

General Guidelines from the Supreme Religious Authority for Lecturers and Preachers during Muharram 1438 A.H.

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate the Merciful
And may peace and benediction of Allah be upon of Muhammad and his pure progeny.

ذَلِكَ وَمَنْ يَعِظْكُمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ.

And whoever holds in honor the symbols of Allah, such (honor) should come truly from piety of heart. We are on the eve of Muharram-ul-Haram which reminds us of a great movement led by reformists for progression of human societies, a movement that motivates nations and make amends to their situations. That movement is the blessed Hussaini movement which places on the shoulders of the followers of Imam Hussain son of Ali (peace be upon him) the great responsibility of ensuring its continuity and seeding it in the hearts and minds of people. No one from the followers of Imam Hussein is relieved of this responsibility irrespective of his position and status, be he a religious scholar, an educated individual or a specialist in one of the various fields of materialistic and human sciences. Every one of us has to shoulder the responsibility of preserving this blessed Hussaini movement by reforming himself and his dependents, his family, relatives and giving awareness to those around him about the importance of this great Hussaini project. However, the lecturers shoulder a greater responsibility in terms of how they present and depict the Ashura movement and uprising led by the Chief of Martyrs, peace be upon him. We need, therefore, to pause for a while and ask: Is the Hussaini pulpit (manber) fulfilling and furthering its responsibility in accordance with the needs of the time and requirements of the modern age in a way such that leaves the influences of the Hussaini movement on the hearts and minds of the people?

Based on this point we have a few pieces of advice and guidelines for those who mount the pulpit in a ceremony held to commemorate the martyrdom of the Chief of Martyrs:

1. The lecturer must address a wide range of issues proportionate to the spiritual, educational and historical needs of the society and this requires the lecturer to be well educated and prepared to discuss various subjects in many different fields which cover the needs of the audience and other guidance-seekers.

2. The lecturer must be aware of the cultural issues of his time. That is to say he should realize and be cognizant of the ideological doubts cast every year; he must be able to read the developments and changing behaviors in every society and at all times which the believers go through because being abreast with the emerging thoughts, behaviors and cultural issues would cause the gathering of people round the Hussaini manber(lit. pulpit)to be more lively, dynamic and effective.

3. The lecturer must make sure to exercise great caution in selecting the Quranic verses and relating authentic narratives from trusted sources and mentioning authentic historical events otherwise failing to verify the sources of the narratives or stories may cause the audience to lose their trust and confidence in the Hussaini manber.

4. The lecturer must avoid narrating dreams and untrue stories which only serve to defame the Hussaini manber and make it look like a cheap media outlet incompatible with the audience's intellectual and cultural level.

5. The lecturer must deliver a well-prepared speech in terms of topics he brings up as they must be coherent and well-organized. He must explain everything in plain words using a good style and carefully chosen phrases as they are highly important for the audience. In fact, if the orator makes his best effort in preparing, classifying and explicating the issue in an eloquent and attractive way, it would help the listeners to follow what is brought up and discussed on the Hussaini pulpit.

6. The entire legacy of the Ahlul-bayt (AS) is precious and beautiful but this depends largely on the lecturer's skill and creativeness as to how he chooses traditions and stories which are attractive for all nations regardless of their religious beliefs, intellectual and social standpoints. As stated by the Imam (AS): "Verily, if people knew the beauty of our words, they would certainly follow us". The beauty of their words is their legacy that focuses on the human values which attract people from different religions and various backgrounds.

7. The lecturer should talk about the common and rampant social problems as well as provide successful solutions to them. It is, therefore, not befitting for the lecturer to suffice to discussing problems such as disintegration of the family or the gap between the young and old generations or divorce issues and other problems of controversial nature without the Hussaini manber playing an active and effective role. Therefore, it is hoped that the lecturers who mount Hussaini manber consult those who are experts in

social and educational fields such as psychologist and sociologists so as to be able to give the right solutions to various social problems because dealing with this issue in such a progressive, yet pragmatic, manner would transfer the Hussaini manber from a state of stagnancy to a state of interaction, collaboration and leadership which aims to reform and correct societies.

8. The Hussaini manber is too revered a place to indulge in Shiites' differences in intellectual areas and religious rites because intervening in such matters would cause the manber to get inclined to a specific group or cause social chaos or even may cause division among the believers whereas, in fact, the manber is a flagship of unity and the secret of Hussaini light that gathers the lovers of the Chief of Martyrs (AS) on a single path towards efficient cooperation.

9. The lecturer must attach importance to common jurisprudential issues in the field of religious observances and the daily business transactions by expounding them and dealing with them in a charming and plain style that makes the listener feel that the Hussaini manber takes care of his/ her real life and the various issues with which he/she is confronted.

10. The lecturer must underscore the importance of the role of marja'iyah (religious authority), the Islamic seminary and status of scholars because they constitute the secrets behind the greatness and dynamism of the structure of Imamiyah religion.

We ask Allah the Exalted, the Blessed, to grant us success in serving the cause of the Chief of Martyrs (peace be upon him) and to make us distinguished by Hussain (peace be upon him) in this world and hereafter.

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and benedictions of Allah be upon Muhammad and his pure progeny.⁷

⁷ Available online, <http://www.sistani.org/english/archive/25478/> (Accessed 1st of December, 2016)