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## Ashura: Uprising as struggle for justice to uphold humanity

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### Abstract

It is just well defined and obvious to all that Imam Hussain (A.S.) is bina-e-Lailaha who presented an everlasting and unique example for his followers. Hussainiyyat is the essence of Islam and it excites us to stand against injustice to uphold humanity and pure Islamic values. Karbala is a learning point giving an acceptable solution of all the issues of living life. I shall try best to explore the historical importance of Ashura, Azadari and Islamic foundations of Hussainiyyat in this study.

**Keywords:** Ashura, Karbala, justice, Hussainiyyat, humanity, Muharram, leadership

### Introduction

Ashura has always been a school where the character of a man has been tested and developed and Imam Hussein (A.S) has been the greatest teacher of humanity in this school. Ashura has not been just a historical event, but a school for teaching faith and belief, courage and martyrdom, justice and will of freedom, aspiration and religious zeal, jihad and uprising against evil, patience and steadfastness, authority and leadership of Imams, and sacrifices and courage. In other words, it gives a lesson of being a human in its real sense to all of us. Being the one-day event, Ashura<sup>1</sup> has influenced the world throughout the centuries. Actual heroes of Ashura seem to be few but, in fact, their number has been increased by including all fighters for justice and freedom in every part of the world and of all ages, and all those people, whose hearts has been beating for human values<sup>[1]</sup>. Ashura has been the cry of oppressed ones against tyranny, suppressed anger of all Abels against Cains, and crystallized moving force against evil for humanity throughout the history.

Undoubtedly status of justice in Islamic culture and system of values is highly elevated. That explains why the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and Infallible Imams attached great importance to it and were trying to restore and obtain justice in Islamic societies until the last breathes, sacrificing their lives for its victory. This Prophet's mission, justice, is clarified by the Holy Qur'an<sup>[2]</sup>.

«لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ»

"Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice; and We sent down iron, in which there is great might and uses for mankind, and so that Allah may know those who help and His apostles in [their] absence. Indeed Allah is all-strong, all-mighty."

God's also stated His commandment to obtain justice to all believers<sup>[3]</sup>

"O you who have faith! Be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah..."

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ...»

From the perspective of this God's commandment, Ashura movement of Imam Hussein (P.B.U.H.) has been the heaviest and bloodiest sacred struggle for truth and justice ever. It has always been and will have continued to be an inspiration and moving force for all uprisings against tyranny and injustice till Day of Judgment.

According to Imam Hussein (A.S.), accepting and obtaining justice is one of the most important obligations and true criterion for any Islamic leader. While the Bany Omayyad Caliphs by tyrannical and oppressive reign were bringing about Islamic society's downfall, abolishing all moral values, human rights and respect to people, Imam's uprising against evil intended to put an end to the violence and injustice.

The strong will of justice ran through all Imam Hussein's actions and Ashura uprising. In his letter written to elders of Kufa, Imam described duties and characteristics of genuine Imam according to the Qura'nic commandments and announced his uprising as revolt for justice's sake:

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«قَلَعَمَرِيْمَا الْإِمَامُ الْأَحَاكِمُ بِالْكِتَابِ، الْقَائِمُ بِالْقِسْطِ»

We can see also the determination to establish right laws in some prayers and prayer book for his pilgrimage:

أَمْرُ أَشْهَادِكَ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الْقِسْطُ وَالْعَدْلُ وَدَعْوَةُ الْبَيْهَمَاءِ وَأَنْتَ صَادِقُ صَدِيقٍ صَدَقْتَ فِيهَا «دَعْوَةُ إِلَيْهِ»

“Indeed I witness that you gave the command to obtain justice and right measures and invite (Islamic society) to justice, and you are truthful. So, whatever you call us to is also true (just)”.

In event Ashura the alleged role of right and justice was so important, that all the Infallible Imams tried to keep its memory alive. Moreover they considered it the key to religious survival and model of struggle against oppression.

Each Imam in his own way did everything to encourage people to keep alive the remembrance of Imam Hussein and martyrs of Karbala. They also referred to the great reward of weeping for Imam Hussein. Imam Reza (A.S) was among those, who didn't let the importance of the first ten days of Muharram vanish. He narrated:

"When the month of Muharram was close, my father was not seen happy, he was always sad during these ten days. Tenth of Muharram was the day of grief, tragedy and sorrow for him and he used to say: "This day, is the day when Hussein (A.S) was martyred."

Ibn Shahrashub narrated from Imam Reza (A.S) that the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.F.) said:

"Muharram is the month in which war was considered unlawful (haram) in the ignorance age. But at the dawn of Islam broke our sanctity and legitimated pouring of our blood, captured our children and women, burned our tents and took as loot whatever was there. They did not respect the sanctity which the Prophet (P.B.U.H. & H.F.) considered for us."

It also has been quoted that he was sombre and sorrowful through the whole month of Moharram <sup>[4]</sup>, had mourning ceremonies and if a poet presented verses or requiem about his grandfather, Imam Hussein (A.S), he always allowed reading it.

Imam not only invited people for mourning, but also used to describe sufferings of his grandfather, that made them weep from the bottom of their hearts. Referring to De'bel Khozaei's story <sup>[5]</sup>, Abu al-Faraj Esfahani narrated: “When I came to Imam Reza (A.S), I saw him sitting among his somber and sad companions. Seeing me coming towards him, he told me: “Well done to De'bel, who helped us with his hands and tongue”, then asked me to sit beside him and continued, "Oh De'bel! I want you to compose a poem, because these days are the days of Ahl-ul-Bait's sorrow and celebration to our enemies, especially Bani Omayya. Oh, De'bel! Everyone who cries his heart out over our tragedy and makes others cry will receive reward from Allah. Anyone who cries for our adversity is gathered with us on one way and belongs to our circle. Oh De'bel! The sins of anyone who cries for the sufferings of my grandfather, Imam Hussein will be forgiven by Allah.” Then he ordered to put curtain between us and shrine attendants and told us to sit behind it and mourn for his grandfather's tragedy. Meanwhile he told me: “Oh De'bel! Read requiem for Hussein (A.S). As long as you're alive you will praise and help us. So do this as much as you can, do not neglect your duty.”

Imam Hussein's (A.S.) and his faithful companions' uprising against evil became the pattern for other movements against oppression and tyranny after Ashura bloodshed in Karbala. Ashura leads to uprising for the sake of revival of all Islamic values and the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (A.S) was for victory of divine justice and humanity. There are many

attractive lessons to be learnt from Azadari and Hussainiyyat to ease the troubles of our present era.

## References

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2. Sura Hadeed (verse 25), Al- Quran
3. Sura Nisa (verse 135), Al Quran
4. History of Islam, page 110
5. Hussainiyyat, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Oxford Press, UK