



AL-ASR

**Striving For Education
and Cultural Awareness**

In the name of God Most Compassionate Most Merciful

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SVC Student Role

We would like to create a secure and happy environment in which respect for ourselves and respect for others is seen to be of equal importance. This trip is geared towards Islamic education, character building and cultural awareness. We would like all the students to gain knowledge, understand concepts and develop skills in accordance with real Islamic teachings. To help us achieve the above, the Management Committee has put together some rules that should be followed during the trip. Every effort is made to prepare schedules in advance and provide comfort within our resources.

Preparation for SVC

Read guidebooks on Iran from your local library, buy one from a shop or through the internet. Learn a few sentences of Farsi and make an effort to use it. Read about Islam, the Islamic Revolution and major cities in Iran. Learn about how to perform ziarat and about Imam Ali Raza (AS) and his sister Masooma (SA). This will give you a good start.

Essentially this is a pilgrimage (ziarat) to Imam Ali Raza (AS) and his sister Masooma (SA). According to a hadith, we only go for ziarat when the infallibles (Masooomeen) themselves invite us. The Infallibles invite us and we accept the invitation by traveling to their shrines. We should consider ourselves lucky that Imam Ali Raza (AS) and his sister (SA) have invited us. We should prepare ourselves for the meeting with the Imam (AS). We believe he can hear and see us. We should present the Imam (AS) with our problems, ask for solutions and beg him to intercede for us to have our sins forgiven. Be determined to return a better Muslim.

Objectives

The long-term objective is to be a part of a new Islamic civilization and to bring about changes through education. The immediate objective is to open our eyes to an alternative culture to the one presented by the Western World, to attend this course to the full and visit shrines of Imam Ali Raza (AS), his sister Masooma (SA), Imam Khomeini and others.

Also, to see what Iran has to offer us and we to Iran. To establish contacts with organizations, individuals and make pen pals. To have further cultural exchange if need be on an individual basis. And to encourage twinning of families, mosques and organizations.

Attendance

All are expected to follow the daily schedule as prepared by the management. The participants must get out of their beds at the first sound of Azan (call for prayer) at about 5:30 am. Students and participants are required to attend all lectures, take notes, participate in discussions perform daily prayers with jamaat

participate in visits and meetings with ulama and officials and complete the course.

Circumstances Beyond Al-Asr's Control

Changes in the schedule can occur due to circumstances beyond Al-Asr's control. Meetings may be cancelled at the last minute, or an additional trip may be organized within a trip.

Sensitive schedules like shopping trips may be replaced by a lecture because that's when the lecturer is available. In such events one should not express one's anger or negative feelings or gang up against the other group members, supervisors or management. In spite of the management's great care in organizing the schedules, it is subject to change.

Cleanliness

All areas of accommodation must be kept neat and tidy. This includes rooms, beds, toilet and bathrooms after use. Clothes should be clean and ironed. Participants should be presentable at all times.

Coach Journeys

These are long journeys and it should be utilised to promote social awareness by discussing issues regarding Islam. There is segregation between brothers and sisters on the coaches. Please make special effort to keep the coaches clean.

Complaints

The complaints procedure is an essential part in the development of Al-Asr. We take all complaints seriously and they are promptly resolved. Complaints should be made privately and politely to a supervisor. The complaints will be duly noted and discussed with a view to overcome any problems or difficulties, whether personal or of a more generic nature.

Discipline

The single most important requirement is discipline. The guidelines have been set and authority been vested in the Course Leader, whose instructions must be followed. Due to heat, homesickness and the like, people tend to get intolerant. This should not be an excuse to be rude or insulting. Foul language, backbiting, teasing and bullying is unacceptable under any circumstances. There are various age groups, backgrounds and temperaments. It is essential to be well mannered, patient, forgiving, tolerant and helpful. All these virtues are self-explanatory and must be followed. These are the very basis of Islamic education. Rules of the Islamic Sharia are the norm.



