us. Just as the guest should focus on showing appreciation, love, and devotion to the host, the pilgrim's primary duty should be to demonstrate their commitment and make a further connection to the Imams through the act of Ziyarat.

1. Eternal Love

Imam Jafar Sadiq's (a) declaration,

"One who visits us after we have passed away is like the one who has visited us while we were alive,"

(Bihar al-Anwar, vol 100 pg 124)

shows that the Imams' love for us transcends boundaries of time and space.

Imagine standing before the Imam while he was alive. Our approach wouldn't be to tell the Imam, "I hope this meeting was of use, and you accept my conversation". Instead, we would be overcome with gratitude and appreciation for the privilege of being in his presence. We would express our thanks for the opportunity to connect, to learn, and to bask in his wisdom. Just as we wouldn't question the acceptance of our interaction with the living Imam, we shouldn't cast doubt upon the acceptance of our posthumous visits to his shrine. In both scenarios—whether standing before the living Imam or visiting the shrine—the emphasis is on the experience itself, the spiritual connection fostered, and the gratitude for the opportunity to be in the presence of the Imams.

2. Upholding a Contract

Imam Reza (a) stated,

"There is a binding contract on every Shia and follower toward his Imam, and the most perfect and beautiful way to fulfill this contract is to go to the Ziyarat of the grave of that Imam"

(Kamil Al Ziyarat Ch.43 Hadees.2).

Just as any contract requires fulfillment, the contract between a believer and their Imam is completed through acts of sincerity. The Qur'an verse

"O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts" (5:1)

reinforces the obligation to fulfill contracts, as mandated by Allah. These contracts encompass pledges to both Allah and fellow humans, binding individuals to their commitments. By saying "Ziyarat Qubool", we are expressing doubt about the acceptance of our Ziyarat. This doubt shifts the focus away from the act of fulfilling the contract with the Imam to questioning the outcome, which goes against the very essence of sincere commitment. It implies we doubt the Imam's capacity to fulfill his side of the contract, because we are doubting "the most perfect and beautiful way" in which the contract is fulfilled.

3. Fulfilling a Right

Imam Sadiq (a) emphasized,

"Verily Allah has made it mandatory on the believers to fulfill the right(s) of Ĥussain(a), and this (Ziyārat) is obligatory on every Muslim"

(Kamil Al Ziyarat Ch.43 Hadees.4).

Given that Allah has established Ziyarat as an inherent right of Imam Hussain (a) and assigned it as a duty for us to undertake, we are presented with a unique opportunity to fulfill this obligation. This decree emphasizes not only the duty to honor Imam Hussain's (a) sacrifice but also the profound connection between believers and this sacred act. By making Ziyarat obligatory, Allah (SWT) tells us the pivotal role it plays in expressing loyalty, and gratitude to Imam Hussain (a).

Understanding this we should approach Ziyarat with the awareness that we are fulfilling a divine obligation, an honor entrusted to us by Allah Himself. The act of Ziyarat is not just a matter of acceptance; it is an act of trust and obedience to Allah's command. If we have the opportunity to go on Ziyarat, we must understand the Imam is choosing us to fulfill his right, and by saying Ziyarat Qubool, it's as if we don't trust he made the correct decision in choosing us. We should instead have humility and be honored.

Conclusion

In essence, the phrase "Ziyarat Qubool" undermines the very principles that Ziyarat seeks to embody. If we cannot even trust the Imams when they are inviting us to meet them, how can we expect them to trust us to become a soldier to avenge them. We must remember; just as the sun's warmth reaches every corner of the earth without needing confirmation, the Imams' blessings and intercession encompass every sincere pilgrim, regardless of vocalized or silent doubt. Embracing this trust and fulfilling the obligation of Ziyarat without casting doubt upon its acceptance will allow us to experience the true essence of this spiritual journey—one of unwavering devotion, love, and trust in divine wisdom.

Reviewed by:

- Allama Syed Hasnain Kazmi (Muballigh Arbaeen in Holy shrine of Imam Ali a.s)
- Sheikh Javeed Hussain Najafi
- Alima Sana Imran
- Syed Anmar Naqvi
- Syed Munir Rizvi (Pakistan)