



Friday, 3rd November 2017

The Commemoration of Arba'een

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to you to inform you of an upcoming religious commemoration for Shia Muslims, Arba'een, which is due to take place on Friday 10th November 2017.

By way of introduction, I am the Principal of the Shia Ithna'asheri Madressa which is a community Sunday school which has circa 900 students (aged 4 – 16) and is based in Northwood, in the London borough of Hillingdon. Our students primarily reside in the London boroughs of Harrow, Brent, and Hillingdon however some do live further afield.

You may already be aware that for Shia Muslims, the first 2 months of the Islamic calendar (Muharram & Safar) bring with it the commemoration and mourning of the martyrdom of Hussain, the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (peace and blessings on him and his Holy Progeny). I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the importance of this event and the reasons why some of the pupils in your school during the period 30th October – 10th November will be attending their local mosque on a daily basis each evening.

Who is Hussain? [www.whoishussain.org]

Hussain was the grandson of the Holy Prophet Muhammed and the son of Ali, the first Shia Imam [successor to the Prophet] and the fourth ruler [Caliph] of the Muslims.

Hussain was revered as a knowledgeable, pious and generous man, who took seriously his responsibility in looking after the poor and needy people in his town. Because of both his lineage and stature, he was and still is regarded as a beacon of guidance for one and all, and is the perfect role model for all those who wish to walk the path of righteousness.

Why do we still remember the day of Ashura and Commemorate the Arba'een?

The actions of Hussain represented a conscious choice to courageously resist and sacrifice his life for a higher cause. The rest of the entire Muslim nation at the time had failed to challenge the malpractice of the then Caliph, and had acquiesced to his authority and given their obedience even though he was an oppressive and cruel tyrant.

In such circumstances, passiveness by Hussain would have signalled not only the end of the religion of Islam (only some 75 years since its inception), but also the end of all humanitarian values of liberty, freedom, integrity, honesty etc. instilled and promoted by Islam. Thus Hussain took the heavy responsibility of challenging the despot and stand firm for the sake of all values promoted and espoused by the religion of Islam. In his own words, he said:

"I have not risen to spread evil or to show off, nor to spread immorality or oppression. But I have done so for the betterment of Muslims, and to propagate goodness and forbid evil."

In Islam, 'forty' (Arabic: Arba'een) holds a great significance and often after the death of a loved one, the families gather after forty days to pay their respects once again. As you will see on the news & social media, millions of Muslims flock towards Kerbala in Iraq to pay their tributes; those who cannot travel gather in their local centres to remember the aftermath of the tragedy and discuss how we can apply and live the values which Hussain stood for.

This year Arba'een falls on **Monday, 10th November 2017** and will be observed through special prayers and events at our religious centers.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us

Yours faithfully,

Sajjad Govani

Principal - Shia Ithna'asheri Madressa Stanmore, London, United Kingdom