

Significance of Didar in a mumin's life

§ Part 1

Didar is a highly significant event in our physical lives. This is because zahiri Didar is the forerunner of the spiritual Didar. It is the highlight of a mumin's life. Throughout history mumin's have done giryah-u zari, have always yearned and prayed for the opportunity to experience it. We have many examples from our devotional literature, such as Ginans and Qasidahs where we see how Pirs and Syeds have articulated the longing for Didar in their devotional poetry.

It is one of the most purest goals to aspire and pray toward. There is no greater happiness for any mumin than the glad tidings bestowed upon them collectively as one jamat by the Imam. The Didar is the source of satisfaction of the heart and the means of comfort for a mumin's soul.

The Divine or Holy Spirit, due to which Hazrat Adam had become the object of the prostration of angels, is still in the Perfect Man, therefore every Prophet and Imam is worthy of veneration and honor. When we know that the veneration (i.e. prostration) which the angels had done to Hazrat Adam, according to the command of God, was far greater than any veneration. This is a fundamental proof of the exalted rank of the Perfect Man.

Holy Prophet has said: "He who saw me (it is as if he) has seen God." And Mawla 'Ali has said: "I am the face of God in the heavens and the earth" The ta'wil of this farman is that the Prophet and the Imam are the face of God in the sense that, in the world or religion, they are the vicegerent and deputy of God, and God is recognized through their recognition. Because the vision of God is attained through their vision and in their love is hidden the love for God.

Holy Ka'bah is a symbol and the exalted Imam is the symbolized and there is no doubt that both the symbol and the symbolized of God are extremely sacred, blessed and venerable.

How should we prepare for the Didar:

There are many favors and blessings hidden in the blessed vision of the Imam of the time. Every mu'min benefits from this according to how fully they have prepared themselves to receive the blessings.

There are two key elements that are important pre-requisites to optimize the benefit of Didar. The first is Imaan (faith), and the second is Amal (good deeds).

1: "Imaan" (Faith):

First, one has to accept the exalted Imam with sincerity and certainty. This is to be followed by creating within oneself, friendship and love for him, that is full of zeal for his vision. Only then as a consequence of his mercy, through his teaching and guidance, the light of eternal salvation is attained.

Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah in his "Memoirs" has said knowledge is of two kinds, one is obtained through "Material Intelligence" (which we acquire by secular education). There is also "Spiritual Enlightenment" (attained through knowledge of certitude). The latter is granted to the Pirs and Dai's who practice total obedience and submission to the Imam of the time

There is a Hadith: "Learn from the *'Alim* (Imam) of my *Ahl-i Bayt* or learn from the one who has learned from the *'Alim* of my *Ahl-i Bayt* (Dai's, Pirs, Hujjats), and get rid of the fire of ignorance".

Thus enlightened knowledge can only be received from the Imam or from the Imam's Dai's and Pirs who are 'Arifs. The Preamble to the Ismaili Constitution states that the "Imam's ta'lim lights the murid's path to spiritual enlightenment and vision." It is the knowledge of the Imam given to the Dai's and Pirs that make it possible for a murid to obtain spiritual enlightenment. Therefore, it is important that while we prepare for Didar, we engage by reading literature by our Dai's, listen attentively to and reflect on Farmans, and recite Ginans. Some notable literature include: "True Meaning of Religion" by Pir Shahabuddin Shah or "Pir Pandandiyat-i Jawanmardi" by Imam Mustansirbillah, Speeches of Mawlana Hazir Imam, or Chapter 8 of "Memoirs of Aga Khan". Such works consist of the

knowledge of certainty. Such knowledge will make our Imaan firm, enabling us to have a more meaningful and satisfying Didar.

Amazingly, and not by any surprise in God's infinite wisdom, there is Divine vision in the form of knowledge. For, knowledge in its spiritual and intellectual form is the Divine light and that light reveals many secrets of God by which the hearts of mumins become prosperous and luminous.

2: "Amal" (Good deeds):

The second pre-requisite is 'Amal' - good deeds. A mumin's good deeds should take place according to the guidance of our Imams. The Imam's guidance should be the benchmark for everything in a mumin's life.

a. Remember the light of Allah at anytime, all the time:

In Ismaili esoteric teachings, we are encouraged to be Da'im-u zikr. This means to be in a state of perpetual zikr.

As we have in our Ginans:

§ Udhte, bedhte, rah chalante, naam Sahib ji kun lije ji

Imam Begum says: *Har dam zikar karna, Haq se sabit hona*

Imam has said: We should remember Ya Allah, Ya Muhammad, Ya 'Ali or the names of any of our previous Imams or the name of our present Imam.

Pir says: Any breath which is devoid of the remembrance of the light of God is a dead moment.

b. Be regular in our religious duties:

Regular attendance in Jamat Khanah;

Timely paid Dasond;

Voluntary Service offered as part of the ethical and moral values of our faith; and

Ethical practice of Islam such as to be generous, forgiving and patient.

c. Giryah-u zari:

The word giryah-u zari is a compound Persian word. Giryah means to weep & zari means to consider one weak and humble.

Giryah-u zari means to remember the Imam with abundant tears. In other words to remember the light of the Imam in such a way that one's heart melts and that he/she is very much aware of their short comings and previous disobedience. The devotee would wish to purify themselves fully in order to achieve their goal and purpose in life – spiritual reunion with The Imam's Divine light (*fana fi-allah*).

Pir Sadruddin says: *kapda dhowe so kiya, dil dhowe so pawe*

When a mu'min receives the Didar of the Imam of the time, their hearts melt miraculously and tears flow automatically. The blessed mumin is purified in his/her entirety (external physical being, internal intangible being). Such mumin offers perpetual, continuous gratitude in the court of Hazar Imam for all His limitless favors and bounties.

Summary:

In light of the teachings of the Holy Quran, Didar or the liqa of God is a fundamental principle of Islam ("Some faces that Day will beam looking towards their Lord." 75:22-23). It is a Quranic fact that His vision is possible not only in the hereafter, but also in higher spirituality in this world. Thus, this Didar in the physical world is the reflection of the nurani Didar, so having experienced the joy of zahiri Didar we can seek the annihilation with the light of God in our spiritual Didar.

Spiritual love and enlightenment:

"But as the joys of human love surpass all that riches and power may bring a man, so does that greater spiritual love and enlightenment, the fruit of that sublime experience of the direct vision of reality which is God's gift and grace, surpass all that the finest, truest human love can offer. For that gift we must ever pray."

Imam Sultan Muhammad Shah, The Memoirs of Aga Khan

Inshallah we will clean our hearts through practicing forgiveness, abundant zikr, giryahu zari and good deeds as a way to prepare ourselves to be in Hazar Imam's physical presence. While in the darbar of the Imam, we should humbly beseech Him amongst other things, to ease the difficulties for the Jamat worldwide, paying particular thought to our Syrian Jamat, humanity at large, blessings for our family, prayers for the souls of all ruhani's, forgiveness of our sins and spiritual elevation that his light will shine upon our hearts. Finally to ask that he accept our prayers and bless us with his holy physical and spiritual Didar.

Sources: Ustaz-i Buzurgwar's "True Vision"

H.A. Rashida Samsam's Waez on "Significance of Didar"

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