

Arbaeen: Arts and Literature



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(Summary of the Article)

Every nation has some forms of religious belief and religious belief is independent. Ways of life and spiritual practices of people all over the world are the basis of religious belief. So faith is a part of human identity. Throughout history, people have used art and literature to express their religious beliefs, and to help them to focus on practices such as prayer and worship. Beautiful words, images and objects have played a vital role in many world religions, in this context, the occasion of **Arbaeen** **Aba Abdillah Al Hussain (A.S)** اربعين ابا عبدالله الحسين is one of its own kind. Arbaeen is a peaceful gathering, specially characterised by a journey by millions of pilgrims on foot towards Karbala (Iraq) where the holy shrine of Imam Hussain is situated. At this largest public gathering event of the world, through the decade, Art and literature have become important forms of expression for many people to show their warm passion of zeal and Love towards Martyrs of Karbala. We see this in walking places of Mashi (مشى) and in BaynUI Haramain (بين الحرمين) like people holding flags which are full of icons and often highly decorated with calligraphic art and with slogans of vibrant colours, designed to give devotees a glimpse of what enthusiasm may be like. People also often decorate their Mowkib (موكب) ; (Mowkib is a permanent shelter providing facilities to pilgrims, including food and accommodation, which are set up on the way to Karbala by locals and people from other countries who serve pilgrims) with religious art as well. Along with Arts, It is a truth that Literature through meaningful words gives direction to the deep and earnest sentiments of a soul.

The battle of Karbala took place on 10th Muharram 61 AH (9/10 October 680 CE) at Karbala, precisely near the Euphrates River, or the area now known as the Country named Iraq. This battle fought between a small retinue consisting of the family and companions of Imam Hussain (A.S),

the grandson of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and son of Imam Ali (A.S) against the military troops sent by Yazid ibn Muawiyah, the Umayyad Caliph.

The Day of Arbaeen marks forty days after the Day of Ashura, the day Imam Hussain (A.S) was martyred in the Battle of Karbala. Arbaeen is closely associated with Mashi (walk on foot towards Karbala). Now, if we discuss the connection of Arbaeen with Art and Literature, first we have to understand the terms "Art and Literature". Art is something that is a blended product of artistic imagination and skills. The form of Art may vary from paintings to digital Art . Whereas, the term literature indicates a body of written works; mainly prose and poetry. The profound impact of the battle of Karbala has been transmitted all over the world through various artistic and literary mediums for over 1400 years. In the context of Arbaeen, it is very true that Art forms like painting, illustrations, and calligraphy have been instrumental in preserving and conveying the essence of Karbala's tragedy to people worldwide. Whatever the medium used, paintings whether these are made by oil paints, water colours or pastel colours manifest the intensity of the sequel of Karbala. Through digital designing, the events and objectives of Karbala present in documentary forms so one can easily comprehend the consequences of this battle. Art exhibitions with the theme of Karbala are organised in different countries like Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Europe. Observations show that on the event of Arbaeen, Banners with motivational slogans showing the objectives of Hussaini movements are displayed in processions at various regions of the world. Along with banners, colourful flags raised by the hands of pilgrims not only reflect their solidarity with the noble cause of Imam Hussain (A.S) but also the revolutionary movement all around the world. One can easily realise that the vast canvas of painters easily accommodate all the events and characters of Karbala. These mediums allow artists to represent agony and pain that Yazid attempted to erase, everlasting the virtuous sacrifice of Imam Hussain(a.s) and his devoted companions. It's also a way to raise a voice of protest against the injustice of domination by super powers in the world. Often Art and Literature are closely associated with each other as If there is a painting, flag with a slogan, motto or indication, it means that it reflects both Art and Literature in itself. The intricate Arabic script of calligraphy, with its diverse versions in

languages like Persian and Urdu, has been used to elegantly write Imam Hussain's name, radiating divine grace and evoking admiration in the hearts of believers and a sense of recognition among non-believers. From the spectrum of love to war, literary persons are a witness to what they endure. Written traditions in the form of poignant poetry, such as Marsiyas, Salams and Nohas, played a pivotal role in spreading the message of Karbala to the Muslims worldwide and to the far corners of the world, evoking powerful emotions and underscoring the enduring message that "victory always favours the truth, and falsehood will ultimately be diminished and destroyed, no matter the strength of the enemies of truth". Today's Renowned intellectuals, of different religions and languages, go and join the Arbaeen gathering and crafted elegies that continue to be recited with great enthusiasm in religious congregations, processions and even during Arbaeen walk, keeping the memory of Karbala alive through adroit words. Each stanza of these heartfelt verses is devoted to honouring Imam Hussain (A.S) and his valiant companions, shedding light on their suffering, bravery, and determination in resisting Yazid and his oppressive army. With the advent of modern technology and social media platforms, the dissemination of these artistic expressions has amplified, reaching people across the globe and deepening their love and understanding of Imam Hussain(a.s) and his sacred mission. On the occasion of Arbaeen, with this literature, not only the Muslim community, but also the whole humanity has diligently preserved the accounts of Karbala through various literary forms, such as books, pamphlets, banners, and flyers, ensuring that the message of Imam Hussain(a.s) resonates with diverse audiences. In some Mowkibs, arrangements of powerpoint presentations have been arranged for the development of common people towards the role of Defenders of Holy Shrines مدافعان حرم (whose precious sacrifice could have made the Arbaeen walk peacefully).

In the modern era, with the advancement of technologies and expansion of various modes of communications like the internet and social media has revolutionised the dissemination of Imam Hussain's message, making it more accessible and faster than ever before. Arbaeen live coverage through reporters, interviews of pilgrims who share their spiritual experience motivate the others, even non muslims to join them in this divine journey of love. Through these tools, people passionately share

their love and devotion to Imam Hussain(a.s), transcending sects and uniting in their appreciation of his sacrifice. The digital landscape has bridged the gaps in understanding, allowing anyone to access authentic narratives and embrace the truth while exposing falsehood. The Arbaeen Walk has given rise to a deep united form of Art and multilingual literature and eulogising all the nations that were previously unknown but now they all are familiar with each other with the name of HUSSAIN (A.S).

The Arbaeen pilgrimage is not merely a long walk. Instead, it is a kind of enthusiastic movement in which despite being in public, pilgrims have their own personal connection with Allah and Imam Hussain (A.S), which finds a new form of divine immaterial dependence and harmony. Two major elements of steadfastness to achieve the ultimate goal of Imam Hussain (A.S) are Strong Determination and Perseverance for hardships. Thinking about the goals and the history behind the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS), the injustice and cruelty imposed on his family and the devotions of his faithful followers bring about many personal and social growth and improvements. Through the journey of Arbaeen at Karbala and even in our own homeland the deep association and close bond of a devotee with his beloved Imam developed. For this purpose, Arts and Literature provide the best channels for meeting with other Muslims, exchanging ideas, and developing brotherhood with Muslims and even non Muslims of other countries and Raising voice against oppression and injustice toward the Yazids of our own time. The last and the crux of this great congregation is it's a kind of preparation for the grand reappearance of Imam Mahdi (AJF), the awaited saviour among Muslims. whose fame has reached the whole world through the Arbaeen Pilgrimage.