

Procession of Arba'in

Procession of Arba'in (Arabic: *مسيرة الأربعين*) is a great march of Shi'as in Iraq from different parts of the country towards Karbala on the occasion of Arba'in to pay a visit to the shrine of Imam al-Husayn (a) and perform ziyarat al-Arba'in.

Millions of people participate in this annual procession. Many people from other countries travel to attend this procession as well.

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Ritual

Procession of Arba'in



The procession of Arba'in in 1970.

Time	<u>Safar 20th</u> , <u>Arba'in of Imam al-Husayn</u>
Place	Roads leading to <u>Karbala</u> , the most popular one is the <u>Najaf</u> to <u>Karbala</u> .
Geographical Extent	Shi'a of neighbor countries of <u>Iraq</u>
Origin	Hadith from <u>Imam al-'Askari</u>
Symbolic Meaning	Answering the call of <u>Imam al-Husayn (a)</u> in the <u>day of 'Ashura</u>

Enjoining the Ziyara of Arba'in

In a hadith from Imam al-Hasan al-Askari (a), the faithful are said to have five signs and attributes. One of those signs is ziyarat al-Arba'in.^[1]

There is also a ziyara narrated for the day of Arba'in from Imam al-Sadiq (a).^[2] Shaykh Abbas Qummi mentioned it with the title of ziyarat al-Arba'in in the third chapter of his Mafatih al-jinan.^[3]

History

Qadi Tabataba'i wrote that procession towards Karbala on the day of Arba'in has been common among Shiites since the time of the Infallible Imams (a) and Shiites practiced this tradition even at the times of Umayyads and Abbasids. He considered this action a permanent conduct of Shi'a during history.^[4]

The author of Adab al-Taff, published in 1388/1967, reported the gathering of Shiites in Arba'in in Karbala and likened it to gathering of Muslims in Mecca and mentioned the attendance of groups of mourners who recited poems in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Urdu. He said that it would not be exaggerating saying that more than a million people attended the

pilgrimage of Arba'in at that time.^[5]

Saddam's Government and Ban on Procession

Toward the end of the fourteenth century/twentieth century, Ba'ath party of Iraq opposed procession of Arba'in and sometimes treated those who went on procession harshly which withered this ritual on the vine. In a period, Ayatollah al-Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr declared procession toward Karbala obligatory.^[6]

Uprising of Arba'in

Ba'ath party limited holding religious rituals, and also setting up any mawkib^[7] as well as the procession toward Karbala were banned.^[8] However, on Safar 15th, 1398/1977, people of Najaf prepared for procession of Arba'in.^[9] Thirty thousand people moved toward Karbala. This movement was first opposed by government forces and some people were martyred. Finally, in the path of Najaf toward Karbala, army forces attacked people and arrested thousands of people.^[10] Some people were killed, some were executed and some others received life sentences. Al-Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and al-Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim played key roles in this uprising.^[11] Imam Khomeini approved this uprising of people too.^[12]



A glance at Procession of Arba'in

Expansion of Arba'in Procession

After the fall of Ba'th regime in Iraq which banned any mourning ceremony, Shiites moved towards Karbala for the first time in 2003.^[13] In the first years of procession, they were only two or three million people. In the next years, the number of pilgrims reached more than ten million people.

In 2013, some reports mentioned the number of fifteen million pilgrims attending Karbala.

Iraq's ministry of interior gave the statistics showing that in 2013, at least one million and three hundred thousand foreign pilgrims came from Arabic and Islamic countries as well as from among Muslim minorities in European countries to Iraq and all of them moved towards Karbala to attend the ceremonies and renew their allegiance with Imam al-Husayn (a).

Distance of the Procession

Iraqi pilgrims move toward Karbala from their cities. But many Iranian pilgrims choose the path between Najaf to Karbala for their procession. The distance between the two cities is about eighty kilometers. There are 1452 marked utility poles between Najaf and Karbala and the distance between every two poles is fifty meters. About twenty to twenty five hours is needed for the whole walking. The best time for beginning the procession is Safar 16th.