Faith Action Truth Patience

Lights will be switched off at 12:00 am for early rising for 'Fajr' prayers at 5:30 am. After 12:00 am there must be complete silence. Please do not disturb the sleep of others at any time by means of talking or any other disturbances. If you have a problem do not spread the negative feeling. Approach your supervisor. If anyone spreads negative feelings the others should take corrective action of guiding him or her. Participants may welcome visitors with the permission of the management. We have a no smoking policy. The team leader has complete discretion in the imposition of sanctions, including suspension and expulsion in an event of gross misconduct.

Food

Iranian food will be served unless volunteers agree to cook curry. Some food may not appeal simply because it's different. Let this not discourage you. You must eat to get energy so that you are able to enjoy the busy routine.

Good food is served three times a day. Sometimes fruit is also served in the mid morning and tea and biscuits in the mid afternoon. There are gaps between meals. If meals are consumed properly there will be no need for snacks from local shops. Do not overfill your trays with food as this deprives others of their share and it might end up in a bin. Clear your trays and stack them in a designated place. Try to help with clearing up. Do not eat sausages as they are known to give diarrhea. Add a little salt to the food as this will prevent any adverse effects of heat.

Personal Belongings

Everyone should look after his or her own personal belongings. Keep your valuables in a safe place, as the management is not liable for any loss or damage to personal items.

Segregation

Having lived in Europe we have to learn to segregate between male and female. All it means is to keep respectful distance and to lower one's gaze (eyes) when there is a mixed Islamic gathering. One should not encourage talking and meeting members of the opposite sex. Designated areas will be provided for males and females for leisure. Students will not be allowed to go out with 'non-mahrams'.

Shopping

Money will be changed once a week, so one should cash enough to last at least a week. There will be plenty of time for shopping. One has to be careful that the shopping should not become a priority. Do not do impulsive buying or overspend. Visit several shops to see the goods and prices. When you have decided what to buy and from where, you must bargain for a cheaper price. Go shopping in groups; it helps in decision-making and reduction in price.

Supervisors

The participants will be divided into small groups and each group will have a supervisor. They are there to help just as a member of the family. In case of any problems with lectures, shopping, loneliness, medical illness or arguments participants should _ approach their supervisors in the first instance.

The participants should follow their advice and respect the boundaries laid down by them. If the participant wants to stay out or go out after the classes, they may do so but only with the permission of the supervisor or a delegated responsible person. In the event of any major problem with the supervisor participants should speak to their manager or course leader.

Toilets

In most places flushing toilets do not exist. At first it can be nauseating as one has to squat. Toilet paper is not readily available in the toilets. Water is used for cleaning. Use a constant trickle of water. Take a couple of toilet rolls if this is your first experience of such toilets. Use small quantities of toilet paper and then use water. Do not use a lot of toilet paper as it blocks the plumbing. Clean the toilet after use; it is useful to have an air freshener.

Uniform

It is compulsory to wear correct uniform when on official trips and as directed by Al-Asr Management. All participants are required to wear full uniform to the airport on the first day.

Brothers must wear full sleeve white shirts and black/dark blue trousers. Sisters must wear black/dark blue mantu (ankle length light material overcoat), black/dark blue head scarf and dark socks. Dark sandals or comfortable shoes suitable for hot weather are required.

Casual clothes such as Jeans, T-shirts and trainers/sneakers are not allowed as part of the uniform. For the majority of the trip you will be required to wear uniform and on occasion during social activities you may wear casual clothes.

Miscellaneous

Al-Asr is very particular about etiquettes and respect for elders, teachers and fellow beings. One should be able to pick good etiquettes, e.g. one should not sit stretching one's legs when in a gathering. There must be decent dressing at all times. Pyjamas should not be worn outside the bedroom. One should be careful that the following do not occur: scruffy hair and outfits, bad breath, body odor, belongings being untidy etc.

It is wajib to keep a beard. Use of make-up is not allowed.

Before this holy journey one should cleanse oneself spiritually and physically. It is obligatory to remove one's pubic hair once every forty days. Carry your own weight, help to create a happy atmosphere and correct those who make the surroundings unpleasant. There will be a facility to phone home with payment.