Manners and Customs

- **Reciting Hawsa:** One of the manners and customs of Iraqis on the way to Karbala on the day of Arba'in is reciting "hawsa". Hawsa refers to poems special to Arab tribes of the south of Iraq. These poems express heroism and valor and are used for urging men to do great and difficult tasks. After recitation by the poet, people repeat one couplet of the poem and move on in circle.^[14]
- **Beginning of the ceremony:** The mourning ritual begins from five days before Arba'in by entering the caravans of ta'ziya. Then, groups of chest-beaters and chain-beaters enter, and the main ceremony begins on the day of Arba'in, two hours after noon. Pilgrims stand near the entrance of the shrine of Imam al-Husayn (a) and recite a lament and

repeat it while they beat their chests and at the end of chest-beating, they raise their hands as a sign of greeting and respect.^[15]

- **Receiving and serving pilgrims:** During the days of procession, nomads living beside the Euphrates set up large tents called mawkib or mudif (guesthouse) on the path of procession and receive and serve pilgrims and accommodate them for rest.^[16] Religious communities of Iraq set up many mawkibs and provide pilgrims with free services. Management of mawkibs is carried out by people independently from the government.^[17]

The Longest Congregational Prayer

In 2014, the longest congregational prayer was formed by the pilgrims during the procession. This congregational prayer was under the guidance of Ayatullah al-Sistani and the lines of the prayer continued for as long as 30 kilometers.^[18]

See also

- Ziyarat al-Arba'in
- Arba'in of Imam al-Husayn (a)
- Ziyarat al-Imam al-Husayn (a)

Gallery



Procession of Arba'in in 2017, Bayn al-Haramayn, Karbala.



Procession of Arba'in in 2017, entrance of Karbala.



Every year in procession of Arba'in, people give food and facilities to pilgrims. The photo is taken in 2017.



The route between Najaf and Karbala, 2015. Mawakibs in the left of the road provide free food and resting place for the pilgrims.

Notes

1. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, vol. 6, p. 52.
2. Ṭūsī, *Tahdhīb al-aḥkām*, vol. 6, p. 113.
3. Qummī, *Mafātīḥ al-jinān*, p. 642.
4. Qāḍī Ṭabāṭabāyī, *Tahqīq darbāra-yi awwal-i arba'in*, p. 2.
5. Shubbar, *Adab al-ṭaff*, vol. 1, p. 41.
6. Maẓāhirī, *Farhang-i sūg-i shī'ī*, p. 102.
7. Stations en route to Karbala, providing services for Imam al-Husayn's (a) pilgrims in the procession of Arba'in.
8. Mu'min, *Sanawāt al-jamr*, p. 165.
9. Asadī, *Mūjiz tārikh al-Iraq al-siyāsī al-ḥadīth*, p. 101.
10. Wiley, *The Islamic movement of Iraqi Shi'as*, p. 81.
11. Mu'min, *Sanawāt al-jamr*, p. 169.
12. Mu'min, *Sanawāt al-jamr*, p. 170.
13. Maẓāhirī, *Farhang-i sūg-i shī'ī*, p. 102.
14. "Farhang-i zīyārat", p. 146.
15. "Farhang-i zīyārat", p. 147.
16. "Farhang-i zīyārat", p. 163.
17. Maẓāhirī, *Farhang-i sūg-i shī'ī*, p. 100.

18. Website of alsumaria.tv (<https://www.alsumaria.tv/news/118624/%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%88-%D8%A5%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A>

[8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%B7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%82/ar\)](https://www.alsumaria.tv/news/118624/%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%88-%D8%A5%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%A8%D8%B1-%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%A9-%D8%A)

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External Links

- Some aerial photos of procession of Arba'in (<http://arbaeen.ir/fa/news-details/67/>)

[v · e](https://en.wikishia.net/index.php/Ziyarat_of_Māzar_al-Ḥusayn_(a)) ([https://en.wikishia.net/index.php/Ziyarat_of_Māzar_al-Ḥusayn_\(a\)](https://en.wikishia.net/index.php/Ziyarat_of_Māzar_al-Ḥusayn_(a)))&action=edit [show]

[v · e](https://en.wikishia.net/index.php?title=Tepping_of_Muḥammad_ibn_Ḥabīb_al-Ḥusayn_(a)_at_Karbala) ([https://en.wikishia.net/index.php?title=Tepping_of_Muḥammad_ibn_Ḥabīb_al-Ḥusayn_\(a\)_at_Karbala](https://en.wikishia.net/index.php?title=Tepping_of_Muḥammad_ibn_Ḥabīb_al-Ḥusayn_(a)_at_Karbala))&action=edit [show]

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